

लाल बहादुर शास्त्री प्रशासन अकादमी

Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy

of Administration

मसूरी

MUSSOORIE

पुस्तकालय

LIBRARY

अवाप्ति संख्या

Accession No.....

22527 112257

वर्ग संख्या

Class No.....

824

पुस्तक संख्या

Book No

Lain 8th ed

THE BEST OF LAMB

METHUEN'S ENGLISH CLASSICS

Fcap 8vo Cloth Boards

The Plays of Shakespeare

Edited by G. H. Cowling 1s. each

As You Like It. A Midsummer-Night's Dream. The Life of King Henry the Fifth. Julius Cæsar. Macbeth. The Merchant of Venice. The Tempest. Twelfth Night. King Richard II. Coriolanus.

The Knight of the Burning Pestle. By Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher. Ed. W. T. Williams. 2s.

Edward II. By Christopher Marlowe. Ed. R. S. Knox. 2s.

Dr. Faustus. By Christopher Marlowe. Ed. R. S. Knox 1s. 9d.

The Duchess of Malfi. By John Webster. Ed. F. Allen 2s.

Every Man in His Humour. By Ben Jonson. Ed. R. S. Knox 2s.

The Shoemaker's Holiday. By T. Dekker. Ed. W. T. Williams. 2s.

Pearl. A 14th Century Poem. Ed. G. G. Coulton. 1s. 9d.

Elizabethan Lyrics. Ed. Dorothea Mayor, B.A. 1s. 9d.

The Minor Poems of John Milton. Ed. H. C. Beeching 2s.

Selections from Daniel Defoe. Ed. H. K. Hawkins 2s.

Letters from Constantinople. By Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Ed. Hilda Chitwin 1s. 9d.

Eothen. By A. W. Kiplake. Ed. Sir C. Elliot 1s. 6d.

Songs of Innocence and of Experience. By William Blake. Ed. G. H. Cowling 1s. 9d.

In Memoriam. By Tennyson. Ed. H. C. Beeching 1s. 6d.

Shakespeare to Hardy. An Anthology of English Lyrics. Chosen by A. Methuen. Introduction by Robert Lynd 3s.

With Commentary by W. F. Williams 3s. 6d. Commentary separately, 1s.

An Anthology of Modern Verse. Chosen by A. Methuen. Introduction by Robert Lynd 2s. 6d.

With Notes by Gerald Bullett, 3s. Notes separately, 1s.

Selections from Matthew Arnold's Poetry. Ed. R. E. C. Houghton 2s.

A Child's Book of Lyrics. Compiled by Philip Wayne. 1s. 9d.

A Little of Everything. By F. V. Lucas. 2s.

Mixed Vintages. By F. V. Lucas 1s. 6d.

The Best of Lamb. Edited by F. V. Lucas. 1s. 6d.

The Best of Hazlitt. Edited by P. P. Howe 2s.

The Best of Carlyle. Edited by F. O. Matthiessen. 2s.

Selections from M. Arnold's Prose. Ed. D. C. Somervell 2s.

Selected Letters of Charles Lamb. Ed. G. I. Clapton 2s.

Selections from Coleridge. Ed. B. I. and M. R. Evans. 2s.

Selections from Wordsworth. Ed. B. I. and M. R. Evans. 2s.

Selections from George Borrow. Ed. W. E. Williams 2s.

Selections from Bunyan. Ed. W. I. Williams and G. H. Vallins 2s.

Selections from Peacock. Ed. H. F. B. Brett-Smith. 2s.

Selections from Evelyn's Diary. Ed. H. A. Treble. 2s.

Selections from Swift. Ed. Williams and Vallins. 2s.

Selections from Goldsmith. Ed. J. Earnshaw. 2s.

Selections from Macaulay. Ed. E. V. Downs and G. L. Davies 2s.

Selections from Byron. Ed. D. M. Walmsley. 2s.

Selections from the Brownings. Ed. H. O'B. Boas. 2s.

Selections from Cowper. Ed. Lord David Cecil. 2s.

Selections from Keats. Ed. J. Earnshaw. 2s.

The Scholemaster. By Roger Ascham. Ed. D. C. Whimster. 2s. 3d.

Tennyson: Select Poems. Ed. Williams and Vallins. 1s. 9d.

Selections from Dryden. Ed. J. Earnshaw 2s.

Selections of Modern Prose. Ed. George Sampson. Each 2s.

Six Volumes.

METHUEN'S ENGLISH CLASSICS

THE BEST
OF
L A M B

compiled by
E. V. LUCAS

EIGHTH EDITION



METHUEN & CO. LTD.
36 Essex Street W.C.
LONDON

<i>First Published (F'cap 8vo)</i>	.	.	.	.	<i>June 18th 1914</i>
<i>Second Edition</i>	.	.	.	.	<i>December 1918</i>
<i>Third Edition (Methuen's English Classics)</i>	.				<i>May 1923</i>
<i>Fourth Edition (" " ")</i>	.				<i>September 1928</i>
<i>Fifth Edition (" " ")</i>	.				<i>September 1929</i>
<i>Sixth Edition (" " ")</i>	.				<i>February 1930</i>
<i>Seventh Edition (F'cap 8vo)</i>	.	.	.	.	<i>April 1934</i>
<i>Eighth Edition (Methuen's English Classics)</i>	.				<i>1935</i>

CONTENTS

PREFACE - - - - -	PAGE ix
ESSAYS :	
CHARACTER OF THE LATE ELIA - - .	II
MY RELATIONS - - - - -	14
MACKERY END, IN HERTFORDSHIRE - -	22
OXFORD IN THE VACATION - - - -	27
MRS. BATTLE'S OPINIONS ON WHIST - -	34
DREAM-CHILDREN - - - - -	41
A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG - -	46
ON SOME OF THE OLD ACTORS - - - -	54
BLAKESMOOR IN H——SHIRE - - - -	67
CAPTAIN JACKSON - - - - -	73
THE WEDDING - - - - -	77
THE GENTLE GIANTESS - - - - -	84
THOUGHTS ON PRESENTS OF GAME - -	87
THREE FALLACIES - - - - -	89
THE DEATH OF COLERIDGE - - - - -	94
STORIES :	
KING LEAR - - - - -	96
THE SEA VOYAGE - - - - -	112

LETTERS :

	PAGE
TO S. T. COLERIDGE - - - - -	118
„ THOMAS MANNING - - - - -	122
„ „ „ - - - - -	124
„ „ „ - - - - -	127
„ „ „ - - - - -	130
„ „ „ - - - - -	133
„ „ „ - - - - -	138
„ „ „ - - - - -	140
„ BARRON FIELD - - - - -	144
„ MRS. WORDSWORTH - - - - -	146
„ DOROTHY WORDSWORTH - - - - -	151
„ S. T. COLERIDGE - - - - -	153
„ MR. AND MRS. COLLIER - - - - -	155
„ BERNARD BARTON - - - - -	156
„ „ „ - - - - -	158
„ „ „ - - - - -	160
„ J. B. DIBDIN - - - - -	162
„ H. C. ROBINSON - - - - -	165
„ WILLIAM WORDSWORTH - - - - -	167
„ SARAH HAZLITT - - - - -	172
„ EDWARD MOXON - - - - -	176

POEMS :

HESTER - - - - -	177
THE FAMILY NAME - - - - -	178
ON AN INFANT DYING AS SOON AS BORN -	178

CONTENTS

vii

	PAGE
WRITTEN AT CAMBRIDGE - - - -	180
WORK - - - - -	181
LEISURE - - - - -	181
IN THE ALBUM OF EDITH S—— - - -	182
FOREST JOYS - - - - -	182
THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES - - - -	184
OLD CHINA - - - - -	186

P R E F A C E

THIS book does not correspond with its title. The best of Lamb must be chosen by each reader individually, with differing choice. But it brings together a certain amount of the most entertaining, most beautiful and, in the case of the letters, most detachable of his writings. The best of Lamb is not to be selected thus, for it is everywhere—sometimes in isolated sentences, sometimes in single epithets.

Charles Lamb was born on February 10th, 1775, the son of a law clerk. He was sent to Christ's Hospital, where he gained a knowledge of Latin and the love of his school-fellow Coleridge. After a brief period at the South Sea House he entered the East India Company's service and remained there for many years. On September 22nd, 1796, his sister Mary, who had shown previous signs of mental aberration, seized a table knife and stabbed her mother to death. She was placed in an asylum, from which, after his father's death, Lamb took her to live under his own care, and together they dwelt in close and affectionate communion—with occasional unhappy interludes during which she had again to be removed to restraint—until Lamb's death in 1834. Miss Lamb, who when in her right mind was conspicuous for her wisdom and sympathy and was as dear as himself to the Lamb circle, survived her brother until 1847.

Lamb's place in literature is unique. He was a fine imaginative critic and something of a poet ; but he lives, and will live, by virtue of being himself and expressing that self in a series of prose essays unsur-

passed in their charm, prodigality of fancy and literary artifice, marked by a distinguished common sense, starred with passages of great beauty and profound insight, and suffused with a kindly and capricious humour. The "Essays of Elia" are a complete revelation of their writer's character and, with his correspondence, constitute an autobiography. The letters, it is pleasant to think, were written chiefly during office hours.

Lamb belonged externally very little to his own time. He cared nothing for politics or public events, although he was not sorry when the death of a royal personage gave him a holiday. He preferred, as he put it, to "write for antiquity." None the less, he was an innovator, and it has chanced that he was not much less a modern force in literature than his friend Wordsworth, for he, too, returned to nature and wrote with sympathy from the unashamed heart. He may have damned the age and have written for antiquity, but he becomes every year a more treasured author by his posterity.

Lamb was also the first English master of nonsense, and his best efforts in that rare medium have still to be excelled.

In the following pages every side of his varied genius is, I hope, illustrated.

E. V. L.

1914

THE BEST OF LAMB

ESSAYS

CHARACTER OF THE LATE ELIA

BY A FRIEND

THIS poor gentleman, who for some months past had been in a declining way, hath at length paid his final tribute to nature.

To say truth, it is time he were gone. The humour of the thing, if there was ever much in it, was pretty well exhausted ; and a two years' and a half existence has been a tolerable duration for a phantom.

I am now at liberty to confess, that much which I have heard objected to my late friend's writings was well-founded. Crude they are, I grant you—a sort of unlicked, incondite things—villainously pranked in an affected array of antique modes and phrases. They had not been *his* if they had been other than such ; and better it is, that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness, than to affect a naturalness (so called) that should be strange to him. Egotistical they have been pronounced by some who did not know, that what he tells us, as of himself, was often true only (historically) of another ; as in a former Essay (to save many instances)—where under the *first person* (his favourite figure) he shadows forth the

forlorn estate of a country-boy placed at a London school, far from his friends and connections—in direct opposition to his own early history. If it be egotism to imply and twine with his own identity the griefs and affections of another—making himself many, or reducing many unto himself—then is the skilful novelist, who all along brings in his hero, or heroine, speaking of themselves, the greatest egotist of all ; who yet has never, therefore, been accused of that narrowness. And how shall the intenser dramatist escape being faulty, who doubtless, under cover of passion uttered by another, oftentimes gives blameless vent to his most inward feelings, and expresses his own story modestly ?

My late friend was in many respects a singular character. Those who did not like him, hated him ; and some, who once liked him, afterwards became his bitterest haters. The truth is, he gave himself too little concern what he uttered, and in whose presence. He observed neither time nor place, and would e'en out with what came uppermost. With the severe religionist he would pass for a freethinker ; while the other faction set him down for a bigot, or persuaded themselves that he belied his sentiments. Few understood him ; and I am not certain that at all times he quite understood himself. He too much affected that dangerous figure—irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred.—He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest ; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator ; and he seemed determined that no one else should play that part when he was present. He was *petit* and ordinary in his person and appearance. I have seen him sometimes in what is called good company, but where he has been a stranger, sit silent, and be suspected for an odd fellow ; till some unlucky occasion provoking

it, he would stutter out some senseless pun (not altogether senseless perhaps, if rightly taken), which has stamped his character for the evening. It was hit or miss with him ; but nine times out of ten, he contrived by this device to send away a whole company his enemies. His conceptions rose kindlier than his utterance, and his happiest *impromptus* had the appearance of effort. He has been accused of trying to be witty, when in truth he was but struggling to give his poor thoughts articulation. He chose his companions for some individuality of character which they manifested.—Hence, not many persons of science, and few professed *litterati*, were of his councils. They were, for the most part, persons of an uncertain fortune ; and, as to such people commonly nothing is more obnoxious than a gentleman of settled (though moderate) income, he passed with most of them for a great miser. To my knowledge this was a mistake. His *intimados*, to confess a truth, were in the world's eye a ragged regiment. He found them floating on the surface of society ; and the colour, or something else, in the weed pleased him. The burrs stuck to him—but they were good and loving burrs for all that. He never greatly cared for the society of what are called good people. If any of these were scandalised (and offences were sure to arise), he could not help it. When he has been remonstrated with for not making more concessions to the feelings of good people, he would retort by asking, what one point did these good people ever concede to him ? He was temperate in his meals and diversions, but always kept a little on this side of abstemiousness. Only in the use of the Indian weed he might be thought a little excessive. He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech. Marry—as the friendly vapour ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it ! the ligaments, which tongue-tied him, were loosened, and the stammerer proceeded a statish !

I do not know whether I ought to bemoan or rejoice that my old friend is departed. His jests

were beginning to grow obsolete, and his stories to be found out. He felt the approaches of age ; and while he pretended to cling to life, you saw how slender were the ties left to bind him. Discoursing with him latterly on this subject, he expressed himself with a pettishness which I thought unworthy of him. In our walks about his suburban retreat (as he called it) at Shacklewell, some children belonging to a school of industry had met us, and bowed and curtsayed, as he thought, in an especial manner to *him*. "They take me for a visiting governor," he muttered earnestly. He had a horror, which he carried to a foible, of looking like anything important and parochial. He thought that he approached nearer to that stamp daily. He had a general aversion from being treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him. He herded always, while it was possible, with people younger than himself. He did not conform to the march of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the boyman. The *toga virilis* never sate gracefully on his shoulders. The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood. These were weaknesses ; but such as they were, they are a key to explicate some of his writings.

MY RELATIONS

I AM arrived at the point of life, at which a man may account it a blessing, as it is a singularity, if he have either of his parents surviving. I have not that felicity—and sometimes think feelingly of a passage in Browne's Christian Morals, where he speaks of a man that hath lived sixty or seventy years in the world. "In such a compass of time," he

says, " a man may have a close apprehension what it is to be forgotten, when he hath lived to find none who could remember his father, or scarcely the friends of his youth, and may sensibly see with what a face in no long time OBLIVION will look upon himself."

I had an aunt, a dear and good one. She was one whom single blessedness had soured to the world. She often used to say, that I was the only thing in it which she loved ; and, when she thought I was quitting it, she grieved over me with mother's tears. A partiality quite so exclusive my reason cannot altogether approve. She was from morning till night poring over good books, and devotional exercises. Her favourite volumes were Thomas à Kempis, in Stanhope's Translation ; and a Roman Catholic Prayer Book, with the *matins* and *complines* regularly set down—terms which I was at that time too young to understand. She persisted in reading them, although admonished daily concerning their Papistical tendency ; and went to church every Sabbath, as a good Protestant should do. These were the only books she studied ; though, I think, at one period of her life, she told me, she had read with great satisfaction the Adventures of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman. Finding the door of the chapel in Essex-street open one day—it was in the infancy of that heresy—she went in, liked the sermon, and the manner of worship, and frequented it at intervals for some time after. She came not for doctrinal points, and never missed them. With some little asperities in her constitution, which I have above hinted at, she was a steadfast, friendly being, and a fine *old Christian*. She was a woman of strong sense, and a shrewd mind—extraordinary at a *repartee* ; one of the few occasions of her breaking silence—else she did not much value wit. The only secular employment I remember to have seen her engaged in, was, the splitting of French beans, and dropping them into a China basin of fair water. The odour of those tender vegetables to this day comes back upon my

sense, redolent of soothing recollections. Certainly it is the most delicate of culinary operations.

Male aunts, as somebody calls them, I had none—to remember. By the uncle's side I may be said to have been born an orphan. Brother, or sister, I never had any—to know them. A sister, I think, that should have been Elizabeth, died in both our infancies. What a comfort, or what a care, may I not have missed in her!—But I have cousins, sprinkled about in Hertfordshire—besides *two*, with whom I have been all my life in habits of the closest intimacy, and whom I may term cousins *par excellence*. These are James and Bridget Elia. They are older than myself by twelve, and ten, years; and neither of them seems disposed, in matters of advice and guidance, to waive any of the prerogatives which primogeniture confers. May they continue still in the same mind; and when they shall be seventy-five, and seventy-three, years old (I cannot spare them sooner), persist in treating me in my grand climacteric precisely as a stripling, or younger brother!

James is an inexplicable cousin. Nature hath her unities, which not every critic can penetrate; or, if we feel, we cannot explain them. The pen of Yorick, and of none since his, could have drawn J. E. entire—those fine Shandian lights and shades, which make up his story. I must limp after in my poor antithetical manner, as the fates have given me grace and talent. J. E. then—to the eye of a common observer at least—seemeth made up of contradictory principles.—The genuine child of impulse, the frigid philosopher of prudence—the phlegm of my cousin's doctrine is invariably at war with his temperament, which is high sanguine. With always some fire-new project in his brain, J. E. is the systematic opponent of innovation, and crier down of every thing that had not stood the test of age and experiment. With a hundred fine notions chasing one another hourly in his fancy, he is startled at the least approach to the romantic in others; and, determined by his own

sense in every thing, commends *you* to the guidance of common sense on all occasions.—With a touch of the eccentric in all which he does, or says, he is only anxious that *you* should not commit yourself by doing any thing absurd or singular. On my once letting slip at table, that I was not fond of a certain popular dish, he begged me at any rate not to say so—for the world would think me mad. He disguises a passionate fondness for works of high art (whereof he hath amassed a choice collection), under the pretext of buying only to sell again—that his enthusiasm may give no encouragement to yours. Yet, if it were so, why does that piece of tender, pastoral Dominichino hang still by his wall?—is the ball of his sight much more dear to him?—or what picture-dealer can talk like him?

Whereas mankind in general are observed to warp their speculative conclusions to the bent of their individual humours, *his* theories are sure to be in diametrical opposition to his constitution. He is courageous as Charles of Sweden, upon instinct; chary of his person, upon principle, as a travelling Quaker.—He has been preaching up to me, all my life, the doctrine of bowing to the great—the necessity of forms, and manner, to a man's getting on in the world. He himself never aims at either, that I can discover,—and has a spirit, that would stand upright in the presence of the Cham of Tartary. It is pleasant to hear him discourse of patience—extolling it as the truest wisdom—and to see him during the last seven minutes that his dinner is getting ready. Nature never ran up in her haste a more restless piece of workmanship than when she moulded this impetuous cousin—and Art never turned out a more elaborate orator than he can display himself to be, upon his favourite topic of the advantages of quiet, and contentedness in the state, whatever it may be, that we are placed in. He is triumphant on this theme, when he has you safe in one of those short stages that ply for the western road, in a very obstructing

manner, at the foot of John Murray's street—where you get in when it is empty, and are expected to wait till the vehicle hath completed her just freight—a trying three quarters of an hour to some people. He wonders at your fidgetiness,—“where could we be better than we are, *thus sitting, thus consulting?*” —“prefers, for his part, a state of rest to locomotion,” —with an eye all the while upon the coachman—till at length, waxing out of all patience, at *your want of it*, he breaks out into a pathetic remonstrance at the fellow for detaining us so long over the time which he had professed, and declares peremptorily, that “the gentleman in the coach is determined to get out, if he does not drive on that instant.”

Very quick at inventing an argument, or detecting a sophistry, he is incapable of attending *you* in any chain of arguing. Indeed he makes wild work with logic; and seems to jump at most admirable conclusions by some process, not at all akin to it. Constantly enough to this, he hath been heard to deny, upon certain occasions, that there exists such a faculty at all in man as *reason*; and wondereth how man came first to have a conceit of it—enforcing his negation with all the might of *reasoning* he is master of. He has some speculative notions against laughter, and will maintain that laughing is not natural to *him*—when peradventure the next moment his lungs shall crow like Chanticleer. He says some of the best things in the world—and declareth that wit is his aversion. It was he who said, upon seeing the Eton boys at play in their grounds—*What a pity to think, that these fine ingenuous lads in a few years will all be changed into frivolous Members of Parliament!*

His youth was fiery, glowing, tempestuous—and in age he discovereth no symptom of cooling. This is that which I admire in him. I hate people who meet Time half-way. I am for no compromise with that inevitable spoiler. While he lives, J. E. will take his swing.—It does me good, as I walk towards

the street of my daily avocation, on some fine May morning, to meet him marching in a quite opposite direction, with a jolly handsome presence, and shining sanguine face, that indicates some purchase in his eye—a Claude—or a Hobbima—for much of his enviable leisure is consumed at Christie's, and Phillips's—or where not, to pick up pictures, and such gauds. On these occasions he mostly stoppeth me, to read a short lecture on the advantage a person like me possesses above himself, in having his time occupied with business which he *must do*—assureth me that he often feels it hang heavy on his hands—wishes he had fewer holidays—and goes off—Westward Ho!—chanting a tune, to Pall Mall—perfectly convinced that he has convinced me—while I proceed in my opposite direction tuneless.

It is pleasant again to see this Professor of Indifference doing the honours of his new purchase, when he has fairly housed it. You must view it in every light, till *he* has found the best—placing it at this distance, and at that, but always suiting the focus of your sight to his own. You must spy at it through your fingers, to catch the aerial perspective—though you assure him that to you the landscape shows much more agreeable without that artifice. Wo be to the luckless wight, who does not only not respond to his rapture, but who should drop an unseasonable intimation of preferring one of his anterior bargains to the present!—The last is always his best hit—his “Cynthia of the minute.”—Alas! how many a mild Madonna have I known to *come in*—a Raphael!—keep its ascendancy for a few brief moons—then, after certain intermedial degradations, from the front drawing-room to the back gallery, thence to the dark parlour,—adopted in turn by each of the Carracci, under successive lowering ascriptions of filiation, mildly breaking its fall—consigned to the oblivious lumber-room, *go out* at last a Lucca Giordano, or plain Carlo Maratti!—which things when I beheld—musing upon the chances

and mutabilities of fate below, hath made me to reflect upon the altered condition of great personages, or that woful Queen of Richard the Second—

“—set forth in pomp
She came adorned hither like sweet May.
Sent back like Hollowmass or shortest day.”

With great love for *you*, J. E. hath but a limited sympathy with what you feel or do. He lives in a world of his own, and makes slender guesses at what passes in your mind. He never pierces the marrow of your habits. He will tell an old established playgoer, that Mr. Such-a-one, of So-and-so (naming one of the theatres), is a very lively comedian—as a piece of news! He advertised me but the other day of some pleasant green lanes which he had found out for me, *knowing me to be a great walker*, in my own immediate vicinity—who have haunted the identical spot any time these twenty years!—He has not much respect for that class of feelings which goes by the name of sentimental. He applies the definition of real evil to bodily sufferings exclusively—and rejecteth all others as imaginary. He is affected by the sight, or the bare supposition, of a creature in pain, to a degree which I have never witnessed out of womankind. A constitutional acuteness to this class of sufferings may in part account for this. The animal tribe in particular he taketh under his especial protection. A broken-winded or spur-galled horse is sure to find an advocate in him. An over-loaded ass is his client for ever. He is the apostle to the brute kind—the never-failing friend of those who have none to care for them. The contemplation of a lobster boiled, or eels skinned *alive*, will wring him so, that “all for pity he could die.” It will take the savour from his palate, and the rest from his pillow, for days and nights. With the intense feeling of Thomas Clarkson, he wanted only the steadiness of pursuit, and unity of purpose, of that “true yoke-fellow with Time,” to have effected as much for the

Animal as he hath done for the *Negro Creation*. But my uncontrollable cousin is but imperfectly formed for purposes which demand co-operation. He cannot wait. His amelioration-plans must be ripened in a day. For this reason he has cut but an equivocal figure in benevolent societies, and combinations for the alleviation of human sufferings. His zeal constantly makes him to outrun, and put out, his coadjutors. He thinks of relieving,—while they think of debating. He was black-balled out of a society for the Relief of

* * * * *

*, because the fervor of his humanity toiled beyond the formal apprehension, and creeping processes, of his associates. I shall always consider this distinction as a patent of nobility in the Elia family!

Do I mention these seeming inconsistencies to smile at, or upbraid, my unique cousin? Marry, heaven, and all good manners, and the understanding that should be between kinsfolk, forbid!—With all the strangenesses of this *strangest of the Elias*—I would not have him in one jot or tittle other than he is; neither would I barter or exchange my wild kinsman for the most exact, regular, and everyway consistent kinsman breathing.

In my next, reader, I may perhaps give you some account of my cousin Bridget—if you are not already surfeited with cousins—and take you by the hand, if you are willing to go with us, on an excursion which we made a summer or two since, in search of *more cousins*—

“Through the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.”

MACKERY END, IN HERTFORDSHIRE

BRIDGET ELIA has been my housekeeper for many a long year. I have obligations to Bridget, extending beyond the period of memory. We house together, old bachelor and maid, in a sort of double singleness; with such tolerable comfort, upon the whole, that I, for one, find in myself no sort of disposition to go out upon the mountains, with the rash king's offspring, to bewail my celibacy. We agree pretty well in our tastes and habits—yet so, as “with a difference.” We are generally in harmony, with occasional bickerings—as it should be among near relations. Our sympathies are rather understood, than expressed; and once, upon my dissembling a tone in my voice more kind than ordinary, my cousin burst into tears, and complained that I was altered. We are both great readers in different directions. While I am hanging over (for the thousandth time) some passage in old Burton, or one of his strange contemporaries, she is abstracted in some modern tale, or adventure, whereof our common reading-table is daily fed with assiduously fresh supplies. Narrative teazes me. I have little concern in the progress of events. She must have a story—well, ill, or indifferently told—so there be life stirring in it, and plenty of good or evil accidents. The fluctuations of fortune in fiction—and almost in real life—have ceased to interest, or operate but dully upon me. Out-of-the-way humours and opinions—heads with some diverting twist in them—the oddities of authorship please me most. My cousin has a native disrelish of any thing that sounds odd or bizarre. Nothing goes down with her, that is quaint, irregular, or out of the road of common sympathy. She “holds Nature more clever” I

MACKERY END, IN HERTFORDSHIRE 23

can pardon her blindness to the beautiful obliquities of the *Religio Medici* ; but she must apologise to me for certain disrespectful insinuations, which she has been pleased to throw out latterly, touching the intellectuals of a dear favourite of mine, of the last century but one—the thrice noble, chaste, and virtuous,—but again somewhat fantastical, and original-brain'd, generous Margaret Newcastle.

It has been the lot of my cousin, oftener perhaps than I could have wished, to have had for her associates and mine, free-thinkers—leaders, and disciples, of novel philosophies and systems ; but she neither wrangles with, nor accepts, their opinions. That which was good and venerable to her, when a child, retains its authority over her mind still. She never juggles or plays tricks with her understanding.

We are both of us inclined to be a little too positive ; and I have observed the result of our disputes to be almost uniformly this—that in matters of fact, dates and circumstances, it turns out, that I was in the right, and my cousin in the wrong. But where we have differed upon moral points ; upon something proper to be done, or let alone ; whatever heat of opposition, or steadiness of conviction, I set out with, I am sure always, in the long run, to be brought over to her way of thinking.

I must touch upon the foibles of my kinswoman with a gentle hand, for Bridget does not like to be told of her faults. She hath an awkward trick (to say no worse of it) of reading in company : at which times she will answer *yes* or *no* to a question, without fully understanding its purport—which is provoking, and derogatory in the highest degree to the dignity of the putter of the said question. Her presence of mind is equal to the most pressing trials of life, but will sometimes desert her upon trifling occasions. When the purpose requires it, and is a thing of moment, she can speak to it greatly ; but in matters which are not stuff of the conscience, she hath been known sometimes to let slip a word less seasonably.

Her education in youth was not much attended to ; and she happily missed all that train of female garniture, which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up exactly in this fashion. I know not whether their chance in wedlock might not be diminished by it ; but I can answer for it, that it makes (if the worst come to the worst) most incomparable old maids.

In a season of distress, she is the truest comforter ; but in the teasing accidents, and minor perplexities, which do not call out the *will* to meet them, she sometimes maketh matters worse by an excess of participation. If she does not always divide your trouble, upon the pleasanter occasions of life she is sure always to treble your satisfaction. She is excellent to be at a play with, or upon a visit ; but best, when she goes a journey with you.

We made an excursion together a few summers since, into Hertfordshire, to beat up the quarters of some of our less-known relations in that fine corn country.

The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End ; or Mackarel End, as it is spelt, perhaps more properly, in some old maps of Hertfordshire ; a farm-house,—delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead. I can just remember having been there, on a visit to a great-aunt, when I was a child, under the care of Bridget ; who, as I have said, is older than myself by some ten years. I wish that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences, that we might share them in equal division. But that is impossible. The house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman, who had married my grandmother's sister. His name was Gladman. My grandmother was a Bruton, married to a Field. The Gladmans and the Brutons are still

flourishing in that part of the country, but the Fields are almost extinct. More than forty years had elapsed since the visit I speak of ; and, for the greater portion of that period, we had lost sight of the other two branches also. Who or what sort of persons inherited Mackery End—kindred or strange folk—we were afraid almost to conjecture, but determined some day to explore.

By somewhat a circuitous route, taking the noble park at Luton in our way from Saint Alban's, we arrived at the spot of our anxious curiosity about noon. The sight of the old farm-house, though every trace of it was effaced from my recollection, affected me with a pleasure which I had not experienced for many a year. For though *I* had forgotten it, *we* had never forgotten being there together, and we had been talking about Mackery End all our lives, till memory on my part became mocked with a phantom of itself, and I thought I knew the aspect of a place which, when present, O how unlike it was to *that*, which I had conjured up so many times instead of it !

Still the air breathed balmily about it ; the season was in the " heart of June," and I could say with the poet :

" But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation ! "

Bridget's was more a waking bliss than mine, for she easily remembered her old acquaintance again—some altered features, of course, a little grudging at. At first, indeed, she was ready to disbelieve for joy ; but the scene soon re-confirmed itself in her affections—and she traversed every out-post of the old mansion, to the wood-house, the orchard, the place where the pigeon-house had stood (house and birds were alike flown)—with a breathless impatience of recognition, which was more pardonable perhaps than decorous at the age of fifty odd. But Bridget in some things is behind her years.

