

In the Name of the Bodleian and Other Essays eBook

In the Name of the Bodleian and Other Essays by Augustine Birrell

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BOOKWORMS

Great is bookishness and the charm of books. No doubt there are times and seasons in the lives of most reading men when they rebel against the dust of libraries and kick against the pricks of these monstrously accumulated heaps of words. We all know 'the dark hour' when the vanity of learning and the childishness of merely literary things are brought home to us in such a way as almost to avail to put the pale student out of conceit with his books, and to make him turn from his best-loved authors as from a friend who has outstayed his welcome, whose carriage we wish were at the door. In these unhappy moments we are apt to call to mind the shrewd men we have known, who have been our blithe companions on breezy fells, heathery moor, and by the stream side, who could neither read nor write, or who, at all events, but rarely practised those Cadmean arts. Yet they could tell the time of day by the sun, and steer through the silent night by the stars; and each of them had—as Emerson, a very bookish person, has said—a dial in his mind for the whole bright calendar of the year. How racy was their talk; how wise their judgments on men and things; how well they did all that at the moment seemed worth doing; how universally useful was their garnered experience—their acquired learning! How wily were these illiterates in the pursuit of game—how ready in an emergency! What a charm there is about out-of-door company! Who would not sooner have spent a summer's day with Sir Walter's humble friend, Tom Purday, than with Mr. William Wordsworth of Rydal Mount! It is, we can only suppose, reflections such as these that make country gentlemen and farmers the sworn foes they are of education and the enemies of School Boards.

I only indicate this line of thought to condemn it. Such temptations come from below. Great, we repeat, is bookishness and the charm of books. Even the writings, the ponderous writings, of that portentous parson, the Rev. T.F. Dibdin, with all their lumbering gaiety and dust-choked rapture over first editions, are not hastily to be sent packing to the auction-room. Much red gold did they cost us, these portly tomes, in bygone days, and on our shelves they shall remain till the end of our time, unless our creditors intervene—were it only to remind us of years when our enthusiasms were pure though our tastes may have been crude.

Some years ago Mr. Blades, the famous printer and Caxtonist, published in vellum covers a small volume which he christened *The Enemies of Books*. It made many friends, and now a revised and enlarged version in comely form, adorned with pictures, and with a few prefatory words by Dr. Garnett, has made its appearance. Mr. Blades himself has left this world for a better one, where—so piety bids us believe—neither fire nor water nor worm can despoil or destroy the pages of heavenly wisdom. But the book-collector must not be caught nursing mere



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sublunary hopes. There is every reason to believe that in the realms of the blessed the library, like that of Major Ponto, will be small though well selected. Mr. Blades had, as his friend Dr. Garnett observes, a debonair spirit—there was nothing fiery or controversial about him. His attitude towards the human race and its treatment of rare books was rather mournful than angry. For example, under the head of 'Fire,' he has occasion to refer to that great destruction of books of magic which took place at Ephesus, to which St. Luke has called attention in his Acts of the Apostles. Mr. Blades describes this holocaust as righteous, and only permits himself to say in a kind of undertone that he feels a certain mental disquietude and uneasiness at the thought of the loss of more than £18,000 worth of books, which could not but have thrown much light (had they been preserved) on many curious questions of folk-lore. Personally, I am dead against the burning of books. A far worse, because a corrupt, proceeding, was the scandalously horrid fate that befell the monastic libraries at our disgustingly conducted, even if generally beneficent, Reformation. The greedy nobles and landed gentry, who grabbed the ancient foundations of the old religion, cared nothing for the books they found cumbering the walls, and either devoted them to vile domestic uses or sold them in shiploads across the seas. It may well be that the monks—fine, lusty fellows!—cared more for the contents of their fish-ponds than of their libraries; but, at all events, they left the books alone to take their chance—they did not rub their boots with them or sell them at the price of old paper. A man need have a very debonair spirit who does not lose his temper over our blessed Reformation. Mr. Blades, on the whole, managed to keep his.

Passing from fire, Mr. Blades has a good deal to say about water, and the harm it has been allowed to do in our collegiate and cathedral libraries. With really creditable composure he writes: 'Few old libraries in England are now so thoroughly neglected as they were thirty years ago. The state of many of our collegiate and cathedral libraries was at that time simply appalling. I could mention many instances—one especially—where, a window having been left broken for a long time, the ivy had pushed through and crept over a row of books, each of which was worth hundreds of pounds. In rainy weather the water was conducted as by a pipe along the tops of the books, and soaked through the whole.' Ours is indeed a learned Church. Fancy the mingled amazement and dismay of the Dean and Chapter when they were informed that all this mouldering literary trash had 'boodle' in it. 'In another and a smaller collection the rain came through on to a bookcase through a sky-light, saturating continually the top shelf, containing Caxtons and other English books, one of which, although rotten, was sold soon after by permission of the Charity Commissioners



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for L200.' Oh, those scoundrelly Charity Commissioners! How impertinent has been their interference with the loving care and guardianship of the Lord's property by His lawfully consecrated ministers! By the side of these anthropoid apes, the genuine bookworm, the paper-eating insect, ravenous as he once was, has done comparatively little mischief. Very little seems known of the creature, though the purchaser of Mr. Blades's book becomes the owner of a life-size portrait of the miscreant in one, at all events, of his many shapes. Mr. Birdsall, of Northampton, sent Mr. Blades, in 1879, by post, a fat little worm he had found in an old volume. Mr. Blades did all, and more than all, that could be expected of a humane man to keep the creature alive, actually feeding him with fragments of Caxtons and seventeenth-century literature; but it availed not, for in three weeks the thing died, and as the result of a post-mortem was declared to be *Aecophera pseudopretella*. Some years later Dr. Garnett, who has spent a long life obliging men of letters, sent Mr. Blades two Athenian worms, which had travelled to this country in a Hebrew Commentary; but, lovely and pleasant in their lives, in their deaths they were not far divided. Mr. Blades, at least, mourned their loss. The energy of bookworms, like that of men, greatly varies. Some go much farther than others. However fair they may start on the same folio, they end very differently. Once upon a time 212 worms began to eat their way through a stout folio printed in the year 1477, by Peter Schoeffer, of Mentz. It was an ungodly race they ran, but let me trace their progress. By the time the sixty-first page was reached all but four had given in, either slinking back the way they came, or perishing *en route*. By the time the eighty-sixth page had been reached but one was left, and he evidently on his last legs, for he failed to pierce his way through page 87. At the other end of the same book another lot of worms began to bore, hoping, I presume, to meet in the middle, like the makers of submarine tunnels, but the last survivor of this gang only reached the sixty ninth page from the end. Mr. Blades was of opinion that all these worms belonged to the *Anobium pertinax*. Worms have fallen upon evil days, for, whether modern books are readable or not, they have long since ceased to be edible. The worm's instinct forbids him to 'eat the china clay, the bleaches, the plaster of Paris, the sulphate of barytes, the scores of adulterants now used to mix with the fibre.' Alas, poor worm! Alas, poor author! Neglected by the *Anobium pertinax*, what chance is there of anyone, man or beast, a hundred years hence reaching his eighty-seventh page!

Time fails me to refer to bookbinders, frontispiece collectors, servants and children, and other enemies of books; but the volume I refer to is to be had of the booksellers, and is a pleasant volume, worthy of all commendation. Its last words set me thinking; they are:

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'Even a millionaire will ease his toils, lengthen his life, and add 100 per cent. to his daily pleasures, if he becomes a bibliophile; while to the man of business with a taste for books, who through the day has struggled in the battle of life, with all its irritating rebuffs and anxieties, what a blessed season of pleasurable repose opens upon him as he enters his sanctum, where every article wafts him a welcome and every book is a personal friend!'

As for the millionaire, I frankly say I have no desire his life should be lengthened, and care nothing about adding 100 per cent. to his daily pleasures. He is a nuisance, for he has raised prices nearly 100 per cent. We curse the day when he was told it was the thing to buy old books; and, if he must buy old books, why is he not content with the works of Gibbon, Hume, and Robertson, and Flavius Josephus, that learned Jew? But it is not the millionaire who set me thinking; it is the harassed man of business; and what I am wondering is, whether, in sober truth and earnestness, it is possible for him, as he shuts his library door and finds himself inside, to forget his rebuffs and anxieties—his maturing bills and overdue argosies—and to lose himself over a favourite volume. The 'article' that wafts him welcome I take to be his pipe. That he will put the 'article' into his mouth and smoke it I have no manner of doubt; my dread is lest, in ten minutes' time, the book should have dropt into his lap and the man's eyes be staring into the fire. But for a' that, and a' that—great is bookishness and the charm of books.

