

# ТОМАС ДЕ КВИНСИ

AUTOBIOGRAPHIC  
SKETCHES

**Томас Де Квинси**  
**Autobiographic Sketches**

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*Autobiographic Sketches:*

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# Thomas De Quincey

## Autobiographic Sketches

### EXTRACT FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY MR. DE QUINCEY TO THE AMERICAN EDITOR OF THIS WORKS

Lasswade, *January 8*, 1853

**MY DEAR SIR:**

I am on the point of revising and considerably altering, for republication in England, an edition of such amongst my writings as it may seem proper deliberately to avow. Not that I have any intention, or consciously any reason, expressly to disown any one thing that I have ever published; but some things have sufficiently accomplished their purpose when they have met the call of that particular transient occasion in which they arose; and others, it may be thought on review, might as well have been suppressed from the very first. Things immoral would of course fall within that category; of these, however, I cannot reproach myself with ever having published so much as one. But even pure levities, simply *as* such, and without liability to any worse objection, may

happen to have no justifying principle of life within them; and if, any where, I find such a reproach to lie against a paper of mine, that paper I should wish to cancel. So that, upon the whole, my new and revised edition is likely to differ by very considerable changes from the original papers; and, consequently, to that extent is likely to differ from your existing Boston reprint.

These changes, as sure to be more or less advantageous to the collection, it is my wish to place at your disposal as soon as possible, in order that you may make what use of them you see fit, be it little or much. It may so happen that the public demand will give you no opportunity for using them at all. I go on therefore to mention, that over and above these changes, which may possibly strike you as sometimes mere caprices, pulling down in order to rebuild, or turning squares into rotundas, (*diruit, aedificat, mutat quadrata rotundis,*) it is my purpose to enlarge this edition by as many new papers as I find available for such a station. These I am anxious to put into the hands of your house, and, so far as regards the U.S., of *your* house exclusively; not with any view to further emolument, but as an acknowledgment of the services which you have already rendered me; viz., first, in having brought together so widely scattered a collection—a difficulty which in my own hands by too painful an experience I had found from nervous depression to be absolutely insurmountable; secondly, in having made me a participator in the pecuniary profits of the American edition, without solicitation or the shadow of any expectation on my

part, without any legal claim that I could plead, or equitable warrant in established usage, solely and merely upon your own spontaneous motion. Some of these new papers, I hope, will not be without their value in the eyes of those who have taken an interest in the original series. But at all events, good or bad, they are now tendered to the appropriation of your individual house, the Messrs. TICKNOR, REED, & FIELDS, according to the amplest extent of any power to make such a transfer that I may be found to possess by law or custom in America.

I wish this transfer were likely to be of more value. But the veriest trifle, interpreted by the spirit in which I offer it, may express my sense of the liberality manifested throughout this transaction by your honorable house.

Ever believe me my dear sir,

Your faithful and obliged,

*THOMAS DE QUINCEY.*

# PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

The miscellaneous writings which I propose to lay before the public in this body of selections are in part to be regarded as a republication of papers scattered through several British journals twenty or thirty years ago, which papers have been reprinted in a collective form by an American house of high character in Boston; but in part they are to be viewed as entirely new, large sections having been intercalated in the present edition, and other changes made, which, even to the old parts, by giving very great expansion, give sometimes a character of absolute novelty. Once, therefore, at home, with the allowance for the changes here indicated, and once in America, it may be said that these writings have been in some sense published. But *publication* is a great idea never even approximated by the utmost anxieties of man. Not the Bible, not the little book which, in past times, came next to the Bible in European diffusion and currency, <sup>1</sup> viz., the treatise

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<sup>1</sup> "*Next to the bible in currency.*"—That is, next in the fifteenth century to the Bible of the nineteenth century. The diffusion of the "De Imitatione Christi" over Christendom (the idea of Christendom, it must be remembered, not then including any part of America) anticipated, in 1453, the diffusion of the Bible in 1853. But why? Through what causes? Elsewhere I have attempted to show that this enormous (and seemingly incredible) popularity of the "De Imitatione Christi" is virtually to be interpreted as a vicarious popularity of the Bible. At that time the Bible itself was a fountain of inspired truth every where sealed up; but a whisper ran through the western nations

"De Imitatione Christi," has yet in any generation been really published. Where is the *printed* book of which, in Coleridge's words, it may not be said that, after all efforts to publish itself, still it remains, for the world of possible readers, "as good as manuscript"? Not to insist, however, upon any romantic rigor in constructing this idea, and abiding by the ordinary standard of what is understood by *publication*, it is probable that, in many cases, my own papers must have failed in reaching even this. For they were printed as contributions to journals. Now, that mode of publication is unavoidably disadvantageous to a writer, except under unusual conditions. By its harsh peremptory punctuality, it drives a man into hurried writing, possibly into saying the thing that is not. They won't wait an hour for you in a magazine or a review; they won't wait for truth; you may as well reason with the sea, or a railway train, as in such a case with an editor; and, as it makes no difference whether that sea which you desire to argue with is the Mediterranean or the Baltic, so, with that editor and his deafness, it matters not a straw whether he belong to a northern or a southern journal. Here is one evil of journal writing—viz., its overmastering precipitation. A second is, its

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of Europe that the work of Thomas à Kempis contained some slender rivulets of truth silently stealing away into light from that interdicted fountain. This belief (so at least I read the case) led to the prodigious multiplication of the book, of which not merely the reimpressions, but the separate translations, are past all counting; though bibliographers *have* undertaken to count them. The book came forward as an answer to the sighing of Christian Europe for light from heaven. I speak of Thomas à Kempis as the author; but his claim was disputed. Gerson was adopted by France as the author; and other local saints by other nations.



effect at times in narrowing your publicity. Every journal, or pretty nearly so, is understood to hold (perhaps in its very title it makes proclamation of holding) certain fixed principles in politics, or possibly religion. These distinguishing features, which become badges of enmity and intolerance, all the more intense as they descend upon narrower and narrower grounds of separation, must, at the very threshold, by warning off those who dissent from them, so far operate to limit your audience. To take my own case as an illustration: these present sketches were published in a journal dedicated to purposes of political change such as many people thought revolutionary. I thought so myself, and did not go along with its politics. Inevitably that accident shut them out from the knowledge of a very large reading class. Undoubtedly this journal, being ably and conscientiously conducted, had some circulation amongst a neutral class of readers; and amongst its own class it was popular. But its own class did not ordinarily occupy that position in regard to social influence which could enable them rapidly to diffuse the knowledge of a writer. A reader whose social standing is moderate may communicate his views upon a book or a writer to his own circle; but his own circle is a narrow one. Whereas, in aristocratic classes, having more leisure and wealth, the intercourse is inconceivably more rapid; so that the publication of any book which interests *them* is secured at once; and this publishing influence passes downwards; but rare, indeed, is the inverse process of publication through an influence spreading upwards.

According to the way here described, the papers now presented to the public, like many another set of papers nominally published, were *not* so in any substantial sense. Here, at home, they may be regarded as still unpublished.<sup>2</sup> But, in such a case, why were not the papers at once detached from the journal, and reprinted? In the neglect to do this, some there are who will read a blamable carelessness in the author; but, in that carelessness, others will read a secret consciousness that the papers were of doubtful value. I have heard, indeed, that some persons, hearing of this republication, had interpreted the case thus: Within the last four or five years, a practice has arisen amongst authors of gathering together into volumes their own scattered contributions to periodical literature. Upon that suggestion, they suppose me suddenly to have remembered that I also had made such contributions; that mine might be entitled to their chance as well as those of others; and, accordingly, that on such a slight invitation *ab extra*, I had called back into life what otherwise I had long since regarded as having already fulfilled its

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<sup>2</sup> At the same time it must not be denied, that, if you lose by a journal in the way here described, you also gain by it. The journal gives you the benefit of its own separate audience, that might else never have heard your name. On the other hand, in such a case, the journal secures to you the special enmity of its own peculiar antagonists. These papers, for instance, of mine, not being political, were read possibly in a friendly temper by the regular supporters of the journal that published them. But some of my own political friends regarded me with displeasure for connecting myself at all with a reforming journal. And far more, who would have been liberal enough to disregard that objection, naturally lost sight of me when under occultation to *them* in a journal which they never saw.

mission, and must doubtless have dismissed to oblivion.

I do not certainly know, or entirely believe, that any such thing was really said. But, however that may be, no representation can be more opposed to the facts. Never for an instant did I falter in my purpose of republishing most of the papers which I had written. Neither, if I myself had been inclined to forget them, should I have been allowed to do so by strangers. For it happens that, during the fourteen last years, I have received from many quarters in England, in Ireland, in the British colonies, and in the United States, a series of letters expressing a far profounder interest in papers written by myself than any which I could ever think myself entitled to look for. Had I, therefore, otherwise cherished no purposes of republication, it now became a duty of gratitude and respect to these numerous correspondents, that I should either republish the papers in question, or explain why I did not. The obstacle in fact had been in part the shifting state of the law which regulated literary property, and especially the property in periodical literature. But a far greater difficulty lay in the labor (absolutely insurmountable to myself) of bringing together from so many quarters the scattered materials of the collection. This labor, most fortunately, was suddenly taken off my hands by the eminent house of Messrs TICKNOR, REED, & FIELDS, Boston, U. S. To them I owe my acknowledgments, first of all, for that service: they have brought together a great majority of my fugitive papers in a series of volumes now amounting to twelve. And, secondly, I am bound to mention that

they have made me a sharer in the profits of the publication, called upon to do so by no law whatever, and assuredly by no expectation of that sort upon my part.

Taking as the basis of my remarks this collective American edition, I will here attempt a rude general classification of all the articles which compose it. I distribute them grossly into three classes: *First*, into that class which proposes primarily to amuse the reader; but which, in doing so, may or may not happen occasionally to reach a higher station, at which the amusement passes into an impassioned interest. Some papers are merely playful; but others have a mixed character. These present *Autobiographic Sketches* illustrate what I mean. Generally, they pretend to little beyond that sort of amusement which attaches to any real story, thoughtfully and faithfully related, moving through a succession of scenes sufficiently varied, that are not suffered to remain too long upon the eye, and that connect themselves at every stage with intellectual objects. But, even here, I do not scruple to claim from the reader, occasionally, a higher consideration. At times, the narrative rises into a far higher key. Most of all it does so at a period of the writer's life where, of necessity, a severe abstraction takes place from all that could invest him with any alien interest; no display that might dazzle the reader, nor ambition that could carry his eye forward with curiosity to the future, nor successes, fixing his eye on the present; nothing on the stage but a solitary infant, and its solitary combat with grief—a mighty darkness, and a sorrow without a

voice. But something of the same interest will be found, perhaps, to rekindle at a maturer age, when the characteristic features of the individual mind have been unfolded. And I contend that much more than amusement ought to settle upon any narrative of a life that is really *confidential*. It is singular—but many of my readers will know it for a truth—that vast numbers of people, though liberated from all reasonable motives to self-restraint, *cannot* be confidential—have it not in their power to lay aside reserve; and many, again, cannot be so with particular people. I have witnessed more than once the case, that a young female dancer, at a certain turn of a peculiar dance, could not—though she had died for it—sustain a free, fluent motion. Aerial chains fell upon her at one point; some invisible spell (who could say *what?*) froze her elasticity. Even as a horse, at noonday on an open heath, starts aside from something his rider cannot see; or as the flame within a Davy lamp feeds upon the poisonous gas up to the meshes that surround it, but there suddenly is arrested by barriers that no Aladdin will ever dislodge. It is because a man cannot see and measure these mystical forces which palsy him, that he cannot deal with them effectually. If he were able really to pierce the haze which so often envelops, even to himself, his own secret springs of action and reserve, there cannot be a life moving at all under intellectual impulses that would not, through that single force of absolute frankness, fall within the reach of a deep, solemn, and sometimes even of a thrilling interest. Without pretending to an interest of this quality, I have done what was

possible on *my* part towards the readiest access to such an interest by perfect sincerity—saying every where nothing *but* the truth; and in any case forbearing to say the *whole* truth only through consideration for others.

Into the second class I throw those papers which address themselves purely to the understanding as an insulated faculty; or do so primarily. Let me call them by the general name of ESSAYS. These, as in other cases of the same kind, must have their value measured by two separate questions. A. What is the problem, and of what rank in dignity or in use, which the essay undertakes? And next, that point being settled, B. What is the success obtained? and (as a separate question) what is the executive ability displayed in the solution of the problem? This latter question is naturally no question for myself, as the answer would involve a verdict upon my own merit. But, generally, there will be quite enough in the answer to question A for establishing the value of any essay on its soundest basis. *Prudens interrogatio est dimidium scientiae*. Skilfully to frame your question, is half way towards insuring the true answer. Two or three of the problems treated in these essays I will here rehearse.

1. *ESSENISM*—*The essay on this, where mentioned at all in print, has been mentioned as dealing with a question of pure speculative curiosity: so little suspicion is abroad of that real question which lies below. Essenism means simply this—Christianity before Christ, and consequently without Christ. If, therefore, Essenism could make good its pretensions, there at one*

blow would be an end of Christianity, which in that case is not only superseded as an idle repetition of a religious system already published, but also as a criminal plagiarism. Nor can the wit of man evade that conclusion. But even that is not the worst. When we contemplate the total orb of Christianity, we see it divide into two hemispheres: first, an ethical system, differing *centrally* from any previously made known to man; secondly, a mysterious and divine machinery for reconciling man to God; a teaching to be taught, but also a work to be worked. Now, the first we find again in the ethics of the counterfeit Essenes—which ought not to surprise us at all; since it is surely an easy thing for him who pillages my thoughts *ad libitum* to reproduce a perfect resemblance in his own: <sup>3</sup> but what has become of the second, viz., not the teaching, but the operative working of Christianity? The ethical system is replaced by a stolen system; but what replaces the mysterious *agencies* of the Christian faith? In Essenism we find again a saintly scheme of ethics; but where is the scheme of mediation?

In the Roman church, there have been some theologians who have also seen reason to suspect the romance of "Essenismus." And I am not sure that the knowledge of this fact may not have operated to blunt the suspicions of the Protestant churches. I do not mean that such a fact would have absolutely

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<sup>3</sup> The crime of Josephus in relation to Christianity is the same, in fact, as that of Lauder in respect to Milton. It was easy enough to detect plagiarisms in the "Paradise Lost" from Latin passages fathered upon imaginary writers, when these passages had previously been forged by Lauder himself for the purpose of sustaining such a charge.

deafened Protestant ears to the grounds of suspicion when loudly proclaimed; but it is very likely to have indisposed them towards listening. Meantime, so far as I am acquainted with these Roman Catholic demurs, the difference between *them* and my own is broad. They, without suspecting any subtle, fraudulent purpose, simply recoil from the romantic air of such a statement—which builds up, as with an enchanter's wand, an important sect, such as could not possibly have escaped the notice of Christ and his apostles. I, on the other hand, insist not only upon the revolting incompatibility of such a sect with the absence of all attention to it in the New Testament, but (which is far more important) the incompatibility of such a sect (as a sect elder than Christ) with the originality and heavenly revelation of Christianity. Here is my first point of difference from the Romish objectors. The second is this: not content with exposing the imposture, I go on, and attempt to show in what real circumstances, fraudulently disguised, it might naturally have arisen. In the real circumstances of the Christian church, when struggling with *Jewish* persecution at some period of the generation between the crucifixion and the siege of Jerusalem, arose probably that secret defensive society of Christians which suggested to Josephus his knavish forgery. We must remember that Josephus did not write until *after* the great ruins effected by the siege; that he wrote at Rome, far removed from the criticism of those survivors who could have exposed, or had a motive for exposing, his malicious frauds; and, finally, that he wrote under the patronage of the



Flavian family: by his sycophancy he had won their protection, which would have overawed any Christian whatever from coming forward to unmask him, in the very improbable case of a work so large, costly, and, by its title, merely archaeological, finding its way, at such a period, into the hands of any poor hunted Christian. <sup>4</sup>

2. *THE CAESARS.*—*This, though written hastily, and in a situation where I had no aid from books, is yet far from being what some people have supposed it—a simple recapitulation, or resumé, of the Roman imperial history.* It moves rapidly over the ground, but still with an exploring eye, carried right and left into the deep shades that have gathered so thickly over the one solitary road <sup>5</sup> traversing that part of history. Glimpses of moral truth, or suggestions of what may lead to it; indications of neglected difficulties, and occasionally conjectural solutions of such difficulties,—these are what this essay offers. It was meant as a specimen of fruits, gathered hastily and without effort, by a vagrant but thoughtful mind: through the coercion of its

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<sup>4</sup> It is a significant fact, that Dr. Strauss, whose sceptical spirit, left to its own disinterested motions, would have looked through and through this monstrous fable of Essenism, coolly adopted it, no questions asked, as soon as he perceived the value of it as an argument against Christianity.

<sup>5</sup> "*Solitary road.*"—The reader must remember that, until the seventh century of our era, when Mahometanism arose, there was no *collateral* history. Why there was none, why no Gothic, why no Parthian history, it is for Rome to explain. We tax ourselves, and are taxed by others, with many an imaginary neglect as regards India; but assuredly we cannot be taxed with *that* neglect. No part of our Indian empire, or of its adjacencies, but has occupied the researches of our Oriental scholars.

theme, sometimes it became ambitious; but I did not give to it an ambitious title. Still I felt that the meanest of these suggestions merited a valuation: derelicts they were, not in the sense of things willfully abandoned by my predecessors on that road, but in the sense of things blindly overlooked. And, summing up in one word the pretensions of this particular essay, I will venture to claim for it so much, at least, of originality as ought *not* to have been left open to any body in the nineteenth century.

3. *CICERO*.—*This is not, as might be imagined, any literary valuation of Cicero; it is a new reading of Roman history in the most dreadful and comprehensive of her convulsions, in that final stage of her transmutations to which Cicero was himself a party—and, as I maintain, a most selfish and unpatriotic party. He was governed in one half by his own private interest as a novus homo dependent upon a wicked oligarchy, and in the other half by his blind hatred of Caesar; the grandeur of whose nature he could not comprehend, and the real patriotism of whose policy could never be appreciated by one bribed to a selfish course. The great mob of historians have but one way of constructing the great events of this era—they succeed to it as to an inheritance, and chiefly under the misleading of that prestige which is attached to the name of Cicero; on which account it was that I gave this title to my essay. Seven years after it was published, this essay, slight and imperfectly developed as is the exposition of its parts, began to receive some public countenance.*

I was going on to abstract the principle involved in some other

essays. But I forbear. These specimens are sufficient for the purpose of informing the reader that I do not write without a thoughtful consideration of my subject; and also, that to think reasonably upon any question has never been allowed by me as a sufficient ground for writing upon it, unless I believed myself able to offer some considerable novelty. Generally I claim (not arrogantly, but with firmness) the merit of rectification applied to absolute errors or to injurious limitations of the truth.

Finally, as a third class, and, in virtue of their aim, as a far higher class of compositions included in the American collection, I rank *The Confessions of an Opium Eater*, and also (but more emphatically) the *Suspiria de Profundis*. On these, as modes of impassioned prose ranging under no precedents that I am aware of in any literature, it is much more difficult to speak justly, whether in a hostile or a friendly character. As yet, neither of these two works has ever received the least degree of that correction and pruning which both require so extensively; and of the *Suspiria*, not more than perhaps one third has yet been printed. When both have been fully revised, I shall feel myself entitled to ask for a more determinate adjudication on their claims as works of art. At present, I feel authorized to make haughtier pretensions in right of their *conception* than I shall venture to do, under the peril of being supposed to characterize their *execution*. Two remarks only I shall address to the equity of my reader. First, I desire to remind him of the perilous difficulty besieging all attempts to clothe in words

the visionary scenes derived from the world of dreams, where a single false note, a single word in a wrong key, ruins the whole music; and, secondly, I desire him to consider the utter sterility of universal literature in this one department of impassioned prose; which certainly argues some singular difficulty suggesting a singular duty of indulgence in criticizing any attempt that even imperfectly succeeds. The sole Confessions, belonging to past times, that have at all succeeded in engaging the attention of men, are those of St. Augustine and of Rousseau. The very idea of breathing a record of human passion, not into the ear of the random crowd, but of the saintly confessional, argues an impassioned theme. Impassioned, therefore, should be the tenor of the composition. Now, in St. Augustine's Confessions is found one most impassioned passage, viz., the lamentation for the death of his youthful friend in the fourth book; one, and no more. Further there is nothing. In Rousseau there is not even so much. In the whole work there is nothing grandly affecting but the character and the inexplicable misery of the writer.