The only thing left was to get into the house—and that was a difficulty which to me singly would have been insurmountable; for I am terribly shy in making myself known to strangers and out-of-date kinsfolk. Love, stronger than scruple, winged my cousin in without me; but she soon returned with a creature that might have sat to a sculptor for the image of Welcome. It was the youngest of the Gladmans; who, by marriage with a Bruton, had become mistress of the old mansion. A comely brood are the Brutons. Six of them, females, were noted as the handsomest young women in the country. But this adopted Bruton, in my mind, was better than they all—more comely. She was born too late to have remembered me. She just recollected in early life to have had her cousin Bridget once pointed out to her, climbing a stile. But the name of kindred, and of cousinship, was enough. Those slender ties, that prove slight as gossamer in the rending atmosphere of a metropolis, bind faster, as we found it, in hearty, homely, loving Hertfordshire. In five minutes we were as thoroughly acquainted as if we had been born and bred up together; were familiar, even to the calling each other by our Christian names. So Christians should call one another. To have seen Bridget, and her—it was like the meeting of the two scriptural cousins! There was a grace and dignity, an amplitude of form and stature, answering to her mind, in this farmer's wife, which would have shined in a palace—or so we thought it. We were made welcome by husband and wife equally—we, and our friend that was with us—I had almost forgotten him—but B. F. will not so soon forget that meeting, if peradventure he shall read this on the far distant shores where the Kangaroo haunts. The fatted calf was made ready, or rather was already so, as if in anticipation of our coming; and, after an appropriate glass of native wine, never let me forget with what honest pride this hospitable cousin made us proceed to Wheathampstead, to introduce us (as some new-

found rarity) to her mother and sister Gladmans, who did indeed know something more of us, at a time when she almost knew nothing.—With what corresponding kindness we were received by them also—how Bridget's memory, exalted by the occasion, warmed into a thousand half-obliterated recollections of things and persons, to my utter astonishment, and her own—and to the astoundment of B. F. who sat by, almost the only thing that was not a cousin there,—old effaced images of more than half-forgotten names and circumstances still crowding back upon her, as words written in lemon come out upon exposure to a friendly warmth,—when I forget all this, then may my country cousins forget me; and Bridget no more remember, that in the days of weakling infancy I was her tender charge—as I have been her care in foolish manhood since—in those pretty pastoral walks, long ago, about Mackery End, in Hertfordshire.

OXFORD IN THE VACATION

CASTING a preparatory glance at the bottom of this article—as the wary connoisseur in prints, with cursory eye (which, while it reads, seems as though it read not), never fails to consult the *quis sculpsit* in the corner, before he pronounces some rare piece to be a Vivares, or a Woollet—methinks I hear you exclaim, reader, *Who is Elia?*

Because in my last I tried to divert thee with some half-forgotten humours of some old clerks defunct, in an old house of business, long since gone to decay, doubtless you have already set me down in your mind as one of the self-same college—a votary of the desk—a notched and cropt scrivener—one that sucks his sustenance, as certain sick people are said to do, through a quill.

Well, I do agnize something of the sort. I confess that it is my humour, my fancy—in the forepart of the day, when the mind of your man of letters requires some relaxation—(and none better than such as at first sight seems most abhorrent from his beloved studies)—to while away some good hours of my time in the contemplation of indigos, cottons, raw silks, piece-goods, flowered or otherwise. In the first place * * * * * and then it sends you home with such increased appetite to your books * * * * * not to say, that your outside sheets, and waste wrappers of foolscap, do receive into them, most kindly and naturally, the impression of sonnets, epigrams, *essays*—so that the very parings of a counting-house are, in some sort, the settings up of an author. The enfranchised quill, that has plodded all the morning among the cart-rucks of figures and cyphers, frisks and curvets so at its ease over the flowery carpet-ground of a midnight dissertation.—It feels its promotion. * * * * * So that you see, upon the whole, the literary dignity of *Etha* is very little, if at all, compromised in the condescension.

Not that, in my anxious detail of the many commodities incidental to the life of a public office, I would be thought blind to certain flaws, which a cunning carper might be able to pick in this Joseph's vest. And here I must have leave, in the fulness of my soul, to regret the abolition, and doing-away-with altogether, of those consolatory interstices, and sprinklings of freedom, through the four seasons,—the *red-letter days*, now become, to all intents and purposes, *dead-letter days*. There was Paul. and Stephen, and Barnabas—

“Andrew and John, men famous in old times”

—we were used to keep all their days holy, as long back as I was at school at Christ's. I remember their effigies, by the same token, in the old *Baskett* Prayer Book. There hung Peter in his uneasy posture—holy Bartlemy in the troublesome act of flaying, after

the famous Marsyas by Spagnoletti.—I honoured them all, and could almost have wept the defalcation of Iscariot—so much did we love to keep holy memories sacred :—only methought I a little grudged at the coalition of the *better Jude* with Simon—clubbing (as it were) their sanctities together, to make up one poor gaudy-day between them— as an economy unworthy of the dispensation.

These were bright visitations in a scholar's and a clerk's life—" far off their coming shone."—I was as good as an almanac in those days. I could have told you such a saint's-day falls out next week, or the week after. Peradventure the Epiphany, by some periodical infelicity, would, once in six years, merge in a Sabbath. Now am I little better than one of the profane. Let me not be thought to arraign the wisdom of my civil superiors, who have judged the further observation of these holy tides to be papistical, superstitious. Only in a custom of such long standing, methinks, if their Holinesses the Bishops had, in decency, been first sounded—but I am wading out of my depths. I am not the man to decide the limits of civil and ecclesiastical authority—I am plain Elia—no Selden, nor Archbishop Usher—though at present in the thick of their books, here in the heart of learning, under the shadow of the mighty Bodley.

I can here play the gentleman, enact the student. To such a one as myself, who has been defrauded in his young years of the sweet food of academic institution, nowhere is so pleasant, to while away a few idle weeks at, as one or other of the Universities. Their vacation, too, at this time of the year, falls in so pat with *ours*. Here I can take my walks unmolested, and fancy myself of what degree or standing I please. I seem admitted *ad eundem*. I fetch up past opportunities. I can rise at the chapel-bell, and dream that it rings for *me*. In moods of humility I can be a Sizar, or a Servitor. When the peacock vein rises, I strut a Gentleman Commoner. In graver moments, I proceed Master of Arts. Indeed

I do not think I am much unlike that respectable character. I have seen your dim-eyed vergers, and bed-makers in spectacles, drop a bow or curtsy, as I pass, wisely mistaking me for something of the sort. I go about in black, which favours the notion. Only in Christ Church reverend quadrangle, I can be content to pass for nothing short of a Seraphic Doctor.

The walks at these times are so much one's own,—the tall trees of Christ's, the groves of Magdalen! The halls deserted, and with open doors, inviting one to slip in unperceived, and pay a *devoir* to some Founder, or noble or royal Benefactress (that should have been ours) whose portrait seems to smile upon their over-looked beadsman, and to adopt me for their own. Then, to take a peep in by the way at the butteries, and sculleries, redolent of antique hospitality: the immense caves of kitchens, kitchen fireplaces, cordial recesses; ovens whose first pies were baked four centuries ago; and spits which have cooked for Chaucer! Not the meanest minister among the dishes but is hallowed to me through his imagination, and the Cook goes forth a Manciple.

Antiquity! thou wondrous charm, what art thou? that, being nothing, art every thing! When thou *wert*, thou wert not antiquity—then thou wert nothing, but hadst a remoter *antiquity*, as thou called'st it, to look back to with blind veneration; thou thyself being to thyself flat, jejune, *modern*! What mystery lurks in this retroversion? or what half Januses¹ are we, that cannot look forward with the same idolatry with which we for ever revert! The mighty future is as nothing, being every thing! the past is every thing, being nothing!

What were thy *dark ages*? Surely the sun rose as brightly then as now, and man got him to his work in the morning. Why is it that we can never hear mention of them without an accompanying feeling, as though a palpable obscure had dimmed the face

¹ "Januses of one face."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

of things, and that our ancestors wandered to and fro groping!

Above all thy rarities, old Oxenford, what do most arid and solace me, are thy repositories of mouldering learning, thy shelves——

What a place to be in is an old library! It seems as though all the souls of all the writers, that have bequeathed their labours to these Bodleians, were reposing here, as in some dormitory, or middle state. I do not want to handle, to profane the leaves, their winding-sheets. I could as soon dislodge a shade. I seem to inhale learning, walking amid their foliage; and the odour of their old moth-scented coverings is fragrant as the first bloom of those scintial apples which grew amid the happy orchard.

Still less have I curiosity to disturb the elder repose of MSS. Those *variæ lectiones*, so tempting to the more erudite palates, do but disturb and unsettle my faith. I am no Herculanean raker. The credit of the three witnesses might have slept unimpeached for me. I leave these curiosities to Porson, and to G. D.—whom, by the way, I found busy as a moth over some rotten archive, rummaged out of some seldom-explored press, in a nook at Oriel. With long poring, he is grown almost into a book. He stood as passive as one by the side of the old shelves. I longed to new-coat him in Russia, and assign him his place. He might have mustered for a tall Scapula.

D. is assiduous in his visits to these seats of learning. No inconsiderable portion of his moderate fortune, I apprehend, is consumed in journeys between them and Clifford's-inn——where, like a dove on the asp's nest, he has long taken up his unconscious abode, amid an incongruous assembly of attorneys, attorneys' clerks, apparitors, promoters, vermin of the law, among whom he sits, "in calm and sinless peace." The fangs of the law pierce him not—the winds of litigation blow over his humble chambers—the hard sheriff's officer moves his hat as he passes—legal nor illegal discourtesy touches him—none thinks

of offering violence or injustice to him—you would as soon “strike an abstract idea.”

D. has been engaged, he tells me, through a course of laborious years, in an investigation into all curious matter connected with the two Universities ; and has lately lit upon a MS. collection of charters, relative to C——, by which he hopes to settle some disputed points—particularly that long controversy between them as to priority of foundation. The ardor with which he engages in these liberal pursuits, I am afraid, has not met with all the encouragement it deserved, either here, or at C——. Your caputs, and heads of colleges, care less than any body else about these questions.—Contented to suck the milky fountains of their Alma Maters, without inquiring into the venerable gentlewomen's years, they rather hold such curiosities to be impertinent—unreverend. They have their good glebe lands *in manu*, and care not much to rake into the title-deeds. I gather at least so much from other sources, for D. is not a man to complain.

D. started like an unbroke heifer, when I interrupted him. *A priori* it was not very probable that we should have met in Oriel. But D. would have done the same, had I accosted him on the sudden in his own walks in Clifford's-inn, or in the Temple. In addition to a provoking short-sightedness (the effect of late studies and watchings at the midnight oil) D. is the most absent of men. He made a call the other morning at our friend M.'s in Bedford-square ; and, finding nobody at home, was ushered into the hall, where, asking for pen and ink, with great exactitude of purpose he enters me his name in the book—which ordinarily lies about in such places, to record the failures of the untimely or unfortunate visitor—and takes his leave with many ceremonies, and professions of regret. Some two or three hours after, his walking destinies returned him into the same neighbourhood again, and again the quiet image of the fire-side circle at M.'s—Mrs. M. presiding at it

like a Queen Lar, with pretty A. S. at her side—striking irresistibly on his fancy, he makes another call (forgetting that they were “certainly not to return from the country before that day week”) and disappointed a second time, inquires for pen and paper as before: again the book is brought, and in the line just above that in which he is about to print his second name (his re-script)—his first name (scarce dry) looks out upon him like another Sosia, or as if a man should suddenly encounter his own duplicate!—The effect may be conceived. D. made many a good resolution against any such lapses in future. I hope he will not keep them too rigorously.

For with G. D.—to be absent from the body, is sometimes (not to speak it profanely) to be present with the Lord. At the very time when, personally encountering thee, he passes on with no recognition—or, being stopped, starts like a thing surprised—at that moment, reader, he is on Mount Tabor—or Parnassus—or co-sphered with Plato—or, with Harrington, framing “immortal commonwealths”—devising some plan of amelioration to thy country, or thy species—peradventure meditating some individual kindness or courtesy, to be done to *thee thyself*, the returning consciousness of which made him to start so guiltily at thy obtruded personal presence.

D. is delightful any where, but he is at the best in such places as these. He cares not much for Bath. He is out of his element at Buxton, at Scarborough, or Harrogate. The Cam and the Isis are to him “better than all the waters of Damascus.” On the Muses’ hill he is happy, and good, as one of the Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains; and when he goes about with you to show you the halls and colleges, you think you have with you the Interpreter at the House Beautiful.

MRS. BATTLE'S OPINIONS ON WHIST

"A CLEAR fire, a clean hearth, and the rigour of the game." This was the celebrated *wish* of old Sarah Battle (now with God) who, next to her devotions, loved a good game at whist. She was none of your lukewarm gamesters, your half and half players, who have no objection to take a hand, if you want one to make up a rubber ; who affirm that they have no pleasure in winning ; that they like to win one game, and lose another ; that they can while away an hour very agreeably at a card-table, but are indifferent whether they play or no ; and will desire an adversary, who has slipt a wrong card, to take it up and play another. These insufferable triflers are the curse of a table. One of these flies will spoil a whole pot. Of such it may be said, that they do not play at cards, but only play at playing at them.

Sarah Battle was none of that breed. She detested them, as I do, from her heart and soul ; and would not, save upon a striking emergency, willingly seat herself at the same table with them. She loved a thorough-paced partner, a determined enemy. She took, and gave, no concessions. She hated favours. She never made a revoke, nor ever passed it over in her adversary without exacting the utmost forfeiture. She fought a good fight : cut and thrust. She held not her good sword (her cards) " like a dancer." She sate bolt upright ; and neither showed you her cards, nor desired to see yours. All people have their blind side—their superstitions ; and I have heard her declare, under the rose, that Hearts was her favourite suit.

I never in my life—and I knew Sarah Battle many of the best years of it—saw her take out her snuff-box

when it was her turn to play ; or snuff a candle in the middle of a game ; or ring for a servant, till it was fairly over. She never introduced, or connived at, miscellaneous conversation during its process. As she emphatically observed, cards were cards : and if I ever saw unmingled distaste in her fine last century countenance, it was at the airs of a young gentleman of a literary turn, who had been with difficulty persuaded to take a hand ; and who, in his excess of candour, declared, that he thought there was no harm in unbending the mind now and then, after serious studies, in recreations of that kind ! She could not bear to have her noble occupation, to which she wound up her faculties, considered in that light. It was her business, her duty, the thing she came into the world to do,—and she did it. She unbent her mind afterwards—over a book.

Pope was her favourite author : his *Rape of the Lock* her favourite work. She once did me the favour to play over with me (with the cards) his celebrated game of *Ombre* in that poem ; and to explain to me how far it agreed with, and in what points it would be found to differ from, *tradrille*. Her illustrations were apposite and poignant ; and I had the pleasure of sending the substance of them to Mr. Bowles : but I suppose they came too late to be inserted among his ingenious notes upon that author.

Quadrille, she has often told me, was her first love ; but whist had engaged her maturer esteem. The former, she said, was showy and specious, and likely to allure young persons. The uncertainty and quick shifting of partners—a thing which the constancy of whist abhors ;—the dazzling supremacy and regal investiture of *Spadille*—absurd, as she justly observed, in the pure aristocracy of whist, where his crown and garter give him no proper power above his brother-nobility of the *Aces* ;—the giddy vanity, so taking to the inexperienced, of playing alone :—above all, the overpowering attractions of a *Sans Prendre Vole*,

—to the triumph of which there is certainly nothing parallel or approaching, in the contingencies of whist ; —all these, she would say, make quadrille a game of captivation to the young and enthusiastic. But whist was the *solider* game : that was her word. It was a long meal ; not, like quadrille, a feast of snatches. One or two rubbers might co-extend in duration with an evening. They gave time to form rooted friendships, to cultivate steady enmities. She despised the chance-started, capricious, and ever fluctuating alliances of the other. The skirmishes of quadrille, she would say, reminded her of the petty ephemeral embroilments of the little Italian states, depicted by Machiavel ; perpetually changing postures and connexions ; bitter foes to-day, sugared darlings to-morrow ; kissing and scratching in a breath ;—but the wars of whist were comparable to the long, steady, deep-rooted, rational, antipathies of the great French and English nations.

A grave simplicity was what she chiefly admired in her favourite game. There was nothing silly in it, like the nob in cribbage - nothing superfluous. No *flushes*—that most irrational of all pleas that a reasonable being can set up— that any one should claim four by virtue of holding cards of the same mark and colour, without reference to the playing of the game, or the individual worth or pretensions of the cards themselves ! She held this to be a solecism ; as pitiful an ambition at cards as alliteration is in authorship. She despised superficiality, and looked deeper than the colours of things.—Suits were soldiers, she would say, and must have a uniformity of array to distinguish them : but what should we say to a foolish squire, who should claim a merit from dressing up his tenantry in red jackets, that never were to be marshalled—never to take the field ?—She even wished that whist were more simple than it is ; and, in my mind, would have stript it of some appendages, which, in the state of human frailty, may be venially, and even commendably allowed of. She

saw no reason for the deciding of the trump by the turn of the card. Why not one suit always trumps?—Why two colours, when the mark of the suits would have sufficiently distinguished them without it?—

“But the eye, my dear Madam, is agreeably refreshed with the variety. Man is not a creature of pure reason—he must have his senses delightfully appealed to. We see it in Roman Catholic countries, where the music and the paintings draw in many to worship, whom your quaker spirit of unsensualizing would have kept out.—You, yourself, have a pretty collection of paintings—but confess to me, whether, walking in your gallery at Sandham, among those clear Vandykes, or among the Paul Potters in the ante-room you ever felt your bosom glow with an elegant delight, at all comparable to *that* you have it in your power to experience most evenings over a well-arranged assortment of the court cards?—the pretty antic habits, like heralds in a procession—the gay triumph-assuring scarlets—the contrasting deadly-killing sables—the ‘hoary majesty of spades’—Pam in all his glory!—

“All these might be dispensed with; and, with their naked names upon the drab pasteboard, the game might go on very well, picture-less. But the *beauty* of cards would be extinguished for ever. Stripped of all that is imaginative in them, they must degenerate into mere gambling.—Imagine a dull deal board, or drum head, to spread them on, instead of that nice verdant carpet (next to nature’s), fittest arena for those courtly combatants to play their gallant jousts and turneys in!—Exchange those delicately-turned ivory markers—(work of Chinese artist, unconscious of their symbol,—or as profanely slighting their true application as the arrantest Ephesian journeyman that turned out those little shrines for the goddess)—exchange them for little bits of leather (our ancestors’ money) or chalk and a slate!”—

The old lady, with a smile, confessed the soundness

of my logic ; and to her approbation of my arguments on her favourite topic that evening, I have always fancied myself indebted for the legacy of a curious cribbage board, made of the finest Sienna marble, which her maternal uncle (old Walter Plumer, whom I have elsewhere celebrated) brought with him from Florence :—this, and a trifle of five hundred pounds, came to me at her death.

The former bequest (which I do not least value) I have kept with religious care ; though she herself, to confess a truth, was never greatly taken with cribbage. It was an essentially vulgar game, I have heard her say,—disputing with her uncle, who was very partial to it. She could never heartily bring her mouth to pronounce “*go*”—or “*that's a go*.” She called it an ungrammatical game. The pegging teased her. I once knew her to forfeit a rubber (a five dollar stake), because she would not take advantage of the turn-up knave, which would have given it her, but which she must have claimed by the disgraceful tenure of declaring “*two for his heels*.” There is something extremely genteel in this sort of self-denial. Sarah Battle was a gentlewoman born.

Piquet she held the best game at the cards for two persons, though she would ridicule the pedantry of the terms—such as pique—repique—the capot—they savoured (she thought) of affectation. But games for two, or even three, she never greatly cared for. She loved the quadrate, or square. She would argue thus :—Cards are warfare : the ends are gain, with glory. But cards are war, in disguise of a sport : when single adversaries encounter, the ends proposed are too palpable. By themselves, it is too close a fight ; with spectators, it is not much bettered. No looker-on can be interested, except for a bet, and then it is a mere affair of money ; he cares not for your luck *sympathetically*, or for your play.—Three are still worse ; a mere naked war of every man against every man, as in cribbage, without league or alliance ; or a rotation of petty and contradictory interests, a

succession of heartless leagues, and not much more hearty infractions of them, as in tradrille.—But in square games (*she meant whist*) all that is possible to be attained in card-playing is accomplished. There are the incentives of profit with honour, common to every species—though the *latter* can be but very imperfectly enjoyed in those other games, where the spectator is only feebly a participator. But the parties in whist are spectators and principals too. They are a theatre to themselves, and a looker-on is not wanted. He is rather worse than nothing, and an impertinence. Whist abhors neutrality, or interests beyond its sphere. You glory in some surprising stroke of skill or fortune, not because a cold—or even an interested—by-stander witnesses it, but because your *partner* sympathises in the contingency. You win for two. You triumph for two. Two are exalted. Two again are mortified; which divides their disgrace, as the conjunction doubles (by taking off the invidiousness) your glories. Two losing to two are better reconciled, than one to one in that close butchery. The hostile feeling is weakened by multiplying the channels. War becomes a civil game.—By such reasonings as these the old lady was accustomed to defend her favourite pastime.

No inducement could ever prevail upon her to play at any game, where chance entered into the composition, *for nothing*. Chance, she would argue—and here again, admire the subtlety of her conclusion!—chance is nothing, but where something else depends upon it. It is obvious, that cannot be *glory*. What rational cause of exaltation could it give to a man to turn up size ace a hundred times together by himself? or before spectators, where no stake was depending?—Make a lottery of a hundred thousand tickets with but one fortunate number—and what possible principle of our nature, except stupid wonderment, could it gratify to gain that number as many times successively, without a prize?—Therefore she disliked the mixture of chance in backgammon, where it

was not played for money. She called it foolish, and those people idiots, who were taken with a lucky hit under such circumstances. Games of pure skill were as little to her fancy. Played for a stake, they were a mere system of over-reaching. Played for glory, they were a mere setting of one man's wit,—his memory, or combination-faculty rather—against another's; like a mock-engagement at a review, bloodless and profitless.—She could not conceive a *game* wanting the spritely infusion of chance,—the handsome excuses of good fortune. Two people playing at chess in a corner of a room, whilst whist was stirring in the centre, would inspire her with insufferable horror and ennui. Those well-cut similitudes of Castles, and Knights, the *imagery* of the board, she would argue, (and I think in this case justly) were entirely misplaced and senseless. Those hard head-contests can in no instance ally with the fancy. They reject form and colour. A pencil and dry slate (she used to say) were the proper arena for such combatants.

To those puny objectors against cards, as nurturing the bad passions, she would retort, that man is a gaming animal. He must be always trying to get the better in something or other:—that this passion can scarcely be more safely expended than upon a game at cards: that cards are a temporary illusion; in truth, a mere drama; for we do but *play* at being mightily concerned, where a few idle shillings are at stake, yet, during the illusion, we *are* as mightily concerned as those whose stake is crowns and kingdoms. They are a sort of dream-fighting; much ado; great battling, and little bloodshed; mighty means for disproportioned ends; quite as diverting, and a great deal more innoxious, than many of those more serious *games* of life, which men play, without esteeming them to be such.——

With great deference to the old lady's judgment on these matters, I think I have experienced some moments in my life, when playing at cards *for nothing*

has even been agreeable. When I am in sickness, or not in the best spirits, I sometimes call for the cards, and play a game at piquet *for love* with my cousin Bridget—Bridget Elia.

I grant there is something sneaking in it ; but with a tooth-ache, or a sprained ankle,—when you are subdued and humble,—you are glad to put up with an inferior spring of action.

There is such a thing in nature, I am convinced, as *sick whist*.—

I grant it is not the highest style of man—I deprecate the manes of Sarah Battle—she lives not, alas ! to whom I should apologise.—

At such times, those *terms* which my old friend objected to, come in as something admissible.—I love to get a tierce or a quatorze, though they mean nothing. I am subdued to an inferior interest. Those shadows of winning amuse me.

That last game I had with my sweet cousin (I capotted her)—(dare I tell thee, how foolish I am ?)—I wished it might have lasted for ever, though we gained nothing, and lost nothing, though it was a mere shade of play : I would be content to go on in that idle folly for ever. The pipkin should be ever boiling, that was to prepare the gentle lenitive to my foot, which Bridget was doomed to apply after the game was over : and, as I do not much relish appliances, there it should ever bubble. Bridget and I should be ever playing.

DREAM-CHILDREN

A REVERIE

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children ; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they

never saw. In was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by every body, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county ; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, " that would be foolish indeed " And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such

a good and religious woman ; so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was ; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain ; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house ; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said “ those innocents would do her no harm ” ; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eye-brows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grand-children, having us to the great house in the holydays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them ; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken pannels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and

because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grand-children, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of every body, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make

allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed ; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death ; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me ; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n ; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentiment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was ; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech ; “ We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice called Bartrum father. We are nothing ; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and

must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name"—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

MANKIND, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his *Mundane Mutations*, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term *Cho-fang*, literally the Cook's holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swine-herd, *Ho-ti*, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son *Bo-bo*, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as youngsters of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian make-shift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of. *Bo-bo* was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so

much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labour of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odour assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from?—not from the burnt cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young fire-brand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crums of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted—*crackling*! Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and, surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hail-stones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on,

but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

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

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

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

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

Ho-ti trembled every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavour, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious) both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strickly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbours would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than

ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Peking, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it, and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given,—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision: and, when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his Lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of

consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string, or spit, came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious arts, make their way among mankind.—

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

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

I speak not of your grown porkers—things between pig and pork—those hobbydehoys—but a young and tender suckling—under a moon old—guiltless as yet of the sty—with no original speck of the *amor immunditie*, the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest—his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble, and a grumble—the mild forerunner, or *prælude*, of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled—but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat—but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result, or common substance,

Behold him, while he is doing—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth, than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string!—Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age, he hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—shooting stars—

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth!—wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal—wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation—from these sins he is happily snatched away—

“ Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
Death came with timely care—”

his memory is odoriferous—no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon—no coal-heaver bolteth him in reeking sausages—he hath a fair sepulchre in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure—and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of Savors. Pine-apple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent—a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause—too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and ex-coriateth the lips that approach her—like lovers' kisses, she biteth—she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish—but she stoppeth at the palate—she meddleth not with the appetite—and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton chop.

Pig—let me speak his praise—is no less provocative of the appetite, than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwined, and

not to be unravelled without hazard, he is—good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbours' fare.

I am one of those, who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. "Presents," I often say, "endear Absents." Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chicken (those "tame villatic fowl"), capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give every thing." I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavours, to extra-domiciliate, or send out of the house, slightly, (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what) a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate—It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweet-meat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London bridge) a grey-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt at this time of day that he was a counterfeit) I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, school-boy-like, I made him a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had

been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger, that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew ; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake—and what should I say to her the next time I saw her—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present—and the odour of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last—and I blamed my impertinent spirit of alms-giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness, and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old grey impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipt to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto—

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, " Whether, supposing that the flavour of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death ? " I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a

few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But, banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic ; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are—but consider, he is a weakling—a flower.

ON SOME OF THE OLD ACTORS

THE casual sight of an old Play Bill, which I picked up the other day—I know not by what chance it was preserved so long — tempts me to call to mind a few of the Players, who make the principal figure in it. It presents the cast of parts in the Twelfth Night, at the old Drury-lane Theatre two-and-thirty years ago. There is something very touching in these old remembrances. They make us think how we *once* used to read a Play Bill not, as now peradventure, singling out a favorite performer, and casting a negligent eye over the rest ; but spelling out every name, down to the very mutes and servants of the scene ; — when it was a matter of no small moment to us whether Whitfield, or Packer, took the part of Fabian ; when Benson, and Burton, and Phillimore — names of small account — had an importance, beyond what we can be content to attribute now to the time's best actors. — “ Orsino, by Mr. Barrymore.” — What a full Shakspearian sound it carries ! how fresh to memory arise the image, and the manner, of the gentle actor !

Those who have only seen Mrs. Jordan within the last ten or fifteen years, can have no adequate notion of her performance of such parts as Ophelia ; Helena,

in *All's Well that Ends Well*; and Viola in this play. Her voice had latterly acquired a coarseness, which suited well enough with her Nells and Hoydens, but in those days it sank, with her steady melting eye, into the heart. Her joyous parts—in which her memory now chiefly lives—in her youth were outdone by her plaintive ones. There is no giving an account how she delivered the disguised story of her love for Orsino. It was no set speech, that she had foreseen, so as to weave it into an harmonious period, line necessarily following line, to make up the music—yet I have heard it so spoken, or rather *read*, not without its grace and beauty—but, when she had declared her sister's history to be a “blank,” and that she “never told her love,” there was a pause, as if the story had ended—and then the image of the “worm in the bud” came up as a new suggestion—and the heightened image of “Patience” still followed after that, as by some growing (and not mechanical) process, thought springing up after thought, I would almost say, as they were watered by her tears. So in those fine lines :

“Write loyal cantos of contemned love—
Hollow your name to the reverberate hills—”

there was no preparation made in the foregoing image for that which was to follow. She used no rhetoric in her passion; or it was nature's own rhetoric, most legitimate then, when it seemed altogether without rule or law.

Mrs. Powel (now Mrs. Renard), then in the pride of her beauty, made an admirable Olivia. She was particularly excellent in her unbending scenes in conversation with the Clown. I have seen some Olivias—and those very sensible actresses too—who in these interlocutions have seemed to set their wits at the jester, and to vie conceits with him in downright emulation. But she used him for her sport, like

what he was, to trifle a leisure sentence or two with, and then to be dismissed, and she to be the Great Lady still. She touched the imperious fantastic humour of the character with nicety. Her fine spacious person filled the scene.

The part of Malvolio has in my judgment been so often misunderstood, and the *general merits* of the actor, who then played it, so unduly appreciated, that I shall hope for pardon, if I am a little prolix upon these points.

Of all the actors who flourished in my time—a melancholy phrase if taken aright, reader—Bensley had most of the swell of soul, was greatest in the delivery of heroic conceptions, the emotions consequent upon the presentment of a great idea to the fancy. He had the true poetical enthusiasm—the rarest faculty among players. None that I remember possessed even a portion of that fine madness which he threw out in Hotspur's famous rant about glory, or the transports of the Venetian incendiary at the vision of the fired city. His voice had the dissonance, and at times the inspiring effect of the trumpet. His gait was uncouth and stiff, but no way embarrassed by affectation; and the thorough-bred gentleman was uppermost in every movement. He seized the moment of passion with the greatest truth; like a faithful clock, never striking before the time; never anticipating or leading you to anticipate. He was totally destitute of trick and artifice. He seemed come upon the stage to do the poet's message simply, and he did it with as genuine fidelity as the nuncios in Homer deliver the errands of the gods. He let the passion or the sentiment do its own work without prop or bolstering. He would have scorned to mountebank it; and betrayed none of that *cleverness* which is the bane of serious acting. For this reason, his Iago was the only endurable one which I remember to have seen. No spectator from his action could divine more of his artifice than Othello was supposed to do. His confessions in soliloquy alone put you

in possession of the mystery. There were no by-intimations to make the audience fancy their own discernment so much greater than that of the Moor — who commonly stands like a great helpless mark set up for mine Ancient, and a quantity of barren spectators, to shoot their bolts at. The Iago of Bensley did not go to work so grossly. There was a triumphant tone about the character, natural to a general consciousness of power; but none of that petty vanity which chuckles and cannot contain itself upon any little successful stroke of its knavery—as is common with your small villains, and green probationers in mischief. It did not clap or crow before its time. It was not a man setting his wits at a child, and winking all the while at other children who are mightily pleased at being let into the secret; but a consummate villain entrapping a noble nature into toils, against which no discernment was available, where the manner was as fathomless as the purpose seemed dark, and without motive. The part of Malvolio, in the *Twelfth Night*, was performed by Bensley, with a richness and a dignity, of which (to judge from some recent castings of that character) the very tradition must be worn out from the stage. No manager in those days would have dreamed of giving it to Mr. Baddeley, or Mr. Parsons: when Bensley was occasionally absent from the theatre, John Kemble thought it no derogation to succeed to the part. Malvolio is not essentially ludicrous. He becomes comic but by accident. He is cold, austere, repelling; but dignified, consistent, and, for what appears, rather of an over-stretched morality. Maria describes him as a sort of Puritan; and he might have worn his gold chain with honour in one of our old round-head families, in the service of a Lambert, or a Lady Fairfax. But his morality and his manners are misplaced in Illyria. He is opposed to the proper *levities* of the piece, and falls in the unequal contest. Still his pride, or his gravity, (call it which you will) is inherent, and native to the man,

not mock or affected, which latter only are the fit objects to excite laughter. His quality is at the best unlovely, but neither buffoon nor contemptible. His bearing is lofty, a little above his station, but probably not much above his deserts. We see no reason why he should not have been brave, honourable, accomplished. His careless committal of the ring to the ground (which he was commissioned to restore to Cesario), bespeaks a generosity of birth and feeling. His dialect on all occasions is that of a gentleman, and a man of education. We must not confound him with the eternal old, low steward of comedy. He is master of the household to a great Princess; a dignity probably conferred upon him for other respects than age or length of service. Olivia, at the first indication of his supposed madness, declares that she "would not have him miscarry for half of her dowry." Does this look as if the character was meant to appear little or insignificant? Once, indeed, she accuses him to his face—of what?—of being "sick of self-love,"—but with a gentleness and considerateness which could not have been, if she had not thought that this particular infirmity shaded some virtues. His rebuke to the knight, and his sottish revellers, is sensible and spirited; and when we take into consideration the unprotected condition of his mistress, and the strict regard with which her state of real or dissembled mourning would draw the eyes of the world upon her house-affairs, Malvolio might feel the honour of the family in some sort in his keeping; as it appears not that Olivia had any more brothers, or kinsmen, to look to it—for Sir Toby had dropped all such nice respects at the buttery hatch. That Malvolio was meant to be represented as possessing estimable qualities, the expression of the Duke in his anxiety to have him reconciled, almost infers. "Pursue him, and entreat him to a peace." Even in his abused state of chains and darkness, a sort of greatness seems never to desert him. He argues highly and well with the supposed Sir Topas,

and philosophises gallantly upon his straw.¹ There must have been some shadow of worth about the man ; he must have been something more than a mere vapour—a thing of straw, or Jack in office—before Fabian and Maria could have ventured sending him upon a courting-errand to Olivia. There was some consonancy (as he would say) in the undertaking, or the jest would have been too bold even for that house of misrule.