CONFIRMED READERS

Dr. Johnson is perhaps our best example of a confirmed reader. Malone once found him sitting in his room roasting apples and reading a history of Birmingham. This staggered even Malone, who was himself a somewhat far-gone reader.

'Don't you find it rather dull?' he ventured to inquire.

'Yes,' replied the Sage, 'it is dull.'

Malone's eyes then rested on the apples, and he remarked he supposed they were for medicine.

'Why, no,' said Johnson; 'I believe they are only there because I wanted something to do. I have been confined to the house for a week, and so you find me roasting apples and reading the history of Birmingham.'

This anecdote pleasingly illustrates the habits of the confirmed reader. Nor let the worldling sneer. Happy is the man who, in the hours of solitude and depression, can read a history of Birmingham. How terrible is the story Welbore Ellis told of Robert Walpole in his magnificent library, trying book after book, and at last, with tears in his eyes, exclaiming: 'It is all in vain: I cannot read!'

Edmund Malone, the Shakespearian commentator and first editor of *Boswell's Johnson*, was as confirmed a reader as it is possible for a book-collector to be. His own life, by Sir James Prior, is full of good things, and is not so well known as it should be. It smacks of books and bookishness.

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Malone, who was an Irishman, was once, so he would have us believe, deeply engaged in politics; but he then fell in love, and the affair, for some unknown reason, ending unhappily, his interest ceased in everything, and he was driven as a last resource to books and writings. Thus are commentators made. They learn in suffering what they observe in the margin. Malone may have been driven to his pursuits, but he took to them kindly, and became a vigorous and skilful book-buyer, operating in the market both on his own behalf and on that of his Irish friends with great success.

His good fortune was enormous, and this although he had a severely restricted notion as to price. He was no reckless bidder, like Mr. Harris, late of Covent Garden, who, just because David Garrick had a fine library of old plays, was determined to have one himself at whatever cost. In Malone's opinion half a guinea was a big price for a book. As he grew older he became less careful, and in 1805, which was seven years before his death, he gave Ford, a Manchester bookseller, L25 for the Editio Princeps of *Venus and Adonis*. He already had the edition of 1596—a friend had given it him—bound up with Constable's and Daniel's Sonnets and other rarities, but he very naturally yearned after the edition of 1593. He fondly imagined Ford's copy to be unique: there he was wrong, but as he died in that belief, and only gave L25 for his treasure, who dare pity him? His copy now reposes in the Bodleian. He secured Shakespeare's Sonnets (1609) and the first edition of the *Rape of Lucrece* for two guineas, and accounted half a crown a fair average price for quarto copies of Elizabethan plays.

Malone was a truly amiable man, of private fortune and endearing habits. He lived on terms of intimacy with his brother book-collectors, and when they died attended the sale of their libraries and bid for his favourite lots, grumbling greatly if they were not knocked down to him. At Topham Beauclerk's sale in 1781, which lasted nine days, Malone bought for Lord Charlemont 'the pleasauntest workes of George Gascoigne, Esquire, with the princely pleasures at Kenilworth Castle, 1587.' He got it cheap (L1 7s.), as it wanted a few leaves, which Malone thought he had; but to his horror, when it came to be examined, it was found to want eleven more leaves than he had supposed. 'Poor Mr. Beauclerk,' he writes, 'seems never to have had his books examined or collated, otherwise he would have found out the imperfections.' Malone was far too good a book-collector to suggest a third method of discovering a book's imperfections—namely, reading it. Beauclerk's library only realized L5,011, and as the Duke of Marlborough had a mortgage upon it of L5,000, there must have been after payment of the auctioneer's charges a considerable deficit.

But Malone was more than a book-buyer, more even than a commentator: he was a member of the Literary Club, and the friend of Johnson, Reynolds, and Burke. On July 28, 1789, he went to Burke's place, the Gregories, near Beaconsfield, with Sir Joshua, Wyndham, and Mr. Courtenay, and spent three very agreeable days. The following extract from the recently published Charlemont papers has interest:

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'As I walked out before breakfast with Mr. Burke, I proposed to him to revise and enlarge his admirable book on the *Sublime and Beautiful*, which the experience, reading, and observation of thirty years could not but enable him to improve considerably. But he said the train of his thoughts had gone another way, and the whole bent of his mind turned from such subjects, and that he was much fitter for such speculations at the time he published that book than now.'

Between the Burke of 1758 and the Burke of 1789 there was a difference indeed, but the forcible expressions, 'the train of my thoughts' and 'the whole bent of my mind,' serve to create a new impression of the tremendous energy and fertile vigour of this amazing man. The next day the party went over to Amersham and admired Mr. Drake's trees, and listened to Sir Joshua's criticisms of Mr. Drake's pictures. This was a fortnight after the taking of the Bastille. Burke's hopes were still high. The Revolution had not yet spoilt his temper.

Amongst the Charlemont papers is an amusing tale I do not remember having ever seen before of young Philip Stanhope, the recipient of Lord Chesterfield's famous letters:

'When at Berne, where he passed some of his boyhood in company with Harte and the excellent Mr., now Lord, Elliott (Heathfield of Gibraltar), he was one evening invited to a party where, together with some ladies, there happened to be a considerable number of Bernese senators, a dignified set of elderly gentlemen, aristocratically proud, and perfect strangers to fun. These most potent, grave, and reverend signors were set down to whist, and were so studiously attentive to the game, that the unlucky brat found little difficulty in fastening to the backs of their chairs the flowing tails of their ample periwigs and in cutting, unobserved by them, the ties of their breeches. This done, he left the room, and presently re-entered crying out, "Fire! Fire!" The affrighted burgomasters suddenly bounced up, and exhibited to the amazed spectators their senatorial heads and backs totally deprived of ornament or covering.'

Young Stanhope was no ordinary child. There is a completeness about this jest which proclaims it a masterpiece. One or other of its points might have occurred to anyone, but to accomplish both at once was to show real distinction.

Sir William Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield's brother, felt no surprise at his nephew's failure to acquire the graces. 'What,' said he, 'could Chesterfield expect? His mother was Dutch, he was educated at Leipsic, and his tutor was a pedant from Oxford.'

Papers which contain anecdotes of this kind carry with them their own recommendation. We hear on all sides complaints—and I hold them to be just complaints—of the abominable high prices of English books. Thirty shillings, thirty-six shillings, are common prices. The thing is too barefaced. His Majesty's Stationery Office set an excellent example. They sell an octavo volume of 460 closely but well-

printed pages, provided with an excellent index, for one shilling and elevenpence. There is not much editing, but the quality of it is good.



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If anyone is confined to his room, even as Johnson was when Malone found him roasting apples and reading a history of Birmingham, he cannot do better than surround himself with the publications of the Historical Manuscripts Commission; they will cost him next to nothing, tell him something new on every page, revive a host of old memories and scores of half-forgotten names, and perhaps tempt him to become a confirmed reader.

FIRST EDITIONS

This is an age of great publicity. Not only are our streets well lighted, but also our lives. The cosy nooks and corners, crannies, and dark places where, in old-fashioned days, men hugged their private vices without shamefacedness have been swept away as ruthlessly as Seven Dials. All the questionable pursuits, fancies, foibles of silly, childish man are discussed grimly and at length in the newspapers and magazines. Our poor hobby-horses are dragged out of the stable, and made to show their shambling paces before the mob of gentlemen who read with ease. There has been much prate lately of as innocent a foible as ever served to make men self-forgetful for a few seconds of time—the collecting of first editions. Somebody hard up for ‘copy’ denounced this pastime, and made merry over a *virtuoso’s* whim. Somebody else—Mr. Slater, I think it was—thought fit to put in a defence, and thereupon a dispute arose as to why men bought first editions dear when they could buy last editions cheap. Brutal, domineering fellows bellowed their complete indifference to Shakespeare’s Quartos till timid *dilettanti* turned pale and fled.