Meantime, by what accident, so foreign to my nature, do I find myself laying foundations towards a higher valuation of my own workmanship? O reader, I have been talking idly. I care not for any valuation that depends upon comparison with others. Place me where you will on the scale of comparison: only suffer me, though standing lowest in your catalogue, to rejoice in the recollection of letters expressing the most fervid interest in particular passages or scenes of the *Confessions*, and, by rebound

from *them*, an interest in their author: suffer me also to anticipate that, on the publication of some parts yet in arrear of the *Suspiria*, you yourself may possibly write a letter to me, protesting that your disapprobation is just where it was, but nevertheless that you are disposed to shake hands with me—by way of proof that you like me better than I deserve.

# AUTOBIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES

## CHAPTER I.

### THE AFFLICTION OF CHILDHOOD

About the close of my sixth year, suddenly the first chapter of my life came to a violent termination; that chapter which, even within the gates of recovered paradise, might merit a remembrance. "*Life is finished!*" was the secret misgiving of my heart; for the heart of infancy is as apprehensive as that of maturest wisdom in relation to any capital wound inflicted on the happiness. "*Life is finished! Finished it is!*" was the hidden meaning that, half unconsciously to myself, lurked within my sighs; and, as bells heard from a distance on a summer evening seem charged at times with an articulate form of words, some monitory message, that rolls round unceasingly, even so for me some noiseless and subterraneous voice seemed to chant continually a secret word, made audible only to my own heart—that "now is the blossoming of life withered forever." Not that such words formed themselves vocally within my ear, or issued audibly from my lips; but such a whisper stole silently to my heart. Yet in what sense could *that* be true? For an infant not more than six years old, was it possible that the promises of

life had been really blighted, or its golden pleasures exhausted? Had I seen Rome? Had I read Milton? Had I heard Mozart? No. St. Peter's, the "Paradise Lost," the divine melodies of "Don Giovanni," all alike were as yet unrevealed to me, and not more through the accidents of my position than through the necessity of my yet imperfect sensibilities. Raptures there might be in arrear; but raptures are modes of *troubled* pleasure. The peace, the rest, the central security which belong to love that is past all understanding,—these could return no more. Such a love, so unfathomable,—such a peace, so unvexed by storms, or the fear of storms,—had brooded over those four latter years of my infancy, which brought me into special relations to my elder sister; she being at this period three years older than myself. The circumstances which attended the sudden dissolution of this most tender connection I will here rehearse. And, that I may do so more intelligibly, I will first describe that serene and sequestered position which we occupied in life. <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> As occasions arise in these Sketches, when, merely for the purposes of intelligibility, it becomes requisite to call into notice such personal distinctions in my family as otherwise might be unimportant, I here record the entire list of my brothers and sisters, according to their order of succession; and Miltonically I include myself; having surely as much logical right to count myself in the series of my own brothers as Milton could have to pronounce Adam the goodliest of his own sons. First and last, we counted as eight children, viz., four brothers and four sisters, though never counting more than six living at once, viz., 1. *William*, older than myself by more than five years; 2. *Elizabeth*; 3. *Jane*, who died in her fourth year; 4. *Mary*; 5. myself, certainly not the goodliest man of men since born my brothers; 6. *Richard*, known to us all by the household name of *Pink*, who in his after years tilted up and down what might then be called his Britannic majesty's oceans (viz., the Atlantic and Pacific) in the quality

Any expression of personal vanity, intruding upon impassioned records, is fatal to their effect—as being incompatible with that absorption of spirit and that self-oblivion in which only deep passion originates or can find a genial home. It would, therefore, to myself be exceedingly painful that even a shadow, or so much as a *seeming* expression of that tendency, should creep into these reminiscences. And yet, on the other hand, it is so impossible, without laying an injurious restraint upon the natural movement of such a narrative, to prevent oblique gleams reaching the reader from such circumstances of luxury or aristocratic elegance as surrounded my childhood, that on all accounts I think it better to tell him, from the first, with the simplicity of truth, in what order of society my family moved at the time from which this preliminary narrative is dated. Otherwise it might happen that, merely by reporting faithfully the facts of this early experience, I could hardly prevent the reader from receiving an impression as of some higher rank than did really belong to my family. And this impression might seem to have been designedly insinuated by myself.

My father was a merchant; not in the sense of Scotland, where it means a retail dealer, one, for instance, who sells groceries in a cellar, but in the English sense, a sense rigorously exclusive; that is, he was a man engaged in *foreign* commerce, and no

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of midshipman, until Waterloo in one day put an extinguisher on that whole generation of midshipmen, by extinguishing all further call for their services; 7. a second *Jane*; 8. *Henry*, a posthumous child, who belonged to Brazennose College, Oxford, and died about his twenty-sixth year.



other; therefore, in *wholesale* commerce, and no other—which last limitation of the idea is important, because it brings him within the benefit of Cicero's condescending distinction <sup>7</sup> as one who ought to be despised certainly, but not too intensely to be despised even by a Roman senator. He—this imperfectly despicable man—died at an early age, and very soon after the incidents recorded in this chapter, leaving to his family, then consisting of a wife and six children, an unburdened estate producing exactly sixteen hundred pounds a year. Naturally, therefore, at the date of my narrative,—whilst he was still living,—he had an income very much larger, from the addition of current commercial profits. Now, to any man who is acquainted with commercial life as it exists in England, it will readily occur that in an opulent English family of that class—opulent, though not emphatically *rich* in a mercantile estimate—the domestic economy is pretty sure to move upon a scale of liberality altogether unknown amongst the corresponding orders in foreign nations. The establishment of servants, for instance, in such houses, measured even *numerically* against those establishments in other nations, would somewhat surprise the foreign appraiser, simply as interpreting the relative station in society occupied by the English merchant. But this same establishment, when measured by the quality and amount of the provision made for its comfort and even elegant accommodation, would fill him

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<sup>7</sup> Cicero, in a well-known passage of his "Ethics", speaks of trade as irredeemably base, if petty, but as not so absolutely felonious if wholesale.

with twofold astonishment, as interpreting equally the social valuation of the English merchant, and also the social valuation of the English servant; for, in the truest sense, England is the paradise of household servants. Liberal housekeeping, in fact, as extending itself to the meanest servants, and the disdain of petty parsimonies, are peculiar to England. And in this respect the families of English merchants, as a class, far outrun the scale of expenditure prevalent, not only amongst the corresponding bodies of continental nations, but even amongst the poorer sections of our own nobility—though confessedly the most splendid in Europe; a fact which, since the period of my infancy, I have had many personal opportunities for verifying both in England and in Ireland. From this peculiar anomaly, affecting the domestic economy of English merchants, there arises a disturbance upon the usual scale for measuring the relations of rank. The equation, so to speak, between rank and the ordinary expressions of rank, which usually runs parallel to the graduations of expenditure, is here interrupted and confounded, so that one rank would be collected from the name of the occupation, and another rank, much higher, from the splendor of the domestic *ménage*. I warn the reader, therefore, (or, rather, my explanation has already warned him,) that he is not to infer, from any casual indications of luxury or elegance, a corresponding elevation of rank.

We, the children of the house, stood, in fact, upon the very happiest tier in the social scaffolding for all good influences.

The prayer of Agur—"Give me neither poverty nor riches"—was realized for us. That blessing we had, being neither too high nor too low. High enough we were to see models of good manners, of self-respect, and of simple dignity; obscure enough to be left in the sweetest of solitudes. Amply furnished with all the nobler benefits of wealth, with *extra* means of health, of intellectual culture, and of elegant enjoyment, on the other hand, we knew nothing of its social distinctions. Not depressed by the consciousness of privations too sordid, not tempted into restlessness by the consciousness of privileges too aspiring, we had no motives for shame, we had none for pride. Grateful also to this hour I am, that, amidst luxuries in all things else, we were trained to a Spartan simplicity of diet—that we fared, in fact, very much less sumptuously than the servants. And if (after the model of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius) I should return thanks to Providence for all the separate blessings of my early situation, these four I would single out as worthy of special commemoration—that I lived in a rustic solitude; that this solitude was in England; that my infant feelings were moulded by the gentlest of sisters, and not by horrid, pugilistic brothers; finally, that I and they were dutiful and loving members of a pure, holy, and magnificent church.

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The earliest incidents in my life, which left stings in my

memory so as to be remembered at this day, were two, and both before I could have completed my second year; namely, 1st, a remarkable dream of terrific grandeur about a favorite nurse, which is interesting to myself for this reason—that it demonstrates my dreaming tendencies to have been constitutional, and not dependent upon laudanum; <sup>8</sup> and, 2dly, the fact of having connected a profound sense of pathos with the reappearance, very early in the spring, of some crocuses. This I mention as inexplicable: for such annual resurrections of plants and flowers affect us only as memorials, or suggestions of some higher change, and therefore in connection with the idea of death; yet of death I could, at that time, have had no experience whatever.

This, however, I was speedily to acquire. My two eldest sisters—eldest of three *then* living, and also elder than myself—were summoned to an early death. The first who died was Jane, about two years older than myself. She was three and a half, I one and a half, more or less by some trifle that I do not recollect. But death was then scarcely intelligible to me, and I could not so properly be said to suffer sorrow as a sad perplexity. There was another death in the house about the same time, namely, of a maternal

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<sup>8</sup> It is true that in those days *paregoric elixir* was occasionally given to children in colds; and in this medicine there is a small proportion of laudanum. But no medicine was ever administered to any member of our nursery except under medical sanction; and this, assuredly, would not have been obtained to the exhibition of laudanum in a case such as mine. For I was then not more than twenty-one months old: at which age the action of opium is capricious, and therefore perilous.

grandmother; but, as she had come to us for the express purpose of dying in her daughter's society, and from illness had lived perfectly secluded, our nursery circle knew her but little, and were certainly more affected by the death (which I witnessed) of a beautiful bird, viz., a kingfisher, which had been injured by an accident. With my sister Jane's death (though otherwise, as I have said, less sorrowful than perplexing) there was, however, connected an incident which made a most fearful impression upon myself, deepening my tendencies to thoughtfulness and abstraction beyond what would seem credible for my years. If there was one thing in this world from which, more than from any other, nature had forced me to revolt, it was brutality and violence. Now, a whisper arose in the family that a female servant, who by accident was drawn off from her proper duties to attend my sister Jane for a day or two, had on one occasion treated her harshly, if not brutally; and as this ill treatment happened within three or four days of her death, so that the occasion of it must have been some fretfulness in the poor child caused by her sufferings, naturally there was a sense of awe and indignation diffused through the family. I believe the story never reached my mother, and possibly it was exaggerated; but upon me the effect was terrific. I did not often see the person charged with this cruelty; but, when I did, my eyes sought the ground; nor could I have borne to look her in the face; not, however, in any spirit that could be called anger. The feeling which fell upon me was a shuddering horror, as upon a first glimpse of the truth that I

was in a world of evil and strife. Though born in a large town, (the town of Manchester, even then amongst the largest of the island,) I had passed the whole of my childhood, except for the few earliest weeks, in a rural seclusion. With three innocent little sisters for playmates, sleeping always amongst them, and shut up forever in a silent garden from all knowledge of poverty, or oppression, or outrage, I had not suspected until this moment the true complexion of the world in which myself and my sisters were living. Henceforward the character of my thoughts changed greatly; for so *representative* are some acts, that one single case of the class is sufficient to throw open before you the whole theatre of possibilities in that direction. I never heard that the woman accused of this cruelty took it at all to heart, even after the event which so immediately succeeded had reflected upon it a more painful emphasis. But for myself, that incident had a lasting revolutionary power in coloring my estimate of life.

So passed away from earth one of those three sisters that made up my nursery playmates; and so did my acquaintance (if such it could be called) commence with mortality. Yet, in fact, I knew little more of mortality than that Jane had disappeared. She had gone away; but perhaps she would come back. Happy interval of heaven-born ignorance! Gracious immunity of infancy from sorrow disproportioned to its strength! I was sad for Jane's absence. But still in my heart I trusted that she would come again. Summer and winter came again—crocuses and roses; why not little Jane?

Thus easily was healed, then, the first wound in my infant heart. Not so the second. For thou, dear, noble Elizabeth, around whose ample brow, as often as thy sweet countenance rises upon the darkness, I fancy a *tiara* of light or a gleaming aureola <sup>9</sup> in token of thy premature intellectual grandeur,—thou whose head, for its superb developments, was the astonishment of science,<sup>10</sup>—thou next, but after an interval of happy years, thou also wert summoned away from our nursery; and the night, which for me gathered upon that event, ran after my steps far into life; and perhaps at this day I resemble little for good or for ill

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<sup>9</sup> "*Aureola*."—The *aureola* is the name given in the "Legends of the Christian Saints" to that golden diadem or circlet of supernatural light (that *glory*, as it is commonly called in English) which, amongst the great masters of painting in Italy, surrounded the heads of Christ and of distinguished saints.

<sup>10</sup> "*The astonishment of science*."—Her medical attendants were Dr. Percival, a well-known literary physician, who had been a correspondent of Condorcet, D'Alembert, &c., and Mr. Charles White, the most distinguished surgeon at that time in the north of England. It was he who pronounced her head to be the finest in its development of any that he had ever seen—an assertion which, to my own knowledge, he repeated in after years, and with enthusiasm. That he had some acquaintance with the subject may be presumed from this, that, at so early a stage of such inquiries, he had published a work on human craniology, supported by measurement of heads selected from all varieties of the human species. Meantime, as it would grieve me that any trait of what might seem vanity should creep into this record, I will admit that my sister died of hydrocephalus; and it has been often supposed that the premature expansion of the intellect in cases of that class is altogether morbid—forced on, in fact, by the mere stimulation of the disease. I would, however, suggest, as a possibility, the very opposite order of relation between the disease and the intellectual manifestations. Not the disease may always have caused the preternatural growth of the intellect; but, inversely, this growth of the intellect coming on spontaneously, and outrunning the capacities of the physical structure, may have caused the disease.

that which else I should have been. Pillar of fire that didst go before me to guide and to quicken,—pillar of darkness, when thy countenance was turned away to God, that didst too truly reveal to my dawning fears the secret shadow of death,—by what mysterious gravitation was it that *my* heart had been drawn to thine? Could a child, six years old, place any special value upon intellectual forwardness? Serene and capacious as my sister's mind appeared to me upon after review, was *that* a charm for stealing away the heart of an infant? O, no! I think of it *now* with interest, because it lends, in a stranger's ear, some justification to the excess of my fondness. But then it was lost upon me; or, if not lost, was perceived only through its effects. Hadst thou been an idiot, my sister, not the less I must have loved thee, having that capacious heart—overflowing, even as mine overflowed, with tenderness; stung, even as mine was stung, by the necessity of loving and being loved. This it was which crowned thee with beauty and power.

"Love, the holy sense,

Best gift of God, in thee was most intense."

That lamp of paradise was, for myself, kindled by reflection from the living light which burned so steadfastly in thee; and never but to thee, never again since *thy* departure, had I power or temptation, courage or desire, to utter the feelings which possessed me. For I was the shyest of children; and, at all stages of life, a natural sense of personal dignity held me back from exposing the least ray of feelings which I was not encouraged



*wholly* to reveal.

It is needless to pursue, circumstantially, the course of that sickness which carried off my leader and companion. She (according to my recollection at this moment) was just as near to nine years as I to six. And perhaps this natural precedency in authority of years and judgment, united to the tender humility with which she declined to assert it, had been amongst the fascinations of her presence. It was upon a Sunday evening, if such conjectures can be trusted, that the spark of fatal fire fell upon that train of predispositions to a brain complaint which had hitherto slumbered within her. She had been permitted to drink tea at the house of a laboring man, the father of a favorite female servant. The sun had set when she returned, in the company of this servant, through meadows reeking with exhalations after a fervent day. From that time she sickened. In such circumstances, a child, as young as myself, feels no anxieties. Looking upon medical men as people privileged, and naturally commissioned, to make war upon pain and sickness, I never had a misgiving about the result. I grieved, indeed, that my sister should lie in bed; I grieved still more to hear her moan. But all this appeared to me no more than as a night of trouble, on which the dawn would soon arise. O moment of darkness and delirium, when the elder nurse awakened me from that delusion, and launched God's thunderbolt at my heart in the assurance that my sister **MUST** die! Rightly it is said of utter, utter misery, that it "cannot be

*remembered.*" <sup>11</sup> Itself, as a rememberable thing, is swallowed up in its own chaos. Blank anarchy and confusion of mind fell upon me. Deaf and blind I was, as I reeled under the revelation. I wish not to recall the circumstances of that time, when *my* agony was at its height, and hers, in another sense, was approaching. Enough it is to say that all was soon over; and, the morning of that day had at last arrived which looked down upon her innocent face, sleeping the sleep from which there is no awaking, and upon me sorrowing the sorrow for which there is no consolation.

On the day after my sister's death, whilst the sweet temple of her brain was yet unviolated by human scrutiny, I formed my own scheme for seeing her once more. Not for the world would I have made this known, nor have suffered a witness to accompany me. I had never heard of feelings that take the name of "sentimental," nor dreamed of such a possibility. But grief, even in a child, hates the light, and shrinks from human eyes. The house was large enough to have two staircases; and by one of these I knew that about midday, when all would be quiet, (for the servants dined at one o'clock,) I could steal up into her chamber. I imagine that it was about an hour after high noon when I reached the chamber door: it was locked, but the key was not taken away. Entering, I closed the door so softly, that, although it opened upon a hall which ascended through all the stories, no echo ran along the silent walls. Then, turning round, I sought my sister's face. But

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<sup>11</sup> "I stood in unimaginable trance And agony which cannot be remembered." *Speech of Alhadra*, in Coleridge's *Remorse*

the bed had been moved, and the back was now turned towards myself. Nothing met my eyes but one large window, wide open, through which the sun of midsummer, at midday, was showering down torrents of splendor. The weather was dry, the sky was cloudless, the blue depths seemed the express types of infinity, and it was not possible for eye to behold, or for heart to conceive, any symbols more pathetic of life and the glory of life.