Bensley, accordingly, threw over the part an air of Spanish loftiness. He looked, spake, and moved like an old Castilian. He was starch, spruce, opinionated, but his superstructure of pride seemed bottomed upon a sense of worth. There was something in it beyond the coxcomb. It was big and swelling, but you could not be sure that it was hollow. You might wish to see it taken down, but you felt that it was upon an elevation. He was magnificent from the outset ; but when the decent sobrieties of the character began to give way, and the poison of self-love, in his conceit of the Countess's affection, gradually to work, you would have thought that the hero of *La Mancha* in person stood before you. How he went smiling to himself ! with what ineffable carelessness would he twirl his gold chain ! what a dream it was ! you were infected with the illusion, and did not wish that it should be removed ! you had no room for laughter ! if an unseasonable reflection of morality obtruded itself, it was a deep sense of the pitiable infirmity of man's nature, that can lay him open to such frenzies—but in truth you rather admired than pitied the lunacy while it lasted—you felt that an hour of such mistake was worth an age with the eyes open. Who would not wish to live but for

¹ *Clown*. What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl ?

Mal. That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird.

Clown. What thinkest thou of his opinion ?

Mal. I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve of his opinion.

a day in the conceit of such a lady's love as Olivia? Why, the Duke would have given his principality but for a quarter of a minute, sleeping or waking, to have been so deluded. The man seemed to tread upon air, to taste manna, to walk with his head in the clouds, to mate Hyperion. O! shake not the castles of his pride—endure yet for a season bright moments of confidence—"stand still ye watches of the element," that Malvolio may be still in fancy fair Olivia's lord—but fate and retribution say no—I hear the mischievous titter of Maria—the witty taunts of Sir Toby—the still more insupportable triumph of the foolish knight—the counterfeited Sir Topas is unmasked—and "thus the whirligig of time," as the true clown hath it, "brings in his revenges." I confess that I never saw the catastrophe of this character, while Bensley played it, without a kind of tragic interest. There was good foolery too. Few now remember Dodd. What an Ague-cheek the stage lost in him! Lovegrove, who came nearest to the old actors, revived the character some few seasons ago, and made it sufficiently grotesque; but Dodd was *it*, as it came out of nature's hands. It might be said to remain *in puris naturalibus*. In expressing slowness of apprehension this actor surpassed all others. You could see the first dawn of an idea stealing slowly over his countenance, climbing up by little and little, with a painful process, till it cleared up at last to the fulness of a twilight conception—its highest meridian. He seemed to keep back his intellect, as some have had the power to retard their pulsation. The balloon takes less time in filling, than it took to cover the expansion of his broad moony face over all its quarters with expression. A glimmer of understanding would appear in a corner of his eye, and for lack of fuel go out again. A part of his forehead would catch a little intelligence, and be a long time in communicating it to the remainder.

I am ill at dates, but I think it is now better than five and twenty years ago that walking in the gardens

of Gray's Inn—they were then far finer than they are now—the accursed Verulam Buildings had not encroached upon all the east side of them, cutting out delicate green crinkles, and shouldering away one of two of the stately alcoves of the terrace—the survivor stands gaping and relationless as if it remembered its brother—they are still the best gardens of any of the Inns of Court, my beloved Temple not forgotten, have the gravest character, their aspect being altogether reverend and law-breathing—Bacon has left the impress of his foot upon their gravel walks—taking my afternoon solace on a summer day upon the aforesaid terrace, a comely sad personage came towards me, whom, from his grave air and deportment, I judged to be one of the old Benchers of the Inn. He had a serious thoughtful forehead, and seemed to be in meditations of mortality. As I have an instinctive awe of old Benchers, I was passing him with that sort of subindicative token of respect which one is apt to demonstrate towards a venerable stranger, and which rather denotes an inclination to greet him, than any positive motion of the body to that effect—a species of humility and will-worship which I observe, nine times out of ten, rather puzzles than pleases the person it is offered to—when the face turning full upon me strangely identified itself with that of Dodd. Upon close inspection I was not mistaken. But could this sad thoughtful countenance be the same vacant face of folly which I had hailed so often under circumstances of gaiety ; which I had never seen without a smile, or recognised but as the usher of mirth ; that looked out so formally flat in Foppington, so frothily pert in Tattle, so impotently busy in Backbite ; so blankly divested of all meaning, or resolutely expressive of none, in Acres, in Fribble, and a thousand agreeable impertinences ? Was this the face—full of thought and carefulness—that had so often divested itself at will of every trace of either to give me diversion, to clear my cloudy face for two or three hours

at least of its furrows? Was this the face—manly, sober, intelligent,—which I had so often despised, made mocks at, made merry with? The remembrance of the freedoms which I had taken with it came upon me with a reproach of insult. I could have asked it pardon. I thought it looked upon me with a sense of injury. There is something strange as well as sad in seeing actors—your pleasant fellows, particularly—subjected to and suffering the common lot—their fortunes, their casualties, their deaths, seem to belong to the scene, their actions to be amenable to poetic justice only. We can hardly connect them with more awful responsibilities. The death of this fine actor took place shortly after this meeting. He had quitted the stage some months; and, as I learned afterwards, had been in the habit of resorting daily to these gardens almost to the day of his decease. In these serious walks probably he was divesting himself of many scenic and some real vanities—weaning himself from the frivolities of the lesser and the greater theatre—doing gentle penance for a life of no very reprehensible fooleries,—taking off by degrees the buffoon mask which he might feel he had worn too long—and rehearsing for a more solemn cast of part. Dying he “put on the weeds of Dominic”¹

If few can remember Dodd, many yet living will not easily forget the pleasant creature, who in those days enacted the part of the Clown to Dodd’s Sir

¹ Dodd was a man of reading, and left at his death a choice collection of old English literature. I should judge him to have been a man of wit. I know one instance of an impromptu which no length of study could have bettered. My merry friend, Jem White, had seen him one evening in Aguecheek, and recognising Dodd the next day in Fleet Street, was irresistibly impelled to take off his hat and salute him as the identical Knight of the preceding evening with a “Save you, Sir Andrew.” Dodd, not at all disconcerted at this unusual address from a stranger, with a courteous half-rebuking wave of the hand, put him off with an “Away, Fool.”

Andrew.—Richard, or rather Dicky Suet—*for so in his life-time he delighted to be called, and time hath ratified the appellation—lieth buried on the north side of the cemetery of Holy Paul, to whose service his nonage and tender years were dedicated. There are who do yet remember him at that period—his pipe clear and harmonious. He would often speak of his chorister days, when he was “cherub Dicky.”*

What clipped his wings, or made it expedient that he should exchange the holy for the profane state; whether he had lost his good voice (his best recommendation to that office), like Sir John, “with hallooing and singing of anthems;” or whether he was adjudged to lack something, even in those early years, of the gravity indispensable to an occupation which professeth to “commerce with the skies”—I could never rightly learn; but we find him, after the probation of a twelvemonth or so, reverting to a secular condition, and become one of us.

I think he was not altogether of that timber, out of which cathedral seats and sounding boards are hewed. But if a glad heart—kind and therefore glad—be any part of sanctity, then might the robe of Motley, with which he invested himself with so much humility after his deprivation, and which he wore so long with so much blameless satisfaction to himself and to the public, be accepted for a surplice—his white stole, and *albe*.

The first fruits of his secularization was an engagement upon the boards of Old Drury, at which theatre he commenced, as I have been told, with adopting the manner of Parsons in old men’s characters. At the period in which most of us knew him, he was no more an imitator than he was in any true sense himself imitable.

He was the Robin Good-Fellow of the stage. He came in to trouble all things with a welcome perplexity, himself no whit troubled for the matter. He was known, like Puck, by his note—*Ha ! Ha ! Ha !*

—sometimes deepening to *Ho ! Ho ! Ho !* with an irresistible accession, derived perhaps remotely from his ecclesiastical education, foreign to his prototype of,—*O La !* Thousands of hearts yet respond to the chuckling *O La !* of Dicky Suett, brought back to their remembrance by the faithful transcript of his friend Mathews's mimicry. The "force of nature could no further go." He drolled upon the stock of these two syllables richer than the cuckoo.

Care, that troubles all the world, was forgotten in his composition. Had he had but two grains (nay, half a grain) of it, he could never have supported himself upon those two spider's strings, which served him (in the latter part of his unmixed existence) as legs. A doubt or a scruple must have made him totter, a sigh have puffed him down ; the weight of a frown had staggered him, a wrinkle made him lose his balance. But on he went, scrambling upon those airy stilts of his, with Robin Good-fellow, "thorough brake, thorough briar," reckless of a scratched face or a torn doublet.

Shakspeare foresaw him, when he framed his fools and jesters. They have all the true Suett stamp, a loose and shambling gait, a slippery tongue, this last the ready midwife to a without-pain-delivered jest ; in words, light as air, venting truths deep as the centre ; with idlest rhymes tagging conceit when busiest, singing with Lear in the tempest, or Sir Toby at the buttery-hatch.

Jack Bannister and he had the fortune to be more of personal favourites with the town than any actors before or after. The difference, I take it, was this :—Jack was more *beloved* for his sweet, good-natured, moral pretensions. Dicky was more *liked* for his sweet, good-natured, no pretensions at all. Your whole conscience stirred with Bannister's performance of Walter in the Children in the Wood—but Dicky seemed like a thing, as Shakspeare says, of Love, too young to know what conscience is. He put us into Vesta's days. Evil fled before him—not as

from Jack, as from an antagonist,—but because it could not touch him, any more than a cannon-ball a fly. He was delivered from the burthen of that death; and, when Death came himself, not in metaphor, to fetch Dicky, it is recorded of him by Robert Palmer, who kindly watched his exit, that he received the last stroke, neither varying his accustomed tranquillity, nor tune, with the simple exclamation, worthy to have been recorded in his epitaph—*O La ! O La ! Bobby !*

The elder Palmer (of stage-treading celebrity) commonly played Sir Toby in those days; but there is a solidity of wit in the jests of that half-Falstaff which he did not quite fill out. He was as much too showy as Moody (who sometimes took the part) was dry and sottish. In sock or buskin there was an air of swaggering gentility about Jack Palmer. He was a *gentleman* with a slight infusion of the *footman*. His brother Bob (of recenter memory) who was his shadow in every thing while he lived, and dwindled into less than a shadow afterwards—was a *gentleman* with a little stronger infusion of the *latter ingredient*, that was all. It is amazing how a little of the more or less makes a difference in these things. When you saw Bobby in the Duke's Servant,¹ you said, what a pity such a pretty fellow was only a servant. When you saw Jack figuring in Captain Absolute, you thought you could trace his promotion to some lady of quality who fancied the handsome fellow in his topknot, and had bought him a commission. Therefore Jack in Dick Amlet was insuperable.

Jack had two voices,—both plausible, hypocritical, and insinuating; but his secondary or supplemental voice still more decisively histrionic than his common one. It was reserved for the spectator; and the *dramatis personæ* were supposed to know nothing at all about it. The *lies* of young Wilding, and the *sentiments* in Joseph Surface, were thus marked out

¹ High Life Below Stairs.

in a sort of italics to the audience. This secret correspondence with the company before the curtain (which is the bane and death of tragedy) has an extremely happy effect in some kinds of comedy, in the more highly artificial comedy of Congreve or of Sheridan especially, where the absolute sense of reality (so indispensable to scenes of interest) is not required, or would rather interfere to diminish your pleasure. The fact is, you do not believe in such characters as Surface—the villain of artificial comedy—even while you read or see them. If you did, they would shock and not divert you. When Ben, in *Love for Love*, returns from sea, the following exquisite dialogue occurs at his first meeting with his father :

Sir Sampson. Thou hast been many a weary league, Ben, since I saw thee.

Ben. Ey, ey, been ! Been far enough, an that be all.—Well, father, and how do all at home ? how does brother Dick, and brother Val ?

Sir Sampson. Dick ! body o' me, Dick has been dead these two years. I writ you word when you were at Leghorn.

Ben. Mess, that's true ; Marry, I had forgot. Dick's dead, as you say—Well, and how ?—I have a many questions to ask you——"

Here is an instance of insensibility which in real life would be revolting, or rather in real life could not have co-existed with the warm-hearted temperament of the character. But when you read it in the spirit with which such playful selections and specious combinations rather than strict *metaphrases* of nature should be taken, or when you saw Bannister play it, it neither did, nor does wound the moral sense at all. For what is Ben—the pleasant sailor which Bannister gives us—but a piece of satire—a creation of Congreve's fancy—a dreamy combination of all the accidents of a sailor's character—his contempt of money—his credulity to women—with that necessary estrangement from home which it is just within the verge of credibility to suppose *might* produce such an hallucination as is here described. We never think

the worse of Ben for it, or feel it as a stain upon his character. But when an actor comes, and instead of the delightful phantom—the creature dear to half-belief—which Bannister exhibited—displays before our eyes a downright concretion of a Wapping sailor—a jolly warm-hearted Jack Tar—and nothing else—when instead of investing it with a delicious confusedness of the head, and a veering undirected goodness of purpose—he gives to it a downright daylight understanding, and a full consciousness of its actions; thrusting forward the sensibilities of the character with a pretence as if it stood upon nothing else, and was to be judged by them alone—we feel the discord of the thing; the scene is disturbed; a real man has got in among the *dramatis personæ*, and puts them out. We want the sailor turned out. We feel that his true place is not behind the curtain but in the first or second gallery.

BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

I DO not know a pleasure more affecting than to range at will over the deserted apartments of some fine old family mansion. The traces of extinct grandeur admit of a better passion than envy: and contemplations on the great and good, whom we fancy in succession to have been its inhabitants, weave for us illusions, incompatible with the bustle of modern occupancy, and vanities of foolish present aristocracy. The same difference of feeling, I think, attends us between entering an empty and a crowded church. In the latter it is chance but some present human frailty—an act of inattention on the part of some of the auditory—or a trait of affectation, or worse, vain-glory, on that of the preacher—puts us by our best thoughts, disharmonising the place and the occasion. But

would'st thou know the beauty of holiness?—go alone on some week-day, borrowing the keys of good Master Sexton, traverse the cool aisles of some country church: think of the piety that has kneeled there—the congregations, old and young, that have found consolation there—the meek pastor—the docile parishioner. With no disturbing emotions, no cross conflicting comparisons, drink in the tranquillity of the place, till thou thyself become as fixed and motionless as the marble effigies that kneel and weep around thee.

Journeying northward lately, I could not resist going some few miles out of my road to look upon the remains of an old great house with which I had been impressed in this way in infancy. I was apprised that the owner of it had lately pulled it down; still I had a vague notion that it could not all have perished, that so much solidity with magnificence could not have been crushed all at once into the mere dust and rubbish which I found it.

The work of ruin had proceeded with a swift hand indeed, and the demolition of a few weeks had reduced it to—an antiquity.

I was astonished at the indistinction of everything. Where had stood the great gates? What bounded the court-yard? Whereabout did the out-houses commence? a few bricks only lay as representatives of that which was so stately and so spacious.

Death does not shrink up his human victim at this rate. The burnt ashes of a man weigh more in their proportion.

Had I seen these brick-and-mortar knaves at their process of destruction, at the plucking of every pannel I should have felt the varlets at my heart. I should have cried out to them to spare a plank at least out of the cheerful store-room, in whose hot window-seat I used to sit and read Cowley, with the grass-plot before, and the hum and flappings of that one solitary wasp that ever haunted it about me—it is in mine ears now, as oft as summer returns; or a pannel of the yellow room.

Why, every plank and pannel of that house for me had magic in it. The tapestried bed-rooms—tapestry so much better than painting—not adorning merely, but peopling the wainscots—at which childhood ever and anon would steal a look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those stern bright visages, staring reciprocally—all Ovid on the walls, in colours vividder than his descriptions. Actæon in mid sprout, with the unappeasable prudery of Diana ; and the still more provoking, and almost culinary coolness of Dan Phœbus, eel-fashion, deliberately divesting of Marsyas.

Then, that haunted room—in which old Mrs. Battle died—whereinto I have crept, but always in the daytime, with a passion of fear ; and a sneaking curiosity, terror-tainted, to hold communication with the past—*How shall they build it up again ?*

It was an old deserted place, yet not so long deserted but that traces of the splendour of past inmates were everywhere apparent. Its furniture was still standing—even to the tarnished gilt leather battledores, and crumbling feathers of shuttlecocks in the nursery, which told that children had once played there. But I was a lonely child, and had the range at will of every apartment, knew every nook and corner, wondered and worshipped everywhere.

The solitude of childhood is not so much the mother of thought, as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those years, that, though there lay—I shame to say how few roods distant from the mansion—half hid by trees, what I judged some romantic lake, such was the spell which bound me to the house, and such my carefulness not to pass its strict and proper precincts, that the idle waters lay unexplored for me ; and not till late in life, curiosity prevailing over elder devotion, I found, to my astonishment, a pretty brawling brook had been the *Lacus Incognitus* of my infancy. Variegated views,

extensive prospects—and those at no great distance from the house—I was told of such—what were they to me, being out of the boundaries of my Eden?—So far from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, methought, still closer the fences of my chosen prison ; and have been hemmed in by a yet securer cincture of those excluding garden walls. I could have exclaimed with that garden-loving poet :

“ Bind me, ye woodbines, in your 'twines,
Curl me about, ye gadding vines ;
And oh so close your circles lace,
That I may never leave this place ;
But, lest your fetters prove too weak,
Ere I your silken bondage break,
Do you, O brambles, chain me too,
And, courteous briars, nail me through ! ”

I was here as in a lonely temple. Snug firesides—the low-built roof—parlours ten feet by ten—frugal boards, and all the homeliness of home—these were the condition of my birth—the wholesome soil which I was planted in. Yet, without impeachment to their tenderest lessons, I am not sorry to have had glances of something beyond ; and to have taken, if but a peep, in childhood, at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune.

To have the feeling of gentility, it is not necessary to have been born gentle. The pride of ancestry may be had on cheaper terms than to be obliged to an importunate race of ancestors ; and the coatless antiquary in his unemblazoned cell, revolving the long line of a Mowbray's or De Clifford's pedigree, at those sounding names may warm himself into as gay a vanity as those who do inherit them. The claims of birth are ideal merely, and what herald shall go about to strip me of an idea ? Is it trenchant to their swords ? can it be hacked off as a spur can ? or torn away like a tarnished garter ?

What, else, were the families of the great to us ? what pleasure should we take in their tedious genealogies, or their capitulatory brass monuments ?

What to us the uninterrupted current of their bloods, if our own did not answer within us to a cognate and correspondent elevation ?

Or wherefore, else, O tattered and diminished 'Scutcheon that hung upon the time-worn walls of thy princely stairs, BLAKESMOOR ! have I in childhood so oft stood poring upon thy mystic characters—thy emblematic supporters, with their prophetic "Resurgam"—till, every dreg of peasantry purging off, I received into myself Very Gentility ? Thou wert first in my morning eyes ; and of nights, hast detained my steps from bedward, till it was but a step from gazing at thee to dreaming on thee.

This is the only true gentry by adoption ; the veritable change of blood, and not, as empirics have fabled, by transfusion.

Who it was by dying that had earned the splendid trophy, I know not, I inquired not ; but its fading rags, and colours cobweb-stained, told that its subject was of two centuries back.

And what if my ancestor at that date was some Damœtas—feeding flocks, not his own, upon the hills of Lincoln—did I in less earnest vindicate to myself the family trappings of this once proud Ægon ?—repaying by a backward triumph the insults he might possibly have heaped in his life-time upon my poor pastoral progenitor.

If it were presumption so to speculate, the present owners of the mansion had least reason to complain. They had long forsaken the old house of their fathers for a newer trifle ; and I was left to appropriate to myself what images I could pick up, to raise my fancy, or to soothe my vanity.

I was the true descendant of those old W—s ; and not the present family of that name, who had fled the old waste places.

Mine was that gallery of good old family portraits, which as I have gone over, giving them in fancy my own family name, one—and then another—would seem to smile, reaching forward from the canvas,

to recognise the new relationship ; while the rest looked grave, as it seemed, at the vacancy in their dwelling, and thoughts of fled posterity.

That Beauty with the cool blue pastoral drapery, and a lamb—that hung next the great bay window—with the bright yellow H—shire hair, and eye of watchet hue—so like my Alice !—I am persuaded she was a true Elia—Mildred Elia, I take it.

Mine too, BLAKESMOOR, was thy noble Marble Hall, with its mosaic pavements, and its Twelve Cæsars—stately busts in marble—ranged round : of whose countenances, young reader of faces as I was, the frowning beauty of Nero, I remember, had most of my wonder ; but the mild Galba had my love. There they stood in the coldness of death, yet freshness of immortality.

Mine too, thy lofty Justice Hall, with its one chair of authority, high-backed and wickered, once the terror of luckless poacher, or self-forgetful maiden—so common since, that bats have roosted in it.

Mine too—whose else?—thy costly fruit-garden, with its sunbaked southern wall ; the ampler pleasure-garden, rising backwards from the house in triple terraces, with flower-pots now of palest lead, save that a speck here and there, saved from the elements, bespoke their pristine state to have been gilt and glittering ; the verdant quarters backwarder still ; and, stretching still beyond, in old formality, thy firry wilderness, the haunt of the squirrel, and the day-long murmuring woodpigeon, with that antique image in the centre, God or Goddess I wist not ; but child of Athens or old Rome paid never a sincerer worship to Pan or to Sylvanus in their native groves, than I to that fragmental mystery.

Was it for this, that I kissed my childish hands too fervently in your idol worship, walks and windings of BLAKESMOOR ! for this, or what sin of mine, has the plough passed over your pleasant places ? I sometimes think that as men, when they die, do not die all, so of their extinguished habitations there may be a hope—a germ to be revived.

CAPTAIN JACKSON

AMONG the deaths in our obituary for this month, I observe with concern "At his cottage on the Bath road, Captain Jackson." The name and attribution are common enough ; but a feeling like reproach persuades me, that this could have been no other in fact than my dear old friend, who some five-and-twenty years ago rented a tenement, which he was pleased to dignify with the appellation here used, about a mile from Westbourn Green. Alack, how good men, and the good turns they do us, slide out of memory, and are recalled but by the surprise of some such sad memento as that which now lies before us !

He whom I mean was a retired half-pay officer, with a wife and two grown-up daughters, whom he maintained with the port and notions of gentlewomen upon that slender professional allowance. Comely girls they were too.

And was I in danger of forgetting this man ?—his cheerful suppers—the noble tone of hospitality, when first you set your foot in *the cottage*—the anxious ministerings about you, where little or nothing (God knows) was to be ministered.—Althea's horn in a poor platter—the power of self-enchantment, by which, in his magnificent wishes to entertain you, he multiplied his means to bounties.

You saw with your bodily eyes indeed what seemed a bare scrag—cold savings from the foregone meal—remnant hardly sufficient to send a mendicant from the door contented. But in the copious will—the revelling imagination of your host—the "mind, the mind, Master Shallow," whole beeves were spread before you—hecatombs—no end appeared to the profusion.

It was the widow's cruse—the loaves and fishes ; carving could not lessen nor helping diminish it—the stamina were left—the elemental bone still flourished, divested of its accidents.

“ Let us live while we can,” methinks I hear the open-handed creature exclaim ; “ while we have, let us not want,” “ here is plenty left ; ” “ want for nothing ”—with many more such hospitable sayings, the spurs of appetite, and old concomitants of smoaking boards, and feast-oppressed chargers. Then sliding a slender ratio of Single Gloucester upon his wife's plate, or the daughter's, he would convey the remanent rind into his own, with a merry quirk of “ the nearer the bone,” &c., and declaring that he universally preferred the outside. For we had our table distinctions, you are to know, and some of us in a manner sate above the salt. None but his guest or guests dreamed of tasting flesh luxuries at night, the fragments were *verè hospitibus sacra*. But of one thing or another there was always enough, and leavings : only he would sometimes finish the remainder crust, to show that he wished no savings.

Wine he had none ; nor, except on very rare occasions, spirits ; but the sensation of wine was there. Some thin kind of ale I remember—“ British beverage,” he would say ! “ Push about, my boys ; ” “ Drink to your sweethearts, girls.” At every meagre draught a toast must ensue, or a song. All the forms of good liquor were there, with none of the effects wanting. Shut your eyes, and you would swear a capacious bowl of punch was foaming in the centre, with beams of generous Port or Madeira radiating to it from each of the table corners. You got flustered, without knowing whence ; tipsy upon words ; and reeled under the potency of his unperforming Bacchanalian encouragements.

We had our songs—“ Why, Soldiers, Why ”—and the “ British Grenadiers ”—in which last we were all obliged to bear chorus. Both the daughters sang. Their proficiency was a nightly theme—the masters

he had given them—the “no-expence” which he spared to accomplish them in a science “so necessary to young women.” But then—they could not sing “without the instrument.”

Sacred, and by me, never-to-be violated, Secrets of Poverty! Should I disclose your honest aims at grandeur, your makeshift efforts of magnificence? Sleep, sleep, with all thy broken keys, if one of the bunch be extant; thrummed by a thousand ancestral thumbs; dear, cracked spinnet of dearer Louisa! Without mention of mine, be dumb, thou thin accompanier of her thinner warble! A veil be spread over the dear delighted face of the well-deluded father, who now haply listening to cherubic notes, scarce feels sincerer pleasure than when she awakened thy timeshaken chords responsive to the twitterings of that slender image of a voice.

We were not without our literary talk either. It did not extend far, but as far as it went, it was good. It was bottomed well; had good grounds to go upon. In *the cottage* was a room, which tradition authenticated to have been the same in which Glover, in his occasional retirements, had penned the greater part of his *Leonidas*. This circumstance was nightly quoted, though none of the present inmates, that I could discover, appeared ever to have met with the poem in question. But that was no matter. Glover had written there, and the anecdote was pressed into the account of the family importance. It diffused a learned air through the apartment, the little side casement of which (the poet's study window), opening upon a superb view as far as to the pretty spire of Harrow, over domains and patrimonial acres, not a rood nor square yard whereof our host could call his own, yet gave occasion to an immoderate expansion of—vanity shall I call it?—in his bosom, as he showed them in a glowing summer evening. It was all his, he took it all in, and communicated rich portions of it to his guests. It was a part of his largess, his hospitality; it was going over his grounds; he was

lord for the time of showing them, and you the implicit lookers-up to his magnificence.

He was a juggler, who threw mists before your eyes—you had no time to detect his fallacies. He would say “hand me the *silver* sugar tongs;” and, before you could discover it was a single spoon, and that *plated*, he would disturb and captivate your imagination by a misnomer of “the urn” for a tea kettle; or by calling a homely bench a sofa. Rich men direct you to their furniture, poor ones divert you from it; he neither did one nor the other, but by simply assuming that everything was handsome about him, you were positively at a demur what you did, or did not see, at *the cottage*. With nothing to live on, he seemed to live on everything. He had a stock of wealth in his mind; not that which is properly termed *Content*, for in truth he was not to be *contained* at all, but overflowed all bounds by the force of a magnificent self-delusion.

Enthusiasm is catching; and even his wife, a sober native of North Britain, who generally saw things more as they were, was not proof against the continual collision of his credulity. Her daughters were rational and discreet young women; in the main, perhaps, not insensible to their true circumstances. I have seen them assume a thoughtful air at times. But such was the preponderating opulence of his fancy, that I am persuaded, not for any half hour together, did they ever look their own prospects fairly in the face. There was no resisting the vortex of his temperament. His riotous imagination conjured up handsome settlements before their eyes, which kept them up in the eye of the world too, and seem at last to have realised themselves; for they both have married since, I am told, more than respectably.

It is long since, and my memory waxes dim on some subjects, or I should wish to convey some notion of the manner in which the pleasant creature described the circumstances of his own wedding-day. I faintly remember something of a chaise and four, in which

he made his entry into Glasgow on that morning to fetch the bride home, or carry her thither, I forget which. It so completely made out the stanza of the old ballad :

“ When we came down through Glasgow town,
We were a comely sight to see ;
My love was clad in black velvet,
And I myself in cramasie.”

I suppose it was the only occasion, upon which his own actual splendour at all corresponded with the world's notions on that subject. In homely cart, or travelling caravan, by whatever humble vehicle they chanced to be transported in less prosperous days, the ride through Glasgow came back upon his fancy, not as a humiliating contrast, but as a fair occasion for reverting to that one day's state. It seemed an “ equipage etern ” from which no power of fate or fortune, once mounted, had power thereafter to dislodge him.

There is some merit in putting a handsome face upon indigent circumstances. To bully and swagger away the sense of them before strangers, may be not always discommendable. Tibbs, and Bobadil, even when detected, have more of our admiration than contempt. But for a man to put the cheat upon himself ; to play the Bobadil at home ; and, steeped in poverty up to the lips, to fancy himself all the while chin-deep in riches, is a strain of constitutional philosophy, and a mastery over fortune, which was reserved for my old friend Captain Jackson.