The fact, of course, is that in such a dispute as this there is but one thing to do—namely, to persuade the Attorney-General of the day to enter up a *nolle prosequi*, and for him who collects first editions to go on collecting. There is nothing to be serious about in the matter. It is not literature. Some of the greatest lovers of letters who have ever lived—Dr. Johnson, for example, and Thomas de Quincey and Carlyle—have cared no more for first editions than I do for Brussels sprouts. You may love Moliere with a love surpassing your love of woman without any desire to beggar yourself in Paris by purchasing early copies of the plays. You may be perfectly content to read Walton’s *Lives* in an edition of 1905, if there is one; and as for *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver* and the *Vicar of Wakefield*—are they not eternal favourites, and just as tickling to the fancy in their nineteenth-century dress as in their eighteenth? The whole thing is but a hobby—but a paragraph in one chapter of the vast, but most agreeable, history of human folly. If John Doe is blankly indifferent to Richard Roe’s Elizabethan dramatists, it is only fair to remember how sublime is Richard’s contempt for John’s collection of old musical instruments. If these gentlemen are wise they will discuss, when they meet, the weather, or the

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Death Duties, or some other extraneous subject, and leave their respective hobbies in the stable. Never mind what your hobby is—books, prints, drawings, china, scarabaei, lepidoptera—keep it to yourself and for those like-minded with you. Sweet indeed is the community of interest, delightful the intercourse which a common foible begets; but correspondingly bitter and distressful is the forced union of nervous zeal and pitiless indifference. Spare us the so-called friends who come and gape and stare and go! What is more painful than the chatter of the connoisseur as it falls upon the long ears of the ignoramus! Collecting is a secret sin—the great pushing public must be kept out. It is sheer madness to puff and praise your hobby, and to invite Dick, Tom, and Harry to inspect your stable: such conduct is to invite rebuff, to expose yourself to just animadversion. Keep the beast in its box. This is my first advice to the hobby-hunter.

My second piece of advice is equally important, particularly at the present time, when the world is too much with us, and it is this—never convert a taste into a trade. The moment you become a tradesman you cease to be a hobbyist. When the love of money comes in at the window the love of books runs out at the door. There has been of late years a good deal of sham book-collecting. The morals of the Stock Exchange have corrupted even the library. Sordid souls have been induced by wily second-hand booksellers to buy books for no other reason than because the price demanded was a high one. This is the very worst possible reason for buying a book. Whether it is ever wise to buy a book, as Aulus Gellius used to do, simply because it is cheap, and regardless of its condition, is a debatable point, but to buy one dear at the mere bidding of a bookseller is to debase yourself. The result of this ungodly traffic has been to enlarge for the moment the circle of book-buyers by including in it men with commercial instincts, sham hobbyists. But these impostors have been lately punished in the only way they could be punished—namely, in their pockets—by a heavy fall of prices. The stuff they were induced to buy has not, and could not, maintain its price, and the shops are now full of the volumes which, seven or ten years ago, fetched fancy sums.

If a young book-collector does but bear in mind the two bits of advice I have proffered him, he may safely be bidden godspeed and congratulated on his choice of a hobby, for it is, without a shadow of a doubt, the cheapest he could have chosen. Even without means to acquire the treasures of a Quaritch or a Pickering, he may yet derive infinite delight from the perusal of the many hundreds of catalogues that now weekly issue from the second-hand booksellers in town and country. He may write an imaginary letter, ordering the books he has previously selected from the catalogue, and then he has only to forget to post it to avoid all disagreeable consequences.



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The constant turnover of old books is amazing. There seems no rest in this world even for folios and quartos. The first edition of old Burton's *Anatomy*, printed at Oxford in a small quarto in 1621, rises to the surface as a rule no less than four times a year; so, too, does Coryat's *Crudities*, hastily gobbled up in five months' travels in France, Savoy, Italy, Germany, *etc.*, 1611. What a seething, restless place this world is, to be sure! The constant recurrence of copies of the same books is almost startling. Hardly a year passes but every book of first-rate importance and interest is knocked down to the highest bidder. No doubt there are still old libraries where, buried in dust and cobwebs, the folios and quartos lie undisturbed; but to turn the pages or examine the index of *Book Prices Current* is to have a vision before your eyes of whole regiments of books passing and repassing across the stage amidst the loud cries of auctioneers and the bidding of booksellers.

In the auction-mart taste is pretty steady. The old favourites hold their own. Every now and again an immortal joins their ranks. Puffing and pretension may win the ear of the outside public, and extort praise from the press, but inside the rooms of a Sotheby, a Puttick, or a Hodgson, these foolish persons count for nothing, and their names are seldom heard. Were an author to turn the pages of *Book Prices Current*, he could hardly fail, as he there read the names of famous men of old, to breathe the prayer, 'May my books some day be found forming part of this great tidal wave of literature which is for ever breaking on Earth's human shores!' But the vanity of authors is endless, and their prayers are apt to be but empty things.

GOSSIP IN A LIBRARY

There were no books in Eden, and there will be none in heaven; but between times—and it is of those I speak—it is otherwise. Mr. Thomas Greenwood, in a most meritorious work on Public Libraries, supplies figures which show that, without counting pamphlets (which are books gone wrong) or manuscripts (which are books *in terrorem*), there are at this present moment upwards of 71,000,000 printed books in bindings in the several public libraries of Europe and America. To estimate the number and extent of private libraries in those countries is impossible. In many large houses there are no books at all—which is to make ignorance visible; whilst in many small houses there are, or seem to be, nothing else—which is to make knowledge inconvenient; yet as there are upwards of 280,000,000 of inhabitants of Europe and America, I cannot greatly err if a passion for round numbers drives me to the assertion that there are at least 300,000,000 books in these countries, not counting bibles and prayer-books. It is a poor show! Russia is greatly to blame, her European population of 88,000,000 being so badly provided for that it



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brings down the average. Were Russia left out in the cold, we might, were our books to be divided amongst our population *per capita*, rely upon having two volumes apiece. This would not afford Mr. Gosse (the title of one of whose books I have stolen) much material for gossip, particularly as his two books might easily chance to be duplicates. There are no habits of man more alien to the doctrine of the Communist than those of the collector, and there is no collector, not even that basest of them all, the Belial of his tribe, the man who collects money, whose love of private property is intenser, whose sense of the joys of ownership is keener than the book-collector's. Mr. William Morris once hinted at a good time coming, when at almost every street corner there would be a public library, where beautiful and rare books will be kept for citizens to examine. The citizen will first wash his hands in a parochial basin, and then dry them on a parochial towel, after which ritual he will walk in and stand *en queue* until it comes to be his turn to feast his eye upon some triumph of modern or some miracle of old typography. He will then return to a bookless home proud and satisfied, tasting of the joy that is in widest commonalty spread. Alas! he will do nothing of the kind, not, at least, if he is one of those in whom the old Adam of the bookstalls still breathes. A public library must always be an abomination. To enjoy a book, you must own it. 'John Jones his book,' that is the best bookplate. I have never admired the much-talked-of bookplate of Grolier, which, in addition to his own name, bore the ridiculous advice *Et Amicorum*. Fudge! There is no evidence that Grolier ever lent any man a book with his plate in it. His collection was dispersed after his death, and then sentimentalists fell a-weeping over his supposed generosity. It would be as reasonable to commend the hospitality of a dead man because you found amongst his papers a vast number of unposted invitations to dinner upon a date he long outlived. Sentiment is seldom in place, but on a bookplate it is peculiarly odious. To paste in each book an invitation to steal it, as Grolier seems to have done, is foolish; but so also is it to invoke, as some book-plates do, curses upon the heads of all subsequent possessors—as if any man who wanted to add a volume to his collection would be deterred by such braggadocio. But this is a digression. Public libraries can never satisfy the longings of book-collectors any more than can the private libraries of other people. Whoever really cared a snap of his fingers for the contents of another man's library, unless he is known to be dying? It is a humorous spectacle to watch one book-collector exhibiting his stores to another. If the owner is a gentleman, as he usually is, he affects indifference—'A poor thing,' he seems to say, 'yet mine own'; whilst the visitor, if human, as he always is, exhibits disgust. If the volume proffered for the visitor's examination is a genuine rarity, not in his own collection, he surlily inquires how it was come by; whilst if it is no great thing, he testily expresses his astonishment it should be thought worth keeping, and this although he has the very same edition at home.

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On the other hand, though actual visits to other men's libraries rarely seem to give pleasure, the perusal of the catalogues of such libraries has always been a favourite pastime of collectors; but this can be accounted for without in any way aspersing the truth of the general statement that the only books a lover of them takes pleasure in are his own.