Let me pause in approaching a remembrance so affecting for my own mind, to mention, that, in the "Opium Confessions," I endeavored to explain the reason why death, other conditions remaining the same, is more profoundly affecting in summer than in other parts of the year—so far, at least, as it is liable to any modification at all from accidents of scenery or season. The reason, as I there suggested, lies in the antagonism between the tropical redundancy of life in summer and the frozen sterilities of the grave. The summer we see, the grave we haunt with our thoughts; the glory is around us, the darkness is within us; and, the two coming into collision, each exalts the other into stronger relief. But, in my case, there was even a subtler reason why the summer had this intense power of vivifying the spectacle or the thoughts of death. And, recollecting it, I am struck with the truth, that far more of our deepest thoughts and feelings pass to us through perplexed combinations of *concrete* objects, pass to us as *involutés* (if I may coin that word) in compound experiences incapable of being disentangled, than ever reach us *directly*, and in their own abstract shapes. It had happened,

that amongst our vast nursery collection of books was the Bible, illustrated with many pictures. And in long dark evenings, as my three sisters, with myself, sat by the firelight round the *guard*<sup>12</sup> of our nursery, no book was so much in request among us. It ruled us and swayed us as mysteriously as music. Our younger nurse, whom we all loved, would sometimes, according to her simple powers, endeavor to explain what we found obscure. We, the children, were all constitutionally touched with pensiveness: the fitful gloom and sudden lambencies of the room by firelight suited our evening state of feelings; and they suited, also, the divine revelations of power and mysterious beauty which awed us. Above all, the story of a just man,—man, and yet *not* man, real above all things, and yet shadowy above all things,—who had suffered the passion of death in Palestine, slept upon our minds like early dawn upon the waters. The nurse knew and explained to us the chief differences in Oriental climates; and all these differences (as it happens) express themselves, more or less, in varying relations to the great accidents and powers of summer. The cloudless sunlights of Syria— those seemed to argue everlasting summer; the disciples plucking the ears of corn—that *must* be summer; but, above all, the very name of Palm Sunday (a festival in the English church) troubled me like an anthem. "Sunday!" what was *that*? That was the day

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<sup>12</sup> "*The guard*."—I know not whether the word is a local one in this sense. What I mean is a sort of fender, four or five feet high, which locks up the fire from too near an approach on the part of children.

of peace which masked another peace deeper than the heart of man can comprehend. "Palms!" what were they? *That* was an equivocal word; palms, in the sense of trophies, expressed the poms of life; palms, as a product of nature, expressed the poms of summer. Yet still even this explanation does not suffice; it was not merely by the peace and by the summer, by the deep sound of rest below all rest and of ascending glory, that I had been haunted. It was also because Jerusalem stood near to those deep images both in time and in place. The great event of Jerusalem was at hand when Palm Sunday came; and the scene of that Sunday was near in place to Jerusalem. What then was Jerusalem? Did I fancy it to be the *omphalos* (navel) or physical centre of the earth? Why should *that* affect me? Such a pretension had once been made for Jerusalem, and once for a Grecian city; and both pretensions had become ridiculous, as the figure of the planet became known. Yes; but if not of the earth, yet of mortality; for earth's tenant, Jerusalem, had now become the *omphalos* and absolute centre. Yet how? There, on the contrary, it was, as we infants understood, that mortality had been trampled under foot. True; but, for that very reason, there it was that mortality had opened its very gloomiest crater. There it was, indeed, that the human had risen on wings from the grave; but, for that reason, there also it was that the divine had been swallowed up by the abyss; the lesser star could not rise before the greater should submit to eclipse. Summer, therefore, had connected itself with death, not merely as a mode of antagonism,

but also as a phenomenon brought into intricate relations with death by scriptural scenery and events.

Out of this digression, for the purpose of showing how inextricably my feelings and images of death were entangled with those of summer, as connected with Palestine and Jerusalem, let me come back to the bed chamber of my sister. From the gorgeous sunlight I turned around to the corpse. There lay the sweet childish figure; there the angel face; and, as people usually fancy, it was said in the house that no features had suffered any change. Had they not? The forehead, indeed,—the serene and noble forehead,—*that* might be the same; but the frozen eyelids, the darkness that seemed to steal from beneath them, the marble lips, the stiffening hands, laid palm to palm, as if repeating the supplications of closing anguish,—could these be mistaken for life? Had it been so, wherefore did I not spring to those heavenly lips with tears and never-ending kisses? But so it was *not*. I stood checked for a moment; awe, not fear, fell upon me; and, whilst I stood, a solemn wind began to blow—the saddest that ear ever heard. It was a wind that might have swept the fields of mortality for a thousand centuries. Many times since, upon summer days, when the sun is about the hottest, I have remarked the same wind arising and uttering the same hollow, solemn, Memnonian,<sup>13</sup> but

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<sup>13</sup> "*Memnonian*."—For the sake of many readers, whose hearts may go along earnestly with a record of infant sorrow, but whose course of life has not allowed them much leisure for study, I pause to explain—that the head of Memnon, in the British Museum, that sublime head which wears upon its lips a smile coextensive with all time and all space, an Aeonian smile of gracious love and Pan-like mystery, the most

saintly swell: it is in this world the one great *audible* symbol of eternity. And three times in my life have I happened to hear the same sound in the same circumstances —namely, when standing between an open window and a dead body on a summer day.

Instantly, when my ear caught this vast Aeolian intonation, when my eye filled with the golden fulness of life, the pomps of the heavens above, or the glory of the flowers below, and turning when it settled upon the frost which overspread my sister's face,

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diffusive and pathetically divine that the hand of man has created, is represented, on the authority of ancient traditions, to have uttered at sunrise, or soon after as the sun's rays had accumulated heat enough to rarefy the air within certain cavities in the bust, a solemn and dirge-like series of intonations; the simple explanation being, in its general outline, this— that sonorous currents of air were produced by causing chambers of cold and heavy air to press upon other collections of air, warmed, and therefore rarefied, and therefore yielding readily to the pressure of heavier air. Currents being thus established by artificial arrangements of tubes, a certain succession of notes could be concerted and sustained. Near the Red Sea lies a chain of sand hills, which, by a natural system of grooves inosculating with each other, become vocal under changing circumstances in the position of the sun, &c. I knew a boy who, upon observing steadily, and reflecting upon a phenomenon that met him in his daily experience, viz., that tubes, through which a stream of water was passing, gave out a very different sound according to the varying slenderness or fulness of the current, devised an instrument that yielded a rude hydraulic gamut of sounds; and, indeed, upon this simple phenomenon is founded the use and power of the stethoscope. For exactly as a thin thread of water, trickling through a leaden tube, yields a stridulous and plaintive sound compared with the full volume of sound corresponding to the full volume of water, on parity of principles, nobody will doubt that the current of blood pouring through the tubes of the human frame will utter to the learned ear, when armed with the stethoscope, an elaborate gamut or compass of music recording the ravages of disease, or the glorious plenitudes of health, as faithfully as the cavities within this ancient Memnonian bust reported this mighty event of sunrise to the rejoicing world of light and life; or, again, under the sad passion of the dying day, uttered the sweet requiem that belonged to its departure.

instantly a trance fell upon me. A vault seemed to open in the zenith of the far blue sky, a shaft which ran up forever. I, in spirit, rose as if on billows that also ran up the shaft forever; and the billows seemed to pursue the throne of God; but *that* also ran before us and fled away continually. The flight and the pursuit seemed to go on forever and ever. Frost gathering frost, some Sarsar wind of death, seemed to repel me; some mighty relation between God and death dimly struggled to evolve itself from the dreadful antagonism between them; shadowy meanings even yet continued to exercise and torment, in dreams, the deciphering oracle within me. I slept—for how long I cannot say: slowly I recovered my self-possession; and, when I woke, found myself standing, as before, close to my sister's bed.

I have reason to believe that a *very* long interval had elapsed during this wandering or suspension of my perfect mind. When I returned to myself, there was a foot (or I fancied so) on the stairs. I was alarmed; for, if any body had detected me, means would have been taken to prevent my coming again. Hastily, therefore, I kissed the lips that I should kiss no more, and slunk, like a guilty thing, with stealthy steps from the room. Thus perished the vision, loveliest amongst all the shows which earth has revealed to me; thus mutilated was the parting which should have lasted forever; tainted thus with fear was that farewell sacred to love and grief, to perfect love and to grief that could not be healed.

O Abasuerus, everlasting Jew! <sup>14</sup> fable or not a fable, thou,

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<sup>14</sup> "*Everlasting Jew.*"—*Der ewige Jude*—which is the common German expression



when first starting on thy endless pilgrimage of woe,—thou, when first flying through the gates of Jerusalem, and vainly yearning to leave the pursuing curse behind thee,—couldst not more certainly in the words of Christ have read thy doom of endless sorrow, than I when passing forever from my sister's room. The worm was at my heart; and, I may say, the worm that could not die. Man is doubtless *one* by some subtle *nexus*, some system of links, that we cannot perceive, extending from the newborn infant to the superannuated dotard; but, as regards many affections and passions incident to his nature at different stages, he is *not* one, but an intermitting creature, ending and beginning anew: the unity of man, in this respect, is coextensive only with the particular stage to which the passion belongs. Some passions, as that of sexual love, are celestial by one half of their origin, animal and earthly by the other half. These will not survive their own appropriate stage. But love, which is *altogether* holy, like that between two children, is privileged to revisit by glimpses the silence and the darkness of declining years; and, possibly, this final experience in my sister's bed room, or some other in which her innocence was concerned, may rise again for me to illuminate the clouds of death.

On the day following this which I have recorded came a body of medical men to examine the brain and the particular nature of the complaint, for in some of its symptoms it had shown perplexing anomalies. An hour after the strangers had

withdrawn, I crept again to the room; but the door was now locked, the key had been taken away, and I was shut out forever.

Then came the funeral. I, in the ceremonial character of *mourner*, was carried thither. I was put into a carriage with some gentlemen whom I did not know. They were kind and attentive to me; but naturally they talked of things disconnected with the occasion, and their conversation was a torment. At the church, I was told to hold a white handkerchief to my eyes. Empty hypocrisy! What need had *he* of masks or mockeries, whose heart died within him at every word that was uttered? During that part of the service which passed within the church, I made an effort to attend; but I sank back continually into my own solitary darkness, and I heard little consciously, except some fugitive strains from the sublime chapter of St. Paul, which in England is always read at burials.<sup>15</sup>

Lastly came that magnificent liturgical service which the English church performs at the side of the grave; for this church does not forsake her dead so long as they continue in the upper air, but waits for her last "sweet and solemn<sup>16</sup> farewell" at the side of the grave. There is exposed once again, and for the last time, the coffin. All eyes survey the record of name, of sex, of

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<sup>15</sup> First Epistle to Corinthians, chap. xv., beginning at ver. 20.

<sup>16</sup> This beautiful expression, I am pretty certain, must belong to Mrs. Trollope; I read it, probably, in a tale of hers connected with the backwoods of America, where the absence of such a farewell must unspeakably aggravate the gloom at any rate belonging to a household separation of that eternal character occurring amongst the shadows of those mighty forests.

age, and the day of departure from earth—records how shadowy! and dropped into darkness as if messages addressed to worms. Almost at the very last comes the symbolic ritual, tearing and shattering the heart with volleying discharges, peal after peal, from the final artillery of woe. The coffin is lowered into its home; it has disappeared from all eyes but those that look down into the abyss of the grave. The sacristan stands ready, with his shovel of earth and stones. The priest's voice is heard once more,—*earth to earth*,—and immediately the dread rattle ascends from the lid of the coffin; *ashes to ashes*—and again the killing sound is heard; *dust to dust*—and the farewell volley announces that the grave, the coffin, the face are sealed up forever and ever.

Grief! thou art classed amongst the depressing passions. And true it is that thou humblest to the dust, but also thou exaltest to the clouds. Thou shakest as with ague, but also thou steadiest like frost. Thou sickenest the heart, but also thou healest its infirmities. Among the very foremost of mine was morbid sensibility to shame. And, ten years afterwards, I used to throw my self-reproaches with regard to that infirmity into this shape, viz., that if I were summoned to seek aid for a perishing fellow-creature, and that I could obtain that aid only by facing a vast company of critical or sneering faces, I might, perhaps, shrink basely from the duty. It is true that no such case had ever actually occurred; so that it was a mere romance of casuistry to tax myself with cowardice so shocking. But, to feel a doubt, was to feel condemnation; and the crime that *might* have been was, in my

eyes, the crime that *had* been. Now, however, all was changed; and for any thing which regarded my sister's memory, in one hour I received a new heart. Once in Westmoreland I saw a case resembling it. I saw a ewe suddenly put off and abjure her own nature, in a service of love—yes, slough it as completely as ever serpent sloughed his skin. Her lamb had fallen into a deep trench, from which all escape was hopeless without the aid of man. And to a man she advanced, bleating clamorously, until he followed her and rescued her beloved. Not less was the change in myself. Fifty thousand sneering faces would not have troubled me *now* in any office of tenderness to my sister's memory. Ten legions would not have repelled me from seeking her, if there had been a chance that she could be found. Mockery! it was lost upon me. Laughter! I valued it not. And when I was taunted insultingly with "my girlish tears," that word "*girlish*" had no sting for me, except as a verbal echo to the one eternal thought of my heart—that a girl was the sweetest thing which I, in my short life, had known; that a girl it was who had crowned the earth with beauty, and had opened to my thirst fountains of pure celestial love, from which, in this world, I was to drink no more.

Now began to unfold themselves the consolations of solitude, those consolations which only I was destined to taste; now, therefore, began to open upon me those fascinations of solitude, which, when acting as a co-agency with unresisted grief, end in the paradoxical result of making out of grief itself a luxury; such a luxury as finally becomes a snare, overhanging life itself, and

the energies of life, with growing menaces. All deep feelings of a *chronic* class agree in this, that they seek for solitude, and are fed by solitude. Deep grief, deep love, how naturally do these ally themselves with religious feeling! and all three—love, grief, religion—are haunters of solitary places. Love, grief, and the mystery of devotion,—what were these without solitude? All day long, when it was not impossible for me to do so, I sought the most silent and sequestered nooks in the grounds about the house or in the neighboring fields. The awful stillness oftentimes of summer noons, when no winds were abroad, the appealing silence of gray or misty afternoons,—these were fascinations as of witchcraft. Into the woods, into the desert air, I gazed, as if some comfort lay hid in *them*. I wearied the heavens with my inquest of beseeching looks. Obstinate I tormented the blue depths with my scrutiny, sweeping them forever with my eyes, and searching them for one angelic face that might, perhaps, have permission to reveal itself for a moment.

At this time, and under this impulse of rapacious grief, that grasped at what it could not obtain, the faculty of shaping images in the distance out of slight elements, and grouping them after the yearnings of the heart, grew upon me in morbid excess. And I recall at the present moment one instance of that sort, which may show how merely shadows, or a gleam of brightness, or nothing at all, could furnish a sufficient basis for this creative faculty.

On Sunday mornings I went with the rest of my family to church: it was a church on the ancient model of England, having

aisles, galleries, <sup>17</sup> organ, all things ancient and venerable, and the proportions majestic. Here, whilst the congregation knelt through the long litany, as often as we came to that passage, so beautiful amongst many that are so, where God is supplicated on behalf of "all sick persons and young children," and that he would "show his pity upon all prisoners and captives," I wept in secret; and raising my streaming eyes to the upper windows of the galleries, saw, on days when the sun was shining, a spectacle as affecting as ever prophet can have beheld. The sides of the windows were rich with storied glass; through the deep purples and crimsons streamed the golden light; emblazonries of heavenly illumination (from the sun) mingling with the earthly emblazonries (from art and its gorgeous coloring) of what is grandest in man. *There* were the apostles that had trampled upon earth, and the glories of earth, out of celestial love to man. *There* were the martyrs that had borne witness to the truth through flames, through torments, and through armies of fierce, insulting faces. *There* were the saints who, under intolerable pangs, had glorified God by meek submission to his will. And all the time, whilst this tumult of sublime memorials held on as the deep chords from some accompaniment in the bass, I saw through the wide central field of the window, where the glass was *uncolored*, white, fleecy clouds sailing over the azure depths of the sky: were

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<sup>17</sup> "Galleries."—These, though condemned on some grounds by the restorers of authentic church architecture, have, nevertheless, this one advantage—that, when the *height* of a church is that dimension which most of all expresses its sacred character, galleries expound and interpret that height.

it but a fragment or a hint of such a cloud, immediately under the flash of my sorrow-haunted eye, it grew and shaped itself into visions of beds with white lawny curtains; and in the beds lay sick children, dying children, that were tossing in anguish, and weeping clamorously for death. God, for some mysterious reason, could not suddenly release them from their pain; but he suffered the beds, as it seemed, to rise slowly through the clouds; slowly the beds ascended into the chambers of the air; slowly, also, his arms descended from the heavens, that he and his young children, whom in Palestine, once and forever, he had blessed, though they *must* pass slowly through the dreadful chasm of separation, might yet meet the sooner. These visions were self-sustained. These visions needed not that any sound should speak to me, or music mould my feelings. The hint from the litany, the fragment from the clouds,—those and the storied windows were sufficient. But not the less the blare of the tumultuous organ wrought its own separate creations. And oftentimes in anthems, when the mighty instrument threw its vast columns of sound, fierce yet melodious, over the voices of the choir,—high in arches, when it seemed to rise, surmounting and overriding the strife of the vocal parts, and gathering by strong coercion the total storm into unity,—sometimes I seemed to rise and walk triumphantly upon those clouds which, but a moment before, I had looked up to as mementoes of prostrate sorrow; yes, sometimes under the transfigurations of music, felt of grief itself as of a fiery chariot for mounting victoriously above the

causes of grief.

God speaks to children, also, in dreams and by the oracles that lurk in darkness. But in solitude, above all things, when made vocal to the meditative heart by the truths and services of a national church, God holds with children "communion undisturbed." Solitude, though it may be silent as light, is, like light, the mightiest of agencies; for solitude is essential to man. All men come into this world *alone*; all leave it *alone*. Even a little child has a dread, whispering consciousness, that, if he should be summoned to travel into God's presence, no gentle nurse will be allowed to lead him by the hand, nor mother to carry him in her arms, nor little sister to share his trepidations. King and priest, warrior and maiden, philosopher and child, all must walk those mighty galleries alone. The solitude, therefore, which in this world appalls or fascinates a child's heart, is but the echo of a far deeper solitude, through which already he has passed, and of another solitude, deeper still, through which he *has* to pass: reflex of one solitude—prefiguration of another.

O burden of solitude, that cleavest to man through every stage of his being! in his birth, which *has* been—in his life, which *is*—in his death, which *shall* be—mighty and essential solitude! that wast, and art, and art to be; thou broodest, like the Spirit of God moving upon the surface of the deeps, over every heart that sleeps in the nurseries of Christendom. Like the vast laboratory of the air, which, seeming to be nothing, or less than the shadow of a shade, hides within itself the principles of all



things, solitude for the meditating child is the Agrippa's mirror of the unseen universe. Deep is the solitude of millions who, with hearts welling forth love, have none to love them. Deep is the solitude of those who, under secret griefs, have none to pity them. Deep is the solitude of those who, fighting with doubts or darkness, have none to counsel them. But deeper than the deepest of these solitudes is that which broods over childhood under the passion of sorrow—bringing before it, at intervals, the final solitude which watches for it, and is waiting for it within the gates of death. O mighty and essential solitude, that wast, and art, and art to be, thy kingdom is made perfect in the grave; but even over those that keep watch outside the grave, like myself, an infant of six years old, thou stretchest out a sceptre of fascination.

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## **DREAM ECHOES OF THESE INFANT EXPERIENCES**

[*Notice to the reader.*—The sun, in rising or setting, would produce little effect if he were defrauded of his rays and their infinite reverberations. "Seen through a fog," says Sara Coleridge, the noble daughter of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "the golden, beaming sun looks like a dull orange, or a red

billiard ball."—*Introd. to Biog. Lit.*, p. clxii. And, upon this same analogy, psychological experiences of deep suffering or joy first attain their entire fulness of expression when they are reverberated from dreams. The reader must, therefore, suppose me at Oxford; more than twelve years are gone by; I am in the glory of youth: but I have now first tampered with opium; and now first the agitations of my childhood reopened in strength; now first they swept in upon the brain with power, and the grandeur of recovered life.]

Once again, after twelve years' interval, the nursery of my childhood expanded before me: my sister was moaning in bed; and I was beginning to be restless with fears not intelligible to myself. Once again the elder nurse, but now dilated to colossal proportions, stood as upon some Grecian stage with her uplifted hand, and, like the superb Medea towering amongst her children in the nursery at Corinth,<sup>18</sup> smote me senseless to the ground. Again I am in the chamber with my sister's corpse, again the poms of life rise up in silence, the glory of summer, the Syrian sunlights, the frost of death. Dream forms itself mysteriously within dream; within these Oxford dreams remoulds itself continually the trance in my sister's chamber—the blue heavens, the everlasting vault, the soaring billows, the throne steeped in the thought (but not the sight) of "*Who* might sit thereon;" the flight, the pursuit, the irrecoverable steps of my return to earth. Once more the funeral procession gathers; the

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<sup>18</sup> Euripides.

priest, in his white surplus, stands waiting with a book by the side of an open grave; the sacristan is waiting with his shovel; the coffin has sunk; the *dust to dust* has descended. Again I was in the church on a heavenly Sunday morning. The golden sunlight of God slept amongst the heads of his apostles, his martyrs, his saints; the fragment from the litany, the fragment from the clouds, awoke again the lawny beds that went up to scale the heavens—awoke again the shadowy arms that moved downward to meet them. Once again arose the swell of the anthem, the burst of the hallelujah chorus, the storm, the trampling movement of the choral passion, the agitation of my own trembling sympathy, the tumult of the choir, the wrath of the organ. Once more I, that wallowed in the dust, became he that rose up to the clouds. And now all was bound up into unity; the first state and the last were melted into each other as in some sunny glorifying haze. For high in heaven hovered a gleaming host of faces, veiled with wings, around the pillows of the dying children. And such beings sympathize equally with sorrow that grovels and with sorrow that soars. Such beings pity alike the children that are languishing in death, and the children that live only to languish in tears.