THE WEDDING

I DO not know when I have been better pleased than at being invited last week to be present at the wedding of a friend's daughter. I like to make one at these ceremonies, which to us old people give back our youth in a manner, and restore

our gayest season, in the remembrance of our own success, or the regrets, scarcely less tender, of our own youthful disappointments, in this point of a settlement. On these occasions I am sure to be in good-humour for a week or two after, and enjoy a reflected honey-moon. Being without a family, I am flattered with these temporary adoptions into a friend's family ; I feel a sort of cousinhood, or uncle-ship, for the season ; I am inducted into degrees of affinity ; and, in the participated socialities of the little community, I lay down for a brief while my solitary bachelorship. I carry this humour so far, that I take it unkindly to be left out, even when a funeral is going on in the house of a dear friend. But to my subject.—

The union itself had been long settled, but its celebration had been hitherto deferred, to an almost unreasonable state of suspense in the lovers, by some invincible prejudices which the bride's father had unhappily contracted upon the subject of the too early marriages of females. He has been lecturing any time these five years—for to that length the courtship has been protracted—upon the propriety of putting off the solemnity, till the lady should have completed her five and twentieth year. We all began to be afraid that a suit, which as yet had abated of none of its ardours, might at last be lingered on, till passion had time to cool, and love go out in the experiment. But a little wheedling on the part of his wife, who was by no means a party to these overstrained notions, joined to some serious expostulations on that of his friends, who, from the growing infirmities of the old gentleman, could not promise ourselves many years' enjoyment of his company, and were anxious to bring matters to a conclusion during his life-time, at length prevailed ; and on Monday last the daughter of my old friend, Admiral — having attained the *womanly* age of nineteen, was conducted to the church by her pleasant cousin J—, who told some few years older.

Before the youthful part of my female readers express their indignation at the abominable loss of time occasioned to the lovers by the preposterous notions of my old friend, they will do well to consider the reluctance which a fond parent naturally feels at parting with his child. To this unwillingness, I believe, in most cases may be traced the difference of opinion on this point between child and parent, whatever pretences of interest or prudence may be held out to cover it. The hard-heartedness of fathers is a fine theme for romance writers, a sure and moving topic ; but is there not something untender, to say no more of it, in the hurry which a beloved child is sometimes in to tear herself from the parental stock, and commit herself to strange graftings ? The case is heightened where the lady, as in the present instance, happens to be an only child. I do not understand these matters experimentally, but I can make a shrewd guess at the wounded pride of a parent upon these occasions. It is no new observation, I believe, that a lover in most cases has no rival so much to be feared as the father. Certainly there is a jealousy in *unparallel subjects*, which is little less heart-rending than the passion which we more strictly christen by that name. Mothers' scruples are more easily got over ; for this reason, I suppose, that the protection transferred to a husband is less a derogation and a loss to their authority than to the paternal. Mothers, besides, have a trembling foresight, which paints the inconveniences (impossible to be conceived in the same degree by the other parent) of a life of forlorn celibacy, which the refusal of a tolerable match may entail upon their child. Mothers' instinct is a surer guide here, than the cold reasonings of a father on such a topic. To this instinct may be imputed, and by it alone may be excused, the unbeseeming artifices, by which some wives push on the matrimonial projects of their daughters, which the husband, however approving, shall entertain with comparative indifference. A little shamelessness on this head is

My friend the Admiral was in fine wig and buckle on this occasion—a striking contrast to his usual neglect of personal appearance. He did not once shove up his borrowed locks (his custom ever at his morning studies) to betray the few grey stragglers of his own beneath them. He wore an aspect of thoughtful satisfaction. I trembled for the hour, which at length approached, when after a protracted *breakfast* of three hours—if stores of cold fowls, tongues, hams, botargoes, dried fruits, wines, cordials, &c., can deserve so meagre an appellation—the coach was announced, which was come to carry off the bride and bridegroom for a season, as custom has sensibly ordained, into the country; upon which design, wishing them a felicitous journey, let us return to the assembled guests.

“As when a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
The eyes of men
Are idly bent on him that enters next,”

so idly did we bend our eyes upon one another, when the chief performers in the morning's pageant had vanished. None told his tale. None sipt her glass. The poor Admiral made an effort—it was not much. I had anticipated so far. Even the infinity of full satisfaction, that had betrayed itself through the prim looks and quiet deportment of his lady, began to wane into something of misgiving. No one knew whether to take their leaves or stay. We seemed assembled upon a silly occasion. In this crisis, betwixt tarrying and departure, I must do justice to a foolish talent of mine, which had otherwise like to have brought me into disgrace in the fore-part of the day; I mean a power, in any emergency, of thinking and giving vent to all manner of strange nonsense. In this awkward dilemma I found it sovereign. I rattled off some of my most excellent absurdities. All were willing to be relieved, at any expense of reason, from the pressure of the intolerable

vacuum which had succeeded to the morning bustle. By this means I was fortunate in keeping together the better part of the company to a late hour : and a rubber of whist (the Admiral's favourite game) with some rare strokes of chance as well as skill, which came opportunely on his side—lengthened out till midnight—dismissed the old gentleman at last to his bed with comparatively easy spirits.

I have been at my old friend's various times since. I do not know a visiting place where every guest is so perfectly at his ease ; nowhere, where harmony is so strangely the result of confusion. Every body is at cross purposes, yet the effect is so much better than uniformity. Contradictory orders ; servants pulling one way ; master and mistress driving some other, yet both diverse ; visitors huddled up in corners ; chairs unsymmetrised : candles disposed by chance ; meals at odd hours, tea and supper at once, or the latter preceding the former ; the host and the guest conferring, yet each upon a different topic, each understanding himself, neither trying to understand or hear the other ; draughts and politics, chess and political economy, cards and conversation on nautical matters, going on at once, without the hope or indeed the wish, of distinguishing them, make it altogether the most perfect *concordia discors* you shall meet with. Yet somehow the old house is not quite what it should be. The Admiral still enjoys his pipe, but he has no Miss Emily to fill it for him. The instrument stands where it stood, but she is gone, whose delicate touch could sometimes for a short minute appease the warring elements. He has learnt, as Marvel expresses it, to " make his destiny his choice." He bears bravely up, but he does not come out with his flashes of wild wit so thick as formerly. His sea songs seldomer escape him. His wife, too, looks as if she wanted some younger body to scold and set to rights. We all miss a junior presence. It is wonderful how one young maiden freshens up, and keeps green, the paternal roof.

Old and young seem to have an interest in her, so long as she is not absolutely disposed of. The youthfulness of the house is flown. Emily is married.

THE GENTLE GIANTESS

(1822)

THE widow Blacket, of Oxford, is the largest female I ever had the pleasure of beholding. There may be her parallel upon the earth, but surely I never saw it. I take her to be lineally descended from the maid's aunt of Brainford, who caused Master Ford such uneasiness. She hath Atlantean shoulders; and, as she stoopeth in her gait—with as few offences to answer for in her own particular as any of Eve's daughters—her back seems broad enough to bear the blame of all the peccadillos that have been committed since Adam. She girdeth her waist—or what she is pleased to esteem as such—nearly up to her shoulders, from beneath which, that huge dorsal expanse, in mountainous declivity, emergeth. Respect for her alone preventeth the idle boys, who follow her about in shoals, whenever she cometh abroad, from getting up and riding. But her presence infallibly commands a reverence. She is indeed, as the Americans would express it, something awful. Her person is a burthen to herself, no less than to the ground which bears her. To her mighty bone she hath a pinguitude withal, which makes the depth of winter to her the most desirable season. Her distress in the warmer solstice is pitiable. During the months of July and August she usually renteth a cool cellar, where ices are kept, whereinto she descendeth when Sirius rageth. She dates from a hot Thursday—some twenty-five years ago. Her apartment in summer is pervious to the four winds. Two doors, in north

and south direction, and two windows, fronting the rising and the setting sun, never closed, from every cardinal point, catch the contributory breezes. She loves to enjoy what she calls a quadruple draught. That must be a shrewd zephyr that can escape her. I owe a painful face-ache, which oppresses me at this moment, to a cold caught, sitting by her, one day in last July, at this receipt of coolness. Her fan in ordinary resembleth a banner spread, which she keepeth continually on the alert to detect the least breeze. She possesseth an active and gadding mind, totally incommensurate with her person. No one delighteth more than herself in country exercises and pastimes. I have passed many an agreeable holiday with her in her favourite park at Woodstock. She performs her part in these delightful ambulatory excursions by the aid of a portable garden chair. She setteth out with you at a fair foot gallop, which she keepeth up till you are both well breathed, and then she reposeth for a few seconds. Then she is up again, for a hundred paces or so, and again resteth—her movement on these sprightly occasions being something between walking and flying. Her great weight seemeth to propel her forward, ostrich-fashion. In this kind of relieved marching I have traversed with her many scores of acres on these well-wooded and well-watered domains. Her delight at Oxford is in the public walks and gardens, where, when the weather is not too oppressive, she passeth much of her valuable time. There is a bench at Maudlin, or rather, situated between the frontiers of that and * * * * * 's college—some litigation latterly, about repairs, has vested the property of it finally in * * * * * 's—where at the hour of noon she is ordinarily to be found sitting—so she calls it by courtesy—but in fact pressing and breaking of it down with her enormous settlement; as both those Foundations, who, however, are good-natured enough to wink at it, have found, I believe, to their cost. Here she taketh the fresh air, principally at vacation

times, when the walks are freest from interruption from the younger fry of students. Here she passeth her idle hours, not idly, but generally accompanied with a book—blest if she can but intercept some resident Fellow (as usually there are some of that brood left behind at these periods), or stray Master of Arts (to most of them she is better known than their dinner-bell), with whom she may confer upon any curious topic of literature. I have seen these shy gownsmen, who truly set but a very slight value upon female conversation, cast a hawk's eye upon her from the length of Maudlin grove, and warily glide off into another walk—true monks as they are, and ungently neglecting the delicacies of her polished converse, for their own perverse and uncommunicating solitariness! Within doors her principal diversion is music, vocal and instrumental, in both which she is no mean professor. Her voice is wonderfully fine; but till I got used to it, I confess it staggered me. It is for all the world like that of a piping bullfinch, while from her size and stature you would expect notes to drown the deep organ. The shake, which most fine singers reserve for the close of cadence, by some unaccountable flexibility, or tremulousness of pipe, she carrieth quite through the composition; so that her time, to a common air or ballad, keeps double motion, like the earth—running the primary circuit of the tune, and still revolving upon its own axis. The effect, as I said before, when you are used to it, is as agreeable as it is altogether new and surprising. The spacious apartment of her outward frame lodgeth a soul in all respects disproportionate. Of more than mortal make, she evinceth withal a trembling sensibility, a yielding infirmity of purpose, a quick susceptibility to reproach, and all the train of diffident and blushing virtues, which for their habitation usually seek out a feeble frame, an attenuated and meagre constitution. With more than man's bulk, her humours and occupations are eminently feminine. She sighs—

being six foot high. She languisheth—being two feet wide. She worketh slender sprigs upon the delicate muslin—her fingers being capable of moulding a Colossus. She sippeth her wine out of her glass daintily—her capacity being that of a tun of Heidelberg. She goeth mincingly with those feet of hers—whose solidity need not fear the black ox's pressure. Softest and largest of thy sex adieu! by what parting attribute may I salute thee—last and best of the Titanesses—Ogress, fed with milk instead of blood—not least, or least handsome, among Oxford's stately structures—Oxford, who, in its deadeast time of vacation, can never properly be said to be empty, having thee to fill it.

THOUGHTS ON PRESENTS OF GAME, ETC.

(1833)

"**W**E love to have our friend in the country sitting thus at our table *by proxy*, to apprehend his presence (though a hundred miles may be between us) by a turkey, whose goodly aspect reflects to us his 'plump corpusculum;' to taste him in grouse or woodcock; to feel him gliding down in the toast peculiar to the latter; to concorporate him in a slice of Canterbury brawn. This is indeed to have him within ourselves; to know him intimately; such participation is, methinks, *unitive*, as the old theologians phrase it."—LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA.

Elia presents his acknowledgments to his "Correspondent unknown," for a basket of prodigiously fine game. He takes for granted that so amiable a character must be reader of the *Athenæum*. Else he had meditated a notice in *The Times*. Now if this friend had consulted the Delphic oracle for a

present suited to the palate of Elia, he could not have hit upon a morsel so acceptable. The birds he is barely thankful for; pheasants are poor *fowls* disguised in fine feathers. But a hare roasted hard and brown—with gravy and melted butter!—old Mr. Chambers, the sensible clergyman in Warwickshire, whose son's acquaintance has made many hours happy in the life of Elia, used to allow a pound of Epping to every hare. Perhaps that was overdoing it. But, in spite of the note of Philomel, who, like some fine poets, that think no scorn to adopt plagiarisms from a humble brother, reiterates every spring her cuckoo cry of "Jug, Jug, Jug," Elia pronounces that a hare, to be truly palated, must be roasted. Jugging sophisticates her. In *our* way it eats so "crips," as Mrs. Minikin says. Time was, when Elia was not arrived at his taste, that he preferred to all luxuries a roasted pig. But he disclaims all such green-sickness appetites in future, though he hath to acknowledge the receipt of many a delicacy in that kind from correspondents—good, but mistaken men—in consequence of their erroneous supposition, that he had carried up into mature life the prepossessions of childhood. From the worthy Vicar of Enfield he acknowledges a tithe contribution of extraordinary sapor. The ancients must have loved hares. Else why adopt the word *lepores* (obviously from *lepus*), but for some subtle analogy between the delicate flavour of the latter, and the finer relishes of wit in what we most poorly translate *pleasantries*. The fine madneses of the poet are the very decoction of his diet. Thence is he hare-brained. Harum-scarum is a libellous unfounded phrase of modern usage. 'Tis true the hare is the most circumspect of animals, sleeping with her eye open. Her ears, ever erect, keep them in that wholesome exercise, which conduces them to form the very tit-bit of the admirers of this noble animal. Noble, will I call her, in spite of her detractors, who from occasional demonstrations of the principle of self-preservation

(common to all animals) infer in her a defect of heroism. Half a hundred horsemen with thrice the number of dogs, scour the country in pursuit of puss across three counties ; and because the well-flavoured beast, weighing the odds, is willing to evade the hue and cry, with her delicate ears shrinking perchance from discord—comes the grave Naturalist, Linnæus perchance, or Buffon, and gravely sets down the hare as a—timid animal. Why, Achilles or Bully Dawson, would have declined the preposterous combat.

In fact, how light of digestion we feel after a hare ! How tender its processes after swallowing ! What chyle it promotes ! How ethereal ! as if its living celerity were a type of its nimble coursing through the animal juices. The notice might be longer. It is intended less as a Natural History of the Hare than a cursory thanks to the country “good Unknown.” The hare has many friends, but none sincerer than

ELIA.

THREE FALLACIES

I.—THAT A MAN MUST NOT LAUGH AT HIS OWN JEST

THE severest exaction surely ever invented upon the self-denial of poor human nature ! This is to expect a gentleman to give a treat without partaking of it ; to sit esurient at his own table, and commend the flavour of his venison upon the absurd strength of his never touching it himself. On the contrary, we love to see a wag *taste* his own joke to his party ; to watch a quirk, or a merry conceit, flickering upon the lips some seconds before the tongue is delivered of it. If it be good, fresh, and racy—begotten of the occasion ; if he that utters it never thought it before, he is naturally the first to be tickled with it ; and any suppression of such complacence we hold to be churlish and insulting.

What does it seem to imply, but that your company is weak or foolish enough to be moved by an image or a fancy, that shall stir you not at all, or but faintly? This is exactly the humour of the fine gentleman in Mandeville, who, while he dazzles his guests with the display of some costly toy, affects himself to "see nothing considerable in it."

II.—THAT WE SHOULD RISE WITH THE LARK

At what precise minute that little airy musician doffs his night gear, and prepares to tune up his unseasonable matins, we are not naturalists enough to determine. But for a mere human gentleman—that has no orchestra business to call him from his warm bed to such preposterous exercises—we take ten, or half after ten (eleven, of course, during this Christmas solstice), to be the very earliest hour, at which he can begin to think of abandoning his pillow. To think of it, we say; for to do it in earnest, requires another half hour's good consideration. Not but there are pretty sun-risings, as we are told, and such like gawds, abroad in the world, in summer time especially, some hours before what we have assigned; which a gentleman may see, as they say, only for getting up. But, having been tempted once or twice, in earlier life, to assist at those ceremonies, we confess our curiosity abated. We are no longer ambitious of being the sun's courtiers, to attend at his morning levees. We hold the good hours of the dawn too sacred to waste them upon such observances; which have in them, besides, something Pagan and Persic. To say truth, we never anticipated our usual hour, or got up with the sun (as 'tis called), to go a journey or upon a foolish whole day's pleasuring, but we suffered for it all the long hours after in listlessness and headaches; Nature herself sufficiently declaring her sense of our presumption, in aspiring to regulate our frail waking courses by the measures of that celestial and sleepless traveller. We deny not that there is

something sprightly and vigorous, at the outset especially, in these break-of-day excursions. It is flattering to get the start of a lazy world ; to conquer death by proxy in his image. But the seeds of sleep and mortality are in us ; and we pay usually in strange qualms, before night falls, the penalty of the unnatural inversion. Therefore, while the busy part of mankind are fast huddling on their clothes, are already up and about their occupations, content to have swallowed their sleep by wholesale ; we chose to linger a-bed, and digest our dreams. It is the very time to recombine the wandering images, which night in a confused mass presented ; to snatch them from forgetfulness ; to shape, and mould them. Some people have no good of their dreams. Like fast feeders, they gulp them too grossly, to taste them curiously. We love to chew the cud of a foregone vision : to collect the scattered rays of a brighter phantasm, or act over again, with firmer nerves, the sadder nocturnal tragedies ; to drag into day-light a struggling and half-vanishing night-mare ; to handle and examine the terrors, or the airy solaces. We have too much respect for these spiritual communications, to let them go so lightly. We are not so stupid, or so careless, as that Imperial forgetter of his dreams, that we should need a seer to remind us of the form of them. They seem to us to have as much significance as our waking concerns ; or rather to import us more nearly, as more nearly we approach by years to the shadowy world, whither we are hastening. We have shaken hands with the world's business ; we have done with it ; we have discharged ourself of it. Why should we get up ? we have neither suit to solicit, nor affairs to manage. The drama has shut in upon us at the fourth act. We have nothing here to expect, but in a short time a sick bed, and a dismissal. We delight to anticipate death by such shadows as night affords. We are already half acquainted with ghosts. We were never much in the world. Disappointment early

struck a dark veil between us and its dazzling illusions. Our spirits showed grey before our hairs. The mighty changes of the world already appear as but the vain stuff out of which dramas are composed. We have asked no more of life than what the mimic images in play-houses present us with. Even those types have waxed fainter. Our clock appears to have struck. We are SUPERANNUATED. In this dearth of mundane satisfaction, we contract politic alliances with shadows. It is good to have friends at court. The abstracted media of dreams seem no ill introduction to that spiritual presence, upon which, in no long time, we expect to be thrown. We are trying to know a little of the usages of that colony ; to learn the language, and the faces we shall meet with there, that we may be the less awkward at our first coming among them. We willingly call a phantom our fellow, as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore, we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world ; and think we know already, how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes, which, while we clung to flesh and blood, alighted us, have become familiar. We feel attenuated into their meagre essences, and have given the hand of half-way approach to incorporeal being. We once thought life to be something ; but it has unaccountably fallen from us before its time. Therefore we choose to dally with visions. The sun has no purposes of ours to light us to. Why should we get up ?

III.—THAT WE SHOULD LIE DOWN WITH THE LAMB

We could never quite understand the philosophy of this arrangement, or the wisdom of our ancestors in sending us for instruction to these woolly bedfellows. A sheep, when it is dark, has nothing to do but to shut his silly eyes, and sleep if he can. Man found out long sixes.—Hail candle-light ! without disparagement to sun or moon, the kindest luminary of the three—

if we may not rather style thee their radiant deputy, mild viceroy of the moon!—We love to read, talk, sit silent, eat, drink, sleep, by candle-light. They are every body's sun and moon. This is our peculiar and household planet. Wanting it, what savage unsocial nights must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unilluminated fastnesses! They must have lain about and grumbled at one another in the dark. What repartees could have passed, when you must have felt about for a smile, and handled a neighbour's cheek to be sure that he understood it? This accounts for the seriousness of the elder poetry. It has a sombre cast (try Hesiod or Ossian), derived from the tradition of those unlantern'd nights. Jokes came in with candles. We wonder how they saw to pick up a pin, if they had any. How did they sup? what a melange of chance carving they must have made of it!—here one had got a leg of a goat, when he wanted a horse's shoulder—there another had dipt his scooped palm in a kid-skin of wild honey, when he meditated right mare's milk. There is neither good eating nor drinking in fresco. Who, even in these civilised times, has never experienced this, when at some economic table he has commenced dining after dusk, and waited for the flavour till the lights came? The senses absolutely give and take reciprocally. Can you tell pork from veal in the dark? or distinguish Sherris from pure Malaga? Take away the candle from the smoking man; by the glimmering of the left ashes, he knows that he is still smoking, but he knows it only by an inference; till the restored light, coming in aid of the olfactories, reveals to both senses the full aroma. Then how he redoubles his puffs! how he burnishes!—There is absolutely no such thing as reading, but by a candle. We have tried the affectation of a book at noon-day in gardens, and in sultry arbours; but it was labour thrown away. Those gay motes in the beam come about you, hovering and teasing, like so many coquets, that will have you all to their self, and are jealous

of your abstractions. By the midnight taper, the writer digests his meditations. By the same light, we must approach to their perusal, if we would catch the flame, the odour. It is a mockery, all that is reported of the influential Phœbus. No true poem ever owed its birth to the sun's light. They are abstracted works :

" Things that were born, when none but the still night,
And his dumb candle, saw his pinching throes."

Marry, daylight—daylight might furnish the images, the crude material ; but for the fine shapings, the true turning and filing (as mine author hath it), they must be content to hold their inspiration of the candle. The mild internal light, that reveals them, like fires on the domestic hearth, goes out in the sunshine. Night and silence call out the starry fancies. Milton's Morning Hymn on Paradise, we would hold a good wager, was penned at midnight ; and Taylor's richer description of a sun-rise smells decidedly of the taper. Even ourself, in these our humbler lucubrations, tune our best measured cadences (Prose has her cadences) not unfrequently to the charm of the drowsier watchman, " blessing the doors ;" or the wild sweep of winds at midnight. Even now a loftier speculation than we have yet attempted, courts our endeavours. We would indite something about the Solar System. —*Betty, bring the candles.*

THE DEATH OF COLERIDGE

In the Album of Mr. Keymer

(1834)'

WHEN I heard of the death of Coleridge, it was without grief. It seemed to me that he long had been on the confines of the next world, that he had a hunger for eternity. I

grieved then that I could not grieve. But since, I feel how great a part he was of me. His great and dear spirit haunts me. I cannot think a thought, I cannot make a criticism on men or books, without an ineffectual turning and reference to him. He was the proof and touchstone of all my cogitations. He was a Grecian (or in the first form) at Christ's Hospital, where I was deputy Grecian ; and the same subordination and deference to him I have preserved through a life-long acquaintance. Great in his writings, he was greatest in his conversation. In him was disproved that old maxim, that we should never allow every one his share of talk. He would talk from morn to dewy eve, nor cease till far midnight, yet who ever would interrupt him, who would obstruct that continuous flow of converse, fetched from Helicon or Zion ? He had the tact of making the unintelligible seem plain. Many who read the abstruser parts of his "Friend" would complain that his works did not answer to his spoken wisdom. They were identical. But he had a tone in oral delivery, which seemed to convey sense to those who were otherwise imperfect recipients. He was my fifty years old friend without a dissension. Never saw I his likeness, nor probably the world can see again. I seem to love the house he died at more passionately than when he lived. I love the faithful Gilmans more than while they exercised their virtues towards him living. What was his mansion is consecrated to me a chapel.

Edmonton,

CHAS. LAMB

November 21st, 1834.

STORIES

KING LEAR

(A Tale from Shakespear)

LEAR, king of Britain, had three daughters ; Gonerill, wife to the duke of Albany ; Regan, wife to the duke of Cornwall ; and Cordelia, a young maid, for whose love the king of France and duke of Burgundy were joint suitors, and were at this time making stay for that purpose in the court of Lear.

The old king, worn out with age and the fatigues of government, he being more than fourscore years old, determined to take no further part in state affairs, but to leave the management to younger strengths, that he might have time to prepare for death, which must at no long period ensue. With this intent he called his three daughters to him, to know from their own lips which of them loved him best, that he might part his kingdom among them in such proportions as their affection for him should seem to deserve.

Gonerill, the eldest, declared that she loved her father more than words could give out, that he was dearer to her than the light of her own eyes, dearer than life and liberty, with a deal of such professing stuff, which is easy to counterfeit where there is no real love, only a few fine words delivered with confidence being wanted in that case. The king, delighted to hear from her own mouth this assurance of her love, and thinking truly that her heart went with it, in a fit of fatherly fondness bestowed upon her and her husband one third of his ample kingdom.

Then calling to him his second daughter, he demanded what she had to say. Regan, who was made of the same hollow metal as her sister, was not a whit behind in her professions, but rather declared that what her sister had spoken came short of the love which she professed to bear for his highness: insomuch that she found all other joys dead, in comparison with the pleasure which she took in the love of her dear king and father.

Lear blest himself in having such loving children, as he thought; and could do no less, after the handsome assurances which Regan had made, than bestow a third of his kingdom upon her and her husband, equal in size to that which he had already given away to Gonerill.

Then turning to his youngest daughter Cordelia, whom he called his joy, he asked what she had to say; thinking no doubt that she would glad his ears with the same loving speeches which her sisters had uttered, or rather that her expressions would be so much stronger than theirs, as she had always been his darling, and favoured by him above either of them. But Cordelia, disgusted with the flattery of her sisters, whose hearts she knew were far from their lips, and seeing that all their coaxing speeches were only intended to wheedle the old king out of his dominions, that they and their husbands might reign in his life-time, made no other reply but this, that she loved his majesty according to her duty, neither more nor less.

The king shocked with this appearance of ingratitude in his favourite child, desired her to consider her words, and to mend her speech, lest it should mar her fortunes.

Cordelia then told her father, that he was her father, that he had given her breeding, and loved her, that she returned those duties back as was most fit, and did obey him, love him, and most honour him. But that she could not frame her mouth to such large speeches as her sisters had done, or promise

to love nothing else in the world. Why had her sisters husbands, if (as they said) they had no love for any thing but their father? If she should ever wed, she was sure the lord to whom she gave her hand would want half her love, half of her care and duty; she should never marry like her sisters, to love her father all.

Cordelia, who in earnest loved her old father, even almost as extravagantly as her sisters pretended to do, would have plainly told him so at any other time, in more daughter-like and loving terms, and without these qualifications which did indeed sound a little ungracious: but after the crafty flattering speeches of her sisters, which she had seen draw such extravagant rewards she thought the handsomest thing she could do was to love and be silent. This put her affection out of suspicion of mercenary ends, and shewed that she loved, but not for gain; and that her professions, the less ostentatious they were, had so much the more of truth and sincerity than her sisters.

This plainness of speech, which Lear called pride, so enraged the old monarch—who in his best of times always shewed much of spleen and rashness, and in whom the dotage incident to old age had so clouded over his reason, that he could not discern truth from flattery, nor a gay painted speech from words that came from the heart—that in a fury of resentment he retracted the third part of his kingdom which yet remained, and which he had reserved for Cordelia, and gave it away from her, sharing it equally between her two sisters and their husbands, the dukes of Albany and Cornwall; whom he now called to him, and in presence of all his courtiers, bestowing a coronet between them, invested them jointly with all the power, revenue, and execution of government, only retaining to himself the name of king; all the rest of royalty he resigned: with this reservation, that himself, with a hundred knights for his attendants, was to be maintained by monthly course in each of his daughter's palaces in turn.

So preposterous a disposal of his kingdom, so little guided by reason, and so much by passion, filled all his courtiers with astonishment and sorrow; but none of them had the courage to interpose between this incensed king and his wrath, except the earl of Kent, who was beginning to speak a good word for Cordelia, when the passionate Lear on pain of death commanded him to desist: but the good Kent was not so to be repelled. He had been ever loyal to Lear, whom he had honoured as a king, loved as a father, followed as a master: and had never esteemed his life further than as a pawn to wage against his royal master's enemies, nor feared to lose it when Lear's safety was the motive: nor now that Lear was most his own enemy did this faithful servant of the king forget his old principles, but manfully opposed Lear, to do Lear good; and was unmannerly only because Lear was mad. He had been a most faithful counsellor in times past to the king, and he besought him now, that he would see with his eyes (as he had done in many weighty matters), and go by his advice still; and in his best consideration recall this hideous rashness: for he would answer with his life his judgment, that Lear's youngest daughter did not love him least, nor were those empty-hearted whose low sound gave no token of hollowness. When power bowed to flattery, honour was bound to plainness. For Lear's threats, what could he do to him, whose life was already at his service? that should not hinder duty from speaking.

The honest freedom of this good earl of Kent only stirred up the king's wrath the more, and like a frantic patient who kills his physician, and loves his mortal disease, he banished this true servant, and allotted him but five days to make his preparations for departure; but if on the sixth his hated person was found within the realm of Britain, that moment was to be his death. And Kent bade farewell to the king, and said, that since he chose to shew himself in such a fashion, it was but banishment to stay

there : and before he went, he recommended Cordelia to the protection of the gods, the maid who had so rightly thought, and so discreetly spoken ; and only wished that her sisters' large speeches might be answered with deeds of love : and then he went, as he said, to shape his old course to a new country.

The king of France and duke of Burgundy were now called in to hear the determination of Lear about his youngest daughter, and to know whether they would persist in their courtship to Cordelia, now that she was under her father's displeasure, and had no fortune but her own person to recommend her : and the duke of Burgundy declined the match, and would not take her to wife upon such conditions ; but the king of France, understanding what the nature of the fault had been which had lost her the love of her father, that it was only a tardiness of speech, and the not being able to frame her tongue to flattery like her sisters, took this young maid by the hand, and saying that her virtues were a dowry above a kingdom, bade Cordelia to take farewell of her sisters, and of her father, though he had been unkind, and she should go with him, and be queen of him and of fair France, and reign over fairer possessions than her sisters : and he called the duke of Burgundy in contempt a waterish duke, because his love for this young maid had in a moment run all away like water.

Then Cordelia with weeping eyes took leave of her sisters, and besought them to love their father well, and make good their professions : and they sullenly told her not to prescribe to them, for they knew their duty ; but to strive to content her husband, who had taken her (as they tauntingly expressed it) as Fortune's alms. And Cordelia with a heavy heart departed, for she knew the cunning of her sisters, and she wished her father in better hands than she was about to leave him in.

Cordelia was no sooner gone, than the devilish dispositions of her sisters began to shew themselves in their true colours. Even before the expiration

of the first month which Lear was to spend by agreement with his eldest daughter Gonerill, the old king began to find out the difference between promises and performances. This wretch having got from her father all that he had to bestow, even to the giving away of the crown from off his head, began to grudge even those small remnants of royalty which the old man had reserved to himself, to please his fancy with the idea of being still a king. She could not bear to see him and his hundred knights. Every time she met her father, she put on a frowning countenance; and when the old man wanted to speak with her, she would feign sickness or anything to be rid of the sight of him; for it was plain that she esteemed his old age a useless burden, and his attendants an unnecessary expense: not only she herself slackened in her expressions of duty to the king, but by her example, and (it is to be feared) not without her private instructions, her very servants affected to treat him with neglect, and would either refuse to obey his orders, or still more contemptuously pretend not to hear them. Lear could not but perceive this alteration in the behaviour of his daughter, but he shut his eyes against it as long as he could, as people commonly are unwilling to believe the unpleasant consequences which their own mistakes and obstinacy have brought upon them.