Mr. Gosse's recent volume, *Gossip in a Library*, is a very pleasing example of the pleasure taken by a book-hunter in his own books. Just as some men and more women assume your interest in the contents of their nurseries, so Mr. Gosse seeks to win our ears as he talks to us about some of the books on his shelves. He has secured my willing attention, and is not likely to be disappointed of a considerable audience.

We live in vocal times, when small birds make melody on every bough. The old book-collectors were a taciturn race—the Bindleys, the Sykeses, the Hebers. They made their vast collections in silence; their own tastes, fancies, predilections, they concealed. They never gossiped of their libraries; their names are only preserved to us by the prices given for their books after their deaths. Bindley's copy fetched L3 10s., Sykes' L4 15s. Thus is the buyer of to-day tempted to his doom, forgetful of the fact that these great names are only quoted when the prices realized at their sales were less than those now demanded.

But solacing as is the thought of those grave, silent times, indisposed as one often is for the chirpy familiarities of this present, it is, or it ought to be, a pious, and therefore pleasant, reflection that there never was a time when more people found delight in book-hunting, or were more willing to pay for and read about their pastime than now.

Rich people may, no doubt, still be met with who think it a serious matter to buy a book if it cost more than 3s. 9d. It was recently alleged in an affidavit made by a doctor in lunacy that for a well-to-do bachelor to go into the Strand, and in the course of the same morning spend L5 in the purchase of 'old books,' was a ground for belief in his insanity and for locking him up. These, however, are but vagaries, for it is certain that the number of people who will read a book like Mr. Gosse's steadily increases. This is its justification, and it is a complete one. It can never be wrong to give pleasure. To talk about books is better than to read about them, but, as a matter of hard fact, the opportunities life affords of talking about books are very few. The mood and the company seldom coincide; when they do, it is delightful, but they seldom do.



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Mr. Gosse's book ought not to be read in a fierce, nagging spirit which demands, What is the good of this? or, Who cares for that? His talk, it must be admitted, is not of masterpieces. The books he takes down are—in some instances, at all events—sad trash. Smart's poems, for example, in an edition of 1752, which does not contain the 'David,' is not a book which, viewed baldly and by itself, can be honestly described as worth reading. This remark is not prompted by jealousy, for I have the book myself, and seldom fail to find the list of subscribers interesting, for, among many other famous names, it contains those of 'Mr. Gray, Peter's College, Cambridge,' 'Mr. Samuel Richardson, editor of *Clarissa*, two books,' and 'Mr. Voltaire, Historiographer of France.' There are various Johnsons among the subscribers, but not Samuel, who apparently would liefer pray with Kit Smart than buy his poetry, thereby showing the doctor's usual piety and good sense.[A]

[Footnote A: 'He insisted on people praying with him, and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as with anyone else.']

Although the nagging spirit before referred to is to be deprecated, it is sometimes amusing to lose your temper with your own hobby. If a book-collector ever does this, he longs to silence whole libraries of bad authors. 'Tis an inglorious acquist,' says Joseph Glanvill in his famous *Vanity of Dogmatizing*—I quote from the first edition, 1661, though the second is the rarer—'to have our heads or volumes laden as were Cardinal Campeius his mules, with old and useless luggage.' 'Twas this vain idolizing of authors,' Glanvill had just before observed, 'which gave birth to that silly vanity of *impertinent citations*, and inducing authority in things neither requiring nor deserving it.' In the same strain he proceeds, 'Methinks 'tis a pitiful piece of knowledge that can be learnt from an *Index* and a poor ambition to be rich in the inventory of another's Treasure. To boast a *Memory* (the most that these pedants can aim at) is but an humble ostentation. 'Tis better to own a Judgment, though but with a *Curta Supellex* of coherent notions, than a *Memory* like a sepulchre furnished with a load of broken and discarnate bones.' Thus far the fascinating Glanvill, whose mode of putting things is powerful.

There are times when the contemplation of huge libraries wearies, and when even the names of Bindley and Sykes fail to please. Dr. Johnson's library sold at Christie's for L247 9s. Let those sneer who dare. It was Johnson, not Bindley, who wrote the *Lives of the Poets*.

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But, of course, no sensible man ever really quarrels with his hobby. A little petulance every now and again variegates the monotony of routine. Mr. Gosse tells us in his book that he cannot resist Restoration comedies. The bulk of them he knows to be as bad as bad can be. He admits they are not literature—whatever that may mean—but he intends to go on collecting them all the same till the inevitable hour when Death collects him. This is the true spirit; herein lies happiness, which consists in being interested in something, it does not much matter what. In this spirit let me take up Mr. Gosse's book again, and read what he has to tell about *Pharamond; or, the History of France. A Fam'd Romance. In Twelve Parts*, or about Mr. John Hopkins' collection of poems, printed by Thomas Warren for Bennet Bunbury at the Blue Anchor, in the Lower Walk of the New Exchange, 1700. The Romance is dull, and as it occupies more than 1,100 folio pages may be pronounced tedious, and the poetry is bad, but as I do not seriously intend ever to read a line of either the Romance or the poetry, this is no great matter.

LIBRARIANS AT PLAY

No man of feeling will grudge the librarians of the universe their annual outing. Their pursuits are not indeed entirely sedentary, since at times they have to climb tall ladders, but of exercise they must always stand in need, and as for air, the exclusively bookish atmosphere is as bad for the lungs as it is for the intellectuals. In 1897 the Second International Library Conference met in London, attended several concerts, was entertained by the Marchioness of Bute and Lady Lubbock; visited Lambeth Palace and Stafford and Apsley Houses; witnessed a special performance of Irving's *Merchant of Venice*; were elected honorary members of the City Liberal, Junior Athaeneum, National Liberal, and Savage Clubs; and, generally speaking, enjoyed themselves after the methods current during that period. They also read forty-six papers, which now alone remain a stately record of their proceedings.

I have lately spent a pleasant afternoon musing over these papers. Their variety is endless, and the dispositions of mind displayed by these librarians are wide as the poles asunder. Some of them babble like babies, others are evidently austere scholars; some are gravely bent on the best methods of classifying catalogues, economizing space, and sorting borrowers' cards; others, scorning such mechanical details, bid us regard libraries, and consequently librarians, as the primary factors in human evolution. 'Where,' asks Mr. Ernest Cushing Richardson, the librarian of Princetown University, New Jersey, U.S.A., 'lies the germ of the library?' He answers his own question after the following convincing fashion: 'At the point where a definitely formed concept from another's mind is placed beside one's own idea for integration, the result being a definite new form, including the substance of both.' The pointsman who presides over this junction is the librarian.

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The young woman of whom Mr. Matthews, the well-known librarian of Bristol, tells us, who, being a candidate for the post of assistant librarian, boldly pronounced Rider Haggard to be the author of the *Idylls of the King*, Southey of *The Mill on the Floss*, and Mark Twain of *Modern Painters*, undoubtedly placed her own ideas at the service of Bristol alongside the preconceived conceptions of Mr. Matthews; but she was rejected all the same.

To speak seriously, who are librarians, and whence come they in such numbers? Of Bodley's librarian we have heard, and all the lettered world honours the name of Richard Garnett, late keeper of the printed books at the British Museum. But beyond these and half a dozen others a great darkness prevails. This ignorance is well illustrated by a pleasing anecdote told at the Conference by Mr. MacAlister:

'Only the day before yesterday, on the Calais boat, I was introduced to a world-famed military officer who, when he understood I had some connection with the Library Association, exclaimed: "Why, you're just the man I want! I have been anxious of late about my man, old Atkins. You see the old boy, with a stoop, sheltering behind the funnel. Poor old beggar! quite past his work, but as faithful as a dog. It has just occurred to me that if you could shove him into some snug library in the country, I'd be awfully grateful to you. His one fault is a fondness for reading, and so a library would be just the thing."