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## DREAM ECHOES FIFTY YEARS LATER

[In this instance the echoes, that rendered back the infant experience, might be interpreted by the reader as connected with a *real* ascent of the Brocken; which was not the case. It was an ascent through all its circumstances executed in dreams, which, under advanced stages in the development of opium, repeat with marvellous accuracy the longest succession of phenomena derived either from reading or from actual experience. That softening and spiritualizing haze which belongs at any rate to the action of dreams, and to the transfigurings worked upon troubled remembrances by retrospects so vast as those of fifty years, was in this instance greatly aided to my own feelings by the alliance with the ancient phantom of the forest mountain in North Germany. The playfulness of the scene is the very evoker of the solemn remembrances that lie hidden below. The half-sportive interlusory revealings of the symbolic tend to the same effect. One part of the effect from the symbolic is dependent upon the great catholic principle of the *Idem in alio*. The symbol restores the theme, but under new combinations of form or coloring; gives back, but changes; restores, but idealizes.]

Ascend with me on this dazzling Whitsunday the Brocken of North Germany. The dawn opened in cloudless beauty; it is a dawn of bridal June; but, as the hours advanced, her youngest sister April, that sometimes cares little for racing across both frontiers of May,—the rearward frontier, and the vanward frontier,—frets the bridal lady's sunny temper with sallies of wheeling and careering showers, flying and pursuing, opening and closing, hiding and restoring. On such a morning, and reaching the summits of the forest mountain about sunrise, we shall have one chance the more for seeing the famous Spectre of the Brocken. <sup>19</sup> Who and what is he? He is a solitary apparition,

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<sup>19</sup> "*Spectre of the Brocken*."—This very striking phenomenon has been continually described by writers, both German and English, for the last fifty years. Many readers, however, will not have met with these descriptions; and on *their* account I add a few words in explanation, referring them for the best scientific comment on the case to Sir David Brewster's "Natural Magic." The spectre takes the shape of a human figure, or, if the visitors are more than one, then the spectres multiply; they arrange themselves on the blue ground of the sky, or the dark ground of any clouds that may be in the right quarter, or perhaps they are strongly relieved against a curtain of rock, at a distance of some miles, and always exhibiting gigantic proportions. At first, from the distance and the colossal size, every spectator supposes the appearances to be quite independent of himself. But very soon he is surprised to observe his own motions and gestures mimicked, and wakens to the conviction that the phantom is but a dilated reflection of himself. This Titan amongst the apparitions of earth is exceedingly capricious, vanishing abruptly for reasons best known to himself, and more coy in coming forward than the Lady Echo of Ovid. One reason why he is seen so seldom must be ascribed to the concurrence of conditions under which only the phenomenon can be manifested; the sun must be near to the horizon, (which, of itself, implies a time of day inconvenient to a person starting from a station as distant as Elbingerode;) the spectator must have his back to the sun; and the air must contain some vapor, but *partially* distributed. Coleridge ascended the Brocken on the Whitsunday of 1799, with a party of English

in the sense of loving solitude; else he is not always solitary in his personal manifestations, but, on proper occasions, has been known to unmask a strength quite sufficient to alarm those who had been insulting him.

Now, in order to test the nature of this mysterious apparition, we will try two or three experiments upon him. What we fear, and with some reason, is, that, as he lived so many ages with foul pagan sorcerers, and witnessed so many centuries of dark idolatries, his heart may have been corrupted, and that even now his faith may be wavering or impure. We will try.

Make the sign of the cross, and observe whether he repeats it, (as on Whitsunday<sup>20</sup> he surely ought to do.) Look! he *does* repeat it; but these driving April showers perplex the images, and *that*, perhaps, it is which gives him the air of one who acts reluctantly or evasively. Now, again, the sun shines more brightly, and the showers have all swept off like squadrons of cavalry to the rear. We will try him again.

Pluck an anemone, one of these many anemones which once

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students from Goettingen, but failed to see the phantom; afterwards in England (and under the three same conditions) he saw a much rarer phenomenon, which he described in the following lines:— "Such thou art as when The woodman winding westward up the glen At wintry dawn, when o'er the sheep-track's maze The viewless snow mist weaves a glistening haze, Sees full before him, gliding without tread, An image with a glory round its head; This shade he worships for its golden hues, And makes (not knowing) that which he pursues."

<sup>20</sup> "On Whitsunday."—It is singular, and perhaps owing to the temperature and weather likely to prevail in that early part of summer, that more appearances of the spectre have been witnessed on Whitsunday than on any other day.

was called the sorcerer's flower,<sup>21</sup> and bore a part, perhaps, in this horrid ritual of fear; carry it to that stone which mimics the outline of a heathen altar, and once was called the sorcerer's altar;<sup>22</sup> then, bending your knee, and raising your right hand to God, say, "Father which art in heaven, this lovely anemone, that once glorified the worship of fear, has travelled back into thy fold; this altar, which once reeked with bloody rites to Cortho, has long been rebaptized into thy holy service. The darkness is gone; the cruelty is gone which the darkness bred; the moans have passed away which the victims uttered; the cloud has vanished which once sat continually upon their graves—cloud of protestation that ascended forever to thy throne from the tears of the defenceless, and from the anger of the just. And lo! we—I thy servant, and this dark phantom, whom for one hour on this thy festival of Pentecost I make *my* servant—render thee united worship in this thy recovered temple."

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<sup>21</sup> "*The sorcerer's flower*," and "*The sorcerer's altar*."—These are names still clinging to the anemone of the Brocken, and to an altar- shaped fragment of granite near one of the summits; and there is no doubt that they both connect themselves, through links of ancient tradition, with the gloomy realities of paganism, when the whole Hartz and the Brocken formed for a very long time the last asylum to a ferocious but perishing idolatry.

<sup>22</sup> "*The sorcerer's flower*," and "*The sorcerer's altar*."—These are names still clinging to the anemone of the Brocken, and to an altar- shaped fragment of granite near one of the summits; and there is no doubt that they both connect themselves, through links of ancient tradition, with the gloomy realities of paganism, when the whole Hartz and the Brocken formed for a very long time the last asylum to a ferocious but perishing idolatry.

Lo! the apparition plucks an anemone, and places it on the altar; he also bends his knee, he also raises his right hand to God. Dumb he is; but sometimes the dumb serve God acceptably. Yet still it occurs to you, that perhaps on this high festival of the Christian church he may have been overruled by supernatural influence into confession of his homage, having so often been made to bow and bend his knee at murderous rites. In a service of religion he may be timid. Let us try him, therefore, with an earthly passion, where he will have no bias either from favor or from fear.

If, then, once in childhood you suffered an affliction that was ineffable,—if once, when powerless to face such an enemy, you were summoned to fight with the tiger that couches within the separations of the grave,—in that case, after the example of Judaea,<sup>23</sup> sitting under her palm tree to weep, but sitting with her head veiled, do you also veil your head. Many years are passed away since then; and perhaps you were a little ignorant thing at that time, hardly above six years old. But your heart was deeper than the Danube; and, as was your love, so was your grief. Many years are gone since that darkness settled on your head; many summers, many winters; yet still its shadows wheel round upon you at intervals, like these April showers upon this glory of bridal June. Therefore now, on this dove-like morning of Pentecost, do you veil your head like Judaea in memory of that transcendent woe, and in testimony that, indeed, it surpassed all utterance of

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<sup>23</sup> On the Roman coins.



words. Immediately you see that the apparition of the Brocken veils *his* head, after the model of Judaea weeping under her palm tree, as if he also had a human heart; and as if *he* also, in childhood, having suffered an affliction which was ineffable, wished by these mute symbols to breathe a sigh towards heaven in memory of that transcendent woe, and by way of record, though many a year after, that it was indeed unutterable by words.

## CHAPTER II.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD OF STRIFE

So, then, one chapter in my life had finished. Already, before the completion of my sixth year, this first chapter had run its circle, had rendered up its music to the final chord—might seem even, like ripe fruit from a tree, to have detached itself forever from all the rest of the arras that was shaping itself within my loom of life. No Eden of lakes and forest lawns, such as the *mirage* suddenly evokes in Arabian sands,—no pageant of air-built battlements and towers, that ever burned in dream-like silence amongst the vapors of summer sunsets, mocking and repeating with celestial pencil "the fuming vanities of earth,"—could leave behind it the mixed impression of so much truth combined with so much absolute delusion. Truest of all things it seemed by the excess of that happiness which it had sustained: most fraudulent it seemed of all things, when looked back upon as some mysterious parenthesis in the current of life, "self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth," hurrying as if with headlong malice to extinction, and alienated by *every* feature from the new aspects of life that seemed to await me. Were it not in the bitter corrosion of heart that I was called upon to face, I should have carried over to the present no connecting link whatever from the

past. Mere reality in this fretting it was, and the undeniableness of its too potent remembrances, that forbade me to regard this burned-out inaugural chapter of my life as no chapter at all, but a pure exhalation of dreams. Misery is a guaranty of truth too substantial to be refused; else, by its determinate evanescence, the total experience would have worn the character of a fantastic illusion.

Well it was for me at this period, if well it were for me to live at all, that from any continued contemplation of my misery I was forced to wean myself, and suddenly to assume the harness of life. Else under the morbid languishing of grief, and of what the Romans called *desiderium*, (the yearning too obstinate after one irrecoverable face,) too probably I should have pined away into an early grave. Harsh was my awaking; but the rough febrifuge which this awaking administered broke the strength of my sickly reveries through a period of more than two years; by which time, under the natural expansion of my bodily strength, the danger had passed over.

In the first chapter I have rendered solemn thanks for having been trained amongst the gentlest of sisters, and not under "horrid pugilistic brothers." Meantime, one such brother I had, senior by much to myself, and the stormiest of his class: him I will immediately present to the reader; for up to this point of my narrative he may be described as a stranger even to myself. Odd as it sounds, I had at this time both a brother and a father, neither of whom would have been able to challenge me as a relative, nor

I *him*, had we happened to meet on the public roads.

In my father's case, this arose from the accident of his having lived abroad for a space that, measured against *my* life, was a very long one. First, he lived for months in Portugal, at Lisbon, and at Cintra; next in Madeira; then in the West Indies; sometimes in Jamaica, sometimes in St. Kitt's; courting the supposed benefit of hot climates in his complaint of pulmonary consumption. He had, indeed, repeatedly returned to England, and met my mother at watering-places on the south coast of Devonshire, &c. But I, as a younger child, had not been one of the party selected for such excursions from home. And now, at last, when all had proved unavailing, he was coming home to die amongst his family, in his thirty-ninth year. My mother had gone to await his arrival at the port (whatever port) to which the West India packet should bring him; and amongst the deepest recollections which I connect with that period, is one derived from the night of his arrival at Greenhay.

It was a summer evening of unusual solemnity. The servants, and four of us children, were gathered for hours, on the lawn before the house, listening for the sound of wheels. Sunset came—nine, ten, eleven o'clock, and nearly another hour had passed—without a warning sound; for Greenhay, being so solitary a house, formed a *terminus ad quem*, beyond which was nothing but a cluster of cottages, composing the little hamlet of Greenhill; so that any sound of wheels coming from the winding lane which then connected us with the Rusholme Road,

carried with it, of necessity, a warning summons to prepare for visitors at Greenhay. No such summons had yet reached us; it was nearly midnight; and, for the last time, it was determined that we should move in a body out of the grounds, on the chance of meeting the travelling party, if, at so late an hour, it could yet be expected to arrive. In fact, to our general surprise, we met it almost immediately, but coming at so slow a pace, that the fall of the horses' feet was not audible until we were close upon them. I mention the case for the sake of the undying impressions which connected themselves with the circumstances. The first notice of the approach was the sudden emerging of horses' heads from the deep gloom of the shady lane; the next was the mass of white pillows against which the dying patient was reclining. The hearse-like pace at which the carriage moved recalled the overwhelming spectacle of that funeral which had so lately formed part in the most memorable event of my life. But these elements of awe, that might at any rate have struck forcibly upon the mind of a child, were for me, in my condition of morbid nervousness, raised into abiding grandeur by the antecedent experiences of that particular summer night. The listening for hours to the sounds from horses' hoofs upon distant roads, rising and falling, caught and lost, upon the gentle undulation of such fitful airs as might be stirring—the peculiar solemnity of the hours succeeding to sunset—the glory of the dying day—the gorgeousness which, by description, so well I knew of sunset in those West Indian islands from which my father was returning—the knowledge that he returned only to die

—the almighty pomp in which this great idea of Death apparelled itself to my young sorrowing heart—the corresponding pomp in which the antagonistic idea, not less mysterious, of life, rose, as if on wings, amidst tropic glories and floral pageantries that seemed even *more* solemn and pathetic than the vapory plumes and trophies of mortality,—all this chorus of restless images, or of suggestive thoughts, gave to my father's return, which else had been fitted only to interpose one transitory red-letter day in the calendar of a child, the shadowy power of an ineffaceable agency among my dreams. This, indeed, was the one sole memorial which restores my father's image to me as a personal reality; otherwise he would have been for me a bare *nominis umbra*. He languished, indeed, for weeks upon a sofa; and, during that interval, it happened naturally, from my repose of manners, that I was a privileged visitor to him throughout his waking hours. I was also present at his bedside in the closing hour of his life, which exhaled quietly, amidst snatches of delirious conversation with some imaginary visitors.

My brother was a stranger from causes quite as little to be foreseen, but seeming quite as natural after they had really occurred. In an early stage of his career, he had been found wholly unmanageable. His genius for mischief amounted to inspiration; it was a divine *afflatus* which drove him in that direction; and such was his capacity for riding in whirlwinds and directing storms, that he made it his trade to create them, as a *nephelaegeta* Zeus, a cloud-compelling Jove, in order that

he *might* direct them. For this, and other reasons, he had been sent to the Grammar School of Louth, in Lincolnshire—one of those many old classic institutions which form the peculiar<sup>24</sup> glory of England. To box, and to box under the severest restraint of honorable laws, was in those days a mere necessity of schoolboy life at *public* schools; and hence the superior manliness, generosity, and self-control of those generally who had benefited by such discipline—so systematically hostile to all meanness, pusillanimity, or indirectness. Cowper, in his "Tyrocinium," is far from doing justice to our great public schools. Himself disqualified, by a delicacy of temperament, for reaping the benefits from such a warfare, and having suffered too much in his own Westminster experience, he could not judge them from an impartial station; but I, though ill enough adapted to an atmosphere so stormy, yet having tried both classes of schools, public and private, am compelled in mere conscience to give my vote (and, if I had a thousand votes, to give *all* my votes) for the former.

Fresh from such a training as this, and at a time when his additional five or six years availed nearly to make *his* age the

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<sup>24</sup> "*Peculiar*."—Viz., as *endowed* foundations to which those resort who are rich and pay, and those also who, being poor, cannot pay, or cannot pay so much. This most honorable distinction amongst the services of England from ancient times to the interests of education—a service absolutely unapproached by any one nation of Christendom—is amongst the foremost cases of that remarkable class which make England, whilst often the most aristocratic, yet also, for many noble purposes, the most democratic of lands.

double of mine, my brother very naturally despised me; and, from his exceeding frankness, he took no pains to conceal that he did. Why should he? Who was it that could have a right to feel aggrieved by this contempt? Who, if not myself? But it happened, on the contrary, that I had a perfect craze for being despised. I doted on it, and considered contempt a sort of luxury that I was in continual fear of losing. Why not? Wherefore should any rational person shrink from contempt, if it happen to form the tenure by which he holds his repose in life? The cases which are cited from comedy of such a yearning after contempt, stand upon a footing altogether different: *there* the contempt is wooed as a serviceable ally and tool of religious hypocrisy. But to me, at that era of life, it formed the main guaranty of an unmolested repose; and security there was not, on any lower terms, for the *latentis semita vitae*. The slightest approach to any favorable construction of my intellectual pretensions alarmed me beyond measure; because it pledged me in a manner with the hearer to support this first attempt by a second, by a third, by a fourth—O Heavens! there is no saying how far the horrid man might go in his unreasonable demands upon me. I groaned under the weight of his expectations; and, if I laid but the first round of such a staircase, why, then, I saw in vision a vast Jacob's ladder towering upwards to the clouds, mile after mile, league after league; and myself running up and down this ladder, like any fatigue party of Irish hodmen, to the top of any Babel which my wretched admirer might choose to build. But I nipped the



abominable system of extortion in the very bud, by refusing to take the first step. The man could have no pretence, you know, for expecting me to climb the third or fourth round, when I had seemed quite unequal to the first. Professing the most absolute bankruptcy from the very beginning, giving the man no sort of hope that I would pay even one farthing in the pound, I never could be made miserable by unknown responsibilities.

Still, with all this passion for being despised, which was so essential to my peace of mind, I found at times an altitude—a starry altitude—in the station of contempt for me assumed by my brother that nettled me. Sometimes, indeed, the mere necessities of dispute carried me, before I was aware of my own imprudence, so far up the staircase of Babel, that my brother was shaken for a moment in the infinity of his contempt; and before long, when my superiority in some bookish accomplishments displayed itself, by results that could not be entirely dissembled, mere foolish human nature forced me into some trifle of exultation at these retributory triumphs. But more often I was disposed to grieve over them. They tended to shake that solid foundation of utter despicableness upon which I relied so much for my freedom from anxiety; and therefore, upon the whole, it was satisfactory to my mind that my brother's opinion of me, after any little transient oscillation, gravitated determinately back towards that settled contempt which had been the result of his original inquest. The pillars of Hercules, upon which rested the vast edifice of his scorn, were these two—1st, my physics; he denounced

me for effeminacy; 2d, he assumed, and even postulated as a *datum*, which I myself could never have the face to refuse, my general idiocy. Physically, therefore, and intellectually, he looked upon me as below notice; but, *morally*, he assured me that he would give me a written character of the very best description, whenever I chose to apply for it. "You're honest," he said; "you're willing, though lazy; you *would* pull, if you had the strength of a flea; and, though a monstrous coward, you don't run away." My own demurs to these harsh judgments were not so many as they might have been. The idiocy I confessed; because, though positive that I was not uniformly an idiot, I felt inclined to think that, in a majority of cases, I really *was*; and there were more reasons for thinking so than the reader is yet aware of. But, as to the effeminacy, I denied it *in toto*; and with good reason, as will be seen. Neither did my brother pretend to have any experimental proofs of it. The ground he went upon was a mere *a priori* one, viz., that I had always been tied to the apron string of women or girls; which amounted at most to this—that, by training and the natural tendency of circumstances, I *ought* to be effeminate; that is, there was reason to expect beforehand that I *should* be so; but, then, the more merit in me, if, in spite of such reasonable presumptions, I really were *not*. In fact, my brother soon learned, by a daily experience, how entirely he might depend upon me for carrying out the most audacious of his own warlike plans—such plans, it is true, that I abominated; but *that* made no difference in the fidelity with which I tried to fulfil them.