True love and fidelity are no more to be estranged by *ill*, than falsehood and hollow-heartedness can be conciliated by *good usage*. This eminently appears in the instance of the good earl of Kent, who, though banished by Lear, and his life made forfeit if he were found in Britain, chose to stay and abide all consequences, as long as there was a chance of his being useful to the king his master. See to what mean shifts and disguises poor loyalty is forced to submit sometimes; yet it counts nothing base or unworthy so as it can but do service where it owes an obligation! In the disguise of a serving man, all his greatness and pomp laid aside, this good earl proffered

his services to the king, who not knowing him to be Kent in that disguise, but pleased with a certain plainness, or rather bluntness in his answers which the earl put on (so different from that smooth oily flattery which he had so much reason to be sick of, having found the effects not answerable in his daughter), a bargain was quickly struck, and Lear took Kent into his service by the name of Caius, as he called himself, never suspecting him to be his once great favourite, the high and mighty earl of Kent.

This Caius quickly found means to shew his fidelity and love to his royal master : for Gonerill's steward that same day behaving in a disrespectful manner to Lear, and giving him saucy looks and language, as no doubt he was secretly encouraged to do by his mistress, Caius not enduring to hear so open an affront put upon his majesty, made no more ado but presently tript up his heels, and laid the unmannerly slave in the kennel . for which friendly service Lear became more and more attached to him.

Nor was Kent the only friend Lear had. In his degree, and as far as so insignificant a personage could shew his love, the poor fool, or jester, that had been of his palace while Lear had a palace, as it was the custom of kings and great personages at that time to keep a fool (as he was called) to make them sport after serious business :—this poor fool clung to Lear after he had given away his crown, and by his witty sayings would keep up his good humour ; though he could not refrain sometimes from jeering at his master for his imprudence, in uncrowning himself, and giving all away to his daughters : at which time, as he rhymingly expressed it, these daughters

“ For sudden joy did weep,
And he for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,
And go the fools among.”

And in such wild sayings, and scraps of songs, of which he had plenty, this pleasant honest fool poured out his heart even in the presence of Gonerill herself,

in many a bitter taunt and jest which cut to the quick ; such as comparing the king to the hedge-sparrow, who feeds the young of the cuckoo till they grow old enough, and then has its head bit off for its pains : and saying, that an ass may know when the cart draws the horse (meaning that Lear's daughters, that ought to go behind, now ranked before their father) ; and that Lear was no longer Lear, but the shadow of Lear : for which free speeches he was once or twice threatened to be whipt.

The coolness and falling off of respect which Lear had begun to perceive, were not all which this foolish-fond father was to suffer from his unworthy daughter : she now plainly told him that his staying in her palace was inconvenient so long as he insisted upon keeping up an establishment of a hundred knights ; that this establishment was useless and expensive, and only served to fill her court with riot and feasting ; and she prayed him that he would lessen their number, and keep none but old men about him, such as himself, and fitting his age.

Lear at first could not believe his eyes or ears, nor that it was his daughter who spoke so unkindly. He could not believe that she who had received a crown from him could seek to cut off his train, and grudge him the respect due to his old age. But she persisting in her undutiful demand, the old man's rage was so excited, that he called her a detested kite, and said that she spoke an untruth : and so indeed she did, for the hundred knights were all men of choice behaviour and sobriety of manners, skilled in all particulars of duty, and not giving to rioting or feasting as she said. And he bid his horses to be prepared, for he would go to his other daughter, Regan, he and his hundred knights : and he spoke of ingratitude, and said it was a marble-hearted devil, and shewed more hideous in a child than the sea-monster. And he cursed his eldest daughter Gonerill so as was terrible to hear : praying that she might never have a child, or if she had, that it might live to return that

scorn and contempt upon her, which she had shewn to him: that she might feel how sharper than a serpent's tooth it was to have a thankless child. And Gonerill's husband, the duke of Albany, beginning to excuse himself for any share which Lear might suppose he had in the unkindness, Lear would not hear him out, but in a rage ordered his horses to be saddled, and set out with his followers for the abode of Regan, his other daughter. And Lear thought to himself, how small the fault of Cordelia (if it was a fault) now appeared, in comparison with her sister's, and he wept; and then he was ashamed that such a creature as Gonerill should have so much power over his manhood as to make him weep.

Regan and her husband were keeping their court in great pomp and state at their palace: and Lear dispatched his servant Caius with letters to his daughter, that she might be prepared for his reception, while he and his train followed after. But it seems that Gonerill had been beforehand with him, sending letters also to Regan, accusing her father of waywardness and ill humours, and advising her not to receive so great a train as he was bringing with him. This messenger arrived at the same time with Caius, and Caius and he met: and who should it be but Caius' old enemy the steward, whom he had formerly tript up by the heels for his saucy behaviour to Lear. Caius not liking the fellow's look, and suspecting what he came for, began to revile him, and challenged him to fight, which the fellow refusing, Caius, in a fit of honest passion, beat him soundly, as such a mischief-maker and carrier of wicked messages deserved: which coming to the ears of Regan and her husband, they ordered Caius to be put in the stocks, though he was a messenger from the king her father, and in that character demanded the highest respect: so that the first thing the king saw when he entered the castle, was his faithful servant Caius sitting in that disgraceful situation.

This was but a bad omen of the reception which he

was to expect ; but a worse followed, when upon enquiry for his daughter and her husband, he was told they were weary with travelling all night, and could not see him : and when lastly, upon his insisting in a positive and angry manner to see them, they came to greet him, whom should he see in their company but the hated Gonerill, who had come to tell her own story, and set her sister against the king her father !

This sight much moved the old man, and still more to see Regan take her by the hand : and he asked Gonerill if she was not ashamed to look upon his old white beard ? And Regan advised him to go home again with Gonerill, and live with her peaceably, dismissing half of his attendants, and to ask her forgiveness ; for he was old and wanted discretion, and must be ruled and led by persons that had more discretion than himself. And Lear shewed how preposterous that would sound, if he were to down on his knees, and beg of his own daughter for food and raiment, and he argued against such an unnatural dependence ; declaring his resolution never to return with her, but to stay where he was with Regan, he and his hundred knights : for he said that she had not forgot that half of the kingdom which he had endowed her with, and that her eyes were not fierce like Gonerill's, but mild and kind. And he said that rather than return to Gonerill, with half his train cut off, he would go over to France, and beg a wretched pension of the king there, who had married his youngest daughter without a portion.

But he was mistaken in expecting kinder treatment of Regan than he had experienced from her sister Gonerill. As if willing to outdo her sister in unfilial behaviour, she declared that she thought fifty knights too many to wait upon him : that five-and-twenty were enough. Then Lear, nigh heart-broken, turned to Gonerill, and said that he would go back with her, for her fifty doubled five-and-twenty, and so her love was twice as much as Regan's. But Gonerill

excused herself, and said, what need of so many as five-and-twenty? or even ten? or five? when he might be waited upon by her servants, or her sister's servants? So these two wicked daughters, as if they strove to exceed each other in cruelty to their old father who had been so good to them, by little and little would have abated him of all his train, all respect (little enough for him that once commanded a kingdom) which was left him to shew that he had once been a king! Not that a splendid train is essential to happiness, but from a king to a beggar is a hard change, from commanding millions to be without one attendant; and it was the ingratitude in his daughters' denying it, more than what he would suffer by the want of it, which pierced this poor king to the heart: insomuch that with this double ill usage, and vexation for having so foolishly given away a kingdom, his wits began to be unsettled, and while he said he knew not what, he vowed revenge against those unnatural hags, and to make examples of them that should be a terror to the earth!

While he was thus idly threatening what his weak arm could never execute, night came on, and a loud storm of thunder and lightning with rain; and his daughters still persisting in their resolution not to admit his followers, he called for his horses, and chose rather to encounter the utmost fury of the storm abroad, than stay under the same roof with these ungrateful daughters: and they saying that the injuries which wilful men procure to themselves are their just punishment, suffered him to go in that condition, and shut their doors upon him.

The winds were high, and the rain and storm increased, when the old man sallied forth to combat with the elements, less sharp than his daughters' unkindness. For many miles about there was scarce a bush; and there upon a heath, exposed to the fury of the storm in a dark night, did king Lear wander out, and defy the winds and the thunder: and he bid the winds to blow the earth into the sea,

or swell the waves of the sea till they drowned the earth, that no token might remain of any such ungrateful animal as man. The old king was now left with no other companion than the poor fool, who still abided with him, with his merry conceits striving to outjest misfortune, saying, it was but a naughty night to swim in, and truly the king had better go in and ask his daughter's blessing :

“ But he that has a little tiny wit,
With heigh ho, the wind and the rain !
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
Though the rain it raineth every day : ”

and swearing it was a brave night to cool a lady's pride.

Thus poorly accompanied this once great monarch was found by his ever faithful servant the good earl of Kent, now transformed to Caius, who ever followed close at his side, though the king did not know him to be the earl ; and he said, “ Alas ! sir, are you here ? creatures that love night, love not such nights as these. This dreadful storm has driven the beasts to their hiding places. Man's nature cannot endure the affliction or the fear.” And Lear rebuked him and said these lesser evils were not felt, where a greater malady was fixed. When the mind is at ease, the body has leisure to be delicate ; but the tempest in his mind did take all feeling else from his senses, but of that which beat at his heart. And he spoke of filial ingratitude, and said it was all one as if the mouth should tear the hand for lifting food to it ; for parents were hands and food and every thing to children.

But the good Caius still persisting in his entreaties that the king would not stay out in the open air, at last persuaded him to enter a little wretched hovel which stood upon the heath, where the fool first entering, suddenly ran back terrified, saying that he had seen a spirit. But upon examination this spirit proved to be nothing more than a poor Bedlam-beggar, who had crept into this deserted hovel for shelter, and with his talk about devils frightened the fool, one of those poor lunatics who are either mad, or feign to be so,

the better to extort charity from the compassionate country-people ; who go about the country, calling themselves poor Tom and poor Turlygood, saying, " Who gives anything to poor Tom ? " sticking pins and nails and sprigs of rosemary into their arms to make them bleed ; and with such horrible actions, partly by prayers, and partly with lunatic curses, they move or terrify the ignorant country-folk into giving them alms. This poor fellow was such a one ; and the king seeing him in so wretched a plight, with nothing but a blanket about his loins to cover his nakedness, could not be persuaded but that the fellow was some father who had given all away to his daughters, and brought himself to that pass : for nothing he thought could bring a man to such wretchedness but the having unkind daughters.

And from this and many such wild speeches which he uttered, the good Caius plainly perceived that he was not in his perfect mind, but that his daughters' ill usage had really made him go mad. And now the loyalty of this worthy earl of Kent shewed itself in more essential services than he had hitherto found opportunity to perform. For with the assistance of some of the king's attendants who remained loyal, he had the person of his royal master removed at day-break to the castle of Dover, where his own friends and influence, as earl of Kent, chiefly lay : and himself embarking for France, hastened to the court of Cordelia, and did there in such moving terms represent the pitiful condition of her royal father, and set out in such lively colours the inhumanity of her sisters, that this good and loving child with many tears besought the king her husband, that he would give her leave to embark for England with a sufficient power to subdue these cruel daughters and their husbands, and restore the old king her father to his throne ; which being granted, she set forth, and with a royal army landed at Dover.

Lear having by some chance escaped from the guardians which the good earl of Kent had put over

him to take care of him in his lunacy, was found by some of Cordelia's train, wandering about the fields near Dover, in a pitiable condition, stark mad and singing aloud to himself, with a crown upon his head which he had made of straw, and nettles, and other wild weeds that he had picked up in the corn-fields. By the advice of the physicians, Cordelia, though earnestly desirous of seeing her father, was prevailed upon to put off the meeting, till, by sleep and the operation of herbs which they gave him, he should be restored to greater composure. By the aid of these skilful physicians, to whom Cordelia promised all her gold and jewels for the recovery of the old king, Lear was soon in a condition to see his daughter.

A tender sight it was to see the meeting between this father and daughter : to see the struggles between the joy of this poor old king at beholding again his once darling child, and the shame at receiving such filial kindness from her whom he had cast off for so small a fault in his displeasure ; both these passions struggling with the remains of his malady, which in his half-crazed brain sometimes made him that he scarce remembered where he was, or who it was that so kindly kissed him and spoke to him : and then he would beg the standers-by not to laugh at him, if he were mistaken in thinking this lady to be his daughter Cordelia ! And then to see him fall on his knees to beg pardon of his child ; and she, good lady, kneeling all the while to ask a blessing of him, and telling him that it did not become him to kneel, but it was her duty, for she was his child, his true and very child Cordelia ! And she kissed him (as she said) to kiss away all her sisters' unkindness, and said that they might be ashamed of themselves, to turn their old kind father with his white beard out into the cold air, when her enemy's dog, though it had bit her (as she prettily expressed it), should have staid by her fire such a night as that, and warmed himself. And she told her father how she had come from France with purpose to bring him assistance ; and he said

that she must forget and forgive, for he was old and foolish, and did not know what he did ; but that to be sure she had great cause not to love him, but her sisters had none. And Cordelia said, that she had no cause, no more than they had.

So we will leave this old king in the protection of this dutiful and loving child, where, by the help of sleep and medicine, she and her physicians at length succeeded in winding up the untuned and jarring senses which the cruelty of his other daughters had so violently shaken. Let us return to say a word or two about those cruel daughters.

These monsters of ingratitude, who had been so false to their old father, could not be expected to prove more faithful to their own husbands. They soon grew tired of paying even the appearance of duty and affection, and in an open way showed they had fixed their loves upon another. It happened that the object of their guilty loves was the same. It was Edmund, a natural son of the late earl of Gloucester, who by his treacheries had succeeded in disinheriting his brother Edgar the lawful heir from his earldom, and by his wicked practices was now earl himself : a wicked man, and a fit object for the love of such wicked creatures as Gonerill and Regan. It falling out about this time that the duke of Cornwall, Regan's husband, died, Regan immediately declared her intention of wedding this earl of Gloucester, which rousing the jealousy of her sister, to whom as well as to Regan this wicked earl had at sundry times professed love, Gonerill found means to make away with her sister by poison ; but being detected in her practices and imprisoned by her husband the duke of Albany, for this deed, and for her guilty passion for the earl which had come to his ears, she in a fit of disappointed love and rage shortly put an end to her own life. Thus the justice of Heaven at last overtook these wicked daughters.

While the eyes of all men were upon this event, admiring the justice displayed in their deserved deaths,

the same eyes were suddenly taken off from this sight to admire at the mysterious ways of the same power in the melancholy fate of the young and virtuous daughter, the lady Cordelia, whose good deeds did seem to deserve a more fortunate conclusion : but it is an awful truth, that innocence and piety are not always successful in this world. The forces which Gonerill and Regan had sent out under the command of the bad earl of Gloucester were victorious, and Cordelia by the practices of this wicked earl, who did not like that any should stand between him and the throne, ended her life in prison. Thus Heaven took this innocent lady to itself in her young years, after shewing her to the world an illustrious example of filial duty. Lear did not long survive this kind child.

Before he died, the good earl of Kent, who had still attended his old master's steps from the first of his daughters' ill usage to this sad period of his decay, tried to make him understand that it was he who had followed him under the name of Caius ; but Lear's care-crazed brain at that time could not comprehend how that could be, or how Kent and Caius could be the same person : so Kent thought it needless to trouble him with explanations at such a time ; and Lear soon after expiring, his faithful servant to the king, between age and grief for his old master's vexations, soon followed him to the grave.

How the judgment of Heaven overtook the bad earl of Gloucester, whose treasons were discovered, and himself slain in single combat with his brother, the lawful earl ; and how Gonerill's husband, the duke of Albany, who was innocent of the death of Cordelia, and had never encouraged his lady in her wicked proceedings against her father, ascended the throne of Britain after the death of Lear, is needless here to narrate ; Lear and his Three Daughters being dead, whose adventures alone concern our story.

THE SEA VOYAGE

(From Mrs. Leicester's School)

I WAS born in the East Indies. I lost my father and mother young. At the age of five my relations thought it proper that I should be sent to England for my education. I was to be entrusted to the care of a young woman who had a character for great humanity and discretion: but just as I had taken leave of my friends, and we were about to take our passage, the young woman was taken suddenly ill, and could not go on board. In this unpleasant emergency, no one knew how to act. The ship was at the very point of sailing, and it was the last ship which was to sail that season. At last the captain, who was known to my friends, prevailed upon my relation who had come with us to see us embark, to leave the young woman on shore, and to let me embark separately. There was no possibility of getting any other female attendant for me, in the short time allotted for our preparation; and the opportunity of going by that ship was thought too valuable to be lost. No other ladies happened to be going; so I was consigned to the care of the captain and his crew,—rough and unaccustomed attendants for a young creature, delicately brought up as I had been; but indeed they did their best to make me not feel the difference. The unpolished sailors were my nursery-maids and my waiting-women. Every thing was done by the captain and the men, to accommodate me, and make me easy. I had a little room made out of the cabin, which was to be considered as my room, and nobody might enter into it. The first mate had a great character for bravery, and all sailor-like accomplishments but with all this he had a gentleness of manners, and a pale feminine cast of face, from ill health and

a weakly constitution, which subjected him to some little ridicule from the officers, and caused him to be named Betsy. He did not much like the appellation, but he submitted to it the better, as he knew that those who gave him a woman's name, well knew that he had a man's heart, and that in the face of danger he would go as far as any man. To this young man, whose real name was Charles Atkinson, by a lucky thought of the captain, the care of me was especially entrusted. Betsy was proud of his charge, and, to do him justice, acquitted himself with great diligence and adroitness through the whole of the voyage. From the beginning I had somehow looked upon Betsy as a woman, hearing him so spoken of, and this reconciled me in some measure to the want of a maid, which I had been used to. But I was a manageable girl at all times, and gave nobody much trouble.

I have not knowledge enough to give an account of my voyage, or to remember the names of the seas we passed through, or the lands which we touched upon, in our course. The chief thing I can remember, for I do not remember the events of the voyage in any order, was Atkinson taking me up on deck, to see the great whales playing about in the sea. There was one great whale came bounding up out of the sea, and then he would dive into it again, and then would come up at a distance where nobody expected him, and another whale was following after him. Atkinson said they were at play, and that that lesser whale loved that bigger whale, and kept it company all through the wide seas : but I thought it strange play, and a frightful kind of love ; for I every minute expected they would come up to our ship and toss it. But Atkinson said a whale was a gentle creature, and it was a sort of sea elephant, and that the most powerful creatures in nature are always the least hurtful. And he told me how men went out to take these whales, and stuck long, pointed darts into them ; and how the sea was discoloured with the blood of these poor whales for many miles distance : and I

admired at the courage of the men, but I was sorry for the inoffensive whale. Many other pretty sights he used to shew me, when he was not on watch or doing some duty for the ship. No one was more attentive to his duty than he; but at such times as he had leisure, he would shew me all pretty sea sights:—the dolphins and porpoises that came before a storm, and all the colours which the sea changed to; how sometimes it was a deep blue, and then a deep green, and sometimes it would seem all on fire: all these various appearances he would shew me, and attempt to explain the reason of them to me, as well as my young capacity would admit of. There was a lion and a tiger on board, going to England as a present to the king, and it was a great diversion to Atkinson and me, after I had got rid of my first terrors, to see the ways of these beasts in their dens, and how venturous the sailors were in putting their hands through the grates, and patting their rough coats. Some of the men had monkeys, which ran loose about, and the sport was for the men to lose them, and find them again. The monkeys would run up the shrouds, and pass from rope to rope, with ten times greater alacrity than the most experienced sailor could follow them; and sometimes they would hide themselves in the most unthought-of places and when they were found, they would grin, and make mouths as if they had sense. Atkinson described to me the ways of these little animals in their native woods, for he had seen them. Oh, how many ways he thought of to amuse me in that long voyage!

Sometimes he would describe to me the odd shapes and varieties of fishes that were in the sea, and tell me tales of the sea-monsters that lay hid at the bottom, and were seldom seen by men; and what a glorious sight it would be, if our eyes could be sharpened to behold all the inhabitants of the sea at once, swimming in the great deeps, as plain as we see the gold and silver fish in a bowl of glass. With such notions he enlarged my infant capacity to take in many things.

When in foul weather I have been terrified at the motion of the vessel, as it rocked backwards and forwards, he would still my fears, and tell me that I used to be rocked so once in a cradle, and that the sea was God's bed, and the ship our cradle, and we were as safe in that greater motion, as when we felt that lesser one in our little wooden sleeping-places. When the wind was up, and sang through the sails, and disturbed me with its violent clamours, he would call it music, and bid me hark to the sea organ, and with that name he quieted my tender apprehensions. When I have looked around with a mournful face at seeing all *men* about me, he would enter into my thoughts, and tell me pretty stories of his mother and his sisters, and a female cousin that he loved better than his sisters, whom he called Jenny, and say that when we got to England I should go and see them, and how fond Jenny would be of his little daughter, as he called me ; and with these images of women and females which he raised in my fancy, he quieted me for a time. One time, and never but once, he told me that Jenny had promised to be his wife if ever he came to England, but that he had his doubts whether he should live to get home, for he was very sickly. This made me cry bitterly.

That I dwell so long upon the attentions of this Atkinson, is only because his death, which happened just before we got to England, affected me so much, that he alone of all the ship's crew has engrossed my mind ever since ; though indeed the captain and all were singularly kind to me, and strove to make up for my uneasy and unnatural situation. The boatswain would pipe for my diversion, and the sailor-boy would climb the dangerous mast for my sport. The rough foremast man would never willingly appear before me, till he had combed his long black hair smooth and sleek, not to terrify me. The officers got up a sort of play for my amusement, and Atkinson, or, as they called him, Betsy, acted as the heroine of the piece. All ways that could be contrived, were

thought upon, to reconcile me to my lot. I was the universal favourite ;—I do not know how deservedly ; but I suppose it was because I was alone, and there was no female in the ship besides me. Had I come over with female relations or attendants, I should have excited no particular curiosity ; I should have required no uncommon attentions. I was one little woman among a crew of men ; and I believe the homage which I have read that men universally pay to women, was in this case directed to me, in the absence of all other woman-kind. I do not know how that might be, but I was a little princess among them, and I was not six years old.

I remember the first draw-back which happened to my comfort, was Atkinson's not appearing during the whole of one day. The captain tried to reconcile me to it, by saying that Mr. Atkinson was confined to his cabin ;—that he was not quite well, but a day or two would restore him. I begged to be taken in to see him, but this was not granted. A day, and then another came, and another, and no Atkinson was visible, and I saw apparent solicitude in the faces of all the officers, who nevertheless strove to put on their best countenances before me, and to be more than usually kind to me. At length, by the desire of Atkinson himself, as I have since learned, I was permitted to go into his cabin and see him. He was sitting up, apparently in a state of great exhaustion, but his face lighted up when he saw me, and he kissed me, and told me that he was going a great voyage, far longer than that which we had passed together, and he should never come back ; and though I was so young, I understood well enough that he meant this of his death, and I cried sadly ; but he comforted me and told me, that I must be his little executrix, and perform his last will, and bear his last words to his mother and his sister, and to his cousin Jenny, whom I should see in a short time ; and he gave me his blessing, as a father would bless his child, and he sent a last kiss by me to all his female relations,

and he made me promise that I would go and see them when I got to England, and soon after this he died ; but I was in another part of the ship when he died, and I was not told it till we got to shore, which was a few days after ; but they kept telling me that he was better and better, and that I should soon see him, but that it disturbed him to talk with any one. Oh, what a grief it was, when I learned that I had lost my old ship-mate, that had made an irksome situation so bearable by his kind assiduities ; and to think that he was gone, and I could never repay him for his kindness !

When I had been a year and a half in England, the captain, who had made another voyage to India and back, thinking that time had alleviated a little the sorrow of Atkinson's relations, prevailed upon my friends who had the care of me in England, to let him introduce me to Atkinson's mother and sister. Jenny was no more ; she had died in the interval, and I never saw her. Grief for his death had brought on a consumption, of which she lingered about a twelve-month, and then expired. But in the mother and the sisters of this excellent young man, I have found the most valuable friends which I possess on this side the great ocean. They received me from the captain as the little *protégé* of Atkinson, and from them I have learned passages of his former life, and this in particular, that the illness of which he died was brought on by a wound of which he never quite recovered, which he got in the desperate attempt, when he was quite a boy, to defend his captain against a superior force of the enemy which had boarded him, and which, by his premature valour inspiring the men, they finally succeeded in repulsing. This was that Atkinson, who, from his pale and feminine appearance, was called Betsy. This was he whose womanly care of me got him the name of a woman, who, with more than female attention, condescended to play the hand-maid to a little unaccompanied orphan, that fortune had cast upon the care of a rough sea captain, and his rougher crew

LETTERS

TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Lamb, when this, the earliest of his letters which is given here, was written, was twenty-five; Coleridge, now staying with Wordsworth at Dove Cottage, was twenty-seven. Miss Wesley was Sarah Wesley, daughter of Charles. Miss Benger was a novelist. Godwin was the author of *Caleb Williams*]

[Probably April 16 or 17, 1800.]

I SEND you, in this parcel, my play, which I beg you to present in my name, with my respect and love, to Wordsworth and his sister. You blame us for giving your direction to Miss Wesley; the woman has been ten times after us about it, and we gave it her at last, under the idea that no further harm would ensue, but she would *once* write to you, and you would bite your lips and forget to answer it, and so it would end. You read us a dismal homily upon "Realities." We know, quite as well as you do, what are shadows and what are realities. You, for instance, when you are over your fourth or fifth jorum, chirping about old school occurrences, are the best of realities. Shadows are cold, thin things, that have no warmth or grasp in them. Miss Wesley and her friend, and a tribe of authoresses that come after you here daily, and, in defect of you, hive and cluster upon us, are the shadows. You encouraged that mopsey, Miss Wesley, to dance after you, in the hope of having her nonsense put into a nonsensical Anthology. We have pretty well shaken her off, by that simple expedient

of referring her to you ; but there are more burrs in the wind. I came home t'other day from business, hungry as a hunter, to dinner, with nothing, I am sure, of *the author but hunger* about me, and whom found I closeted with Mary but a friend of this Miss Wesley, one Miss Benje, or Benje— I don't know how she spells her name. I just came in time enough, I believe, luckily to prevent them from exchanging vows of eternal friendship. It seems she is one of your authoresses, that you first foster, and then upbraid us with. But I forgive you. "The rogue has given me potions to make me love him." Well ; go she would not, nor step a step over our threshold, till we had promised to come and drink tea with her next night. I had never seen her before, and could not tell who the devil it was that was so familiar. We went, however, not to be impolite. Her lodgings are up two pairs of stairs in East Street. Tea and coffee, and macaroons—a kind of cake I much love. We sat down. Presently Miss Benje broke the silence, by declaring herself quite of a different opinion from D'Israeli, who supposes the differences of human intellect to be the mere effect of organization. She begged to know my opinion. I attempted to carry it off with a pun upon organ ; but that went off very flat. She immediately conceived a very low opinion of my metaphysics ; and, turning round to Mary, put some question to her in French,—possibly having heard that neither Mary nor I understood French. The explanation that took place occasioned some embarrassment and much wondering. She then fell into an insulting conversation about the comparative genius and merits of all modern languages, and concluded with asserting that the Saxon was esteemed the purest dialect in Germany. From thence she passed into the subject of poetry ; where I, who had hitherto sat mute and a hearer only, humbly hoped I might now put in a word to some advantage, seeing that it was my own trade in a manner. But I was stopped by a round assertion,

that no good poetry had appeared since Dr. Johnson's time. It seems the Doctor has suppressed many hopeful geniuses that way by the severity of his critical strictures in his "Lives of the Poets." I here ventured to question the fact, and was beginning to appeal to *names*, but I was assured "it was certainly the case." Then we discussed Miss More's book on education, which I had never read. It seems Dr. Gregory, another of Miss Benjey's friends, has found fault with one of Miss More's metaphors. Miss More has been at some pains to vindicate herself—in the opinion of Miss Benjey, not without success. It seems the Doctor is invariably against the use of broken or mixed metaphor, which he reprobates against the authority of Shakspeare himself. We next discussed the question, whether Pope was a poet? I find Dr. Gregory is of opinion he was not, though Miss Seward does not at all concur with him in this. We then sat upon the comparative merits of the ten translations of "Pizarro," and Miss Benjey or Benje advised Mary to take two of them home; she thought it might afford her some pleasure to compare them *verbatim*; which we declined. It being now nine o'clock, wine and macaroons were again served round, and we parted, with a promise to go again next week, and meet the Miss Porters, who, it seems, have heard much of Mr. Coleridge, and wish to meet *us*, because we are *his* friends. I have been preparing for the occasion. I crowd cotton in my ears. I read all the reviews and magazines of the past month against the dreadful meeting, and I hope by these means to cut a tolerable second-rate figure.

Pray let us have no more complaints about shadows. We are in a fair way, *through you*, to surfeit sick upon them.

Our loves and respects to your host and hostess. Our dearest love to Coleridge.

Take no thought about your proof-sheets; they shall be done as if Woodfall himself did them. Pray

send us word of Mrs. Coleridge and little David Hartley, your little reality.

Farewell, dear Substance. Take no umbrage at any thing I have written.

C. LAMB, *Umbra*.

Land of Shadows,
Shadow-month the 16th or 17th, 1800.

Coleridge, I find loose among your papers a copy of "*Christabel*." It wants about thirty lines; you will very much oblige me by sending me the beginning as far as that line,—

"And the spring comes slowly up this way;"

and the intermediate lines between—

"The lady leaps up suddenly,
The lovely Lady Christabel;"

and the lines,—

"She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak."

The trouble to you *will be small*, and the benefit to us *very great*! A pretty antithesis! A figure in speech I much applaud.

Godwin has called upon us. He spent one evening here. Was very friendly. Kept us up till midnight. Drank punch, and talked about you. He seems, above all men, mortified at your going away. Suppose you were to write to that good-natured heathen—"or is he a *shadow*?" If I do not *write*, impute it to the long postage, of which you have so much cause to complain. I have scribbled over a *queer letter*, as I find by perusal; but it means no mischief.

I am, and will be, yours ever, in sober sadness,

C. L.

Write your *German* as plain as sunshine, for that must correct itself. You know I am homo unius linguæ: in English, illiterate, a dunce, a ninny.

TO THOMAS MANNING.

[This letter refers to the epilogue which Lamb wrote for the Professor [Godwin]'s unsuccessful play, *Antonio*. Manning, to whom it was written, was a mathematician whom Lamb had met at Cambridge, aged, in 1800, twenty-eight.]

Dec. 16th, 1800.