The usual titled lady also turned up at the Conference. This time she was recommending her late cook for the post of librarian, alleging on her behalf the same strange trait of character—her fondness for reading. Here, of course, one recalls Mark Pattison's famous dictum, 'The librarian who reads is lost,' about which there is much to be said, both *pro* and *con*; but we must not be put off our inquiry, which is: Who are these librarians, and whence come they? They are the custodians of the 70,000,000 printed books (be the numbers a little more or less) in the public libraries of the Western world, and they come from guarding their treasures. They deserve our friendliest consideration. If occasionally their enthusiasm provokes a smile, it is, or should be, of the kindest. When you think of 70,000,000 books, instinctively you wish to wash your hands. Nobody knows what dust is who has not divided his time between the wine-cellar and the library. The work of classification, of indexing, of packing away, must be endless. Great men have arisen who have grappled with these huge problems. We read respectfully of Cutter's rules, which are to the librarian even as Kepler's laws to the astronomer. We have also heard of Poole's index. We bow our heads. Both Cutter and Poole are Americans. The parish of St. Pancras has just, by an overwhelming majority, declined to have a free library, and consequently a librarian. Brutish St. Pancras!

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Libraries are obviously of two kinds: those intended for popular use and those meant for the scholar. The ordinary free library, in the sense of Mr. Ewart's Act of Parliament of 1850, is a popular library where a wearied population turns for distraction. Fiction plays a large part. In some libraries 80 per cent. of the books in circulation are novels. Hence Mr. Goldwin Smith's splenetic remark, 'People have no more right to novels than to theatre-tickets out of the taxes.' Quite true; no more they have—or to public gardens or to beautiful pictures or to anything save to peep through the railings and down the areas of Mr. Gradgrind's fine new house in Park Lane.

When we are considering popular libraries, it does not do to expect too much of tired human nature. This popular kind of library was well represented—perhaps a little over-represented, at the Conference. All our American cousins are not Cutters and Pooles. There was Mr. Crunden, who keeps the public library at St. Louis, U.S.A. He is all against dull text-books. As a boy he derived his inspiration from Sargent's *Standard Speaker*, and the interesting sketch he gives us of his education makes us wonder whether amidst his multitudinous reading he ever encountered Newman's marvellous description and handling of the young and over-read Mr. Brown, which is to be found under the heading 'Elementary Studies' in *Lectures and Essays on University Subjects*.

I shuddered just a little on reading in Mr. Crunden's paper of the boy who, before he was nine, had read Bulfinch's *Age of Chivalry* and *Age of Charlemagne*, Bryant's *Translation of the 'Iliad'*, a prose translation of the *Odyssey*, Malory's *King Arthur*, and several other versions of the *Arthurian legend*, Prescott's *Peru and Mexico*, Macaulay's *Lays*, Longfellow's *Hiawatha* and *Miles Standish*, the *Jungle Books*, and other books too numerous to mention. A famous list, but perilously long.

Mr. Crunden supports his case for varied reading by quotations from all quarters—Dr. William T. Harris, President Eliot, Professor Mackenzie, Charles Dudley Warner, Sir John Lubbock—but their scraps of wisdom or of folly do not remove my uneasiness about the digestion of the little boy who, before he was nine years old, had (not content with Malory) read several versions of the *Arthurian legend*!

Ladies make excellent librarians, and have tender hearts for children, and so we find a paper written by a lady librarian, entitled *Books that Children Like*. She quotes some interesting letters from children: 'I like books about ancient history and books about knights, also stories of adventure, and mostly books with a deep plot and mystery about them.' 'I do not like *Gulliver's Travels*, because I think they are silly.' 'I read *Little Men*. I did not like this book.' 'I like *Ivanhoe*, by Scott, better than any.' 'My favourite books are *Tom Sawyer*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and *Scudder's American History*. I like *Tom Sawyer* because he was so jolly, *Uncle Tom* because he was so faithful, and *Nathan Hale* because he was so brave.' These are unbought verdicts no wise man will despise.

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All this is popular enough. But the unpopular library must not be overlooked, for, after all, libraries are for the learned. We must not let the babes and sucklings, or the weary seamstress or badgered clerk, or even the working-man, ride rough-shod over Salmasius and Scaliger. In the papers of Mr. Garnett, Mr. Pollard, Mr. Dziatzko, Mr. Cutter, and others, the less popular and nobler side of the library is duly exhibited.

My anxiety about these librarians, who are beginning to be a profession by themselves, is how they are to be paid. That librarians must live is at least as obvious in their case as in that of any other class. They must also, if they are to be of any use, be educated. In 1878 the late Mr. Robert Harrison, who for many years led a grimy life in the London Library, advocated £250 as a minimum annual salary for a competent librarian. But, as Mr. Ogle, of Bootle, pertinently asked at the Conference, 'Are his views yet accepted?' We fear not. Mr. Ogle courageously proceeds:

'The fear of a charge of trades unionism has long kept librarians silent, but this matter is one of public importance, and affects educational progress. A School-Board rate of 6d. or 1s. is willingly paid to teach our youth to read. Shall an additional 2d. be grudged to turn that reading talent into right and safe channels, where it may work for the public welfare and economy?'

Festina lente, good Mr. Ogle, I beseech you. That way fierce controversy and, it may be, disaster lies. Do not stir the Philistine within us. The British nation is still savage under the skin. It has no real love for books, libraries, or librarians. In its hidden heart it deems them all superfluous. Anger it, and it may in a fit of temper sweep you all away. The loss of our free librarians would indeed be grievous. Never again could they meet in conference and read papers full of quaint things and odd memories. What, for example, can be more amusing than Mr. Cowell's reminiscences of forty years' library work in Liverpool, of the primitive days when a youthful Dicky Sam (for so do the inhabitants of that city call themselves) mistook the *Flora of Liverpool* for a book either about a ship or a heroine? He knows better now. And what shall we say of the Liverpool brushmaker who, at a meeting of the library committee, recited a poem in praise of woman, containing the following really magnificent line?—

'The heart that beats fondest is found in the stays.'

There is nothing in Roscoe or Mrs. Hemans (local bards) one half so fine. Long may librarians live and flourish! May their salaries increase, if not by leaps and bounds, yet in steady proportions. Yet will they do well to remember that books are not everything.

LAWYERS AT PLAY



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That dreary morass, that Serbonian bog, the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy, has been lately lit up as by the flickering light of a will-o'-the-wisp, by the almost simultaneous publication of an imaginary charge delivered to an equally imaginary jury by a judge of no less eminence than the late Lord Penzance (that tough Erastian) and of the still bolder *jeu d'esprit*, *A Report of the Trial of an Issue in Westminster Hall*, June 20, 1627, which is the work of the unbridled fancy of His Honour Judge Willis, late Treasurer of the Inner Temple, and a man most intimately acquainted with the literature of the seventeenth century.

Neither production of these playful lawyers, clothed though they be in the garb of judicial procedure, is in the least likely to impress the lay mind with that sense of 'impartiality' or 'indifference' which is supposed to be an attribute of justice, or, indeed, with anything save the unfitness of the machinery of an action at law for the determination of any matter which invokes the canons of criticism and demands the arbitrament of a well-informed and lively taste.

Lord Penzance, who favours the Baconians, made no pretence of impartiality, and says outright in his preface that his readers 'must not expect to find in these pages an equal and impartial leaning of the judge alternately to the case of both parties, as would, I hope, be found in any judicial summing-up of the evidence in a real judicial inquiry.' And, he adds, 'the form of a summing-up is only adopted for convenience, but it is in truth very little short of an argument for the plaintiffs, *i.e.*, the Baconians.'

Why any man, judge or no judge, who wished to prepare an argument on one side of a question should think fit to cast that argument for convenience' sake in the form of a judicial summing-up of both sides is, and must remain, a puzzle.

Judge Willis, who is a Shakespearean, bold and unabashed, is not content with a mere summing-up, but, with a gravity and wealth of detail worthy of De Foe, has presented us with what purports to be a verbatim report of so much of the proceedings in a suit of *Hall v. Russell* as were concerned with the trial before a jury of the simple issue—whether William Shakespeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon, 'the testator in the cause of *Hall v. Russell*,' was the author of the plays in the Folio of 1623. We are favoured with the names of counsel employed, who snarl at one another with such startling verisimilitude, whilst the remarks that fall from the bench do so with such naturalness, that it is perhaps not surprising, or any very severe reflection upon his literary *esprit*, that a member of the Bar, having heard Judge Willis deliver his lecture in the Inner Temple Hall, repaired next day to the library to study at his leisure the hitherto unnoted case of *Hall v. Russell*. Ten witnesses are put in the box to prove the affirmative—that Shakespeare was the author of the plays. Mr.