This eldest brother of mine was in all respects a remarkable boy. Haughty he was, aspiring, immeasurably active; fertile in resources as Robinson Crusoe; but also full of quarrel as it is possible to imagine; and, in default of any other opponent, he would have fastened a quarrel upon his own shadow for presuming to run before him when going westwards in the morning, whereas, in all reason, a shadow, like a dutiful child, ought to keep deferentially in the rear of that majestic substance which is the author of its existence. Books he detested, one and all, excepting only such as he happened to write himself. And these were not a few. On all subjects known to man, from the Thirty-nine Articles of our English church down to pyrotechnics, legerdemain, magic, both black and white, thaumaturgy, and necromancy, he favored the world (which world was the nursery where I lived amongst my sisters) with his select opinions. On this last subject especially—of necromancy—he was very great: witness his profound work, though but a fragment, and, unfortunately, long since departed to the bosom of Cinderella, entitled "How to raise a Ghost; and when you've got him down, how to keep him down." To which work he assured us that some most learned and enormous man, whose name was a foot and a half long, had promised him an appendix, which appendix treated of the Red Sea and Solomon's signet ring, with forms of *mittimus* for ghosts that might be refractory, and probably a riot act, for any *émeute* amongst ghosts inclined to raise barricades; since he often thrilled our young hearts by supposing the case,

(not at all unlikely, he affirmed,) that a federation, a solemn league and conspiracy, might take place amongst the infinite generations of ghosts against the single generation of men at any one time composing the garrison of earth. The Roman phrase for expressing that a man had died, viz., "*Abiit ad plures*" (He has gone over to the majority,) my brother explained to us; and we easily comprehended that any one generation of the living human race, even if combined, and acting in concert, must be in a frightful minority, by comparison with all the incalculable generations that had trod this earth before us. The Parliament of living men, Lords and Commons united, what a miserable array against the Upper and Lower House composing the Parliament of ghosts! Perhaps the Pre-Adamites would constitute one wing in such a ghostly army. My brother, dying in his sixteenth year, was far enough from seeing or foreseeing Waterloo; else he might have illustrated this dreadful duel of the living human race with its ghostly predecessors, by the awful apparition which at three o'clock in the afternoon, on the 18th of June, 1815, the mighty contest at Waterloo must have assumed to eyes that watched over the trembling interests of man. The English army, about that time in the great agony of its strife, was thrown into squares; and under that arrangement, which condensed and contracted its apparent numbers within a few black geometrical diagrams, how frightfully narrow, how spectral, did its slender quadrangles appear at a distance, to any philosophic spectators that knew about the amount of human interests confided to that army, and

the hopes for Christendom that even then were trembling in the balance! Such a disproportion, it seems, might exist, in the case of a ghostly war, between the harvest of possible results and the slender band of reapers that were to gather it. And there was even a worse peril than any analogous one that has been *proved* to exist at Waterloo. A British surgeon, indeed, in a work of two octavo volumes, has endeavored to show that a conspiracy was traced at Waterloo, between two or three foreign regiments, for kindling a panic in the heat of battle, by flight, and by a sustained blowing up of tumbrils, under the miserable purpose of shaking the British steadiness. But the evidences are not clear; whereas my brother insisted that the presence of sham men, distributed extensively amongst the human race, and meditating treason against us all, had been demonstrated to the satisfaction of all true philosophers. Who were these shams and make-believe men? They were, in fact, people that had been dead for centuries, but that, for reasons best known to themselves, had returned to this upper earth, walked about amongst us, and were undistinguishable, except by the most learned of necromancers, from authentic men of flesh and blood. I mention this for the sake of illustrating the fact, of which the reader will find a singular instance in the foot note attached, that the same crazes are everlastingly revolving upon men. <sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Five years ago, during the carnival of universal anarchy equally amongst doers and thinkers, a closely-printed pamphlet was published with this title, "A New Revelation, or the Communion of the Incarnate Dead with the Unconscious Living. Important Fact, without trifling Fiction, by HIM." I have not the pleasure of knowing HIM; but

This hypothesis, however, like a thousand others, when it happened that they engaged no durable sympathy from his nursery audience, he did not pursue. For some time he turned his thoughts to philosophy, and read lectures to us every night upon some branch or other of physics. This undertaking arose upon some one of us envying or admiring flies for their power of walking upon the ceiling. "Poh!" he said, "they are impostors; they pretend to do it, but they can't do it as it ought to be done. Ah! you should see *me* standing upright on the ceiling, with my head downwards, for half an hour together, and meditating profoundly." My sister Mary remarked, that we should all be very glad to see him in that position. "If that's the case," he replied, "it's very well that all is ready, except as to a strap or two." Being an excellent skater, he had first imagined that, if held up until he had started, he might then, by taking a bold sweep ahead, keep himself in position through the continued impetus of skating. But

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certainly I must concede to HIM, that he writes like a man of extreme sobriety upon his extravagant theme. He is angry with Swedenborg, as might be expected, for his chimeras; some of which, however, of late years have signally altered their aspect; but, as to HIM, there is no chance that he should be occupied with chimeras, because (p. 6) "he has met with some who have acknowledged the fact of their having come from the dead"—*habes confitentem reum*. Few, however, are endowed with so much candor; and in particular, for the honor of literature, it grieves me to find, by p. 10, that the largest number of these shams, and perhaps the most uncandid, are to be looked for amongst "publishers and printers," of whom, it seems, "the great majority" are mere forgeries: a very few speak frankly about the matter, and say they don't care who knows it, which, to my thinking, is impudence, but by far the larger section doggedly deny it, and call a policeman, if you persist in charging them with being shams. Some differences there are between my brother and HIM, but in the great outline of their views they coincide.

this he found not to answer; because, as he observed, "the friction was too retarding from the plaster of Paris, but the case would be very different if the ceiling were coated with ice." As it was *not*, he changed his plan. The true secret, he now discovered, was this: he would consider himself in the light of a humming top; he would make an apparatus (and he made it) for having himself launched, like a top, upon the ceiling, and regularly spun. Then the vertiginous motion of the human top would overpower the force of gravitation. He should, of course, spin upon his own axis, and sleep upon his own axis—perhaps he might even dream upon it; and he laughed at "those scoundrels, the flies," that never improved in their pretended art, nor made any thing of it. The principle was now discovered; "and, of course," he said, if a man can keep it up for five minutes, what's to hinder him from doing so for five months?" "Certainly, nothing that I can think of," was the reply of my sister, whose scepticism, in fact, had not settled upon the five months, but altogether upon the five minutes. The apparatus for spinning him, however, perhaps from its complexity, would not work—a fact evidently owing to the stupidity of the gardener. On reconsidering the subject, he announced, to the disappointment of some amongst us, that, although the physical discovery was now complete, he saw a moral difficulty. It was not a *humming* top that was required, but a peg top. Now, this, in order to keep up the *vertigo* at full stretch, without which, to a certainty, gravitation would prove too much for him, needed to be whipped incessantly. But that was

precisely what a gentleman ought not to tolerate: to be scourged unintermittingly on the legs by any grub of a gardener, unless it were father Adam himself, was a thing that he could not bring his mind to face. However, as some compensation, he proposed to improve the art of flying, which was, as every body must acknowledge, in a condition disgraceful to civilized society. As he had made many a fire balloon, and had succeeded in some attempts at bringing down cats by *parachutes*, it was not very difficult to fly downwards from moderate elevations. But, as he was reproached by my sister for never flying back again,—which, however, was a far different thing, and not even attempted by the philosopher in "Rasselas,"—(for

"Revocare gradum, et *superas* evadere ad auras  
Hic labor, hoc opus est,")

he refused, under such poor encouragement, to try his winged parachutes any more, either "aloft or alow," till he had thoroughly studied Bishop Wilkins <sup>26</sup> on the art of translating right reverend gentlemen to the moon; and, in the mean time, he resumed

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<sup>26</sup> Charles II., notoriously wrote a book on the possibility of a voyage to the moon, which, in a bishop, would be called a translation to the moon, and perhaps it was *his* name in combination with *his* book that suggested the "Adventures of Peter Wilkins." It is unfair, however, to mention him in connection with that single one of his works which announces an extravagant purpose. He was really a scientific man, and already in the time of Cromwell (about 1656) had projected that Royal Society of London which was afterwards realized and presided over by Isaac Barrow and Isaac Newton. He was also a learned man, but still with a veil of romance about him, as may be seen in his most elaborate work— "The Essay towards a Philosophic or Universal Language."



his general lectures on physics. From these, however, he was speedily driven, or one might say shelled out, by a concerted assault of my sister Mary's. He had been in the habit of lowering the pitch of his lectures with ostentatious condescension to the presumed level of our poor understandings. This superciliousness annoyed my sister; and accordingly, with the help of two young female visitors, and my next younger brother,—in subsequent times a little middy on board many a ship of H. M., and the most predestined rebel upon earth against all assumptions, small or great, of superiority,—she arranged a mutiny, that had the unexpected effect of suddenly extinguishing the lectures forever. He had happened to say, what was no unusual thing with him, that he flattered himself he had made the point under discussion tolerably clear; "clear," he added, bowing round the half circle of us, the audience, "to the meanest of capacities;" and then he repeated, sonorously, "clear to the most excruciatingly mean of capacities." Upon which, a voice, a female voice,—but whose voice, in the tumult that followed, I did not distinguish,—retorted, "No, you haven't; it's as dark as sin;" and then, without a moment's interval, a second voice exclaimed, "Dark as night;" then came my young brother's insurrectionary yell, "Dark as midnight;" then another female voice chimed in melodiously, "Dark as pitch;" and so the peal continued to come round like a catch, the whole being so well concerted, and the rolling fire so well sustained, that it was impossible to make head against it; whilst the abruptness of the interruption gave to it the

protecting character of an oral "round robin," it being impossible to challenge any one in particular as the ringleader. Burke's phrase of "the swinish multitude," applied to mobs, was then in every body's mouth; and, accordingly, after my brother had recovered from his first astonishment at this audacious mutiny, he made us several sweeping bows that looked very much like tentative rehearsals of a sweeping *fusillade*, and then addressed us in a very brief speech, of which we could distinguish the words *pearls* and *swinish multitude*, but uttered in a very low key, perhaps out of some lurking consideration for the two young strangers. We all laughed in chorus at this parting salute; my brother himself condescended at last to join us; but there ended the course of lectures on natural philosophy.

As it was impossible, however, that he should remain quiet, he announced to us, that for the rest of his life he meant to dedicate himself to the intense cultivation of the tragic drama. He got to work instantly; and very soon he had composed the first act of his "Sultan Selim;" but, in defiance of the metre, he soon changed the title to "Sultan Amurath," considering *that* a much fiercer name, more bewhiskered and beturbaned. It was no part of his intention that we should sit lolling on chairs like ladies and gentleman that had paid opera prices for private boxes. He expected every one of us, he said, to pull an oar. We were to *act* the tragedy. But, in fact, we had many oars to pull. There were so many characters, that each of us took four at the least,

and the future midddy had six. He, this wicked little midddy,<sup>27</sup> caused the greatest affliction to Sultan Amurath, forcing him to order the amputation of his head six several times (that is, once in every one of his six parts) during the first act. In reality, the sultan, though otherwise a decent man, was too bloody. What by the bowstring, and what by the cimeter, he had so thinned the population with which he commenced business, that scarcely any of the characters remained alive at the end of act the first. Sultan Amurath found himself in an awkward situation. Large arrears of work remained, and hardly any body to do it but the sultan himself. In composing act the second, the author had to proceed like Deucalion and Pyrrha, and to create an entirely new generation. Apparently this young generation, that ought to have been so good, took no warning by what had happened to their ancestors in act the first: one must conclude that they were quite as wicked, since the poor sultan had found himself reduced to order them all for execution in the course of this act the second. To the brazen age had succeeded an iron age; and the prospects were becoming sadder and sadder as the tragedy advanced. But here the author began to hesitate. He felt it hard to resist the instinct of carnage. And was it right to do so? Which of the felons

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<sup>27</sup> "*Middy*."—I call him so simply to avoid confusion, and by way of anticipation; else he was too young at this time to serve in the navy. Afterwards he did so for many years, and saw every variety of service in every class of ships belonging to our navy. At one time, when yet a boy, he was captured by pirates, and compelled to sail with them; and the end of his adventurous career was, that for many a year he has been lying at the bottom of the Atlantic.

whom he had cut off prematurely could pretend that a court of appeal would have reversed his sentence? But the consequences were distressing. A new set of characters in every act brought with it the necessity of a new plot; for people could not succeed to the arrears of old actions, or inherit ancient motives, like a landed estate. Five crops, in fact, must be taken off the ground in each separate tragedy, amounting, in short, to five tragedies involved in one.

Such, according to the rapid sketch which at this moment my memory furnishes, was the brother who now first laid open to me the gates of war. The occasion was this. He had resented, with a shower of stones, an affront offered to us by an individual boy, belonging to a cotton factory: for more than two years afterwards this became the *teterrima causa* of a skirmish or a battle as often as we passed the factory; and, unfortunately, *that* was twice a day on every day except Sunday. Our situation in respect to the enemy was as follows: Greenhay, a country house newly built by my father, at that time was a clear mile from the outskirts of Manchester; but in after years Manchester, throwing out the *tentacula* of its vast expansions, absolutely enveloped Greenhay; and, for any thing I know, the grounds and gardens which then insulated the house may have long disappeared. Being a modest mansion, which (including hot walls, offices, and gardener's house) had cost only six thousand pounds, I do not know how it should have risen to the distinction of giving name to a region of that great town; however, it *has* done so;

<sup>28</sup> and at this time, therefore, after changes so great, it will be difficult for the *habitué* of that region to understand how my brother and myself could have a solitary road to traverse between Greenhay and Princess Street, then the termination, on that side, of Manchester. But so it was. *Oxford Street*, like its namesake in London, was then called the *Oxford Road*; and during the currency of our acquaintance with it, arose the first three houses in its neighborhood; of which the third was built for the Rev. S. H., one of our guardians, for whom his friends had also built the Church of St. Peter's—not a bowshot from the house. At present, however, he resided in Salford, nearly two miles from Greenhay; and to him we went over daily, for the benefit of his classical instructions. One sole cotton factory had then risen along the line of Oxford Street; and this was close to a bridge, which also was a new creation; for previously all passengers to Manchester went round by Garrat. This factory became to us the *officina gentium*, from which swarmed forth those Goths and Vandals that continually threatened our steps; and this bridge became the eternal arena of combat, we taking good care to be on the right side of the bridge for retreat, *i.e.*, on the town side, or the country side, accordingly as we were going out in the morning, or returning in the afternoon. Stones were the implements of warfare; and by continual practice both parties became expert in

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<sup>28</sup> "Green\_hays\_," with slight variation in the spelling, is the name given to that district of which Greenhay formed the original nucleus. Probably it was the solitary situation of the house which (failing any other grounds of denomination) raised it to this privilege.

throwing them.

The origin of the feud it is scarcely requisite to rehearse, since the particular accident which began it was not the true efficient cause of our long warfare, but simply the casual occasion. The cause lay in our aristocratic dress. As children of an opulent family, where all provisions were liberal, and all appointments elegant, we were uniformly well dressed; and, in particular, we wore trousseurs, (at that time unheard of, except among sailors,) and we also wore Hessian boots—a crime that could not be forgiven in the Lancashire of that day, because it expressed the double offence of being aristocratic and being outlandish. We were aristocrats, and it was vain to deny it; could we deny our boots? whilst our antagonists, if not absolutely *sans culottes*, were slovenly and forlorn in their dress, often unwashed, with hair totally neglected, and always covered with flakes of cotton. Jacobins they were not, as regarded any sympathy with the Jacobinism that then desolated France; for, on the contrary, they detested every thing French, and answered with brotherly signals to the cry of "Church and king," or "King and constitution." But, for all that, as they were perfectly independent, getting very high wages, and these wages in a mode of industry that was then taking vast strides ahead, they contrived to reconcile this patriotic anti-Jacobinism with a personal Jacobinism of that sort which is native to the heart of man, who is by natural impulse (and not without a root of nobility, though also of base envy) impatient of inequality, and submits to it only through a sense of its necessity,

or under a long experience of its benefits.

It was on an early day of our new *tyrocinium*, or perhaps on the very first, that, as we passed the bridge, a boy happening to issue from the factory <sup>29</sup> sang out to us derisively, "Hollo, bucks!" In this the reader may fail to perceive any atrocious insult commensurate to the long war which followed. But the reader is wrong. The word "*dandies*" <sup>30</sup> which was what the villain meant, had not then been born, so that he could not have called us by that name, unless through the spirit of prophecy. *Buck* was the nearest word at hand in his Manchester vocabulary: he gave all he could, and let us dream the rest. But in the next moment he discovered our boots, and he consummated his crime by saluting us as "Boots! boots!" My brother made a dead stop, surveyed him with intense disdain, and bade him draw near, that he might "give his flesh to the fowls of the air." The boy declined to accept this liberal invitation, and conveyed his answer by a most contemptuous and plebian gesture, <sup>31</sup> upon which my brother drove him in with a shower of stones.

During this inaugural flourish of hostilities, I, for my part,

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<sup>29</sup> "*Factory*."—Such was the designation technically at that time. At present, I believe that a building of that class would be called a "mill."

<sup>30</sup> This word, however, exists in *Jack-a-dandy*—a very old English word. But what does *that* mean?

<sup>31</sup> Precisely, however, the same gesture, plebian as it was, by which the English commandant at Heligoland replied to the Danes when civilly inviting him to surrender. Southey it was, on the authority of Lieutenant Southey, his brother, who communicated to me this anecdote.

remained inactive, and therefore apparently neutral. But this was the last time that I did so: for the moment, indeed, I was taken by surprise. To be called a *buck* by one that had it in his choice to have called me a coward, a thief, or a murderer, struck me as a most pardonable offence; and as to *boots*, that rested upon a flagrant fact that could not be denied; so that at first I was green enough to regard the boy as very considerate and indulgent. But my brother soon rectified my views; or, if any doubts remained, he impressed me, at least, with a sense of my paramount duty to himself, which was threefold. First, it seems that I owed military allegiance to *him*, as my commander-in-chief, whenever we "took the field;" secondly, by the law of nations, I, being a cadet of my house, owed suit and service to him who was its head; and he assured me, that twice in a year, on *my* birthday and on *his*, he had a right, strictly speaking, to make me lie down, and to set his foot upon my neck; lastly, by a law not so rigorous, but valid amongst gentlemen,—viz., "by the *comity* of nations,"—it seems I owed eternal deference to one so much older than myself, so much wiser, stronger, braver, more beautiful, and more swift of foot. Something like all this in tendency I had already believed, though I had not so minutely investigated the modes and grounds of my duty. By temperament, and through natural dedication to despondency, I felt resting upon me always too deep and gloomy a sense of obscure duties attached to life, that I never *should* be able to fulfil; a burden which I could not carry, and which yet I did not know how to throw off. Glad, therefore, I was



to find the whole tremendous weight of obligations—the law and the prophets—all crowded into this one pocket command, "Thou shalt obey thy brother as God's vicar upon earth." For now, if, by any future stone levelled at him who had called me a "buck," I should chance to draw blood, perhaps I might not have committed so serious a trespass on any rights which he could plead; but if I *had*, (for on this subject my convictions were still cloudy,) at any rate, the duty I might have violated in regard to this general brother, in right of Adam, was cancelled when it came into collision with my paramount duty to this liege brother of my own individual house.

From this day, therefore, I obeyed all my brother's military commands with the utmost docility; and happy it made me that every sort of doubt, or question, or opening for demur was swallowed up in the unity of this one papal principle, discovered by my brother, viz., that all rights and duties of casuistry were transferred from me to himself. *His* was the judgment—*his* was the responsibility; and to me belonged only the sublime obligation of unconditional faith in *him*. That faith I realized. It is true that he taxed me at times, in his reports of particular fights, with "horrible cowardice," and even with "a cowardice that seemed inexplicable, except on the supposition of treachery." But this was only a *façon de parler* with him: the idea of secret perfidy, that was constantly moving under ground, gave an interest to the progress of the war, which else tended to the monotonous. It was a dramatic artifice for sustaining the interest,

where the incidents might happen to be too slightly diversified. But that he did not believe his own charges was clear, because he never repeated them in his "General History of the Campaigns," which was a *resumé*, or recapitulating digest, of his daily reports.