WE are damn'd !
 Not the facetious epilogue could save us.
 For, as the editor of the "Morning Post," quick-sighted gentleman ! hath this morning truly observed (I beg pardon if I falsify his *words*, their profound *sense* I am sure I retain), both prologue and epilogue were worthy of accompanying such a piece ; and indeed (mark the profundity, Mister Manning) were received with proper indignation by such of the audience only as thought either worth attending to. PROFESSOR, thy glories wax dim ! Again, the incomparable author of the "True Briton" declareth in *his* paper (bearing same date) that the epilogue was an indifferent attempt at humour and character, and failed in both. I forbear to mention the other papers, because I have not read them. O PROFESSOR, how different thy feelings now (*quantum mutatus ab illo professore, qui in agris philosophiæ tantas victorias aquisivisti*),—how different thy proud feelings but one little week ago,—thy anticipation of thy nine nights,—those visionary claps, which have soothed thy soul by day and thy dreams by night ! Calling in accidentally on the Professor while he was out, I was ushered into the study ; and my nose quickly (most sagacious always) pointed me to four tokens lying loose upon thy table, Professor, which indicated thy violent and satanical pride of heart. Imprimis, there caught mine eye a list of six persons, thy friends, whom thou didst meditate inviting to a sumptuous dinner on the

Thursday, anticipating the profits of thy Saturday's play to answer charges ; I was in the honoured file ! Next, a stronger evidence of thy violent and almost satanical pride, lay a list of all the morning papers (from the "Morning Chronicle" downwards to the "Porcupine,") with the places of their respective offices, where thou wast meditating to insert, and didst insert, an elaborate sketch of the story of thy play—stones in thy enemy's hand to bruise thee with ; and severely wast thou bruised, O Professor ! nor do I know what oil to pour into thy wounds. Next, which convinced me to a dead conviction of thy pride, violent and almost satanical pride—lay a list of books, which thy un-tragedy-favoured pocket could never answer ; Dodsley's Old Plays, Malone's Shakspeare (still harping upon thy play, thy philosophy abandoned meanwhile to Christians and superstitious minds) ; nay, I believe (if I can believe my memory), that the ambitious Encyclopædia itself was part of thy meditated acquisitions ; but many a playbook was there. All these visions are *damned* ; and thou, Professor, must read Shakspeare in future out of a common edition ; and, hark ye, pray read him to a little better purpose ! Last and strongest against thee (in colours manifest as the hand upon Belshazzar's wall), lay a volume of poems by C. Lloyd and C. Lamb. Thy heart misgave thee, that thy assistant might possibly not have talent enough to furnish thee an epilogue ! Manning, all these things came over my mind ; all the gratulations that would have thickened upon him, and even some have glanced aside upon his humble friend ; the vanity, and the fame, and the profits (the Professor is £500 ideal money out of pocket by this failure, besides £200 he would have got for the copyright, and the Professor is never much beforehand with the world ; what he gets is all by the sweat of his brow and dint of brain, for the Professor, though a sure man, is also a slow) ; and now to muse upon thy altered physiognomy, thy pale and squalid appearance (a kind of *blue sickness* about the eyelids),

and thy crest fallen, and thy proud demand of £200 from thy bookseller changed to an uncertainty of his taking it at all, or giving thee full £50. The Professor has won my heart by this *his* mournful catastrophe. You remember Marshall, who dined with him at my house ; I met him in the lobby immediately after the damnation of the Professor's play, and he looked to me like an angel : his face was lengthened, and ALL OVER SWEAT ; I never saw such a care-fraught visage ; I could have hugged him, I loved him so intensely. " From every pore of him a perfume fell." I have seen that man in many situations, and from my soul I think that a more god-like honest soul exists not in this world. The Professor's poor nerves trembling with the recent shock, he hurried him away to my house to supper ; and there we comforted him as well as we could. He came to consult me about a change of catastrophe ; but alas ! the piece was condemned long before that crisis. I at first humoured him with a specious proposition, but have since joined his true friends in advising him to give it up. He did it with a pang, and is to print it as *his*.
L.

TO THOMAS MANNING

[George Dyer was the G.D. of the Essay " Oxford in the Vacation " Lamb's copy of the *Poems*, with a cancelled preface, is in the British Museum. Godwin's new drama was never acted. The reference to Fénelon will be found in his *Political Justice*.]

December 27th, 1800.

AT length George Dyer's phrenesis has come to a crisis ; he is raging and furiously mad. I waited upon the heathen, Thursday was a se'nnight ; the first symptom which struck my eye and gave me incontrovertible proof of the fatal truth was a pair of nankeen pantaloons four times too big

for him, which the said Heathen did pertinaciously affirm to be new.

They were absolutely ingrained with the accumulated dirt of ages ; but he affirmed them to be clean. He was going to visit a lady that was nice about those things, and that's the reason he wore nankeen that day. And then he danced, and capered, and fidgeted, and pulled up his pantaloons, and hugged his intolerable flannel vestment closer about his poetic loins ; anon he gave it loose to the zephyrs which plentifully insinuate their tiny bodies through every crevice, door, window or wainscot, expressly formed for the exclusion of such impertinents. Then he caught at a proof sheet, and caught up a laundress's bill instead—made a dart at Blomfield's Poems, and threw them in agony aside. I could not bring him to one direct reply ; he could not maintain his jumping mind in a right line for the tithe of a moment by Clifford's Inn clock. He must go to the printer's immediately—the most unlucky accident—he had struck off five hundred impressions of his Poems, which were ready for delivery to subscribers, and the Preface must all be expunged. There were eighty pages of Preface, and not till that morning had he discovered that in the very first page of said Preface he had set out with a principle of Criticism fundamentally wrong, which vitiated all his following reasoning. The Preface must be expunged, although it cost him £30—the lowest calculation, taking in paper and printing ! In vain have his real friends remonstrated against this Midsummer madness. George is as obstinate as a Primitive Christian—and wards and parries off all our thrusts with one unanswerable fence ;—" Sir, it is of great consequence that the world is not misled ! "

As for the other Professor, he has actually begun to dive into Tavernier and Chardin's *Persian Travels* for a story, to form a new drama for the sweet tooth of this fastidious age. Hath not Bethlehem College a fair action for non-residence against such professors ?

Are poets so *few* in *this age*, that He must write poetry? *Is morals* a subject so exhausted, that he must quit that line? Is the metaphysic well (without a bottom) drained dry?

If I can guess at the wicked pride of the Professor's heart, I would take a shrewd wager that he disdains ever again to dip his pen in *Prose*. Adieu, ye splendid theories! Farewell, dreams of political justice! Lawsuits, where I was counsel for Archbishop Fénelon *versus* my own mother, in the famous fire cause!

Vanish from my mind, professors, one and all! I have metal more attractive on foot.

Man of many snipes,—I will sup with thee, Deo volente et diabolo nolente, on Monday night the 5th of January, in the new year, and crush a cup to the infant century.

A word or two of my progress. Embark at six o'clock in the morning, with a fresh gale, on a Cambridge one-decker; very cold till eight at night; land at St. Mary's light-house, muffins and coffee upon table (or any other curious production of Turkey or both Indies), snipes exactly at nine, punch to commence at ten, with *argument*; difference of opinion is expected to take place about eleven; perfect unanimity, with some haziness and dimness, before twelve.—N.B. My single affection is not so singly wedded to snipes; but the curious and epicurean eye would also take a pleasure in beholding a delicate and well-chosen assortment of teals, ortolans, the unctuous and palate-soothing flesh of geese wild and tame, nightingales' brains, the sensorium of a young sucking-pig, or any other Christmas dish, which I leave to the judgment of you and the cook of Gonville,

C. LAMB.

TO THOMAS MANNING

[Stoddart was the brother of Sarah Stoddart, whom Hazlitt afterwards married. Holcroft was Thomas Holcroft, who wrote *The Road to Ruin*.]

24th Sept., 1802, London.

MY DEAR MANNING,—Since the date of my last letter, I have been a traveller. A strong desire seized me of visiting remote regions. My first impulse was to go and see Paris. It was a trivial objection to my aspiring mind, that I did not understand a word of the language, since I certainly intend some time in my life to see Paris, and equally certainly never intend to learn the language ; therefore that could be no objection. However, I am very glad I did not go, because you had left Paris (I see) before I could have set out. I believe, Stoddart promising to go with me another year prevented that plan. My next scheme (for to my restless, ambitious mind London was become a bed of thorns) was to visit the far-famed Peak in Derbyshire, where the Devil sits, they say, without breeches. *This* my purer mind rejected as indelicate. And my final resolve was a tour to the Lakes. I set out with Mary to Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice ; for my time being precious did not admit of it. He received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains : great floundering bears and monsters they seemed, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post-chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, &c. &c. We thought we had got into fairyland.

But that went off (as it never came again—while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets) ; and we entered Coleridge's comfortable study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose I can ever again. Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, &c. I never shall forget ye, how ye lay about that night, like an intrenchment ; gone to bed, as it seemed for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study ; which is a large, antique, ill-shaped room, with an old-fashioned organ, never played upon, big enough for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Æolian harp, and an old sofa, half-bed, &c. And all looking out upon the last fading view of Skiddaw and his broad-breasted brethren ; what a night ! Here we stayed three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with the Clarksons (good people and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night), and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths were gone to Calais. They have since been in London and past much time with us : he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married. So we have seen Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater (where the Clarksons live), and a place at the other end of Ulswater—I forget the name—to which we travelled on a very sultry day, over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up the bed of Ladore. In fine, I have satisfied myself, that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic*, which I very much suspected before : they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired, when she got about half-way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones), and with the

reinforcement of a draught of cold water she surmounted it most manfully. Oh, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about, and about, making you giddy; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad! It was a day that will stand out, like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned (I have now been come home near three weeks—I was a month out), and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controlled by any one, to come home and *work*. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet-Street and the Strand are better places to live in for good and all than among Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, participating in their greatness. After all, I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year—two, three years—among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet-Street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature. My habits are changing, I think: *i.e.* from drunk to sober. Whether I shall be happier or not remains to be proved. I shall certainly be more happy in a morning; but whether I shall not sacrifice the fat, and the marrow, and the kidneys, *i.e.* the night, the glorious care-drowning night, that heals all our wrongs, pours wine into our mortifications, changes the scene from indifferent and flat to bright and brilliant!—O Manning, if I should have formed a diabolical resolution, by the time you come to England, of not admitting any spirituous liquors into my house, will you be my guest on such shameworthy terms? Is life, with such limitations, worth trying? The truth is, that my liquors bring a nest of friendly harpies about my house, who consume me. This is a pitiful tale to be

THE BEST OF LAMB

read at St. Gothard; but it is just now nearest my heart. Fenwick is a ruined man. He is hiding himself from his creditors, and has sent his wife and children into the country. Fell, my other drunken companion (that has been: *nam hic cæstus artemque repono*), is turned editor of a "Naval Chronicle." Godwin (with a pitiful artificial wife) continues a steady friend, though the same facility does not remain of visiting him often. That Bitch has detached Marshall from his house, Marshall the man who went to sleep when the "Ancient Mariner" was reading; the old, steady, unalterable friend of the Professor. Holcroft is not yet come to town. I expect to see him, and will deliver your message. How I hate *this part* of a letter. Things come crowding in to say, and no room for 'em. Some things are too little to be told, *i.e.* to have a preference; some are too big and circumstantial. Thanks for yours, which was most delicious. Would I had been with you, benighted, &c. I fear my head is turned with wandering. I shall never be the same acquiescent being. Farewell; write again quickly, for I shall not like to hazard a letter, not knowing where the fates have carried you. Farewell, my dear fellow.

C. LAMB.

TO THOMAS MANNING

[Manning had expressed his intention of settling in China. Rickman was John Rickman, a Parliamentary clerk who introduced the Census into England. The merry natural captain was James Burney, brother of the author of *Evelina*.]

[Dated at end: Feb. 19th, 1803.]

MY DEAR MANNING,—The general scope of your letter afforded no indications of insanity, but some particular points raised a scruple. For God's sake don't think any more of

"Independent Tartary." What have you to do among such Ethiopians? Is there no *lineal descendant* of Prester John?

Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?—depend upon't they'll never make you their king, as long as any branch of that great stock is remaining. I tremble for your Christianity. They'll certainly circumcise you. Read Sir John Maundevill's travels to cure you, or come over to England. There is a Tartar-man now exhibiting at Exeter Change. Come and talk with him, and hear what he says first. Indeed, he is no very favorable specimen of his Countrymen! But perhaps the best thing you can do, is to *try* to get the idea out of your head. For this purpose repeat to yourself every night, after you have said your prayers, the words Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary, two or three times, and associate with them the *idea of oblivion* ('tis Hartley's method with obstinate memories), or say, Independent, Independent, have I not already got an *Independence*? That was a clever way of the old puritans—pundivinity. My dear friend, think what a sad pity it would be to bury such *parts* in heathen countries, among nasty, unconvertible, horse-belching, Tartar people! Some say, they are Cannibals; and then conceive a Tartar-fellow *eating* my friend, and adding the *cool malignity* of mustard and vinegar! I am afraid 'tis the reading of Chaucer has misled you; his foolish stories about Cambuscan and the ring, and the horse of brass. Believe me, there's no such things, 'tis all the poet's *invention*; but if there were such *darling* things as old Chaucer sings, I would *up* behind you on the Horse of Brass, and frisk off for Prester John's Country. But these are all tales; a Horse of Brass never flew, and a King's daughter never talked with Birds! The Tartars, really, are a cold, insipid, smouchey set. You'll be sadly moped (if you are not eaten) among them. Pray *try* and cure yourself. Take Hellebore (the counsel is Horace's, 'twas none of my thought *originally*). Shave

yourself oftener. Eat no saffron, for saffron-eaters contract a terrible Tartar-like yellow. Pray, to avoid the fiend. Eat nothing that gives the heart-burn. *Shave the upper lip.* Go about like an European. Read no books of voyages (they're nothing but lies) : only now and then a Romance, to keep the fancy *under*. Above all, don't go to any sights of *wild beasts*. *That has been your ruin.* Accustom yourself to write familiar letters on common subjects to your friends in England, such as are of a moderate understanding. And think about common things more. There's your friend Holcroft now, has written a play. You used to be fond of the drama. Nobody went to see it. Notwithstanding this, with an audacity perfectly original, he faces the town down in a preface, that they *did like* it very much. I have heard a waspish punster say, "Sir, why did you not laugh at my jest?" But for a man boldly to face me out with, "Sir, I maintain it, you did laugh at my jest," is a little too much. I have seen H. but once. He spoke of you to me in honorable terms. H. seems to me to be drearily dull. Godwin is dull, but then he has a dash of affectation, which smacks of the coxcomb, and your coxcombs are always agreeable. I supped last night with Rickman, and met a merry *natural* captain, who pleases himself vastly with once having made a Pun at Otahete in the O. language. 'Tis the same man who said Shakspeare he liked, because he was so *much of the Gentleman*. Rickman is a man "absolute in all numbers." I think I may one day bring you acquainted, if you do not go to Tartary first ; for you'll never come back. Have a care, my dear friend, of Anthropophagi ! their stomachs are always craving. But if you do go among [them] pray contrive to *stink* as soon as you can that you may [? not] hang a [? on] harid at the Butcher's. 'Tis terrible to be weighed out for 5d. a-pound. To sit at table (the reverse of fishes in Holland), not as a guest, but as a meat.

God bless you : do come to England Air and

exercise may do great things. Talk with some Minister. Why not your father?

God dispose all for the best. I have discharged my duty.

Your sincere fr^d,

C. LAMB.

TO THOMAS MANNING

[The play that was hissed at Drury Lane was *Mr. H. Lamb* is said to have joined in this manifestation of disapproval.]

[Dated at end : 26 February, 1808.]

DEAR MISSIONARY,—Your letters from the farthest ends of the world have arrived safe. Mary is very thankful for your remembrance of her, and with the less suspicion of mercenariness, as the silk, the *symbolum materiale* of your friendship, has not yet appeared. I think Horace says somewhere, *nox longa*. I would not impute negligence or unhandsome delays to a person whom you have honoured with your confidence; but I have not heard of the silk, or of Mr. Knox, save by your letter. Maybe he expects the first advances! or it may be that he has not succeeded in getting the article on shore, for it is among the *res prohibita et non nisi smuggle-ationis via fruenda*. But so it is, in the friendships between *wicked men*, the very expressions of their good-will cannot but be sinful. *Splendida vitia* at best. Stay, while I remember it—Mrs. Holcroft was safely delivered of a girl some day in last week. Mother and child doing well. Mr. Holcroft has been attack'd with severe rheumatism. They have moved to Clipstone Street. I suppose you know my farce was damned. The noise still rings in my ears. Was you ever in the pillory?—being damned is something like that. Godwin keeps a shop in Skinner Street, Snow Hill, he is turned children's bookseller, and sells penny, twopenny, threepenny, and fourpenny books. Sometimes he gets an order

for the dearer sort of Books. (Mind, all that I tell you in this letter is true.) A treaty of marriage is on foot between William Hazlitt and Miss Stoddart. Something about settlements only retards it. She has somewhere about £80 a year, to be £120 when her mother dies. He has no settlement except what he can claim from the Parish. *Pauper est Cinna, sed amat*. The thing is therefore in abeyance. But there is love o' both sides. Little Fenwick (you don't see the connexion of ideas here, how the devil should you?) is in the rules of the Fleet. Cruel creditors! operation of iniquitous laws! is Magna Charta then a mockery? Why, in general (here I suppose you to ask a question) my spirits are pretty good, but I have my depressions, black as a smith's beard, Vulcanic, Stygian. At such times I have recourse to a pipe, which is like not being at home to a dun; he comes again with tenfold bitterness the next day.—(mind, I am not in debt, I only borrow a similitude from others; it shows imagination.) I have done two books since the failure of my farce; they will both be out this summer. The one is a juvenile book—“The Adventures of Ulysses,” intended to be an introduction to the reading of Telemachus! It is done out of the Odyssey, not from the Greek: I would not mislead you; nor yet from Pope's Odyssey, but from an older translation of one Chapman. The “Shakespear Tales” suggested the doing it. Godwin is in both those cases my bookseller. The other is done for Longman, and is “Specimens of English Dramatic Poets contemporary with Shakespear.” Specimens are becoming fashionable—we have “Specimens of Ancient English Poets,” “Specimens of Modern English Poets,” “Specimens of Ancient English Prose Writers,” without end. They used to be called “Beauties.” You have seen “Beauties of Shakespear?” so have many people that never saw any beauties in Shakespear. Longman is to print it, and be at all the expense and risk; and I am to share the profits after all deductions; *i.e.* a year or two hence

I must pocket what they please to tell me is due to me. But the book is such as I am glad there should be. It is done out of old plays at the Museum and out of Dodsley's collection, &c. It is to have notes. So I go creeping on since I was lamed with that cursed fall from off the top of Drury-lane Theatre into the pit, something more than a year ago. However, I have been free of the house ever since, and the house was pretty free with me upon that occasion. Damn 'em, how they hissed! It was not a hiss neither, but a sort of a frantic yell, like a congregation of mad geese, with roaring something like bears, mows and mops like apes, sometimes snakes, that hiss'd me into madness. 'Twas like St. Anthony's temptations. Mercy on us, that God should give his favourite children, men, mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to flatter agreeably, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely: to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss with: and that they should turn them into mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyenas, and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like distillations of aspic poison, to asperse and vilify the innocent labours of their fellow-creatures who are desirous to please them! God be pleased to make the breath stink and the teeth rot out of them all therefore! Make them a reproach, and all that pass by them to loll out their tongue at them! Blind mouths! as Milton somewhere calls them. Do you like Braham's singing? The little Jew has bewitched me. I follow him like as the boys followed Tom the Piper. He cured me of melancholy, as David cured Saul; but I don't throw stones at him, as Saul did at David in payment. I was insensible to music till he gave me a new sense. O, that you could go to the new opera of "Kais" to-night! 'Tis all about Eastern manners; it would just suit you. It describes the wild Arabs, wandering Egyptians, lying dervishes, and all that sort of people, to a hair. You needn't ha' gone so far to see what you see, if you saw it as

I do every night at Drury-lane Theatre. Braham's singing, when it is impassioned, is finer than Mrs. Siddons's or Mr. Kemble's acting; and when it is not impassioned, it is as good as hearing a person of fine sense talking. The brave little Jew! Old Sergeant Hill is dead. Mrs. Rickman is in the family way. It is thought that Hazlitt will have children, if he marries Miss Stoddart. I made a pun the other day, and palmed it upon Holcroft, who grinned like a Cheshire cat. (Why do cats grin in Cheshire?—Because it was once a county palatine, and the cats cannot help laughing whenever they think of it, though I see no great joke in it.) I said that Holcroft said, being asked who were the best dramatic writers of the day, "HOOK AND I." Mr. Hook is author of several pieces, "Tekeli," &c. You know what *hooks and eyes* are, don't you? They are what little boys do up their breeches with. Your letter had many things in it hard to be understood: the puns were ready and Swift-like; but don't you begin to be melancholy in the midst of Eastern customs! "The mind does not easily conform to foreign usages, even in trifles: it requires something that it has been familiar with." That begins one of Dr. Hawkesworth's papers in the "Adventurer," and is, I think, as sensible a remark as ever fell from the Doctor's mouth. White is at Christ's Hospital, a wit of the first magnitude, but had rather be thought a gentleman, like Congreve. You know Congreve's repulse which he gave to Voltaire, when he came to visit him as a *literary man*, that he wished to be considered only in the light of a private gentleman. I think the impertinent Frenchman was properly answered. I should just serve any member of the French institute in the same manner, that wished to be introduced to me. Bonaparte has voted 5,000 livres to Davy, the great young English chemist; but it has not arrived. Coleridge has delivered two lectures at the Royal Institution; two more were attended, but he did not come. It is thought he has gone sick upon

them. He a'n't well, that's certain. Wordsworth is coming to see him. He sits up in a two pair of stairs room at the "Courier" Office, and receives visitors on his close stool. How is Mr. Ball? He has sent for a prospectus of the London Library.

Does any one read at Canton? Lord Moira is President of the Westminster Library. I suppose you might have interest with Sir Joseph Banks to get to be president of any similar institution that should be set up at Canton. I think public reading-rooms the best mode of educating young men. Solitary reading is apt to give the headache. Besides, who knows that you *do* read? There are ten thousand institutions similar to the Royal Institution, which have sprung up from it. There is the London Institution, the Southwark Institution, the Russell Square Rooms Institution, &c.—*College quasi Con-lege*, a place where people read together. Wordsworth, the great poet, is coming to town; he is to have apartments in the Mansion House. He says he does not see much difficulty in writing like Shakspeare, if he had a mind to try it. It is clear then nothing is wanting but the mind. Even Coleridge a little checked at this hardihood of assertion. Jones of Trinity, I suppose you know he is dead. Dyer came to me the other evening at 11 o'clock, when there was a large room full of company, which I usually get together on a Wednesday evening (all great men have public days), to propose to me to have my face done by a Miss Beetham (or Betham), a miniature painter, some relation to Mrs. Beetham the Profilist or Pattern Mangle woman opposite to St. Dunstan's, to put before my book of Extracts. I declined it.

Well, my dear Manning, talking cannot be infinite; I have said all I have to say; the rest is but remembrances, which we shall bear in our heads of you, while we have heads. Here is a packet of trifles nothing worth; but it is a trifling part of the world where I live; emptiness abounds. But, in fulness of affection, we remain yours,

C. L.

TO THOMAS MANNING

[Many of the statements in this letter are nonsense. Mrs. Clarke was the ex-mistress of the Duke of York, and had brought an action against him. Mrs. — was Mrs. Godwin.]

28th March, 1809.

DEAR MANNING,—I sent you a long letter by the ships which sailed the beginning of last month, accompanied with books, &c. Since I last wrote, Holcroft is dead. He died on Thursday last. So there is one of your friends whom you will never see again! Perhaps the next fleet may bring you a letter from Martin Burney, to say that he writes by desire of Miss Lamb, who is not well enough to write herself, to inform you that her brother died on Thursday last, 14th June, &c. But I hope *not*. I should be sorry to give occasion to open a correspondence between Martin and you. This letter must be short, for I have driven it off to the very moment of doing up the packets; and besides, that which I refer to above is a very long one; and if you have received my books, you will have enough to do to read them. While I think on it, let me tell you we are moved. Don't come any more to Mitre Court Buildings. We are at 34, Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, and shall be here till about the end of May; then we remove to No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I mean to live and die; for I have such horror of moving, that I would not take a benefice from the King, if I was not indulged with non-residence. What a dislocation of comfort is comprised in that word moving! Such a heap of little nasty things, after you think all is got into the cart: old dredging-boxes, worn-out brushes, gallipots, vials, things that it is impossible the most necessitous person can ever want, but which the women, who

preside on these occasions, will not leave behind if it was to save your soul ; they'd keep the cart ten minutes to stow in dirty pipes and broken matches, to show their economy. Then you can find nothing you want for many days after you get into your new lodgings. You must comb your hair with your fingers, wash your hands without soap, go about in dirty gaiters. Was I Diogenes, I would not move out of a kilderkin into a hogshead, though the first had had nothing but small beer in it, and the second reeked claret. Our place of final destination,—I don't mean the grave, but No. 2 [4], Inner Temple Lane,—looks out upon a gloomy churchyard-like court, called Hare Court, with three trees and a pump in it. Do you know it ? I was born near it, and used to drink at that pump when I was a Rechabite of six years old. If you see newspapers you will read about Mrs. Clarke. The sensation in London about this nonsensical business is marvellous. I remember nothing in my life like it. Thousands of ballads, caricatures, lives, of Mrs. Clarke, in every blind alley. Yet in the midst of this stir, a sublime abstracted dancing-master, who attends a family we know in Kensington, being asked a question about the progress of the examination in the House, inquired who Mrs. Clarke was ? He had heard nothing of it. He had evaded this omnipresence by utter insignificancy ! The Duke should make that man his confidential valet. I proposed locking him up, barring him the use of his fiddle and red pumps, until he had minutely perused and committed to memory the whole body of the examinations, which employed the House of Commons a fortnight, to teach him to be more attentive to what concerns the public. I think I told you of Godwin's little book, and of Coleridge's prospectus, in my last ; if I did not, remind me of it, and I will send you them, or an account of them, next fleet. I have no conveniency of doing it by this. Mrs. — grows every day in disfavour with God and man. I will be buried with this inscription over me :—" Here

lies C. L., the Woman-hater"—I mean that hated ONE WOMAN: for the rest, God bless them, and when he makes any more, make 'em prettier. How do you like the Mandarinesses? Are you on some little footing with any of them? This is Wednesday. On Wednesdays is my levee. The Captain, Martin, Phillips, (not the Sheriff,) Rickman, and some more, are constant attendants, besides stray visitors. We play at whist, eat cold meat and hot potatoes, and any gentleman that chooses smokes. Why do you never drop in? You'll come some day, won't you?

C. LAMB, &c.

TO THOMAS MANNING

[There is more nonsense here. Lamb had not published any book on titles of honour]

Jan 2nd, 1810.

Mary sends her love.

DEAR MANNING,—When I last wrote to you, I was in lodgings. I am now in chambers, No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I should be happy to see you any evening. Bring any of your friends, the Mandarins, with you. I have two sitting-rooms: I call them so *par excellence*, for you may stand, or loll, or lean, or try any posture in them; but they are best for sitting; not squatting down Japanese fashion, but the more decorous use of the post—s which European usage has consecrated. I have two of these rooms on the third floor, and five sleeping, cooking, &c., rooms, on the fourth floor. In my best room is a choice collection of the works of Hogarth, an English painter of some humour. In my next best are shelves containing a small but well-chosen library. My best room commands a court, in which there are trees and a pump, the water of which is excellent—cold with brandy, and not very insipid without. Here I hope to set up my rest,

and not quit till Mr. Powell, the undertaker, gives me notice that I may have possession of my last lodging. He lets lodgings for single gentlemen. I sent you a parcel of books by my last, to give you some idea of the state of European literature. There comes with this two volumes, done up as letters, of minor poetry, a sequel to "Mrs. Leicester;" the best you may suppose mine; the next best are my coadjutor's; you may amuse yourself in guessing them out; but I must tell you mine are but one-third in quantity of the whole. So much for a very delicate subject. It is hard to speak of one's self, &c. Holcroft had finished his life when I wrote to you, and Hazlitt has since finished his life—I do not mean his own life, but he has finished a life of Holcroft, which is going to press. Tuthill is Dr. Tuthill. I continue Mr. Lamb. I have published a little book for children on titles of honour: and to give them some idea of the difference of rank and gradual rising, I have made a little scale, supposing myself to receive the following various accessions of dignity from the king, who is the fountain of honour—As at first, 1, Mr. C. Lamb; 2, C. Lamb, Esq.; 3, Sir C. Lamb, Bart.; 4, Baron Lamb of Stamford;¹ 5, Viscount Lamb; 6, Earl Lamb; 7, Marquis Lamb; 8, Duke Lamb. It would look like quibbling to carry it on further, and especially as it is not necessary for children to go beyond the ordinary titles of sub-regal dignity in our own country, otherwise, I have sometimes in my dreams imagined myself still advancing, as 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th, Pope Innocent, higher than which is nothing but the Lamb of God. Puns I have not made many (nor punch much), since the date of my last; one I cannot help relating. A constable in Salisbury Cathedral was telling me that eight people dined at the top of the spire of the cathedral; upon which I remarked,

¹ Where my family come from. I have chosen that if ever I should have my choice.

that they must be very sharp-set. But in general I cultivate the reasoning part of my mind more than the imaginative. Do you know Kate * * * * *? I am stuffed out so with eating turkey for dinner, and another turkey for supper yesterday (turkey in Europe and turkey in Asia), that I can't jog on. It is New Year here. That is, it was New Year half a year back, when I was writing this. Nothing puzzles me more than time and space, and yet nothing puzzles me less, for I never think about them. The Persian ambassador is the principal thing talked of now. I sent some people to see him worship the sun on Primrose Hill at half past six in the morning, 28th November; but he did not come, which makes me think the old fire-worshippers are a sect almost extinct in Persia. Have you trampled on the Cross yet? The Persian ambassador's name is Shaw Ali Mirza. The common people call him Shaw Nonsense. While I think of it, I have put three letters besides my own three into the India post for you, from your brother, sister, and some gentleman whose name I forget. Will they, have they, did they, come safe? The distance you are at, cuts up tenses by the root. I think you said you did not know Kate * * * * * * * *. I express her by nine stars, though she is but one, but if ever one star differed from another in glory —. You must have seen her at her father's. Try and remember her. Coleridge is bringing out a paper in weekly numbers, called the "Friend," which I would send, if I could; but the difficulty I had in getting the packets of books out to you before deters me; and you'll want something new to read when you come home. It is chiefly intended to puff off Wordsworth's poetry; but there are some noble things in it by the by. Except Kate, I have had no vision of excellence this year, and she passed by like the queen on her coronation day; you don't know whether you saw her or not. Kate is fifteen: I go about moping, and sing the old pathetic ballad I used to like in my youth:

"She's sweet Fifteen,
I'm *one year more*."

Mrs. Bland sung it in boy's clothes the first time I heard it. I sometimes think the lower notes in my voice are like Mrs. Bland's. That glorious singer Braham, one of my lights, is fled. He was for a season. He was a rare composition of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel, yet all these elements mixed up so kindly in him, that you could not tell which predominated; but he is gone, and one Phillips is engaged instead. Kate is vanished, but Miss B * * * * * is always to be met with!

"Queens drop away, while blue-legg'd Maukin thrives;
And courtly Mildred dies while country Madge survives."

That is not my poetry, but Quarles's; but haven't you observed that the rarest things are the least obvious? Don't show anybody the names in this letter. I write confidentially, and wish this letter to be considered as *private*. Hazlitt has written a *grammar* for Godwin; Godwin sells it bound up with a treatise of his own on language, but the *grey mare is the better horse*. I don't allude to Mrs. Godwin, but to the word *grammar*, which comes near to *grey mare*, if you observe, in sound. That figure is called *paranomasia* in Greek. I am sometimes happy in it. An old woman begged of me for charity. "Ah! sir," said she, "I have seen better days;" "So have I, good woman," I replied; but I meant literally, days not so rainy and overcast as that on which she begged: she meant more prosperous days. Mr. Dawe is made associate of the Royal Academy. By what law of association I can't guess. Mrs. Holcroft, Miss Holcroft, Mr. and Mrs. Godwin, Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt, Mrs. Martin and Louisa, Mrs. Lum, Capt. Burney, Mrs. Burney, Martin Burney, Mr. Rickman, Mrs. Rickman, Dr. Stoddart, William Dollin, Mr. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Norris, Mr. Fenwick, Mrs. Fenwick, Miss Fenwick, a man that saw you at our house one day, and a lady that heard me speak of you;

Mrs. Buffam that heard Hazlitt mention you, Dr. Tuthill, Mrs. Tuthill, Colonel Harwood, Mrs. Harwood, Mr. Collier, Mrs. Collier, Mr. Sutton, Nurse, Mr. Fell, Mrs. Fell, Mr. Marshall, are very well, and occasionally inquire after you. [*Rest cut away.*]

TO BARRON FIELD

[Barron Field was a lawyer who had become a judge in New South Wales. Lamb subsequently made this letter the theme of his *Elia* Essay on Distant Correspondents.]