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Blount and M. Jaggard, the publishers of the Folio, give a most satisfactory account of the somewhat crucial point—how they came by the manuscripts, with all the amendments and corrections, and pass lightly over the fact that those manuscripts had disappeared. ‘Rare Ben Jonson’ in the witness-box is a masterpiece of dramatic invention; he demolishes Bacon’s advocate with magnificent vitality. John Selden makes a stately witness, and Francis Meres a very useful one. Generally speaking, the weakest part in these interesting proceedings is the cross-examination. I have heard the learned judge do better in old days. No witnesses are called for the Baconians, though all the writings of the great philosopher were put in for what they were worth. The Lord Chief Justice, who seems to have been a friend of Shakespeare’s, sums up dead in his favour, and the jury (with whose names we are not supplied, which is a pity—Bunyan or De Foe would have given them to us), after a short absence, a quarter of an hour, return a Shakespearean verdict, which of course ought by rights to make the whole question *res judicata*.

But it has done nothing of the kind. Could we really ask Blount and Jaggard how they came by the manuscripts, and who made the corrections, and did we believe their replies, why, then a stray Baconian here and there might reluctantly abandon his strange fancy; but as *Hall v. Russell* is Judge Willis’s joke, it will convert no Baconians any more than Dean Sherlock’s once celebrated *Trial of the Witnesses* compels belief in the Resurrection.

The question in reality is a compound one. Did Shakespeare write the plays? If yes, the matter is at rest. If no—who did? If an author can be found—Bacon or anyone else—well and good. If no author can be found—Anon. wrote them—a conclusion which need terrify no one, since the plays would still remain within our reach, and William Shakespeare, apart from the plays, is very little to anybody who has not written his life.

But this is not the form the controversy has assumed. The anti-Shakespeareans are to a man Baconians, and fondly imagine that if only Will Shakespeare were put out of the way their man must step into the vacant throne. Lord Penzance in charging his jury told them that those of their number ‘who had studied the writings of Bacon’ and were ‘keenly alive to his marvellous mental powers’ would probably have ‘no difficulty,’ if once satisfied that the author they were seeking after was *not* Shakespeare, in finding as a fact that he *was* Bacon. But suppose James Spedding had been on that jury, and, rising in his place, had spoken as follows:



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'My Lord,—If any man has ever studied the writings of Bacon, I have. For twenty-five years I have done little else. If any man is keenly alive to his marvellous mental powers, I am that man. I am also deeply read in the plays attributed to Shakespeare, and I think I am in a condition to say that, whoever was the real author, it was *not* Bacon.'

That this is exactly what Spedding would have said we know from the letter he wrote on the subject to Mr. Holmes, reprinted in *Essays and Discussions*, and it completely upsets the whole scheme of arrangement of Lord Penzance's summing-up, which proceeds on the easy footing that the more difficulties you throw in Shakespeare's path the smoother becomes Bacon's.

That there are difficulties in Shakespeare's path, some things very hard to explain, must be admitted. Lord Penzance makes the most of these. It is, indeed, a most extraordinary thing that anybody should have had the mother-wit to write the plays traditionally assigned to Shakespeare. Where did he get it from? How on earth did the plays get themselves written? Where, when, and how did the author pick up his multifarious learnings? Lord Penzance, good, honest man, is simply staggered by the extent of the play-wright's information. The plays, so he says, 'teem with erudition,' and can only have been written by someone who had the classics at his finger-ends, modern languages on the tip of his tongue—by someone who had travelled far and read deeply; and, above all, by a man who had spent at least a year in a conveyancer's chambers! And yet, when this has been said, would Lord Penzance have added that the style and character of the playwright is the style and character of a really learned man of his period! Can anything less like such a style be imagined? Once genius is granted, heaven-born genius, a mother-wit beyond the dreams of fancy, and then plain humdrum men, ordinary judicial intelligences, will do well to be on their guard against it. 'Beware—beware! he is fooling thee.' Shakespeare's genius has simply befooled Lord Penzance. Seafaring men, after reading *The Tempest*, are ready to maintain that its author must have been for at least a year before the mast. As for Shakespeare's law, which has taken in so many matter-of-fact practitioners, one can now refer to Ben Jonson's evidence in *Hall v. Russell*, where that great dramatist has no difficulty in showing that if none but a lawyer could have written Shakespeare's plays, a lawyer alone could have preached Thomas Adams's sermons. Judge Willis's profound knowledge of sound old divinity has served him here in good stead. The fact is it is simply impossible to exaggerate the quick-wittedness and light-heartedness of a great literary genius. The absorbing power, the lightning-like faculty of apprehension, the instant recognition of the uses to which any fact or fancy can be put, the infinite number and delicacy of the mental feelers,

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thrust out in all directions, which belong to the creative brain and keep it in tremulous and restless activity, are quite enough so to differentiate the possessor of these endowments from his fellow mortals as to make comparison impossible. Shakespeare the actor was by the common consent of his enemies one of the deftest fellows that ever made use of other men's materials—'Convey, the wise it call.' I will again quote Spedding:

'If Shakespeare was not trained as a scholar or a man of science, neither do the works attributed to him show traces of trained scholarship or scientific education. Given the *faculties*, you will find that all the acquired knowledge, art, and dexterity which the Shakespearean plays imply were easily attainable by a man who was labouring in his vocation and had nothing else to do.'

I greatly prefer this cool judgment of a scholar deeply read in Elizabethan lore to Lord Penzance's heated and almost breathless admiration for the 'teeming erudition' of the plays.

Lord Penzance likewise displays a very creditable non-acquaintance with the disposition of authors one to another. He is quite shocked at the callousness of Shakespeare's contemporaries to Shakespeare if he were indeed the author of the Quartos which bore his name in his lifetime. But as it cannot be suggested that in, say, 1600 it was generally known that Shakespeare was not the author of these plays, it is hard to see how his contemporaries can be acquitted of indifference to his prodigious superiority over themselves. Authors, however, never take this view. Shakespeare's contemporaries thought him a mighty clever fellow and no more. Why, even Wordsworth was well persuaded he could write like Shakespeare had he been so minded. Mr. Arnold remained all his life honestly indifferent to and sceptical about the fame of both Tennyson and Browning. Great living lawyers and doctors do not invariably idolize each other, nor do the lawyers and doctors in a small way of business always speak well of those in a big way. The poets and learned critics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—Dryden, Pope, Johnson—looked upon Shakespeare with an indulgent eye, as a great but irregular genius, after much the same fashion as did the old sea-dogs of Nelson's day regard the hero of Trafalgar. 'Do not criticise him too harshly,' said Lord St. Vincent; 'there can only be one Nelson.'

These are not the real difficulties, though they seem to have pressed somewhat heavily on Lord Penzance.

The circumstances attendant upon the publication of the Folio of 1623 are undoubtedly puzzling. Shakespeare died in 1616, leaving behind him more than forty plays circulating in London and more or less associated with his name. His will, a most elaborate document, does not contain a single reference to his literary life or labours. Seven years after his death the Folio appears, which contains twenty-six plays



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out of the odd forty just referred to, and ten extra plays which had never before been in print, and about six of which there is a very scanty Shakespearean tradition. Of the twenty-six old plays, seventeen had been printed in small Quartos, possibly surreptitiously, in Shakespeare's lifetime, but the Folio does not reprint from these Quartos, but from enlarged, amended, and enormously improved copies. Messrs. Heminge and Condell, the editor of this priceless treasure, the First Folio, wrote a long-winded dedication to Lords Pembroke and Montgomery, which contains but one pertinent passage, in which they ask their readers to believe that it had been the office of the editors to collect and publish the author's 'mere writings,' he being dead, and to offer them, not 'maimed and deformed,' in surreptitious and stolen copies, but 'cured and perfect of their limbs and all the rest, absolute in their numbers as he conceived them, who as he was a happie imitator of Nature was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together, and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.'

From whose custody did those 'papers' come? Where had they been all the seven years? Of what did they consist? If in truth unblotted, all the seventeen Quartos as well as the new plays must have been printed from fair manuscript copies. From whom were these unblotted copies received, and what became of them? The silence of these players is irritating and perplexing,—though, possibly, the explanation of the mystery, were it forthcoming, would be, as often happens, of the simplest. It may be that these unblotted copies were in the theatre library all the time.