We fought every day, and, generally speaking, *twice* every day; and the result was pretty uniform, viz., that my brother and I terminated the battle by insisting upon our undoubted right to run away. *Magna Charta*, I should fancy, secures that great right to every man; else, surely, it is sadly defective. But out of this catastrophe to most of our skirmishes, and to all our pitched battles except one, grew a standing schism between my brother and myself. My unlimited obedience had respect to action, but not to opinion. Loyalty to my brother did not rest upon hypocrisy: because I was faithful, it did not follow that I must be false in relation to his capricious opinions. And these opinions sometimes took the shape of acts. Twice, at the least, in every week, but sometimes every night, my brother insisted on singing "Te Deum" for supposed victories which he had won; and he insisted also on my bearing a part in these "Te Deums." Now, as I knew of no such victories, but resolutely asserted the truth,—viz., that we ran away,—a slight jar was thus given to the else triumphal effect of these musical ovations. Once having uttered my protest, however, willingly I gave my aid to the chanting; for I loved unspeakably the grand and varied system of chanting in the Romish and English churches. And, looking back at this day to the ineffable benefits which I derived from the church of

my childhood, I account among the very greatest those which reached me through the various chants connected with the "O, Jubilate," the "Magnificat," the "Te Deum," the "Benedicite," &c. Through these chants it was that the sorrow which laid waste my infancy, and the devotion which nature had made a necessity of my being, were profoundly interfused: the sorrow gave reality and depth to the devotion; the devotion gave grandeur and idealization to the sorrow. Neither was my love for chanting altogether without knowledge. A son of my reverend guardian, much older than myself, who possessed a singular faculty of producing a sort of organ accompaniment with one half of his mouth, whilst he sang with the other half, had given me some instructions in the art of chanting; and, as to my brother, he, the hundred-handed Briareus, could do all things; of course, therefore, he could chant.

Once having begun, it followed naturally that the war should deepen in bitterness. Wounds that wrote memorials in the flesh, insults that rankled in the heart,—these were not features of the case likely to be forgotten by our enemies, and far less by my fiery brother. I, for my part, entered not into any of the passions that war may be supposed to kindle, except only the chronic passion of anxiety. *Fear* it was not; for experience had taught me that, under the random firing of our undisciplined enemies, the chances were not many of being wounded. But the uncertainties of the war; the doubts in every separate action whether I could keep up the requisite connection with my brother, and, in case I

could not, the utter darkness that surrounded my fate; whether, as a trophy won from Israel, I should be dedicated to the service of some Manchester Dagon, or pass through fire to Moloch,—all these contingencies, for me that had no friend to consult, ran too violently into the master current of my constitutional despondency ever to give way under any casual elation of success. Success, however, we really had at times; in slight skirmishes pretty often; and once, at least, as the reader will find to his mortification, if he is wicked enough to take the side of the Philistines, a most smashing victory in a pitched battle. But even then, and whilst the hurrahs were yet ascending from our jubilating lips, the freezing remembrance came back to my heart of that deadly depression which, duly at the coming round of the morning and evening watches, travelled with me like my shadow on our approach to the memorable bridge. A bridge of sighs <sup>32</sup> too

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<sup>32</sup> "*Bridge of sighs*."—Two men of memorable genius, Hood last, and Lord Byron by many years previously, have so appropriated this phrase, and reissued it as English currency, that many readers suppose it to be theirs. But the genealogies of fine expressions should be more carefully preserved. The expression belongs originally to Venice. This *jus postliminii* becomes of real importance in many cases, but especially in the case of Shakspeare. Could one have believed it possible beforehand? And yet it is a fact that he is made to seem a robber of the lowest order, by mere dint of suffering robbery. Purely through their own jewelily splendor have many hundreds of his phrases forced themselves into usage so general, under the vulgar infirmity of seeking to strengthen weak prose by shreds of poetic quotation, that at length the majority of careless readers come to look upon these phrases as belonging to the language, and traceable to no distinct proprietor any more than proverbs: and thus, on afterwards observing them in Shakspeare, they regard him in the light of one accepting alms (like so many meaner persons) from the common treasury of the universal mind, on which

surely it was for me; and even for my brother it formed an object of fierce yet anxious jealousy, that he could not always disguise, as we first came in sight of it; for, if it happened to be occupied in strength, there was an end of all hope that we could attempt the passage; and *that* was a fortunate solution of the difficulty, as it imposed no evil beyond a circuit; which, at least, was safe, if the world should choose to call it inglorious. Even this shade of ignominy, however, my brother contrived to color favorably, by calling us—that is, me and himself—"a corps of observation;" and he condescendingly explained to me, that, although making "a lateral movement," he had his eye upon the enemy, and "might yet come round upon his left flank in a way that wouldn't, perhaps, prove very agreeable." This, from the nature of the ground, never happened. We crossed the river at Garrat, out of sight from the enemy's position; and, on our return in the evening, when we reached that point of our route from which the retreat was secure to Greenhay, we took such revenge for the morning insult as might belong to extra liberality in our stone donations.

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treasury, meantime, he had himself conferred these phrases as original donations of his own. Many expressions in the "Paradise Lost," in "Il Penseroso," and in "L'Allegro," are in the same predicament. And thus the almost incredible case is realized which I have described, viz., that simply by having suffered a robbery through two centuries, (for the first attempt at plundering Milton was made upon his juvenile poems,) have Shakspeare and Milton come to be taxed as robbers. N. B.—In speaking of Hood as having appropriated the phrase *Bridge of Sighs*, I would not be understood to represent him as by possibility aiming at any concealment. He was as far above such a meanness by his nobility of heart, as he was raised above all need for it by the overflowing opulence of his genius.

On this line of policy there was, therefore, no cause for anxiety; but the common case was, that the numbers might not be such as to justify this caution, and yet quite enough for mischief. To my brother, however, stung and carried headlong into hostility by the martial instincts of his nature, the uneasiness of doubt or insecurity was swallowed up by his joy in the anticipation of victory, or even of contest; whilst to myself, whose exultation was purely official and ceremonial, as due by loyalty from a cadet to the head of his house, no such compensation existed. The enemy was no enemy in *my* eyes; his affronts were but retaliations; and his insults were so inapplicable to my unworthy self, being of a calibre exclusively meant for the use of my brother, that from me they recoiled, one and all, as cannon shot from cotton bags.

The ordinary course of our day's warfare was this: between nine and ten in the morning occurred our first transit, and, consequently, our earliest opportunity for doing business. But at this time the great sublunary interest of breakfast, which swallowed up all nobler considerations of glory and ambition, occupied the work people of the factory, (or what in the pedantic diction of this day are termed the "operatives,") so that very seldom any serious business was transacted. Without any formal armistice, the paramount convenience of such an arrangement silently secured its own recognition. Notice there needed none of truce, when the one side yearned for breakfast, and the other for a respite: the groups, therefore, on or about the bridge, if any at all, were loose in their array, and careless. We passed

through them rapidly, and, on my part, uneasily; exchanging a few snarls, perhaps, but seldom or ever snapping at each other. The tameness was almost shocking of those who, in the afternoon, would inevitably resume their natural characters of tiger cats and wolves. Sometimes, however, my brother felt it to be a duty that we should fight in the morning; particularly when any expression of public joy for a victory,—bells ringing in the distance,—or when a royal birthday, or some traditional commemoration of ancient feuds, (such as the 5th of November,) irritated his martial propensities. Some of these being religious festivals, seemed to require of us an *extra* homage, for which we knew not how to find any natural or significant expression, except through sharp discharges of stones, that being a language older than Hebrew or Sanscrit, and universally intelligible. But, excepting these high days of religious solemnity, when a man is called upon to show that he is not a pagan or a miscreant in the eldest of senses, by thumping, or trying to thump, somebody who is accused or accusable of being heterodox, the great ceremony of breakfast was allowed to sanctify the hour. Some natural growls we uttered, but hushed them soon, regardless

"Of the sweeping whirlpool's sway,  
That, hushed in grim repose, looked for his evening prey."

*That* came but too surely. Yes, evening never forgot to come; this odious necessity of fighting never missed its road back, or

fell asleep, or loitered by the way, more than a bill of exchange or a tertian fever. Five times a week (Saturday sometimes, and Sunday always, were days of rest) the same scene rehearsed itself in pretty nearly the same succession of circumstances. Between four and five o'clock we had crossed the bridge to the safe, or Greenhay side; then we paused, and waited for the enemy. Sooner or later a bell rang, and from the smoky hive issued the hornets that night and day stung incurably my peace of mind. The order and procession of the incidents after this were odiously monotonous. My brother occupied the main high road, precisely at the point where a very gentle rise of the ground attained its summit; for the bridge lay in a slight valley, and the main military position was fifty or eighty yards above the bridge: then—but having first examined my pockets, in order to be sure that my stock of ammunition, stones, fragments of slate, with a reasonable proportion of brickbats, was all correct and ready for action—he detached me about forty yards to the right, my orders being invariable, and liable to no doubts or "quibbling." Detestable in *my* ears was that word "*quibbling*," by which, for a thousand years, if the war had happened to last so long, he would have fastened upon me the imputation of meaning, or wishing, at least, to do what he called "pettifogulizing"—that is, to plead some distinction, or verbal demur, in bar of my orders, under some colorable pretence that, according to their literal construction, they really did not admit of being fulfilled, or perhaps that they admitted it too much as being capable of



fulfilment in two senses, either of them a practicable sense. True it was that my eye was preternaturally keen for flaws of language, not from pedantic exaction of superfluous accuracy, but, on the contrary, from too conscientious a wish to escape the mistakes which language not rigorous is apt to occasion. So far from seeking to "pettifogulize"—*i.e.*, to find evasions for any purpose in a trickster's minute tortuosities of construction—exactly in the opposite direction, from mere excess of sincerity, most unwillingly I found, in almost every body's words, an unintentional opening left for double interpretations. Undesigned equivocation prevails every where;<sup>33</sup> and it is not the cavilling hair splitter, but, on the contrary, the single-eyed servant of truth, that is most likely to insist upon the limitation of expressions too wide or too vague, and upon the decisive election between meanings potentially double. Not in order to resist or evade my brother's directions, but for the very opposite purpose—*viz.*, that I might fulfil them to the letter; thus and no otherwise it happened that I showed so much scrupulosity about the exact value and position of his words, as finally to draw upon myself the vexatious reproach of being habitually a "pettifogulizer."

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<sup>33</sup> Geometry (it has been said) would not evade disputation, if a man could find his interest in disputing it: such is the spirit of cavil. But I, upon a very opposite ground, assert that there is not one page of prose that could be selected from the best writer in the English language (far less in the German) which, upon a sufficient interest arising, would not furnish matter, simply through its defects in precision, for a suit in Chancery. Chancery suits do not arise, it is true, because the doubtful expressions do not touch any interest of property; but what *does* arise is this—that something more valuable than a pecuniary interest is continually suffering, *viz.*, the interests of truth.

Meantime, our campaigning continued to rage. Overtures of pacification were never mentioned on either side. And I, for *my* part, with the passions only of peace at my heart, did the works of war faithfully and with distinction. I presume so, at least, from the results. It is true, I was continually falling into treason, without exactly knowing how I got into it, or how I got out of it. My brother also, it is true, sometimes assured me that he could, according to the rigor of martial justice, have me hanged on the first tree we passed; to which my prosaic answer had been, that of trees there *were* none in Oxford Street—[which, in imitation of Von Troil's famous chapter on the snakes of Lapland, the reader may accept, if he pleases, as a complete course of lectures on the "dendrology" of Oxford Street.] But, notwithstanding such little stumblings in my career, I continued to ascend in the service; and, I am sure, it will gratify my friendly readers to hear, that, before my eighth birthday, I was promoted to the rank of major general. Over this sunshine, however, soon swept a train of clouds. Three times I was taken prisoner, and with different results. The first time I was carried to the rear, and not molested in any way. Finding myself thus ignominiously neglected, I watched my opportunity; and, by making a wide circuit, easily effected my escape. In the next case, a brief council was held over me; but I was not allowed to hear the deliberations; the result only being communicated to me—which result consisted in a message not very complimentary to my brother, and a small present of kicks to myself. This

present was paid down without any discount, by means of a general subscription amongst the party surrounding me—that party, luckily, not being very numerous; besides which, I must, in honesty, acknowledge myself, generally speaking, indebted to their forbearance. They were not disposed to be too hard upon me. But, at the same time, they clearly did not think it right that I should escape altogether from tasting the calamities of war. And this translated the estimate of my guilt from the public jurisdiction to that of the individual, sometimes capricious and harsh, and carrying out the public award by means of legs that ranged through all gradations of weight and agility. One kick differed exceedingly from another kick in dynamic value; and, in some cases, this difference was so distressingly conspicuous as to imply special malice, unworthy, I conceive, of all generous soldiership.

On returning to our own frontiers, I had an opportunity of displaying my exemplary greenness. That message to my brother, with all its *virus* of insolence I repeated as faithfully for the spirit as, and as literally for the expressions, as my memory allowed me to do; and in that troublesome effort, simpleton that I was, fancied myself exhibiting a soldier's loyalty to his commanding officer. My brother thought otherwise: he was more angry with me than with the enemy. I ought, he said, to have refused all participation in such *sans cullotes* insolence; to carry it was to acknowledge it as fit to be carried. One, grows wiser every day; and on this particular day I made a resolution that, if again made

prisoner, I would bring no more "jaw" (so my brother called it) from the Philistines. If these people *would* send "jaw," I settled that, henceforwards, it must go through the post office.

In my former captures, there had been nothing special or worthy of commemoration in the circumstances. Neither was there in the third, excepting that, by accident, in the second stage of the case, I was delivered over to the custody of young women and girls; whereas the ordinary course would have thrown me upon the vigilant attentions (relieved from monotony by the experimental kicks) of boys. So far, the change was very much for the better. I had a feeling myself, on first being presented to my new young mistresses, of a distressing sort. Having always, up to the completion of my sixth year, been a privileged pet, and almost, I might say, ranking amongst the sanctities of the household, with all its female sections, whether young or old, (an advantage which I owed originally to a long illness, an ague, stretching over two entire years of my infancy,) naturally I had learned to appreciate the indulgent tenderness of women; and my heart thrilled with love and gratitude, as often as they took me up into their arms and kissed me. Here it would have been as every where else; but, unfortunately, my introduction to these young women was in the very worst of characters. I had been taken in arms—in arms against their own brothers, cousins, sweethearts, and on pretexts too frivolous to mention. If asked the question, it would be found that I should not myself deny the fact of being at war with their whole order. What was the meaning of *that*?

What was it to which war pledged a man? It pledged him, in case of opportunity, to burn, ravage, and depopulate the houses and lands of the enemy; which enemy was these fair girls. The warrior stood committed to universal destruction. Neither sex nor age, neither the smiles of unoffending infancy nor the gray hairs of the venerable patriarch, neither the sanctity of the matron nor the loveliness of the youthful bride, would confer any privilege with the warrior, consequently not with me.

Many other hideous features in the military character will be found in books innumerable—levelled at those who make war, and therefore at myself. And it appears finally by these books, that, as one of my ordinary practices, I make a wilderness, and call it a pacification; that I hold it a duty to put people to the sword; which done, to plough up the foundations of their hearths and altars, and then to sow the ground with salt.

All this passing through my brain, when suddenly one young woman snatched me up in her arms, and kissed me: from *her*, I was passed round to others of the party, who all in turn caressed me, with no allusion to that warlike mission against them and theirs, which only had procured me the honor of an introduction to themselves in the character of captive. The too palpable fact that I was not the person meant by nature to exterminate their families, or to make wildernesses, and call them pacifications, had withdrawn from their minds the counterfact—that whatever had been my performances, my intentions had been hostile, and that in such a character only I could have become their prisoner.

Not only did these young people kiss me, but I (seeing no military reason against it) kissed *them*. Really, if young women will insist on kissing major generals, they must expect that the generals will retaliate. One only of the crowd adverted to the character in which I came before them: to be a lawful prisoner, it struck her too logical mind that I must have been caught in some aggressive practices. "Think," she said, "of this little dog fighting, and fighting our Jack." "But," said another in a propitiatory tone, "perhaps he'll not do so any more." I was touched by the kindness of her suggestion, and the sweet, merciful sound of that same "*Not do so any more*" which really was prompted, I fear, much more by that charity in her which hopeth all things than by any signs of amendment in myself. Well was it for me that no time was allowed for an investigation into my morals by point-blank questions as to my future intentions. In which case it would have appeared too undeniably, that the same sad necessity which had planted me hitherto in a position of hostility to their estimable families would continue to persecute me; and that, on the very next day, duty to my brother, howsoever it might struggle with gratitude to themselves, would range me in martial attitude, with a pocketful of stones, meant, alas! for the exclusive use of their respectable kinsmen. Whilst I was preparing myself, however, for this painful exposition, my female friends observed issuing from the factory a crowd of boys not likely at all to improve my prospects. Instantly setting me down on my feet, they formed a sort of *cordon sanitaire* behind me, by stretching out their

petticoats or aprons, as in dancing, so as to touch; and then crying out, "Now, little dog, run for thy life," prepared themselves (I doubt not) for rescuing me, should my recapture be effected.

But this was not effected, although attempted with an energy that alarmed me, and even perplexed me with a vague thought (far too ambitious for my years) that one or two of the pursuing party might be possessed by some demon of jealousy, as eye witnesses to my revelling amongst the lips of that fair girlish bevy, kissing and being kissed, loving and being loved; in which case, from all that ever I had read about jealousy, (and I had read a great deal—viz., "Othello," and Collins's "Ode to the Passions,") I was satisfied that, if again captured, I had very little chance for my life. That jealousy was a green-eyed monster, nobody could know better than *I* did. "O, my lord, beware of jealousy!" Yes; and my lord couldn't possibly have more reason for bewaring of it than myself; indeed, well it would have been had his lordship run away from all the ministers of jealousy—Iago, Cassio, and embroidered handkerchiefs—at the same pace of six miles an hour which kept me ahead of my infuriated pursuers. Ah, that maniac, white as a leper with flakes of cotton, can I ever forget him—*him* that ran so far in advance of his party? What passion but jealousy could have sustained him in so hot a chase? There were some lovely girls in the fair company that had so condescendingly caressed me; but, doubtless, upon that sweet creature his love must have settled, who suggested, in her soft, relenting voice, a penitence in me that, alas! had

not dawned, saying, "*Yes; but perhaps he will not do so any more.*" Thinking, as I ran, of her beauty, I felt that this jealous demoniac must fancy himself justified in committing seven times seven murders upon me, if he should have it in his power. But, thank Heaven, if jealousy can run six miles an hour, there are other passions—as, for instance, panic—that can run, upon occasion, six and a half; so, as I had the start of him, (you know, reader,) and not a very short start,—thanks be to the expanded petticoats of my dear female friends!—naturally it happened that the green-eyed monster came in second best. Time, luckily, was precious with *him*; and, accordingly, when he had chased me into the by-road leading down to Greenhay, he turned back. For the moment, therefore, I found myself suddenly released from danger. But this counted for nothing. The same scene would probably revolve upon me continually; and, on the next rehearsal, Green-eyes might have better luck. It saddened me, besides, to find myself under the political necessity of numbering amongst the Philistines, and as daughters of Gath, so many kind-hearted girls, whom, by personal proof, I knew to be such. In the profoundest sense, I was unhappy; and, not from any momentary accident of distress, but from deep glimpses which now, and heretofore, had opened themselves, as occasions arose, into the inevitable conflicts of life. One of the saddest among such conflicts is the necessity, wheresoever it occurs, of adopting—though the heart should disown—the enmities of one's own family, or country, or religious sect. In forms how afflicting must



that necessity have sometimes occurred during the Parliamentary war! And, in after years, amongst our beautiful old English metrical romances, I found the same impassioned complaint uttered by a knight, Sir Ywain, as early as A.D. 1240—

"But now, where'er I stray or go,  
My heart SHE has that is my foe!"

I knew—I anticipated to a certainty—that my brother would not hear of any merit belonging to the factory population whom every day we had to meet in battle; on the contrary, even submission on *their* part, and willingness to walk penitentially through the *Furcae Caudinae*, would hardly have satisfied his sense of their criminality. Often, indeed, as we came in view of the factory, he would shake his fist at it, and say, in a ferocious tone of voice, "*Delenda est Carthago!*" And certainly, I thought to myself, it must be admitted by every body, that the factory people are inexcusable in raising a rebellion against my brother. But still rebels were men, and sometimes were women; and rebels, that stretch out their petticoats like fans for the sake of screening one from the hot pursuit of enemies with fiery eyes, (green or otherwise,) really are not the sort of people that one wishes to hate.