Aug. 31st, 1817.

MY DEAR BARRON,—The bearer of this letter so far across the seas is Mr. Lawrey, who comes out to you as a missionary, and whom I have been strongly importuned to recommend to you as a most worthy creature by Mr. Fenwick, a very old, honest friend of mine, of whom, if my memory does not deceive me, you have had some knowledge heretofore as editor of the “Statesman”—a man of talent, and patriotic. If you can show him any facilities in his arduous undertaking, you will oblige us much. Well, and how does the land of thieves use you? and how do you pass your time in your extra-judicial intervals? Going about the streets with a lantern, like Diogenes, looking for an honest man? You may look long enough, I fancy. Do give me some notion of the manners of the inhabitants where you are. They don’t thieve all day long, do they? No human property could stand such continuous battery. And what do they do when they an’t stealing?

Have you got a theatre? What pieces are performed? Shakespear’s, I suppose—not so much for the poetry, as for his having once been in danger of leaving his country on account of certain “small deer.”

Have you poets among you? Cursed plagiarists,

I fancy, if you have any. I would not trust an idea or a pocket-handkerchief of mine among 'em. You are almost competent to answer Lord Bacon's problem, whether a nation of atheists can subsist together. You are practically in one :

“ So thievish 'tis, that the eighth commandment itself
Scarce seemeth there to be.”

Our old honest world goes on with little perceptible variation. Of course you have heard of poor Mitchell's death, and that G. Dyer is one of Lord Stanhope's residuaries. I am afraid he has not touched much of the residue yet. He is positively as lean as Cassius. Barnes is going to Demerara or Essequibo, I am not quite certain which. A[lsager] is turned actor. He came out in genteel comedy at Cheltenham this season, and has hopes of a London engagement.

For my own history, I am just in the same spot, doing the same thing (videlicet, little or nothing,) as when you left me ; only I have positive hopes that I shall be able to conquer that inveterate habit of smoking which you may remember I indulged in. I think of making a beginning this evening, viz., Sunday, 31st August, 1817, not Wednesday, 2nd Feb., 1818, as it will be perhaps when you read this for the first time. There is the difficulty of writing from one end of the globe (hemispheres I call 'em) to another. Why, half the truths I have sent you in this letter will become lies before they reach you, and some of the lies (which I have mixed for variety's sake, and to exercise your judgment in the finding of them out) may be turned into sad realities before you shall be called upon to detect them. Such are the defects of going by different chronologies. Your now is not my now ; and again, your then is not my then ; but my now may be your then, and *vice versa*. Whose head is competent to these things ?

How does Mrs. Field get on in her geography ? Does she know where she is by this time ? I am not sure sometimes you are not in another planet ;

but then I don't like to ask Capt. Burney, or any of those that know anything about it, for fear of exposing my ignorance.

Our kindest remembrances, however, to Mrs. F., if she will accept of reminiscences from another planet, or at least another hemisphere.

C. L.

TO MRS. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[W. W. was, of course, Wordsworth; W. H., Hazlitt; and S. T. C., Coleridge]

18 feb. 1818. East India House.

(Marv shall send you all the *news*, which I find I have left out.)

MY DEAR MRS. WORDSWORTH, I have repeatedly taken pen in hand to answer your kind letter. My sister should more properly have done it, but she having failed, I consider myself answerable for her debts. I am now trying to do it in the midst of Commercial noises, and with a quill which seems more ready to glide into arithmetical figures and names of Goods, Cassia, Cardemoms, Aloes, Ginger, Tea, than into kindly responses and friendly recollections.

The reason why I cannot write letters at home is, that I am never alone. Plato's (I write to W. W. now) Plato's double animal parted never longed [? more] to be reciprocally reunited in the system of its first creation, than I sometimes do to be but for a moment single and separate. Except my morning's walk to the office, which is like treading on sands of gold for that reason, I am never so. I cannot walk home from office but some officious friend offers his damn'd unwelcome courtesies to accompany me. All the morning I am pestered. I could sit and gravely cast up sums in great Books, or compare sum with sum, and write PAID against

this and UNP'D against t'other, and yet reserve in some "corner of my mind" some darling thoughts all my own—faint memory of some passage in a Book—or the tone of an absent friend's Voice—a snatch of Miss Burrell's singing—a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face—The two operations might be going on at the same time without thwarting, as the sun's two motions (earth's I mean), or as I sometimes turn round till I am giddy, in my back parlour, while my sister is walking longitudinally in the front—or as the shoulder of veal twists round with the spit, while the smoke wreathes up the chimney—but there are a set of amateurs of the Belle Lettres—the gay science—who come to me as a sort of rendezvous, putting questions of criticism, of British Institutions, Lalla Rooks &c., what Coleridge said at the Lecture last night—who have the form of reading men, but, for any possible use Reading can be to them but to talk of, might as well have been Ante-Cadmeans born, or have lain sucking out the sense of an Egyptian hieroglyph as long as the Pyramids will last before they should find it. These pests worrit me at business and in all its intervals, perplexing my accounts, poisoning my little salutary warming-time at the fire, puzzling my paragraphs if I take a newspaper, cramming in between my own free thoughts and a column of figures which had come to an amicable compromise but for them. Their noise ended, one of them, as I said, accompanys me home lest I should be solitary for a moment; he at length takes his welcome leave at the door, up I go, mutton on table, hungry as hunter, hope to forget my cares and bury them in the agreeable abstraction of mastication, knock at the door, in comes Mrs. Hazlitt, or M. Burney, or Morgan, or Demogorgon, or my brother, or somebody, to prevent my eating alone, a Process absolutely necessary to my poor wretched digestion. O the pleasure of eating alone!—eating my dinner alone! let me think of it. But in they come, and make it absolutely necessary that

I should open a bottle of orange—for my meat turns into stone when any one dines with me, if I have not wine—wine can mollify stones. Then *that* wine turns into acidity, acerbity, misanthropy, a hatred of my interrupters (God bless 'em! I love some of 'em dearly), and with the hatred a still greater aversion to their going away. Bad is the dead sea they bring upon me, choking and death-doing, but worse is the deader dry sand they leave me on if they go before bed time. Come never, I would say to these spoilers of my dinner, but if you come, never go. The fact is, this interruption does not happen very often, but every time it comes by surprise that present bane of my life, orange wine, with all its dreary stiling consequences, follows. Evening Company I should always like had I any mornings, but I am saturated with human faces (*divine* forsooth) and voices all the golden morning, and five evenings in a week would be as much as I should covet to be in company, but I assure you that is a wonderful week in which I can get two, or one, to myself. I am never C. L. but always C. L. and Co.

He, who thought it not good for man to be alone, preserve me from the more prodigious monstrosity of being never by myself. I forget bed time, but even there these sociable frogs clamber up to annoy me. Once a week, generally some singular evening that, being alone, I go to bed at the hour I ought always to be abed, just close to my bedroom window, is the club room of a public house, where a set of singers, I take them to be chorus-singers of the two theatres (it must be *both of them*), begin their orgies. They are a set of fellows (as I conceive) who being limited by their talents to the burthen of the song at the play houses, in revenge have got the common popular airs by Bishop or some cheap composer arranged for choruses, that is, to be sung all in chorus. At least I never can catch any of the text of the plain song, nothing but the Babylonish choral howl at the tail on't. "That fury being quenched"—the howl I

mean—a curseder burden succeeds, of shouts and clapping and knocking of the table. At length over tasked nature drops under it and escapes for a few hours into the society of the sweet silent creatures of Dreams, which go away with mocks and mows at cockcrow. And then I think of the words Christobel's father used (bless me, I have dipt in the wrong ink) to say every morning by way of variety when he awoke—"Every knell, the Baron saith, Wakes us up to a world of death," or something like it. All I mean by this senseless interrupted tale is, that by my central situation I am a little over companied. Not that I have any animosity against the good creatures that are so anxious to drive away the Harpy solitude from me. I like 'em, and cards, and a chearful glass, but I mean merely to give you an idea between office confinement and after office society, how little time I can call my own. I mean only to draw a picture, not to make an inference. I would not that I know of have it otherwise. I only wish sometimes I could exchange some of my faces and voices for the faces and voices which a late visitation brought most welcome and carried away leaving regret, but more pleasure, even a kind of gratitude, at being so often favored with that kind northern visitation. My London faces and noises don't hear me—I mean no disrespect—or I should explain myself that instead of their return 220 times a year and the return of W. W. &c. 7 times in 104 weeks, some more equal distribution might be found. I have scarce room to put in Mary's kind love and my poor name.

CH. LAMB.

This to be read last.

W. H. goes on lecturing against W. W. and making copious use of quotations from said W. W. to give a zest to said lectures. S. T. C. is lecturing with success. I have not heard either him or H. but I dined with S. T. C. at Gilman's a Sunday or 2 since and he was well and in good spirits. I mean to hear

some of the course, but lectures are not much to my taste, whatever the Lecturer may be. If *read*, they are dismal flat, and you can't think why you are brought together to hear a man read his works which you could read so much better at leisure yourself ; if delivered extempore, I am always in pain lest the gift of utterance should suddenly fail the orator in the middle, as it did me at the dinner given in honor of me at the London Tavern. "Gentlemen" said I, and there I stoppt,—the rest my feelings were under the necessity of supplying. Mrs. Wordsworth *will* go on, kindly haunting us with visions of seeing the lakes once more which never can be realized. Between us there is a great gulf—not of inexplicable moral antipathies and distances, I hope (as there seemed to be between me and that Gentleman concern'd in the Stamp office that I so strangely coiled up from at Haydons). I think I had an instinct that he was the head of an office. I hate all such people—Accountants, Deputy Accountants. The dear abstract notion of the East India Company, as long as she is unseen, is pretty, rather Poetical ; but as SHE makes herself manifest by the persons of such Beasts, I loathe and detest her as the Scarlet what-do-you-call-her of Babylon. I thought, after abridging us of all our red letter days, they had done their worst, but I was deceived in the length to which Heads of offices, those true Liberty haters, can go. They are the tyrants, not Ferdinand, nor Nero—by a decree past this week, they have abridged us of the immemorially-observed custom of going at one o'clock of a Saturday, the little shadow of a holiday left us. Blast them. I speak it soberly. Dear W.W., be thankful for your liberty.

We have spent two very pleasant Evenings lately with Mr. Monkhouse.

TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[Willy was Wordsworth's son. The reference to Westminster Bridge is explained by Wordsworth's famous sonnet written there.]

[P.M. 25 Nov., 1819.]

DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,—You will think me negligent, but I wanted to see more of Willy, before I ventured to express a prediction. Till yesterday I had barely seen him—*Virgilium Tantum Vidi*—but yesterday he gave us his small company to a bullock's heart—and I can pronounce him a lad of promise. He is no pedant nor bookworm, so far I can answer. Perhaps he has hitherto paid too little attention to other men's inventions, preferring, like Lord Foppington, the "natural sprouts of his own." But he has observation, and seems thoroughly awake. I am ill at remembering other people's *bon mots*, but the following are a few. Being taken over Waterloo Bridge, he remarked that if we had no mountains, we had a fine river at least, which was a Touch of the Comparative, but then he added, in a strain which augured less for his future abilities as a Political Economist, that he supposed they must take at least a pound a week Toll. Like a curious naturalist he inquired if the tide did not come up a little salty. This being satisfactorily answered, he put another question as to the flux and reflux, which being rather cunningly evaded than artfully solved by that she-Aristotle Mary, who muttered something about its getting up an hour sooner and sooner every day, he sagely replied, "Then it must come to the same thing at last" which was a speech worthy of an infant Halley! The Lion in the 'Change by no means came up to his ideal standard. So impossible it is

for nature in any of her works to come up to the standard of a child's imagination. The whelps (Lionets) he was sorry to find were dead, and on particular enquiry his old friend the Ouran Outang had gone the way of all flesh also. The grand Tiger was also sick, and expected in no short time to exchange this transitory world for another—or none. But again, there was a Golden Eagle (I do not mean that of Charing) which did much arride and console him. William's genius, I take it, leans a little to the figurative, for being at play at Tricktrack (a kind of minor Billiard-table which we keep for smaller wights, and sometimes refresh our own mature fatigues with taking a hand at), not being able to hit a ball he had iterate aimed at, he cried out, "I cannot hit that beast." Now the balls are usually called men, but he felicitously hit upon a middle term, a term of approximation and imaginative reconciliation, a something where the two ends, of the brute matter (ivory) and their human and rather violent personification into *men*, might meet, as I take it, illustrative of that Excellent remark in a certain Preface about Imagination, explaining "like a sea-beast that had crawled forth to sun himself." Not that I accuse William Minor of hereditary plagiarism, or conceive the image to have come *ex traduce*. Rather he seemeth to keep aloof from any source of imitation, and purposely to remain ignorant of what mighty poets have done in this kind before him. For being asked if his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge, he answer'd that he did not know.

It is hard to discern the Oak in the Acorn, or a Temple like St. Paul's in the first stone which is laid, nor can I quite prefigure what destination the genius of William Minor hath to take. Some few hints I have set down, to guide my future observations. He hath the power of calculation in no ordinary degree for a chit. He combineth figures, after the first boggle, rapidly. As in the Tricktrack board, where the hits are figured, at first he did not perceive that

15 and 7 made 22, but by a little use he could combine 8 with 25—and 33 again with 16, which approacheth something in kind (far let me be from flattering him by saying in degree) to that of the famous American boy. I am sometimes inclined to think I perceive the future satirist in him, for he hath a sub-sardonic smile which bursteth out upon occasion, as when he was asked if London were as big as Ambleside, and indeed no other answer was given, or proper to be given, 'so so ensnaring and provoking a question. In the contour of skull certainly I discern something paternal. But whether in all respects the future man shall transcend his father's fame, Time the trier of geniuses must decide. Be it pronounced peremptorily at present, that Willy is a well-mannered child, and though no great student, hath yet a lively eye for things that lie before him. Given in haste from my desk at Leadenhall. Your's and yours' most sincerely.

C. LAMB.

TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[This letter was the germ of the *Elia* essay on "Two Races of Men."]

[No date. ? Autumn, 1820.]

DEAR C.,—Why will you make your visits, which should give pleasure, matter of regret to your friends? You never come but you take away some folio that is part of my existence. With a great deal of difficulty I was made to comprehend the extent of my loss. My maid Becky brought me a dirty pit of paper, which contained her description of some book which Mr. Coleridge had taken away. It was "Luster's Tables," which, for some time, I could not make out. "What! has he carried away any of the *tables*, Becky?" "No, it wasn't any tables, but it was a book that he called Luster's Tables." I was obliged to search personally among my shelves, and a huge fissure suddenly disclosed

to me the true nature of the damage I had sustained. That book, C., you should not have taken away, for it is not mine ; it is the property of a friend, who does not know its value, nor indeed have I been very sedulous in explaining to him the estimate of it ; but was rather contented in giving a sort of corroboration to a hint that he let fall, as to its being suspected to be not genuine, so that in all probability it would have fallen to me as a deodand ; not but I am as sure it is Luther's as I am sure that Jack Bunyan wrote the "*Pilgrim's Progress* ;" but it was not for me to pronounce upon the validity of testimony that had been disputed by learned clerks than I. So I quietly let it occupy the place it had usurped upon my shelves, and should never have thought of issuing an ejectment against it ; for why should I be so bigoted as to allow rites of hospitality to none but my own books, children, &c. ?—a species of egotism I abhor from my heart. No ; let 'em all snug together, Hebrews and Proselytes of the gate ; no selfish partiality of mine shall make distinction between them ; I charge no warehouse-room for my friends' commodities ; they are welcome to come and stay as long as they like, without paying rent. I have several such strangers that I treat with more than Arabian courtesy ; there's a copy of More's fine poem ; which is none of mine ; but I cherish it as my own ; I am none of those churlish landlords that advertise the goods to be taken away in ten days' time, or then to be sold to pay expenses. So you see I had no right to lend you that book ; I may lend you my own books, because it is at my own hazard, but it is not honest to hazard a friend's property ; I always make that distinction. I hope you will bring it with you, or send it by Hartley ; or he can bring that, and you the "*Polemical Discourses*," and come and eat some atoning mutton with us one of these days shortly. We are engaged two or three Sundays deep, but always dine at home on week-days at half-past four. So come all four—men and

TO MR. AND MRS. J. D. COLLIER 155

books I mean—my third shelf (northern compartment) from the top has two devilish gaps, where you have knocked out his two eye-teeth.

Your wronged friend,

C. LAMB.

TO MR. AND MRS. J. D. COLLIER

[The Colliers were the parents of John Payne Collier, the Shakespearian scholar. They lived at East Grinstead.]

Twelfth Day [January 6], 1823.

THE pig was above my feeble praise. It was a dear pigmy. There was some contention as to who should have the ears, but in spite of his obstinacy (deaf as these little creatures are to advice) I contrived to get at one of them.

It came in boots too, which I took as a favor. Generally those petty toes, pretty toes! are missing. But I suppose he wore them, to look taller.

He must have been the least of his race. His little foots would have gone into the silver slipper. I take him to have been Chinese, and a female.—

If Evelyn could have seen him, he would never have farrowed two such prodigious volumes, seeing how much good can be contained in—how small a compass!

He crackled delicately.

John Collier Junr. has sent me a Poem which (without the smallest bias from the aforesaid present, believe me) I pronounce *sterling*.

I set about Evelyn, and finished the first volume in the course of a natural day. To-day I attack the second.—Parts are very interesting.—

I left a blank at top of my letter, not being determined *which* to address it to, so Farmer and Farmer's wife will please to divide our thanks. May your granaries be full, and your rats empty, and your chickens plump, and your envious neighbors lean, and your labourers busy, and you as idle and as happy as the day is long!

VIVE L' AGRICULTURE!

Frank Field's marriage of course you have seen in the papers, and that his brother Barron is expected home.

"How do you make your pigs so little?

They are vastly engaging at that age.

I was so myself.

Now I am a disagreeable old hog—

A middle-aged-gentleman-and-a-half."

My faculties, thank God, are not much impaired. I have my sight, hearing, taste, pretty perfect; and can read the Lord's prayer in the common type, by the help of a candle, without making many mistakes.

Believe me, while my faculties last, a proper appreciator of your many kindnesses in this way; and that the last lingering relish of past flavors upon my dying memory will be the smack of that little Ear. It was the left ear, which is lucky. Many happy returns (not of the Pig) but of the New Year to both.—

Mary for her share of the Pig and the memoirs desires to send the same—

Dr. Mr. C. and Mrs. C.—

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

TO BERNARD BARTON

[Barton was a Quaker bank clerk at Woodbridge and the author of much devotional verse. He had asked Lamb to advise him on his intention of giving up his ledger work for literature]

9 Jan., 1823.

THROW yourself on the world without any rational plan of support, beyond what the chance employ of Booksellers would afford you" !!!

Throw yourself rather, my dear Sir, from the steep farpeian rock, slap-dash headlong upon iron spikes. If you had but five consolatory minutes between the desk and the bed, make much of them, and live

a century in them, rather than turn slave to the Booksellers. They are Turks and Tartars, when they have poor Authors at their beck. Hitherto you have been at arm's length from them. Come not within their grasp. I have known many authors for bread, some repining, others envying the blessed security of a Counting House, all agreeing they had rather have been Taylors, Weavers, what not? rather than the things they were. I have known some starved, some to go mad, one dear friend literally dying in a workhouse. You know not what a rapacious, dishonest set those booksellers are. Ask even Southey, who (a single case almost) has made a fortune by book drudgery, what he has found them. O you know not, may you never know! the miseries of subsisting by authorship. 'Tis a pretty appendage to a situation like yours or mine, but a slavery worse than all slavery to be a bookseller's dependent, to drudge your brains for pots of ale and breasts of mutton, to change your free thoughts and voluntary numbers for ungracious TASK-WORK. Those fellows hate *us*. The reason I take to be, that, contrary to other trades, in which the Master gets all the credit (a Jeweller or Silver-smith for instance), and the Journeyman, who really does the fine work, is in the background, in *our* work the world gives all the credit to *Us*, whom *they* consider as *their* Journeymen, and therefore do they hate us, and cheat us, and oppress us, and would wring the blood of us out, to put another sixpence in their mechanic pouches. I contend, that a Bookseller has a *relative honesty* towards Authors, not like his honesty to the rest of the world. B[aldwin], who first engag'd me as Elia, has not paid me up yet (nor any of us without repeated mortifying applalls), yet how the Knave fawned while I was of service to him! Yet I dare say the fellow is punctual in settling his milk-score, &c. Keep to your Bank, and the Bank will keep you. Trust not to the Public, you may hang, starve,

drown yourself, for anything that worthy *Personage* cares. I bless every star that Providence, not seeing good to make me independent, has seen it next good to settle me upon the stable foundation of Leadenhall. Sit down, good B. B., in the Banking Office; what, is there not from six to Eleven P.M. 6 days in the week, and is there not all Sunday? Fie, what a superfluity of man's time,—if you could think so! Enough for relaxation, mirth, converse, poetry, good thoughts, quiet thoughts. O the corroding torturing tormenting thoughts, that disturb the Brain of the unlucky wight, who must draw upon it for daily sustenance. Henceforth I retract all my fond complaints of mercantile employment, look upon them as Lovers' quarrels. I was but half in earnest, Welcome, dead timber of a desk, that makes me live. A little grumbling is a wholesome medicine for the spleen; but in my inner heart do I approve and embrace this our close but unharassing way of life. I am quite serious. If you can send me Fox, I will not keep it six *weeks*, and will return it, with warm thanks to yourself and friend, without blot or dog's ear. You much oblige me by this kindness.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Please to direct to me at India Ho. in future.
[? I am] not always at Russell St.

TO BERNARD BARTON

[Lamb's house in Colebrook Row, Islington, still stands.]

[Dated at end: 2 September [1823].]

DEAR B. B.—What will you say to my not writing? You cannot say I do not write now. Hessey has not used your kind sonnet, nor have I seen it. Pray send me a Copy. Neither have I heard any more of your Friend's

MS., which I will reclaim, whenever you please. When you come London-ward you will find me no longer in Covt. Gard. I have a Cottage, in Colebrook row, Islington. A cottage, for it is detach'd; a white house, with 6 good rooms; the New River (rather elderly by this time) runs (if a moderate walking pace can be so termed) close to the foot of the house; and behind is a spacious garden, with vines (I assure you), pears, strawberries, parsnips, leeks, carrots, cabbages, to delight the heart of old Alcinous. You enter without passage into a cheerful dining room, all studded over and rough with old Books, and above is a lightsome Drawing room, 3 windows, full of choice prints. I feel like a great Lord, never having had a house before.

The London I fear falls off.—I linger among its creaking rafters, like the last rat. It will topple down, if they don't get some Buttresses. They have pull'd down three, W. Hazlitt, Proctor, and their best stay, kind light hearted Wainwright—their Janus. The best is, neither of our fortunes is concern'd in it.

I heard of you from Mr. Pulham this morning, and that gave a filip to my Laziness, which has been intolerable. But I am so taken up with pruning and gardening, quite a new sort of occupation to me. I have gather'd my Jargonels, but my Windsor Pears are backward. The former were of exquisite raciness. I do now sit under my own vine, and contemplate the growth of vegetable nature. I can now understand in what sense they speak of FATHER ADAM. I recognise the paternity, while I watch my tulips. I almost FELL with him, for the first day I turned a drunken gard'ner (as he let in the serpent) into my Eden, and he laid about him, lopping off some choice boughs, &c., which hung over from a neighbor's garden, and in his blind zeal laid waste a shade, which had sheltered their window from the gaze of passers by. The old gentleman (fury made her not handsome) could scarcely

be reconciled by all my fine words. There was no buttering her parsnips. She talk'd of the Law. What a lapse to commit on the first day of my happy "garden-state."

I hope you transmitted the Fox-Journal to its Owner with suitable thanks.

Mr. Cary, the Dante-man, dines with me to-day. He is a model of a country Parson, lean (as a Curate ought to be), modest, sensible, no obtruder of church dogmas, quite a different man from Southey,—you would like him.

Pray accept this for a Letter, and believe me with sincere regards

Yours

C. L.

TO BERNARD BARTON

[January 9, 1824.]

DEAR B. B.—Do you know what it is to succumb under an insurmountable day mare—a whoreson lethargy, Falstaff calls it—an indisposition to do any thing, or to be any thing—a total deadness and distaste—a suspension of vitality—an indifference to locality—a numb soporifical goodfornothingness—an ossification all over—an oyster-like insensibility to the passing events—a mind-stupor,—a brawny defiance to the needles of a thrusting-in conscience—did you ever have a very bad cold, with a total irresolution to submit to water gruel processes?—this has been for many weeks my lot, and my excuse—my fingers drag heavily over this paper, and to my thinking it is three and twenty furlongs from here to the end of this demi-sheet—I have not a thing to say—nothing is of more importance than another—I am flatter than a denial or a pancake—emptier than Judge Park's wig when the head is in it—duller than a country stage when the actors are off it—a cypher—an O—I acknowledge life at all, only by an occasional convulsional cough,

and a permanent phlegmatic pain in the chest—I am weary of the world—Life is weary of me—My day is gone into Twilight and I don't think it worth the expence of candles—my wick hath a thief in it, but I can't muster courage to snuff it—I inhale suffocation—I can't distinguish veal from mutton—nothing interests me—'tis 12 o'clock and Thurtell is just now coming out upon the New Drop—Jack Ketch alertly tucking up his greasy sleeves to do the last office of mortality, yet cannot I elicit a groan or a moral reflection—if you told me the world will be at end tomorrow, I should just say, "will it?"—I have not volition enough to dot my i's—much less to comb my EYEBROWS—my eyes are set in my head—my brains are gone out to see a poor relation in Moorfields, and they did not say when they'd come back again—my scull is a Grub street Attic, to let—not so much as a joint stool or a crackd jordan left in it—my hand writes, not I, from habit, as chickens run about a little when their heads are off—O for a vigorous fit of gout, cholic, tooth ache—an earwig in my auditory, a fly in my visual organs—pain is life—the sharper, the more evidence of life—but this apathy, this death—did you ever have an obstinate cold, a six or seven weeks' unintermitting chill and suspension of hope, fear, conscience, and every thing—yet do I try all I can to cure it, I try wine, and spirits, and smoking, and snuff in unsparing quantities, but they all only seem to make me worse, instead of better—I sleep in a damp room, but it does me no good; I come home late o' nights, but do not find any visible amendment.

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

It is just 15 minutes after 12. Thurtell is by this time a good way on his journey, baiting at Scorpion perhaps, Ketch is bargaining for his cast coat and waistcoat, the Jew demurs at first at three half crowns, but on consideration that he may get somewhat by showing 'em in the Town, finally closes.—

C. L.

TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

[Dibdin, the son of Charles Dibdin the younger, was a clerk in the city. He had gone to Hastings for his health.]

Friday, some day in June, 1826.

[P.M. June 30, 1826.]

DEAR D.—My first impulse upon opening your letter was pleasure at seeing your old neat hand, nine parts gentlemanly, with a modest dash of the clerical: my second a Thought, natural enough this hot weather, Am I to answer all this? why 'tis as long as those to the Ephesians and Galatians put together—I have counted the words for curiosity. But then Paul has nothing like the fun which is ebullient all over yours. I don't remember a good thing (good like yours) from the 1st Romans to the last of the Hebrews. I remember but one Pun in all the Evangely, and that was made by his and our master: Thou art Peter (that is Doctor Rock) and upon this rock will I build &c. } which sanctifies Punning with me against all gain-sayers. I never knew an enemy to puns, who was not an ill-natured man. Your fair critic in the coach reminds me of a Scotchman who assured me that he did not see much in Shakspeare. I replied, I dare say *not*. He felt the equivoke, lookd awkward, and reddish, but soon returnd to the attack, by saying that he thought Burns was as good as Shakspeare: I said that I had no doubt he was—to a *Scotchman*. We exchangd no more words that day.—Your account of the fierce faces in the Hanging, with the presumed interlocution of the Eagle and the Tyger, amused us greatly. You cannot be so very bad, while you can pick mirth off from

rotten walls. But let me hear you have escaped out of your oven. May the Form of the Fourth Person who clapt invisible wet blankets about the shoulders of Shadrach Meshach and Abednego, be with you in the fiery Trial. But get out of the frying pan. Your business, I take it, is bathing, not baking.

Let me hear that you have clamber'd up to Lover's Seat ; it is as fine in that neighbourhood as Juan Fernandez, as lonely too, when the Fishing boats are not out ; I have sat for hours, staring upon a shipless sea. The salt sea is never so grand as when it is left to itself. One cock-boat spoils it. A sea-mew or two improves it. And go to the little church, which is a very protestant Loretto, and seems dropt by some angel for the use of a hermit, who was at once parishioner and a whole parish. It is not too big. Go in the night, bring it away in your portmanteau, and I will plant it in my garden. It must have been erected in the very infancy of British Christianity, for the two or three first converts ; yet hath it all the appertenances of a church of the first magnitude, its pulpit, its pews, its baptismal font ; a cathedral in a nutshell. Seven people would crowd it like a Caledonian Chapel. The minister that divides the word there, must give lumping pennyworths. It is built to the text of two or three assembled in my name. It reminds me of the grain of mustard seed. If the glebe land is proportionate, it may yield two potatoes. Tythes out of it could be no more split than a hair. Its First fruits must be its Last, for 'twould never produce a couple. It is truly the strait and narrow way, and few there be (of London visitants) that find it. The still small voice is surely to be found there, if any where. A sounding board is merely there for ceremony. It is secure from earthquakes, not more from sanctity than size, for 'twould feel a mountain thrown upon it no more than a taper-worm would. Go and see, but not without your spectacles. By the way, there's a capital farm house two thirds

of the way to the Lover's Seat, with incomparable plum cake, ginger beer, etc. Mary bids me warn you not to read the Anatomy of Melancholy in your present *low way*. You'll fancy yourself a pipkin, or a headless bear, as Burton speaks of. You'll be lost in a maze of remedies for a labyrinth of diseasements, a plethora of cures. Read Fletcher; above all the Spanish Curate, the Thief or Little Night-walker, the Wit Without Money, and the Lover's Pilgrimage. Laugh and come home fat. Neither do we think Sir T. Browne quite the thing for you just at present. Fletcher is as light as Soda water. Browne and Burton are too strong potions for an Invalid. And don't thumb or dirt the books. Take care of the bindings. Lay a leaf of silver paper under 'em, as you read them. And don't smoke tobacco over 'em, the leaves will fall in and burn or dirty their namesakes. If you find any dusty atoms of the Indian Weed crumbled up in the Beaumont and Fletcher, they are *mine*. But then, you know, so is the Folio also. A pipe and a comedy of Fletcher's the last thing of a night is the best recipe for light dreams and to scatter away Nightmares. Probatum est. But do as you like about the former. Only cut the Baker's. You will come home else all crust; Rankings must chip you before you can appear in his counting house. And my dear Peter Fin Junr., do contrive to see the sea at least once before you return. You'll be ask'd about it in the Old Jewry. It will appear singular not to have seen it. And rub up your Muse, the family Muse, and send us a rhyme or so. Don't waste your wit upon that damn'd Dry Salter. I never knew but one Dry Salter who could relish those mellow effusions, and he broke. You knew Tommy Hill, the wettest of dry salters. Dry Salters, what a word for this thirsty weather! I must drink after it. Here's to thee, my dear Dibdin, and to our having you again snug and well at Colebrooke, but our dearest hopes are to hear again from you shortly.

TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON 165

An epistle only a quarter as agreeable as your last, would be a treat.

Yours most truly C. LAMB.

Timothy B. Dibdin, Esq.,
No. 9, Blucher Row,
Priory, Hastings.

TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[Crabb Robinson was a lawyer and amateur of friendship, to whose diary we owe much information concerning Lamb and the leading literary men of his time. Randal Norris was Sub-Treasurer and Librarian of the Inner Temple. Lamb made his essay "A Death-Bed" out of this letter.]

Colebrooke Row, Islington.

Saturday, 20th Jan., 1827.

DEAR ROBINSON,—I called upon you this morning, and found that you were gone to visit a dying friend. I had been upon a like errand. Poor Norris has been lying dying for now almost a week, such is the penalty we pay for having enjoyed a strong constitution! Whether he knew me or not, I know not, or whether he saw me through his poor glazed eyes; but the group I saw about him I shall not forget. Upon the bed, or about it, were assembled his wife and two daughters, and poor deaf Richard, his son, looking doubly stupified. There they were, and seemed to have been sitting all the week. I could only reach out a hand to Mrs. Norris. Speaking was impossible in that mute chamber. By this time I hope it is all over with him. In him I have a loss the world cannot make up. He was my friend and my father's friend all the life I can remember. I seem to have made foolish friendships ever since. Those are friendships which outlive a second generation. Old as I am waxing, in his eyes I was still the child he first knew me. To the last he called me Charley. I have

none to call me Charley now. He was the last link that bound me to the Temple. You are but of yesterday. In him seem to have died the old plainness of manners and singleness of heart. Letters he knew nothing of, nor did his reading extend beyond the pages of the "Gentleman's Magazine." Yet there was a pride of literature about him from being amongst books (he was librarian), and from some scraps of doubtful Latin which he had picked up in his office of entering students, that gave him very diverting airs of pedantry. Can I forget the erudite look with which, when he had been in vain trying to make out a black-letter text of Chaucer in the Temple Library, he laid it down and told me that—"in those old books, Charley, there is sometimes a deal of very indifferent spelling;" and seemed to console himself in the reflection! His jokes, for he had his jokes, are now ended, but they were old trusty perennials, staples that pleased after *decies repetita*, and were always as good as new. One song he had, which was reserved for the night of Christmas-day, which we always spent in the Temple. It was an old thing, and spoke of the flat bottoms of our foes and the possibility of their coming over in darkness, and alluded to threats of an invasion many years blown over; and when he came to the part

"We'll still make 'em run, and we'll still make 'em sweat,
In spite of the devil and Brussels Gazette!"

his eyes would sparkle as with the freshness of an impending event. And what is the "Brussels Gazette" now? I cry while I enumerate these trifles. "How shall we tell them in a stranger's ear?" His poor good girls will now have to receive their afflicted mother in an inaccessible hovel in an obscure village in Herts, where they have been long struggling to make a school without effect; and poor deaf Richard—and the more helpless for being so—is thrown on the wide world.

My first motive in writing, and, indeed, in calling

on you, was to ask if you were enough acquainted with any of the Benchers, to lay a plain statemēt before them of the circumstances of the family. I almost fear not, for you are of another hall. But if you can oblige me and my poor friend, who is now insensible to any favours, pray exert yourself. You cannot say too much good of poor Norris and his poor wife.

Yours ever, CHARLES LAMB.

TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[The Lambs, owing largely to Mary Lamb's failing health, had left London for Enfield.]

[P.M. January 22, 1830.]

AND is it a year since we parted from you at the steps of Edmonton Stage? There are not now the years that there used to be. The tale of the dwindled age of men, reported of successional mankind, is true of the same man only. We do not live a year in a year now. 'Tis a punctum stans. The seasons pass us with indifference. Spring cheers not, nor winter heightens our gloom, Autumn hath foregone its moralities, they are hey-pass re-pass [as] in a show-box. Yet as far as last year occurs back, for they scarce shew a reflex now, they make no memory as heretofore—'twas sufficiently gloomy. Let the sullen nothing pass.

Suffice it that after sad spirits prolonged thro' many of its months, as it called them, we have cast our skins, have taken a farewell of the pompous troublesome trifle calld housekeeping, and are settled down into poor boarders and lodgers at next door with an old couple, the Baucis and Baucida of dull Enfield. Here we have nothing to do with our victuals but to eat them, with the garden but to see it grow, with the tax gatherer but to hear him knock, with the maid but to hear her scolded. Scot

and lot, butcher, baker, are things unknown to us save as spectators of the pageant. We are fed we know not how, quietists, confiding ravens. We have the otium pro dignitate, a respectable insignificance. Yet in the self condemned obliviousness, in the stagnation, some molesting yearnings of life, not quite kill'd, rise, prompting me that there was a London, and that I was of that old Jerusalem. In dreams I am in Fleetmarket, but I wake and cry to sleep again. I die hard, a stubborn Eloisa in this detestable Paraclete. What have I gained by health? intolerable dulness. What by early hours and moderate meals?—a total blank. O never let the lying poets be believed, who 'tice men from the chearful haunts of streets—or think they mean it not of a country village. In the ruins of Palmyra I could gird myself up to solitude, or muse to the snorings of the Seven Sleepers, but to have a little teasing image of a town about one, country folks that do not look like country folks, shops two yards square, half a dozen apples and two penn'orth of overlooked gingerbread for the lofty fruiterers of Oxford Street—and, for the immortal book and print stalls, a circulating library that stands still, where the shew-picture is a last year's Valentine, and whither the fame of the last ten Scotch novels has not yet travel'd (marry, they just begin to be conscious of the Red Gauntlet), to have a new plasterd flat church, and to be wishing that it was but a Cathedral. The very blackguards here are degenerate. The topping gentry, stock brokers. The passengers too many to ensure your quiet, or let you go about whistling, or gaping—too few to be the fine indifferent pageants of Fleet Street. Confining, room-keeping thickest winter is yet more bearable here than, the gaudy months. Among one's books at one's fire by candle one is soothed into an oblvion that one is not in the country, but with the light the green fields return, till I gaze, and in a calenture can plunge myself into Saint Giles's. O let no native Londoner imagine that

health, and rest, and innocent occupation, interchange of converse sweet and recreative study, can make the country any thing better than altogether odious and detestable. A garden was the primitive prison till man with promethean felicity and boldness luckily sinn'd himself out of it. Thence follow'd Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London, haberdashers, goldsmiths, taverns, playhouses, satires, epigrams, puns—these all came in on the town part, and the thither side of innocence. Man found out inventions.

From my den I return you condolence for your decaying sight, not for any thing there is to see in the country, but for the miss of the pleasure of reading a London newspaper. The poets are as well to listen to, any thing high may, nay must, be read out—you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor—but the light paragraphs must be glid over by the proper eye, mouthing mumbles their gossamery substance. 'Tis these trifles I should mourn in fading sight. A newspaper is the single gleam of comfort I receive here, it comes from rich Cathay with tidings of mankind. Yet I could not attend to it read out by the most beloved voice. But your eyes do not get worse, I gather. O for the collyrium of Tobias inclosed in a whiting's liver to send you with no apocryphal good wishes! The last long time I heard from you, you had knock'd your head against something. Do not do so. For your head (I do not flatter) is not a nob, or the top of a brass nail, or the end of a nine pin—unless a Vulcanian hammer could fairly batter a Recluse out of it, then would I bid the smirch'd god knock and knock lustily, the two-handed skinker. What a nice long letter Dorothy has written! Mary must squeeze out a line *propria manu*, but indeed her fingers have been incorrigibly nervous to letter writing for a long interval. 'Twill please you all to hear that, tho' I fret like a lion in a net, her present health and spirits are better than they have been for some time past : she is absolutely three years and a half younger,

as I tell her, since we have adopted this boarding plan. Our providers are an honest pair, dame Westwood and her husband—he, when the light of prosperity shined on them, a moderately thriving haberdasher within Bow Bells, retired since with something under a competence, writes himself parcel gentleman, hath borne parish offices, sings fine old sea songs at threescore and ten, sighs only now and then when he thinks that he has a son on his hands about 15, whom he finds a difficulty in getting out into the world, and then checks a sigh with muttering, as I once heard him prettily, not meaning to be heard, “I have married my daughter however”—takes the weather as it comes, outsides it to town in severest season, and a’ winter nights tells old stories not tending to literature, how comfortable to author-rid folks! and has *one anecdote*, upon which and about forty pounds a year he seems to have retired in green old age. It was how he was a *rider* in his youth, travelling for shops, and once (not to baulk his employer’s bargain) on a sweltering day in August, rode foaming into Dunstable upon a *mad horse* to the dismay and expostulatory wonderment of inn-keepers, ostlers &c. who declared they would not have bestrid the beast to win the Darby. Understand the creature gall’d to death and desperation by gad flies, cormorants winged, worse than beset Inachus’ daughter. This he tells, this he brindles and burnishes on a’ winter’s eves, ’tis his star of set glory, his rejuvenescence to descant upon. Far from me be it (dii avertant) to look a gift story in the mouth, or cruelly to surmise (as those who doubt the plunge of Curtius) that the inseparate conjuncture of man and beast, the centaur-phenomenon that staggerd all Dunstable, might have been the effect of unromantic necessity, that the horse-part carried the reasoning, willy nilly, that needs must when such a devil drove, that certain spiral configurations in the frame of Thomas Westwood unfriendly to alighting, made the alliance more forcible than

voluntary. Let him enjoy his fame for me, nor let me hint a whisper that shall dismount Bellerophon. Put case he was an involuntary martyr, yet if in the fiery conflict he buckled the soul of a constant haberdasher to him, and adopted his flames, let Accident and He share the glory! You would all like Thomas Westwood.



How weak is painting to describe a man! Say that he stands four feet and a nail high by his own yard measure, which like the Sceptre of Agamemnon shall never sprout again, still you have no adequate idea, nor when I tell you that his dear hump, which I have favord in the picture, seems to me of the buffalo—indicative and repository of mild qualities, a budget of kindnesses, still you have not the man. Knew you old Norris of the Temple, 60 years ours and our father's friend, he was not more natural to us than this old W. the acquaintance of scarce more weeks. Under his roof now ought I to take my rest, but that back-looking ambition tells me I might yet be a Londoner. Well, if we ever do move, we have encumbrances the less to impede us: all our furniture has faded under the auctioneer's hammer, going for nothing like the tarnished frippery of the prodigal, and we have only a spoon or two left to bless us. Clothed we came into Enfield, and naked we must go out of it. I would live in London shirtless, bookless. Henry Crabb is at Rome, advices to that effect have reach'd Bury. But by solemn legacy he bequeath'd at parting (whether he should live or die) a Turkey of Suffolk to be sent every succeeding Xmas to us and divers other friends. What a genuine old Bachelor's action! I fear he

will find the air of Italy too classic. His station is in the Hartz forest, his soul is *Bego'ethed* Miss Kelly we never see; Talfourd not this half-year; the latter flourishes, but the exact number of his children, God forgive me, I have utterly forgotten, we single people are often out in our count there. Shall I say two? One darling I know they have lost within a twelvemonth, but scarce known to me by sight, and that was a second child lost. We see scarce anybody. We have just now Emma with us for her holydays: you remember her playing at brag with Mr. Quillinan at poor Monkhouse's! She is grown an agreeable young woman; she sees what I write, so you may understand me with limitations. She was our inmate for a twelvemonth, grew natural to us, and then they told us it was best for her to go out as a Governess, and so she went out, and we were only two of us, and our pleasant house-mate is changed to an occasional visitor. If they want my sister to go out (as they call it) there will be only one of us. Heaven keep us all from this acceding to Unity!

Can I cram loves enough to you all in this little O? Excuse particularizing. C. L.

TO SARAH HAZLITT

[Hazlitt's widow. Emma was Emma Isola, whom the Lambs adopted. She was now teaching in a clergyman's family. Martin Burney was the son of Captain Burney.]

[Enfield, Saturday, May 24th, 1830.]

Mary's love? Yes. Mary Lamb quite well.

DEAR SARAH,—I found my way to Northaw on Thursday and a very good woman behind a counter, who says also that you are a very good lady but that the woman who was with you was naught. These things may be so or not. I did not accept her offered glass of wine (home-made, I take it) but craved a cup of ale, with which

I seasoned a slice of cold Lamb from a sandwich box, which I ate in her back parlour, and proceeded for Berkhamstead, &c. ; lost myself over a heath, and had a day's pleasure. I wish you could walk as I do, and as you used to do. I am sorry to find you are so poorly ; and, now I have found my way, I wish you back at Goody Tomlinson's. What a pretty village 'tis. I should have come sooner, but was waiting a summons to Bury. Well, it came, and I found the good parson's lady (he was from home) exceedingly hospitable.

Poor Emma, the first moment we were alone, took me into a corner and said, " Now, pray, don't *drink* ; do check yourself after dinner, for my sake, and when we get home to Enfield, you shall drink as much as ever you please, and I won't say a word about it." How I behaved, you may guess, when I tell you that Mrs. Williams and I have written acrostics on each other, and she hoped that she should have " no reason to regret Miss Isola's recovery, by its depriving *her* of our begun correspondence." Emma stayed a month with us, and has gone back (in tolerable health) to her long home, for *she* comes not again for a twelvemonth. I amused Mrs. Williams with an occurrence on our road to Enfield. We travelled with one of those troublesome fellow-passengers in a stage-coach, that is called a well-informed man. For twenty miles we discoursed about the properties of steam, probabilities of carriages by ditto, till all my science, and more than all, was exhausted, and I was thinking of escaping my torment by getting up on the outside, when, getting into Bishops Stortford, my gentleman, spying some farming land, put an unlucky question to me : " What sort of a crop of turnips I thought we should have this year ? " Emma's eyes turned to me, to know what in the world I could have to say ; and she burst into a violent fit of laughter, maugre her pale, serious cheeks, when, with the greatest gravity, I replied, that " it depended, I

believed, upon boiled legs of mutton." This clench'd our conversation ; and my Gentleman, with a face half wise, half in scorn, troubled us with no more conversation, scientific or philosophical, for the remainder of the journey. Ayrton was here yesterday, and as *learned* to the full as my fellow-traveller. What a pity that he will spoil a wit and a devilish pleasant fellow (as he is) by wisdom ! He talk'd on Music ; and by having read Hawkins and Burne recently I was enabled to talk of Names, and show more knowledge than he had suspected I possessed ; and in the end he begg'd me to shape my thoughts upon paper, which I did after he was gone, and sent him.

FREE THOUGHTS ON SOME EMINENT COMPOSERS

Some cry up Haydn, some Mozart,
Just as the whim bites. For my part,
I do not care a farthing candle
For either of them, or for Handel.
Cannot a man live free and easy,
Without admiring Pergolesi !
Or thro' the world with comfort go
That never heard of Doctor Blow !
So help me God, I hardly have ;
And yet I eat, and drink, and shave,
Like other people, (if you watch it.)
And know no more of stave and crotchet
Than did the un-Spaniardised Peruvians ;
Or those old ante-queer-Diluvians,
That lived in the unwash'd world with Jubal,
Before that dirty blacksmith Tubal,
By stroke on anvil, or by summ'at,
Found out, to his great surprise, the gamut.
I care no more for Cimerosa
Than he did for Salvator Rosa,
Being no Painter ; and bad luck
Be mine, if I can bear that Gluck !
Old Tycho Brahe and modern Herschel
Had something in them ; but who's Purcel ?
The devil, with his foot sq cloven,
For aught I care, may take Beethoven ;
And, if the bargain does not suit,
I'll throw him Weber in to boot !
There's not the splitting of a splinter
To chuse 'twixt *him last named*, and Winter.
Of Doctor Pepusch old queen Dido
Knew just as much, God knows, as I do.

I would not go four miles to visit
Sebastian Bach—or Batch—which is it ?
No more I would for Bononcini.
As for Novello and Rossini,
I shall not say a word about [to grieve] 'em,
Because they're living. So I leave 'em.

Martin Burney is as odd as ever. We had a dispute about the word "heir," which I contended was pronounced like "air;" he said that might be in common parlance; or that we might so use it, speaking of the "Heir-at-Law," a comedy; but that in the Law Courts it was necessary to give it a full aspiration, and to say *Hayer*! he thought it might even vitiate a cause, if a Counsel pronounced it otherwise. In conclusion, he "would consult Serjeant Wilde;" who gave it against him. Sometimes he falleth into the water, sometimes into the fire. He came down here, and insisted on reading Virgil's "Eneid" all through with me (which he did,) because a Counsel must know Latin. Another time he read out all the Gospel of St. John, because Biblical quotations are very emphatic in a Court of Justice. A third time, he would carve a fowl, which he did very ill-favoredly, because "we did not know how indispensable it was for a Barrister to do all those sort of things well. Those little things were of more consequence than we supposed." So he goes on, harassing about the way to prosperity, and losing it. With a long head, but somewhat a wrong one harum-scarum. Why does not his guardian angel look to him? He deserves one—: may be, he has tired him out.

I am — with this long scrawl, but I thought in your exile, you might like a letter. Commend me to all the wonders in Derbyshire, and tell the devil I humbly kiss—my hand to him

Yours ever, C. LAMB.

TO EDWARD MOXON

[Edward Moxon was the publisher, who married Emma Isola. He had given his betrothed a watch.]

[P.M. July 24, 1833.]

FOR god's sake, give Emma no more watches. *One* has turn'd her head. She is arrogant, and insulting. She said some thing very unpleasant to our old Clock in the passage, as if he did not keep time, and yet he had made her no appointment. She takes it out every instant to look at the moment-hand. She lugs us out into the fields, because there the bird-boys ask you "Pray, Sir, can you tell us what's a Clock," and she answers them punctually. She loses all her time looking "what the time is." I overheard her whispering, "Just so many hours, minutes, &c. to Tuesday—I think St. George's goes too slow"—This little present of Time, why, 'tis Eternity to her—

What can make her so fond of a gingerbread watch?

She has spoil'd some of the movements. Between ourselves, she has kissed away "half past 12," which I suppose to be the canonical hour in Hanover Sq.

Well, if "love me, love my watch," answers, she will keep time to you —

It goes right by the Horse Guards—

[*On the next page :—*]

Emma hast kist this yellow wafer—a hint.

DEAREST M.

Never mind opposite nonsense. She does not love you for the watch, but the watch for you.

I will be at the wedding, and keep the 30 July as long as my poor months last me, as a festival gloriously.

Your *ever* ELIA.

We have not heard from Cambridge. I will write the moment we do.

Edmonton, 24th July, 3.20 post mer. minutes 4
instants by Emma's watch.

POEMS

HESTER

(*February, 1803*)

WHEN maidens such as Hester die,
Their place ye may not well supply,
Though ye among a thousand try,
With vain endeavour.

A month or more hath she been dead,
Yet cannot I by force be led
To think upon the wormy bed,
And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,
A rising step, did indicate
Of pride and joy no common rate,
That flush'd her spirit.

I know not by what name beside
I shall it call :—if 'twas not pride,
It was a joy to that allied,
She did inherit.

Her parents held the Quaker rule,
Which doth the human feeling cool,
But she was train'd in Nature's school,
Nature had blest her.

A waking eye, a prying mind,
A heart that stirs, is hard to bind,
A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,
Ye could not Hester.

THE BEST OF LAMB

My sprightly neighbour, gone before
 To that unknown and silent shore,
 Shall we not meet, as heretofore,
 Some summer morning,

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
 Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
 A bliss that would not go away,
 A sweet fore-warning ?

THE FAMILY NAME

WHAT reason first imposed thee, gentle name,
 Name that my father bore, and his sire's
 sire,

Without reproach ? we trace our stream no higher ;
 And I, a childless man, may end the same.
 Perchance some shepherd on Lincolnian plains,
 In manners guileless as his own sweet flocks,
 Received thee first amid the merry mocks
 And arch allusions of his fellow swains.
 Perchance from Salem's holier fields returned,
 With glory gotten on the heads abhorr'd
 Of faithless Saracens, some martial lord
 Took his meek title, in whose zeal he burn'd.
 Whate'er the fount whence thy beginnings came
 No deed of mine shall shame thee, gentle name.

ON

AN INFANT DYING AS SOON AS BORN

(1827)

I SAW where in the shroud did lurk
 A curious frame of Nature's work.
 A flow'ret crushed in the bud,
 A nameless piece of Babyhood,
 Was in a cradle-coffin lying !

Extinct, with scarce the sense of dying ;
So soon to exchange the imprisoning womb
For darker closets of the tomb !
She did but ope an eye, and put
A clear beam forth, then strait up shut
For the long dark : ne'er more to see
Through glasses of mortality.
Riddle of destiny, who can show
What thy short visit meant, or know
What thy errand here below ?
Shall we say, that Nature blind
Check'd her hand, and changed her mind,
Just when she had exactly wrought
A finish'd pattern without fault ?
Could she flag, or could she tire,
Or lack'd she the Promethean fire
(With her nine moons' long workings sicken'd)
That should thy little limbs have quicken'd ?
Limbs so firm, they seem'd to assure
Life of health, and days mature :
Woman's self in miniature !
Limbs so fair, they might supply
(Themselves now but cold imagery)
The sculptor to make Beauty by.
Or did the stern-eyed Fate descry,
That babe, or mother, one must die ;
So in mercy left the stock,
And cut the branch ; to save the shock
Of young years widow'd ; and the pain
When Single State comes back again
To the lone man who, 'reft of wife,
Thenceforward drags a maimed life ?
The economy of Heaven is dark ;
And wisest clerks have miss'd the mark,
Why Human Buds, like this, should fall
More brief than fly ephemeral,
That has his day ; while shrivel'd crones
Stiffen with age to stocks and stones ;
And crabbed use the conscience sears
In sinners of an hundred years.

Mother's prattle, mother's kiss,
 Baby fond, thou ne'er wilt miss.
 Rites, which custom does impose,
 Silver bells and baby clothes ;
 Coral redder than those lips,
 Which pale death did late eclipse ;
 Music framed for infants' glee,
 Whistle never tuned for thee ;
 Though thou want'st not, thou shalt have them.
 Loving hearts were they which gave them.
 Let not one be missing ; nurse,
 See them laid upon the hearse
 Of infant slain by doom perverse.
 Why should kings and nobles have
 Pictured trophies to their grave ;
 And we, churls, to thee deny
 Thy pretty toys with thee to lie,
 A more harmless vanity ?

WRITTEN AT CAMBRIDGE

(August 15. 1819)

I WAS not train'd in Academic bowers,
 And to those learned streams I nothing owe
 Which copious from those twin fair founts do
 flow ;
 Mine have been any thing but studious hours.
 Yet can I fancy, wandering 'mid thy towers,
 Myself a nursling, Granta, of thy lap ;
 My brow seems tightening with the Doctor's cap,
 And I walk *gowned* ; feel unusual powers.
 Strange forms of logic clothe my admiring speech,
 Old Ramus' ghost is busy at my brain ;
 And my scull teems with notions infinite.
 Be still, ye reeds of Camus, while I teach
 Truths, which transcend the searching Schoolmen's
 vein,
 And half had stagger'd that stout Stagirite !

WORK

(1819)

WHO first invented work, and bound the free
 And holyday-rejoicing spirit down
 To the ever-haunting importunity
 Of business in the green fields, and the town—
 To plough, loom, anvil, spade—and oh ! most sad,
 To that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood ?
 Who but the Being unblest, alien from good,
 Sabbathless Satan ! he who his unglad
 Task ever plies 'mid rotatory burnings,
 That round and round incalculably reel—
 For wrath divine hath made him like a wheel—
 In that red realm from which are no returnings ;
 Where toiling, and turmoiling, ever and aye
 He, and his thoughts, keep pensive working-day.

LEISURE

(1821)

THEY talk of time, and of time's galling yoke,
 That like a mill-stone on man's mind doth
 press,
 Which only works and business can redress :
 Of divine Leisure such foul lies are spoke,
 Wounding her fair gifts with calumnious stroke.
 But might I, fed with silent meditation,
 Assoiled live from that fiend Occupation—
Improbis Labor, which my spirits hath broke—
 I'd drink of time's rich cup, and never surfeit :
 Fling in more days than went to make the gem,
 That crown'd the white top of Methusalem :

Yea on my weak neck take, and never forfeit,
 Like Atlas bearing up the dainty sky,
 The heaven-sweet burthen of eternity.

DEUS NOBIS HÆC OTIA FECIT.

IN THE ALBUM OF EDITH S[OUTHEY]

(1833)

IN Christian world MARY the garland wears !
 REBECCA sweetens on a Hebrew's ear ;
 Quakers for pure PRISCILLA are more clear ;
 And the light Gaul by amorous NINON swears.
 Among the lesser lights how LUCY shines !
 What air of fragrance ROSAMOND throws round !
 How like a hymn doth sweet CECILIA sound !
 Of MARTHAS, and of ABIGAILS, few lines
 Have bragg'd in verse. Of coarsest household stuff
 Should homely JOAN be fashioned. But can
 You BARBARA resist, or MARIAN ?
 And is not CLARE for love excuse enough ?
 Yet, by my faith in numbers, I profess,
 These all, than Saxon EDITH, please me less.

FOREST JOYS

(From *John Woodvil*, 1798-1802)

SIMON

I have known some men that are too general-
 contemplative for the narrow passion. I am in some
 sort a *general* lover.

MARGARET

In the name of the boy God, who plays at hood-
 man-blind with the Muses, and cares not whom he
 catches : what is it *you* love ?

SIMON

Simply, all things that live,
From the crook'd worm to man's imperial form,
And God-resembling likeness. The poor fly,
That makes short holyday in the sun beam,
And dies by some child's hand. The feeble bird
With little wings, yet greatly venturous
In the upper sky. The fish in th' other element
That knows no touch of eloquence. What else ?
Yor tall and elegant stag,
Who paints a dancing shadow of his horns
In the water, where he drinks.

MARGARET

I myself love all these things, yet so as with a difference --- for example, some animals better than others, some men rather than other men ; the night-ingale before the cuckoo, the swift and graceful palfrey before the slow and asinine mule. Your humour goes to confound all qualities.

What sports do you use in the forest ?—

SIMON

Not many ; some few, as thus :—
To see the sun to bed, and to arise,
Like some hot amourist with glowing eyes,
Bursting the lazy bands of sleep that bound him,
With all his fires and travelling glories round him,
Sometimes the moon on soft night clouds to rest,
Like beauty nestling in a young man's breast,
And all the winking stars, her handmaids, keep
Admiring silence, while those lovers sleep.
Sometimes outstretcht, in very idleness,
Nought doing, saying little, thinking less,
To view the leaves, thin dancers upon air,
Go eddying round ; and small birds, how they fare,
When mother Autumn fills their beaks with corn,
Filch'd from the careless Amalthea's horn ;

And how the woods berries and worms provide
 Without their pains, when earth has nought beside
 To answer their small wants.
 To view the graceful deer come tripping by,
 Then stop, and gaze, then turn, they know not why,
 Like bashful youngers in society.
 To mark the structure of a plant or tree,
 And all fair things of earth, how fair they be.

MARGARET

(*Smiling*) And, afterwards them paint in simile

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

(*January, 1798. Text of 1818*)

I HAVE had playmates, I have had companions,
 In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-
 days,
 All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
 Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies,
 All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women ;
 Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
 All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man ;
 Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly ;
 Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like, I paced round the haunts of my childhood.
 Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,
 Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES 185

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling ?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces—

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me ; all are departed ;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

OLD CHINA

I HAVE an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying, that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to ; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have?—to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective—a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends—whom distance cannot diminish—figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, has made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a lady from a salver—two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect ! And here the same lady, or another—for likeness is identity on tea-cups—is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as

angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream !

Farther on—if far or near can be predicated of their world—see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays.

Here—a cow and rabbit couchant, and co-extensive—so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson (which we are old fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon) some of these *speciosa miracula* upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using ; and could not help remarking, how favourable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to over-shade the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

“ I wish the good old times would come again,” she said, “ when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean, that I want to be poor ; but there was a middle state ;”—so she was pleased to ramble on,—“ in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and, O ! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times !) we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

“ Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so thread-bare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker’s in

Covent-garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating* you called it)—and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till day-break—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity, with which you flaunted it about in that over worn suit—your old corbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

“When you come home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo, which we christened the ‘Lady Blanch;’ when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi’s, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?”

“Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter’s Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holyday—holydays, and all other fun, are gone, now we are rich—and the little handbasket in which

I used to deposit our day's fare of savory cold lamb and salad—and how you would pry about at noon-tide for some decent house, where we might go in, and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a table-cloth—and wish for such another honest hostess, as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now, when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom moreover, we *ride* part of the way—and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense—which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

“ You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the battle of Hexham, and the surrender of Calais, and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the Children in the Wood—when we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria? You used to say, that the gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially—that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going—that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what

was going on, on the stage—because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then—and I appeal to you, whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation, than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient stair-cases, was bad enough,—but there was still a law of civility to women recognised to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages—and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat, and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money, and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then—but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

“There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common—in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear—to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologises, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never do make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

“I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet—and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings

—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much—or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year—and still we found our slender capital decreasing—but then, betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now), we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with ‘lusty brimmers’ (as you used to quote it out of *heartly cheerful Mr. Cotton*, as you called him), we used to welcome in the ‘coming guest.’ Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year—no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us.”

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor—hundred pounds a year. “It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superfluous into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened, and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power—those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straiten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth; a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride, where we formerly walked; live better, and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so—than we had means to do in those good old days you

speaking of. Yet could those days return—could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a-day—could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them—could the good old one shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fireside, sitting on this luxurious sofa—be once more struggling up those inconvenient stair-cases, pushed about, and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours—and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe*, which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Cræsus had, or the great Jew R —— is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half-Madonna-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house."

लाल बहादुर शास्त्री राष्ट्रीय प्रशासन अकादमी, पुस्तकालय
L.B.S. National Academy of Administration, Library

मसूरी

MUSSOORIE

यह पुस्तक निम्नांकित तारीख तक वापिस करनी है।

This book is to be returned on the date last stamped

[illegible]

824
Lam
8th ed.

अवधि सं. 112257
ACC No. 22527

वर्ग सं. पुस्तक सं.
Class No. Book No.
लेखक
Author... Lamb
शीर्षक
Title The best of Lamb.
.....

निगम दिनांक
Date of Issue

उधारकर्ता की सं.
Borrower's No.

हस्ताक्षर
Signature

824

LIBRARY

22527

Lam

LAL BHADUR SHASTRI

8th ed.

National Academy of Administration
MUSSOORIE

Accession No. 112257

1. Books are issued for 15 days only but may have to be recalled earlier if urgently required.
2. An over-due charge of 25 Paise per day per volume will be charged.
3. Books may be renewed on request, at the discretion of the Librarian.
4. Periodicals, Rare and Reference books may not be issued and may be consulted only in the Library.
5. Books lost, defaced or injured in any way shall have to be replaced or its double price shall be paid by the borrower.

Help to keep this book fresh, clean & moving