Whether these interrogatories, now unanswerable, raise doubts in the mind of sufficient potency to destroy the tradition of centuries, and to prevent us from sharing the conviction of Milton, of Dryden, of Pope, and Johnson that Shakespeare was the author of Shakespeare's plays must be left for individual consideration. But, however destructive these doubts may prove, they do not go a yard of the way to let in Bacon.

Once more I will quote Spedding, for he, of all the moderns, by virtue of his taste and devouring studies, is the best qualified to speak:

'Aristotle was an extraordinary man. Plato was an extraordinary man. That two men each severally so extraordinary should have been living at the same time in the same place was a very extraordinary thing. But would it diminish the wonder to suppose the two to be one? So I say of Bacon and Shakespeare. That a human being possessed of the faculties necessary to make a Shakespeare should exist is extraordinary. That a human being possessed of the necessary faculties to make Bacon should exist is extraordinary. That two such human beings should have been living in London at the same time was more extraordinary still. But that one man should have existed

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possessing the faculties and opportunities necessary to make *both* would have been the most extraordinary thing of all' (see Spedding's *Essays and Discussions*, 1879, pp. 371, 372). 'Great writers, especially being contemporary, have many features in common, but if they are really great writers they write naturally, and nature is always individual. I doubt whether there are five lines together to be found in Bacon which could be mistaken for Shakespeare, or five lines in Shakespeare which could be mistaken for Bacon, by one who was familiar with their several styles and practised in such observations' (*Ibid.*, p. 373).

THE NON-JURORS

To anyone blessed or cursed with an ironical humour the troublesome history of the Church of England since the Reformation cannot fail to be an endless source of delight. It really is exciting. Just a little more of Calvin and of Beza, half a dozen words here, or Cranmer's pencil through a single phrase elsewhere; a 'quantum suff.' of the men 'that allowed no Eucharistic sacrifice,' and away must have gone beyond recall the possibility of the Laudian revival and all that still appertains thereunto. We must have lost the 'primitive' men, the Kens, the Wilsons, the Knoxes, the Kebles, the Puseys. On the other hand, but for the unfaltering language of the Articles, the hearty tone of the Homilies, and the agreeable readiness of both sides to curse the Italian impudence of the Bishop of Rome and all his 'detestable enormities,' our Anglican Church history could never have been enriched with the names or sweetened by the memories of the Romaines, the Flavels, the Venns, the Simeons, and of many thousand unnamed saints who finished their course in the fervent faith of Evangelicalism. But on what a thread it has always hung! An ill-considered Act of Parliament, an amendment hastily accepted by a pestered layman at midnight, a decision in a court of law, a Jerusalem Bishoprick, a passage in an early Father, an ancient heresy restudied, and off to Rome goes a Newman or a Manning, whilst a Baptist Noel finds his less romantic refuge in Protestant Dissent. Schism is for ever in the air. Disruption a lively possibility. It has always been a ticklish business belonging to the Church of England, unless you can muster up enough courage to be a frank Erastian, and on the rare occasions when you attend your parish church handle the Book of Common Prayer with all the reverence due to a schedule to an Act of Parliament.

Among the many noticeable humours of the present situation is the tone adopted by an average Churchman like Canon Overton to the Non-Jurors. When the late Mr. Lathbury published his admirable *History of the Non-Jurors*,[A] he had to prepare himself for a very different public of Churchmen and Churchwomen than will turn over Canon Overton's agreeable pages.[B] In 1845 the average Churchman, after he had



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conquered the serious initial difficulty of comprehending the Non-Juror's position, was only too apt to consider him a fool for his pains. 'It has been the custom,' wrote Mr. Lathbury, 'to speak of the Non-Jurors as a set of unreasonable men, and should I succeed in any measure in correcting those erroneous impressions, I shall feel that my labour has not been in vain.' But in 1902, as Canon Overton is ready enough to perceive, 'their position is a little better understood.' The well-nigh 'fools' are all but 'confessors.'

[Footnote A: *A History of the Non-Jurors*. By Thomas Lathbury. London: Pickering, 1845.]

[Footnote B: *The Non-Jurors*. By J.H. Overton, D.D. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1902, 16s.]

The early history of the Non-Jurors is as fascinating and as fruitful as their later history is dull, melancholy, and disappointing.

Nobody will deny that the Bishops, clergy, and laity of the Church of England who refused to take the oaths to William and Mary and George I., when tendered to them, were amply justified in the Court of Conscience. They were ridiculed by the politicians of the day for their supersensitiveness; but what were they to do? If they took the oaths, they apostalized from the faith they had once professed.

Before the Revolution it was the faith of all High Churchmen—part of the *deposition* they had to guard—that the doctrine of non-resistance and passive obedience was Gospel truth, primitive doctrine, and a chief 'characteristic' of the Anglican Church.

The saintly John Kettlewell, in his tractate, *Christianity: a Doctrine of the Cross, or Passive Obedience under any Pretended Invasion of Legal Rights and Liberties* (1696), makes this perfectly plain; and when Ken came to compose his famous will, wherein he declared that he died in the Communion of the Church of England, 'as it adheres to the doctrine of the Cross,' the good Bishop did not mean what many a pious soul in later days has been edified by thinking he did mean, the doctrine of the Atonement, but that of passive obedience, which was the Non-Juror's cross.

It is sad to think a doctrine dear to so many saintly men, maintained with an erudition so vast and exemplified by sacrifices so great, should have disappeared in the vortex of present-day conflict. It may some day reappear in Convocation. Kettlewell, who was a precise writer and accurate thinker, defined sovereignty as supremacy. 'Kings,' he said, 'can be no longer sovereigns, but subjects, if they have any superiors'; and he points out with much acumen that the best security under a sovereign 'which sovereignty allows' is that the Kings and Ministers are accountable and liable for breach of law as

well as others. Kettlewell, had he lived long enough, might have come to transfer his idea of sovereignty to Kings, Lords, and Commons speaking through an Act of Parliament, and if so, he would have urged *active*



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obedience to its enactments, when not contrary to conscience, and *passive obedience* if they were so contrary. Therefore, were he alive to-day, and did he think it contrary to conscience (as he easily might) to pay a school-rate for an 'undenominational' school, he would not draw a cheque for the amount, but neither would he punch the bailiff's head who came to seize his furniture. Kettlewell's treatise is well worth reading. Its last paragraph is most spirited.

There could be no doubt about it. The High Church party were bound hand and foot to the doctrine of the Cross—*i.e.*, passive obedience to the Lord's Anointed. Whoever else might actively resist or forsake the King, they could not without apostasy. But the Revolution of 1688 was not content to pierce the High Churchmen through one hand. Not only did the Revolution require the Church to forswear its King, but also to see its spiritual fathers deprived and intruders set in their places without even the semblance of any spiritual authority. If it was hard to have James II. a fugitive in foreign lands and Dutch William in Whitehall, it was perhaps even harder to see Sancroft expelled from Lambeth, and the Erastian and latitudinarian Tillotson, who was prepared to sacrifice even episcopacy for peace, usurping the title of Archbishop of Canterbury. After all, no man, not even a Churchman, can serve two masters. The loyalty of a High Churchman to the throne is always subject to his loyalty to the Church, and at the Revolution he was wounded in both houses.

When Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne, and established what was then unblushingly called 'the new religion,' the whole Anglican Hierarchy, with the paltry exception of the Bishop of Llandaff, refused the oaths of supremacy, and were superseded. In a little more than 100 years the Protestant Bench was bombarded with a heart-searching oath—this time of allegiance. Opinion was divided; the point was not so clear as in 1559. The Archbishop of York and his brethren of London, Lincoln, Bristol, Winchester, Rochester, Llandaff and St. Asaph, Carlisle and St. David's, swore to bear true allegiance to Their Majesties King William and Queen Mary. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of Bath and Wells, Ely, Gloucester, Norwich, Peterborough, Worcester, Chichester, and Chester refused to swear anything of the kind, and were consequently, in pursuance of the terms of an Act of Parliament, and of an Act of Parliament only, deprived of their ecclesiastical preferments. They thus became the first Non-Jurors, and were long, except two who died before actual sentence of exclusion, affectionately known and piously venerated in all High Church homes as 'the Deprived Fathers.'