Homewards, therefore, I drew in sadness, and little doubting that *hereafter* I might have verbal feuds with my brother on behalf of my fair friends, but not dreaming how much displeasure I had

already incurred by my treasonable collusion with their caresses. That part of the affair he had seen with his own eyes, from his position on the field; and then it was that he left me indignantly to my fate, which, by my first reception, it was easy to see would not prove very gloomy. When I came into our own study, I found him engaged in preparing a *bulletin*, (which word was just then travelling into universal use,) reporting briefly the events of the day. The art of drawing, as I shall again have occasion to mention, was amongst his foremost accomplishments; and round the margin of the border ran a black border, ornamented with cyprus and other funereal emblems. When finished, it was carried into the room of Mrs. Evans. This Mrs. Evans was an important person in our affairs. My mother, who never chose to have any direct communication with her servants, always had a housekeeper for the regulation of all domestic business; and the housekeeper, for some years, was this Mrs. Evans. Into her private parlor, where she sat aloof from the under servants, my brother and I had the *entrée* at all times, but upon very different terms of acceptance: he as a favorite of the first class; *I*, by sufferance, as a sort of gloomy shadow that ran after *his* person, and could not well be shut out if *he* were let in. Him she admired in the very highest degree; myself, on the contrary, she detested, which made me unhappy. But then, in some measure, she made amends for this, by despising me in extremity; and for *that* I was truly thankful—I need not say *why*, as the reader already knows. Why she detested me, so far as I know, arose

in part out of my thoughtfulness indisposed to garrulity, and in part out of my savage, Orson-like sincerity. I had a great deal to say, but then I could say it only to a very few people, amongst whom Mrs. Evans was certainly not one; and, when I *did* say any thing, I fear that dire ignorance prevented my laying the proper restraints upon my too liberal candor; and \_that could not prove acceptable to one who thought nothing of working for any purpose, or for no purpose, by petty tricks, or even falsehoods—all which I held in stern abhorrence that I was at no pains to conceal. The *bulletin* on this occasion, garnished with this pageantry of woe, cypress wreaths, and arms reversed, was read aloud to Mrs. Evans, indirectly, therefore, to me. It communicated with Spartan brevity, the sad intelligence (but not sad to Mrs. E.) "that the major general had forever disgraced himself, by submitting to the ..... caresses of the enemy." I leave a blank for the epithet affixed to "caresses," not because there *was* any blank, but, on the contrary, because my brother's wrath had boiled over in such a hubble-bubble of epithets, some only half erased, some doubtfully erased, that it was impossible, out of the various readings, to pick out the true classical text. "Infamous," "disgusting," and "odious" struggled for precedence; and *infamous* they might be; but on the other affixes I held my own private opinions. For some days my brother's displeasure continued to roll in reverberating thunders; but at length it growled itself to rest; and at last he descended to mild expostulations with me, showing clearly, in a series of

general orders, what frightful consequences must ensue, if major generals (as a general principle) should allow themselves to be kissed by the enemy.

About this time my brother began to issue, instead of occasional bulletins, through which hitherto he had breathed his opinions into the ear of the public, (viz., of Mrs. Evans,) a regular gazette, which, in imitation of the London Gazette, was published twice a week. I suppose that no creature ever led such a life as *I* did in that gazette. Run up to the giddiest heights of promotion on one day, for merits which I could not myself discern, in a week or two I was brought to a court martial for offenses equally obscure. I was cashiered; I was restored "on the intercession of a distinguished lady;" (Mrs. Evans, to wit;) I was threatened with being drummed out of the army, to the music of the "Rogue's March;" and then, in the midst of all this misery and degradation, upon the discovery of some supposed energy that I had manifested, I was decorated with the Order of the Bath. My reading had been extensive enough to give me some vague aerial sense of the honor involved in such a decoration, whilst I was profoundly ignorant of the channels through which it could reach an individual, and of the sole fountain from which it could flow. But, in this enormity of disproportion between the cause and the effect, between the agency and the result, I saw nothing more astonishing than I had seen in many other cases confessedly true. Thousands of vast effects, by all that I had heard, linked themselves to causes apparently trivial. The dreadful taint of

scrofula, according to the belief of all Christendom, fled at the simple touch of a Stuart <sup>34</sup> sovereign: no miracle in the Bible, from Jordan or from Bethesda, could be more sudden or more astoundingly victorious. By my own experience, again, I knew that a *styan* (as it is called) upon the eyelid could be easily reduced, though not instantaneously, by the slight application of any golden trinket. Warts upon the fingers of children I had myself known to vanish under the *verbal* charm of a gypsy woman, without any medicinal application whatever. And I well knew, that almost all nations believed in the dreadful mystery of the *evil eye*; some requiring, as a condition of the evil agency, the co-presence of malice in the agent; but others, as appeared from my father's Portuguese recollections, ascribing the same horrid power to the eye of certain select persons, even though innocent of all malignant purpose, and absolutely unconscious of their own fatal gift, until awakened to it by the results. Why, therefore, should there be any thing to shock, or even to surprise, in the power claimed by my brother, as an attribute inalienable from primogeniture in certain select families, of conferring knightly honors? The red ribbon of the Bath he certainly *did* confer

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<sup>34</sup> "*Of a Stuart sovereign*," and by no means of a Stuart only. Queen Anne, the last Stuart who sat on the British throne, was the last of *our princes* who touched for the *king's evil*, (as scrofula was generally called until lately;) but the Bourbon houses, on the thrones of France, Spain, and Naples, as well as the house of Savoy, claimed and exercised the same supernatural privilege down to a much later period than the year 1714—the last of Queen Anne: according to their own and the popular faith, they could have cleansed Naaman the Syrian, and Gehazi too.

upon me; and once, in a paroxysm of imprudent liberality, he promised me at the end of certain months, supposing that I swerved from my duty by no atrocious delinquency, the Garter itself. This, I knew, was a far loftier distinction than the Bath. Even then it was so; and since those days it has become much more so; because the long roll of martial services in the great war with Napoleon compelled our government greatly to widen the basis of the Bath. This promise was never fulfilled; but not for any want of clamorous persecution on my part addressed to my brother's wearied ear and somewhat callous sense of honor. Every fortnight, or so, I took care that he should receive a "refresher," as lawyers call it,—a new and revised brief,—memorializing my pretensions. These it was my brother's policy to parry, by alleged instances of recent misconduct on my part. But all such offences, I insisted, were thoroughly washed away by subsequent services in moments of peril, such as he himself could not always deny. In reality, I believe his real motive for withholding the Garter was, that he had nothing better to bestow upon himself.

"Now, look here," he would say, appealing to Mrs. Evans; "I suppose there's a matter of half a dozen kings on the continent, that would consent to lose three of their fingers, if by such a sacrifice they could purchase the blue ribbon; and here is this little scamp, conceiting himself entitled to it before he has finished two campaigns. "But I was not the person to be beaten off in this fashion. I took my stand upon the promise. A promise

was a promise, even if made to a scamp; and then, besides—but there I hesitated; awful thoughts interposed to check me; else I wished to suggest that, perhaps, some two or three among that half dozen kings might also be scamps. However, I reduced the case to this plain dilemma: These six kings had received a promise, or they had not. If they had not, my case was better than theirs; if they *had*, then, said I, "all seven of us"—I was going to add, "are sailing in the same boat," or something to that effect, though not so picturesquely expressed; but I was interrupted by his deadly frown at my audacity in thus linking myself on as a seventh to this *attelage* of kings, and that such an absolute grub should dream of ranking as one in a bright pleiad of pretenders to the Garter. I had not particularly thought of that; but now, that such a demur was offered to my consideration, I thought of reminding him that, in a certain shadowy sense, I also might presume to class myself as a king, the meaning of which was this: Both my brother and myself, for the sake of varying our intellectual amusements, occupied ourselves at times in governing imaginary kingdoms. I do not mention this as any thing unusual; it is a common resource of mental activity and of aspiring energies amongst boys. Hartley Coleridge, for example, had a kingdom which he governed for many years; whether well or ill, is more than I can say. Kindly, I am sure, he would govern it; but, unless a machine had been invented for enabling him to write without effort, (as was really done for our fourth George during the pressure of illness,) I fear that the public service must

have languished deplorably for want of the royal signature. In sailing past his own dominions, what dolorous outcries would have saluted him from the shore—"Hollo, royal sir! here's the deuse to pay: a perfect lock there is, as tight as locked jaw, upon the course of our public business; throats there are to be cut, from the product of ten jail deliveries, and nobody dares to cut them, for want of the proper warrant; archbishoprics there are to be filled; and, because they are *not* filled, the whole nation is running helter skelter into heresy—and all in consequence of your majesty's sacred laziness." *Our* governments were less remissly administered; since each of us, by continued reports of improvements and gracious concessions to the folly or the weakness of our subjects, stimulated the zeal of his rival. And here, at least, there seemed to be no reason why I should come into collision with my brother. At any rate, I took pains *not* to do so. But all was in vain. My destiny was, to live in one eternal element of feud.

My own kingdom was an island called Gombroon. But in what parallel of north or south latitude it lay, I concealed for a time as rigorously as ancient Rome through every century concealed her real name.<sup>35</sup> The object in this provisional concealment

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<sup>35</sup> One reason, I believe, why it was held a point of wisdom in ancient days that the metropolis of a warlike state should have a secret name hidden from the world, lay in the pagan practice of *evocation*, applied to the tutelary deities of such a state. These deities might be lured by certain rites and briberies into a transfer of their favors to the besieging army. But, in order to make such an evocation effectual, it was necessary to know the original and secret name of the beleaguered city; and this, therefore, was



was, to regulate the position of my own territory by that of my brother's; for I was determined to place a monstrous world of waters between us as the only chance (and a very poor one it proved) for compelling my brother to keep the peace. At length, for some reason unknown to me, and much to my astonishment, he located his capital city in the high latitude of 65 deg. N. That fact being once published and settled, instantly I smacked my little kingdom of Gombroon down into the tropics, 10 deg., I think, south of the line. Now, at least, I was on the right side of the hedge, or so I flattered myself; for it struck me that my brother never would degrade himself by fitting out a costly nautical expedition against poor little Gombroon; and how else could he get at me? Surely the very fiend himself, if he happened to be in a high arctic latitude, would not indulge his malice so far as to follow its trail into the tropic of Capricorn. And what was to be got by such a freak? There was no Golden Fleece in Gombroon. If the fiend or my brother fancied *that*, for once they were in the wrong box; and there was no variety of vegetable produce, for I never denied that the poor little island was only 270 miles in circuit. Think, then, of sailing through 75 deg. of latitude only to crack such a miserable little filbert as that. But my brother stunned me by explaining, that, although his capital lay in lat. 65 deg. N., not the less his dominions swept southwards through a matter of 80 or 90 deg.; and as to the tropic of Capricorn, much of it was his own private property. I was aghast at hearing

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religiously concealed.

*that*. It seemed that vast horns and promontories ran down from all parts of his dominions towards any country whatsoever, in either hemisphere,—empire or republic, monarchy, polyarchy, or anarchy,—that he might have reasons for assaulting.

Here in one moment vanished all that I had relied on for protection: distance I had relied on, and suddenly I was found in close neighborhood to my most formidable enemy. Poverty I had rolled on, and *that* was not denied: he granted the poverty, but it was dependent on the barbarism of the Gombroonians. It seems that in the central forests of Gombroonia there were diamond mines, which my people, from their low condition of civilization, did not value, nor had any means of working. Farewell, therefore, on *my* side, to all hopes of enduring peace, for here was established, in legal phrase, *a lien* forever upon my island, and not upon its margin, but its very centre, in favor of any invaders better able than the natives to make its treasures available. For, of old, it was an article in my brother's code of morals, that, supposing a contest between any two parties, of which one possessed an article, whilst the other was better able to use it, the rightful property vested in the latter. As if you met a man with a musket, then you might justly challenge him to a trial in the art of making gunpowder; which if you *could* make, and he could *not*, in that case the musket was *de jure* yours. For what shadow of a right had the fellow to a noble instrument which he could not "maintain" in a serviceable condition, and "feed" with its daily rations of powder and shot? Still, it may be

fancied that, since all the relations between us as independent sovereigns (whether of war, or peace, or treaty) rested upon our own representations and official reports, it was surely within my competence to deny or qualify as much as within his to assert. But, in reality, the *law* of the contest between us, as suggested by some instinct of propriety in my own mind, would not allow me to proceed in such a method. What he said was like a move at chess or draughts, which it was childish to dispute. The move being made, my business was—to face it, to parry it, to evade it, and, if I could, to overthrow it. I proceeded as a lawyer who moves as long as he can, not by blank denial of facts, (or *coming to an issue*,) but by *demurring*, (*i.e.*, admitting the allegations of fact, but otherwise interpreting their construction.) It was the understood necessity of the case that I must passively accept my brother's statements so far as regarded their verbal expression; and, if *I* would extricate my poor islanders from their troubles, it must be by some distinction or evasion lying *within* this expression, or not blankly contradicting it.

"How, and to what extent," my brother asked, "did I raise taxes upon my subjects?" My first impulse was to say, that I did not tax them at all, for I had a perfect horror of doing so; but prudence would not allow of my saying *that*; because it was too probable he would demand to know how, in that case, I maintained a standing army; and if I once allowed it to be supposed that I had none, there was an end forever to the independence of my people. Poor things! they would have been invaded and

dragooned in a month. I took some days, therefore, to consider that point; but at last replied, that my people, being maritime, supported themselves mainly by a herring fishery, from which I deducted a part of the produce, and afterwards sold it for manure to neighboring nations. This last hint I borrowed from the conversation of a stranger who happened to dine one day at Greenhay, and mentioned that in Devonshire, or at least on the western coast of that county, near Ilfracombe, upon any excessive take of herrings, beyond what the markets could absorb, the surplus was applied to the land as a valuable dressing. It might be inferred from this account, however, that the arts must be in a languishing state amongst a people that did not understand the process of salting fish; and my brother observed derisively, much to my grief, that a wretched ichthyophagous people must make shocking soldiers, weak as water, and liable to be knocked over like ninepins; whereas, in *his* army, not a man ever ate herrings, pilchards, mackerels, or, in fact, condescended to any thing worse than surloins of beef.

At every step I had to contend for the honor and independence of my islanders; so that early I came to understand the weight of Shakspeare's sentiment—

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown!"

O reader, do not laugh! I lived forever under the terror of two separate wars in two separate worlds: one against the factory

boys, in a real world of flesh and blood, of stones and brickbats, of flight and pursuit, that were any thing but figurative; the other in a world purely aerial, where all the combats and the sufferings were absolute moonshine. And yet the simple truth is, that, for anxiety and distress of mind, the reality (which almost every morning's light brought round) was as nothing in comparison of that dream kingdom which rose like a vapor from my own brain, and which apparently by *fiat* of my will could be forever dissolved. Ah! but no; I had contracted obligations to Gombroon; I had submitted my conscience to a yoke; and in secret truth my will had no such autocratic power. Long contemplation of a shadow, earnest study for the welfare of that shadow, sympathy with the wounded sensibilities of that shadow under accumulated wrongs, these bitter experiences, nursed by brooding thought, had gradually frozen that shadow into a rigor of reality far denser than the material realities of brass or granite. Who builds the most durable dwellings? asks the laborer in "Hamlet;" and the answer is, The gravedigger. He builds for corruption; and yet *his* tenements are incorruptible: "the houses which *he* makes last to doomsday." <sup>36</sup> Who is it that seeks for concealment? Let him hide himself <sup>37</sup> in the unsearchable chambers of light,—of light

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<sup>36</sup> Hamlet, Act v., scene 1.

<sup>37</sup> "*Hide himself in—light.*"—The greatest scholar, by far, that this island ever produced, viz., Richard Bentley, published (as is well known) a 4to volume that in some respects is the very worst 4to now extant in the world—viz., a critical edition of the "Paradise Lost." I observe, in the "Edinburgh Review," (July, 1851, No. 191, p. 15,) that a learned critic supposes Bentley to have meant this edition as a "practical

which at noonday, more effectually than any gloom, conceals the very brightest stars,—rather than in labyrinths of darkness the thickest. What criminal is that who wishes to abscond from public justice? Let him hurry into the frantic publicities of London, and by no means into the quiet privacies of the country. So, and upon the analogy of these cases, we may understand that, to make a strife overwhelming by a thousand fold to the feelings, it must not deal with gross material interests, but with such as

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jest." Not at all. Neither could the critic have fancied such a possibility, if he had taken the trouble (which *I* did many a year back) to examine it. A jest book it certainly is, and the most prosperous of jest books, but undoubtedly never meant for such by the author. A man whose lips are livid with anger does not jest, and does not understand jesting. Still, the Edinburgh Reviewer is right about the proper functions of the book, though wrong about the intentions of the author. The fact is, the man was maniacally in error, and always in error, as regarded the ultimate or poetic truth of Milton; but, as regarded truth reputed and truth *apparent*, he often had the air of being furiously in the right; an example of which I will cite. Milton, in the First Book of the "Paradise Lost," had said,— "That from the secret top Of Oreb or of Sinai didst inspire;" upon which Bentley comments in effect thus: "How!—the exposed summit of a mountain *secret*? Why, it's like Charing Cross—always the least secret place in the whole county." So one might fancy; since the summit of a mountain, like Plinlimmon or Cader Idris in Wales, like Skiddaw or Helvellyn in England, constitutes a central object of attention and gaze for the whole circumjacent district, measured by a radius sometimes of 15 to 20 miles. Upon this consideration, Bentley instructs us to substitute as the true reading—"That on the *sacred* top," &c. Meantime, an actual experiment will demonstrate that there is no place so absolutely secret and hidden as the exposed summit of a mountain, 3500 feet high, in respect to an eye stationed in the valley immediately below. A whole party of men, women, horses, and even tents, looked at under those circumstances, is absolutely invisible unless by the aid of glasses: and it becomes evident that a murder might be committed on the bare open summit of such a mountain with more assurance of absolute secrecy than any where else in the whole surrounding district.

rise into the world of dreams, and act upon the nerves through spiritual, and not through fleshly torments. Mine, in the present case, rose suddenly, like a rocket, into their meridian altitude, by means of a hint furnished to my brother from a Scotch advocate's reveries.

This advocate, who by his writings became the remote cause of so much affliction to my childhood, and struck a blow at the dignity of Gombroon, that neither my brother nor all the forces of Tigrosylvania (my brother's kingdom) ever could have devised, was the celebrated James Burnett, better known to the English public by his judicial title of Lord Monboddo. The Burnetts of Monboddo, I have often heard, were a race distinguished for their intellectual accomplishments through several successive generations; and the judge in question was eminently so. It did him no injury that many people regarded him as crazy. In England, at the beginning of the last century, we had a saying,<sup>38</sup> in reference to the Harveys of Lord Bristol's family, equally distinguished for wit, beauty, and eccentricity, that at the creation there had been three kinds of people made, viz., men, women, and Harveys; and by all accounts, something of the same kind might plausibly have been said in Scotland about the Burnetts. Lord Monboddo's nieces, of whom one perished by falling from a precipice, (and, as I have heard, through mere absence of mind, whilst musing upon a book which she carried in her

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<sup>38</sup> Which "*saying*" is sometimes ascribed, I know not how truly, to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

hand,) still survive in the affection of many friends, through the interest attached to their intellectual gifts; and Miss Burnett, the daughter of the judge, is remembered in all the memorials of Burns the poet, as the most beautiful, and otherwise the most interesting, of his female aristocratic friends in Edinburgh. Lord Monboddo himself trod an eccentric path in literature and philosophy; and our tutor, who spent his whole life in reading, withdrawing himself in that way from the anxieties incident to a narrow income and a large family, found, no doubt, a vast fund of interesting suggestions in Lord M.'s "Dissertations on the Origin of Language;" but to us he communicated only one section of the work. It was a long passage, containing some very useful illustrations of a Greek idiom; useful I call them, because four years afterwards, when I had made great advances in my knowledge of Greek, they so appeared to me. <sup>39</sup> But then, being

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<sup>39</sup> It strikes me, upon second thoughts, that the particular idiom, which Lord Monboddo illustrated as regarded the Greek language, merits a momentary notice; and for this reason—that it plays a part not at all less conspicuous or less delicate in the Latin. Here is an instance of its use in Greek, taken from the well-known night scene in the "Iliad:"——*gaethaese de poimenos aetor*, And the heart of the shepherd *rejoices*; where the verb *gaethaese* is in the indefinite or aorist tense, and is meant to indicate a condition of feeling not limited to any time whatever—past, present, or future. In Latin, the force and elegance of this usage are equally impressive, if not more so. At this moment, I remember two cases of this in Horace:— 1. "Rarò antecedentem scelestum Deseruit pede poena claudo;" 2. "saepe Diespiter Neglectus incesto addidit integrum." "That is—"oftentimes the supreme ruler, when treated with neglect, confounds or unites (not *has united*, as the tyro might fancy) the impure man with the upright in one common fate." Exceedingly common is this usage in Latin poetry, when the object is to generalize a remark—as not connected with one mode of time



scarcely seven years old, as soon as our tutor had finished his long extract from the Scottish judge's prelection, I could express my thankfulness for what I had received only by composing my features to a deeper solemnity and sadness than usual—no very easy task, I have been told; otherwise, I really had not the remotest conception of what his lordship meant. I knew very well the thing called a *tense*; I knew even then by name the *Aoristus Primus*, as a respectable tense in the Greek language. It (or shall we say *he*?) was known to the whole Christian world by this distinction of *Primus*; clearly, therefore, there must be some low, vulgar tense in the background, pretending also to the name of Aorist, but universally scouted as the *Aoristus Secundus*, or Birmingham counterfeit. So that, unable as I was, from ignorance, to go along with Lord M.'s appreciation of his pretensions, still, had it been possible to meet an Aoristus Primus in the flesh, I should have bowed to him submissively, as to one apparently endowed with the mysterious rights of primogeniture. Not so my brother.

Aorist, indeed! Primus or Secundus, what mattered it? Paving stones were something, brickbats were something; but an old

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more than another. In reality, all three modes of time—past, present, future—are used (though not equally used) in all languages for this purpose of generalization. Thus,—

1. *The future*; as, Sapiens dominabitur astris;
2. *The present*; as, Fortes fortuna juvat;
3. *The past*; as in the two cases cited from Horace.

But this practice holds equally in English: as to the future and the present, nobody will doubt it; and here is a case from the past: "The fool *hath said* in his heart, There is no God;" not meaning, that in some past time he has said so, but that generally in all times he *does* say so, and *will* say so.

superannuated tense! That any grown man should trouble himself about *that!* Indeed there *was* something extraordinary there. For it is not amongst the ordinary functions of lawyers to take charge of Greek; far less, one might suppose, of lawyers of Scotland, where the *general* system of education has moved for two centuries upon a principle of slight regard to classical literature. Latin literature was very much neglected, and Greek nearly altogether. The more was the astonishment at finding a rare delicacy of critical instinct, as well as of critical sagacity, applied to the Greek idiomatic niceties by a Scottish lawyer, viz., that the same eccentric judge, first made known to us by our tutor.

To the majority of readers, meantime, at this day, Lord M. is memorable chiefly for his craze about the degeneracy of us poor moderns, when compared with the men of pagan antiquity; which craze itself might possibly not have been generally known, except in connection with the little skirmish between him and Dr. Johnson, noticed in Boswell's account of the doctor's Scottish tour. "Ah, doctor," said Lord M., upon some casual suggestion of that topic, "poor creatures are we of this eighteenth century; our fathers were better men than we!" "O, no, my lord," was Johnson's reply; "we are quite as strong as our forefathers, and a great deal wiser! "Such a craze, however, is too widely diffused, and falls in with too obstinate a preconception <sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> "*Too obstinate a preconception.*"—Until the birth of geology, and fossil paleontology, concurring with vast strides ahead in the science of comparative

in the human race, which has in every age hypochondriacally

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anatomy, it is a well-established fact, that oftentimes the most scientific museum admitted as genuine fragments of the human osteology what in fact belonged to the gigantic brutes of our earth in her earliest stages of development. This mistake would go some way in accounting for the absurd disposition in all generations to view themselves as abridged editions of their forefathers. Added to which, as a separate cause of error, there can be little doubt, that intermingled with the human race there has at most periods of the world been a separate and Titanic race, such as the Anakim amongst the peoples of Palestine, the Cyclopean race diffused over the Mediterranean in the elder ages of Greece, and certain tribes amongst the Alps, known to Evelyn in his youth (about Cromwell's time) by an unpleasant travelling experience. These gigantic races, however, were no arguments for a degeneration amongst the rest of mankind. They were evidently a variety of man, coexistent with the ordinary races, but liable to be absorbed and gradually lost by intermarriage amongst other tribes of the ordinary standard. Occasional exhumations of such Titan skeletons would strengthen the common prejudice. They would be taken, not for a local variety, but for an antediluvian or prehistoric type, from which the present races of man had arisen by gradual degeneration. These cases of actual but misinterpreted experience, at the same time that they naturally must tend to fortify the popular prejudice, would also, by accounting for it, and ingrafting it upon a reasonable origin, so far tend to take from it the reproach of a prejudice. Though erroneous, it would yet seem to us, in looking back upon it, a rational and even an inevitable opinion, having such plausible grounds to stand upon; plausible, I mean, until science and accurate examination of the several cases had begun to read them into a different construction. Yet, on the other hand, in spite of any colorable excuses that may be pleaded for this prejudice, it is pretty plain that, after all, there is in human nature a deep-laid predisposition to an obstinate craze of this nature. Else why is it that, in every age alike, men have asserted or even assumed the downward tendency of the human race in all that regards *moral* qualities. For the *physical* degeneration of man there really were some apparent (though erroneous) arguments; but, for the moral degeneration, no argument at all, small or great. Yet a bigotry of belief in this idle notion has always prevailed amongst moralists, pagan alike and Christian. Horace, for example, informs us that "Aetas parentum, pejor avis, tulit Nos nequiores—mox daturos Progeniem vitiosiore." "The last generation was worse, it seems, than the penultimate, as the present is worst than the last. We,

regarded itself as under some fatal necessity of dwindling, much to have challenged public attention. As real paradoxes (spite of the idle meaning attached usually to the word *paradox*) have often no falsehood in them, so here, on the contrary, was a falsehood which had in it nothing paradoxical. It contradicted all the indications of history and experience, which uniformly had pointed in the very opposite direction; and so far it ought to have been paradoxical, (that is, revolting to popular opinion,) but was *not* so; for it fell in with prevailing opinions, with the oldest, blindest, and most inveterate of human superstitions. If extravagant, yet to the multitude it did not *seem* extravagant. So natural a craze, therefore, however baseless, would never have carried Lord Monboddo's name into that meteoric notoriety and atmosphere of astonishment which soon invested it in England. And, in that case, my childhood would have escaped the deadliest blight of mortification and despondency that could have been incident to a most morbid temperament concurring with a

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however, of the present, bad as we may be, shall be kept in countenance by the coming generation, which will prove much worse than ourselves. On the same precedent, all the sermons through the last three centuries, if traced back through decennial periods, so as to form thirty successive strata, will be found regularly claiming the precedence in wickedness for the immediate period of the writer. Upon which theories, as men ought physically to have dwindled long ago into pygmies, so, on the other hand, morally they must by this time have left Sodom and Gomorrah far behind. What a strange animal must man upon this scheme offer to our contemplation; shrinking in size, by graduated process, through every century, until at last he would not rise an inch from the ground; and, on the other hand, as regards villany, towering evermore and more up to the heavens. What a dwarf! what a giant! Why, the very crows would combine to destroy such a little monster.

situation of visionary (yes! if you please, of fantastic) but still of most real distress.

How much it would have astonished Lord Monboddo to find himself made answerable, virtually made answerable, by the evidence of secret tears, for the misery of an unknown child in Lancashire. Yet night and day these silent memorials of suffering were accusing him as the founder of a wound that could not be healed. It happened that the several volumes of his work lay for weeks in the study of our tutor. Chance directed the eye of my brother, one day, upon that part of the work in which Lord M. unfolds his hypothesis that originally the human race had been a variety of the ape. On which hypothesis, by the way, Dr. Adam Clarke's substitution of *ape* for *serpent*, in translating the word *nachash*, (the brute tempter of Eve,) would have fallen to the ground, since this would simply have been the case of one human being tempting another. It followed inevitably, according to Lord M., however painful it might be to human dignity, that in this, their early stage of brutality, men must have had tails. My brother mused upon this revery, and, in a few days, published an extract from some scoundrel's travels in Gombroon, according to which the Gombroonians had not yet emerged from this early condition of apedom. They, it seems, were still *homines caudati*. Overwhelming to me and stunning was the ignominy of this horrible discovery. Lord M. had not overlooked the natural question—In what way did men get rid of their tails? To speak the truth, they never *would* have got rid

of them had they continued to run wild; but growing civilization introduced arts, and the arts introduced sedentary habits. By these it was, by the mere necessity of continually sitting down, that men gradually wore off their tails. Well, and what should hinder the Gombroonians from sitting down? *Their* tailors and shoemakers would and could, I hope, sit down, as well as those of Tigrosylvania. Why not? Ay, but my brother had insisted already that they *had* no tailors, that they *had* no shoemakers; which, *then*, I did not care much about, as it merely put back the clock of our history—throwing us into an earlier, and therefore, perhaps, into a more warlike stage of society. But, as the case stood now, this want of tailors, &c., showed clearly that the process of sitting down, so essential to the ennobling of the race, had not commenced. My brother, with an air of consolation, suggested that I might even now, without an hour's delay, compel the whole nation to sit down for six hours a day, which would always "make a beginning." But the truth would remain as before, viz., that I was the king of a people that had tails; and the slow, slow process by which, in a course of many centuries, their posterity might rub them off,—a hope of vintages never to be enjoyed by any generations that are yet heaving in sight,—*that* was to me the worst form of despair.

Still there was one resource: if I "didn't like it," meaning the state of things in Gombroon, I might "abdicate." Yes, I knew *that*. I might abdicate; and, once having cut the connection between myself and the poor abject islanders, I might seem to have no

further interest in the degradation that affected them. After such a disruption between us, what was it to me if they had even three tails apiece? Ah, *that* was fine talking; but this connection with my poor subjects had grown up so slowly and so genially, in the midst of struggles so constant against the encroachments of my brother and his rascally people; we had suffered so much together; and the filaments connecting them with my heart were so aerially fine and fantastic, but for that reason so inseverable, that I abated nothing of my anxiety on their account; making this difference only in my legislation and administrative cares, that I pursued them more in a spirit of despondency, and retreated more shyly from communicating them. It was in vain that my brother counselled me to dress my people in the Roman toga, as the best means of concealing their ignominious appendages: if he meant this as comfort, it was none to me; the disgrace lay in the fact, not in its publication; and in my heart, though I continued to honor Lord Monboddo (whom I heard my guardian also daily delighting to honor) as a good Grecian, yet secretly I cursed the Aoristus Primus, as the indirect occasion of a misery which was not and could not be comprehended.

From this deep degradation of myself and my people, I was drawn off at intervals to contemplate a different mode of degradation affecting two persons, twin sisters, whom I saw intermittingly; sometimes once a week, sometimes frequently on each separate day. You have heard, reader, of pariahs. The pathos of that great idea possibly never reached you. Did it

ever strike you how far that idea had extended? Do not fancy it peculiar to Hindostan. Before Delhi was, before Agra, or Lahore, might the pariah say, I was. The most interesting, if only as the most mysterious, race of ancient days, the Pelasgi, that overspread, in early times of Greece, the total Mediterranean,—a race distinguished for beauty and for intellect, and sorrowful beyond all power of man to read the cause that could lie deep enough for so imperishable an impression,—*they* were pariahs. The Jews that, in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, were cursed in a certain contingency with a sublimer curse than ever rang through the passionate wrath of prophecy, and that afterwards, in Jerusalem, cursed themselves, voluntarily taking on their own heads, and on the heads of their children's children forever and ever, the guilt of innocent blood,—*they* are pariahs to this hour. Yet for *them* there has ever shone a sullen light of hope. The gypsies, for whom no conscious or acknowledged hope burns through the mighty darkness that surrounds them,—they are pariahs of pariahs. Lepers were a race of mediaeval pariahs, rejected of men, that now have gone to rest. But travel into the forests of the Pyrenees, and there you will find their modern representatives in the Cagots. Are these Pyrenean Cagots pagans? Not at all, They are good Christians. Wherefore, then, that low door in the Pyrenean churches, through which the Cagots are forced to enter, and which, obliging them to stoop almost to the ground, is a perpetual memento of their degradation? Wherefore is it that men of pure Spanish blood will



hold no intercourse with the Cagot? Wherefore is it that even the shadow of a Cagot, if it falls across a fountain, is held to have polluted that fountain? All this points to some dreadful taint of guilt, real or imputed, in ages far remote.<sup>41</sup>

But in ages far nearer to ourselves, nay, in our own generation and our own land, are many pariahs, sitting amongst us all, nay, oftentimes sitting (yet not recognized for what they really are) at good men's tables. How general is that sensuous dulness, that deafness of the heart, which the Scriptures attribute to human beings! "Having ears, they hear not; and, seeing, they do not understand." In the very act of facing or touching a dreadful object, they will utterly deny its existence. Men say to me daily, when I ask them, in passing, "Any thing in this morning's paper?" "O, no; nothing at all." And, as I never had any other answer, I am bound to suppose that there never *was* any thing in a daily newspaper; and, therefore, that the horrible burden of misery and of change, which a century accumulates as its *facit* or

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<sup>41</sup> The names and history of the Pyrenean Cagots are equally obscure. Some have supposed that, during the period of the Gothic warfare with the Moors, the Cagots were a Christian tribe that betrayed the Christian cause and interests at a critical moment. But all is conjecture. As to the name, Southey has somewhere offered a possible interpretation of it; but it struck me as far from felicitous, and not what might have been expected from Southey, whose vast historical research and commanding talent should naturally have unlocked this most mysterious of modern secrets, if any unlocking does yet lie within the resources of human skill and combining power, now that so many ages divide us from the original steps of the case. I may here mention, as a fact accidentally made known to myself, and apparently not known to Southey, that the Cagots, under a name very slightly altered, are found in France also, as well as Spain, and in provinces of France that have no connection at all with Spain.

total result, has not been distributed at all amongst its thirty-six thousand five hundred and twenty-five days: every day, it seems, was separately a blank day, yielding absolutely nothing—what children call a deaf nut, offering no kernel; and yet the total product has caused angels to weep and tremble. Meantime, when I come to look at the newspaper with my own eyes, I am astonished at the misreport of my informants. Were there no other section in it than simply that allotted to the police reports, oftentimes I stand aghast at the revelations there made of human life and the human heart; at its colossal guilt, and its colossal misery; at the suffering which oftentimes throws its shadow over palaces, and the grandeur of mute endurance which sometimes glorifies a cottage. Here transpires the dreadful truth of what is going on forever under the thick curtains of domestic life, close behind us, and before us, and all around us. Newspapers are evanescent, and are too rapidly recurrent, and people see nothing great in what is familiar, nor can ever be trained to read the silent and the shadowy in what, for the moment, is covered with the babbling garrulity of daylight. I suppose now, that, in the next generation after that which is here concerned, had any neighbor of our tutor been questioned on the subject of a domestic tragedy, which travelled through its natural stages in a leisurely way, and under the eyes of good Dr. S—, he would have replied, "Tragedy! O, sir, nothing of the kind! You have been misled; the gentleman must lie under a mistake: perhaps it was in the next street." No, it was *not* in the next

street; and the gentleman does not lie under a mistake, or, in fact, lie at all. The simple truth is, blind old neighbor, that you, being rarely in the house, and, *when* there, only in one particular room, saw no more of what was hourly going on than if you had been residing with the Sultan of Bokhara. But I, a child between seven and eight years old, had access every where. I was privileged, and had the *entree* even of the female apartments; one consequence of which was, that I put *this* and *that* together. A number of syllables, that each for itself separately might have meant nothing at all, did yet, when put together, through weeks and months, read for *my* eyes into sentences, as deadly and significant as *Tekel, upharsin*. And another consequence was, that, being, on account of my age, nobody at all, or very near it, I sometimes witnessed things that perhaps it had not been meant for any body to witness, or perhaps some half-conscious negligence overlooked my presence. "Saw things! What was it now? Was it a man at midnight, with a dark lantern and a six-barrel revolver?" No, *that* was not in the least like what I saw: it was a great deal more like what I will endeavor to describe. Imagine two young girls, of what exact age I really do not know, but apparently from twelve to fourteen, twins, remarkably plain in person and features, unhealthy, and obscurely reputed to be idiots. Whether they really were such was more than I knew, or could devise any plan for learning. Without dreaming of any thing unkind or uncourteous, my original impulse had been to say, "If you please, are you idiots?" But I felt that such a question

had an air of coarseness about it, though, for my own part, I had long reconciled myself to being called an idiot by my brother. There was, however, a further difficulty: breathed as a gentle murmuring whisper, the question might possibly be reconciled to an indulgent ear as confidential and tender. Even to take a liberty with those you love is to show your trust in their affection; but, alas! these poor girls were deaf; and to have shouted out, "Are you idiots, if you please?" in a voice that would have rung down three flights of stairs, promised (as I felt, without exactly seeing why) a dreadful exaggeration to whatever incivility might, at any rate, attach to the question; and some *did* attach, that was clear, even if warbled through an air of Cherubini's and accompanied on the flute. Perhaps they were *not* idiots, and only seemed to be such from the slowness of apprehension naturally connected with deafness. That I saw them but seldom, arose from their peculiar position in the family. Their father had no private fortune; his income from the church was very slender; and, though considerably increased by the allowance made for us, his two pupils, still, in a great town, and with so large a family, it left him little room for luxuries. Consequently, he never had more than two servants, and at times only one. Upon this plea rose the scheme of the mother for employing these two young girls in menial offices of the household economy. One reason for that was, that she thus indulged her dislike for them, which she took no pains to conceal; and thus, also, she withdrew them from the notice of strangers. In this way, it happened that I saw

them myself but at uncertain intervals. Gradually, however, I came to be aware of their forlorn condition, to pity them, and to love them. The poor twins were undoubtedly plain to the degree which is called, by unfeeling people, ugliness. They were also deaf, as I have said, and they were scrofulous; one of them was disfigured by the small pox; they had glimmering eyes, red, like the eyes of ferrets, and scarcely half open; and they did not walk so much as stumble along. There, you have the worst of them. Now, hear something on the other side. What first won my pity was, their affection for each other, united to their constant sadness; secondly, a notion which had crept into my head, probably derived from something said in my presence by elder people, that they were destined to an early death; and, lastly, the incessant persecutions of their mother. This lady belonged, by birth, to a more elevated rank than that of her husband, and she was remarkably well bred as regarded her manners. But she had probably a weak understanding; she was shrewish in her temper; was a severe economist; a merciless exactor of what she viewed as duty; and, in persecuting her two unhappy daughters, though she yielded blindly to her unconscious dislike of them, as creatures that disgraced her, she was not aware, perhaps, of ever having put forth more expressions of anger and severity than were absolutely required to rouse the constitutional torpor of her daughters' nature; and where disgust has once rooted itself, and been habitually expressed in tones of harshness, the mere sight of the hateful object mechanically calls forth the eternal tones of

anger, without distinct consciousness or separate intention in the speaker. Loud speaking, besides, or even shouting, was required by the deafness of the two girls. From anger so constantly discharging its thunders, naturally they did not show open signs of recoiling; but that they felt it deeply, may be presumed from their sensibility to kindness. My own experience showed *that*

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