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Who can doubt that they were right, holding the faith they did? Yet Englishmen do not take kindly to martyrdom, and some of the Bishops were strangely puzzled. The excellent Ken, who, like Keble, was an Englishman first and a Catholic afterwards (in other words, no true Catholic at all), when told that James was ready to give Ireland to France, as nearly as possible conformed, so angry was he with the Lord's Anointed; and even the fiery Leslie, one of our most agreeable writers, was always ready to forgive those pious, peaceful souls who thought it no sin, though great sorrow, to comply with the demands of Caesar, but still managed to retain their old Church and King principles. Leslie reserved his wrath for the Tillotsons and the Tenisons and the Burnets, who first, to use his own words, swallowed 'the morsels of usurpation' and then dressed them up 'with all the gaudy and ridiculous flourishes that an Apostate eloquence can put upon them.'

The early Non-Jurors included among their number a very large proportion of holy, learned, and primitive-minded men. At least 400 of the general body of the clergy refused the oaths and accepted for themselves and those dependent on them lives of poverty and seclusion. They were from the beginning an unpopular body. They were not Puritans, they were not Deists, they were not Presbyterians, they would not go to their parish churches; and yet they vehemently objected to being called Papists. What troublesome people! Five of the deprived fathers, including the Primate, had known what it was, when they defied their Sovereign, to be the idols of the mob; but when they adhered to his fallen cause they were deprived of their sees, and sent packing from their palaces without a single growl of popular discontent. Oblivion was their portion, even as it was of their Roman Catholic predecessors at the time of the Reformation.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, when turned out of Lambeth by a judgment of the Court of King's Bench to make way for Tillotson, retired to his native village in Fressingfield, where he did not attend the parish church, nor would allow any but non-juring clergy to perform Divine service in his presence. Dr. Sancroft (who was a book-lover, and had designed a binding of his own) died on November 24, 1693, and the epitaph, of his own composition, on his tombstone may still be read with profit by time-servers of all degrees and denominations, cleric and lay, in Parliament and out of it. All the deprived Bishops, so Mr. Lathbury assures us, were in very narrow circumstances, and of Turner, of Ely, Mr. Lathbury very properly writes: 'This man who, by adhering to the new Sovereign, and taking the oath, might have ended his day amidst an abundance of earthly blessings, was actually sustained in his declining years by the bounty of those who sympathized with him in his distresses.' Bishop Turner died in 1700.



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Despite this distressing and most genuine poverty, the reader of old books will not infrequently come across traces of many happy and well-spent hours during which these poor Non-Jurors managed 'to fleet the time' in their own society, for they were, many of them, men of the most varied tastes and endowed with Christian tempers; whilst their writings exhibit, as no other writings of the period do, the saintliness and devotion which are supposed to be among the 'notes' of the Catholic Church. Two better men than Kettlewell and Dodwell are nowhere to be found, and as for vigorous writing, where is Charles Leslie to be matched?

So long as the deprived fathers continued to live, the schism—for complete schism it was between 'the faithful remnant of the Church of England' and the Established Church—was on firm ground. But what was to happen when the last Bishop died? Dodwell, who, next to Hickes, seems to have dominated the Non-Juring mind, did not wish the schism to continue after the death of the deprived Bishops; for though he admitted that the prayers for the Revolution Sovereigns would be 'unlawful prayers,' to which assent could not properly be given, he still thought that communion with the Church of England was possible. Hickes thought otherwise, and Hickes, it must not be forgotten, though only known to the world and even to Non-Jurors generally, as the deprived Dean of Worcester, was in sober truth and reality Bishop of Thetford, having been consecrated a Suffragan Bishop under that title by the deprived Bishops of Norwich, Peterborough, and Ely, at Southgate, in Middlesex, on February 24, 1693, in the Bishop of Peterborough's lodgings. At the same time the accomplished Thomas Wagstaffe was consecrated Suffragan Bishop of Ipswich, though he continued to earn his living as a physician all the rest of his days.

These were clandestine consecrations, for even so well-trying and whole-hearted a Non-Juror as Thomas Hearne, of Oxford, knew nothing about them, though a great friend of both the new Bishops, until long years had sped. It would be idle at this distance of time, and having regard to the events which have happened since February, 1693, to consider the nice questions how far the Act of Henry VIII. relating to the appointment of suffragans could have any applicability to such consecrations, or what degree of Episcopal authority was thereby conferred, or for how long.

As things turned out, Ken proved the longest liver of the deprived fathers. The good Bishop died at Longleat, one of the few great houses which sheltered Non-Jurors, on March 19, 1711. But before his death he had made cession of his rights to his friend Hooper, who on the violent death of Kidder, the intruding revolution Bishop, had been appointed by Queen Anne, who had wished to reinstate Ken, to Bath and Wells. It was the wish of Ken that the schism should come to an end on his death.

It did nothing of the kind, though some very leading Non-Jurors, including the learned Dodwell and Nelson, rejoined the main body of the Church, saving all just exceptions to the 'unlawful prayers.'

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Bishop Wagstaffe died in 1712, leaving Bishop Hicke alone in his glory, who in 1713, assisted by two Scottish Bishops, consecrated Jeremy Collier, Samuel Hawes, and Nathaniel Spinckes, Bishops of 'the faithful remnant.' Hicke died in 1715, and the following year the great and hugely learned Thomas Brett became a Bishop, as also did Henry Gawdy.

Then, alas! arose a schism which rent the faithful remnant in twain. It was about a great subject, the Communion Service. Collier and Brett were in favour of altering the Book of Common Prayer so as to restore it to the First Book of King Edward VI., which provided for (1) The mixed chalice; (2) prayers for the faithful departed; (3) prayer for the descent of the Holy Ghost on the consecrated elements; (4) the Oblatory Prayer, offering the elements to the Father as symbols of His Son's body and blood. This side of the controversy became known as 'The Usagers,' whilst those Non-Jurors, headed by Bishop Spinckes, who held by King Charles's Prayer-Book, were called 'the Non-Usagers.' The discussion lasted long, and was distinguished by immense learning and acumen.

The Usagers may be said to have carried the day, for after the controversy had lasted fourteen years, in 1731 Timothy Mawman was consecrated a Bishop by three Bishops, two of whom were 'Usagers' and one a 'Non-Usager.' But in the meantime what had become of the congregations committed to their charge? Never large, they had dwindled almost entirely away.

The last regular Bishop was Robert Gordon, who was consecrated in 1741 by Brett, Smith, and Mawman. Gordon, who was an out-and-out Jacobite, died in 1779.

I have not even mentioned the name of perhaps the greatest of the Non-Jurors, William Law, nor that of Carte, an historian, the fruits of whose labour may still be seen in other men's orchards.

The whole story, were it properly told, would prove how hard it is in a country like England, where nobody really cares about such things, to run a schism. But who knows what may happen to-morrow?

LORD CHESTERFIELD

'Buy good books and read them; the best books are the commonest, and the last editions are always the best, if the editors are not blockheads.' So wrote Lord Chesterfield to his son, that highly-favoured and much bewritten youth, on March 19, 1750, and his words have been chosen with great cunning by Mr. Charles Strachey as a motto for his new edition of these famous letters.[A]

[Footnote A: Published by Methuen and Co. in 2 vols.]



The quotation is full of the practical wisdom, but is at the same time—so much, at least, an old book-collector may be allowed to say—a little suggestive of the too-well-defined limitations of their writer’s genius and character. Lord Chesterfield is always clear and frequently convincing, yet his wisdom is that of Mr. Worldly Wiseman, and not only never points in the direction of the Celestial City, but seldom displays sympathy with any generous emotion or liberal taste. Yet as we have nobody like him in the whole body of our literature, we can welcome even another edition—portable, complete, and cheap—of his letters to his son with as much enthusiasm as is compatible with the graces, and with the maxim, so dear to his lordship’s heart, *Nil admirari!*

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What, I have often wondered, induced Lord Chesterfield to write this enormously long and troublesome series of letters to a son who was not even his heir? Their sincerity cannot be called in question. William Wilberforce did not more fervently desire the conversion to God of his infant Samuel than apparently did Lord Chesterfield the transformation of his lumpish offspring into 'the all-accomplished man' he wished to have him.

'All this,' so the father writes in tones of fervent pleading—'all this you may compass if you please. You have the means, you have the opportunities; employ them, for God's sake, while you may, and make yourself the all-accomplished man I wish to have you. It entirely depends upon the next two years; they are the decisive ones' (Letter CLXXVII.).

It is the very language of an evangelical piety applied to the manufacture of a worldling. But what promoted the anxiety? Was it natural affection—a father's love? If it was, never before or since has that world-wide and homely emotion been so concealed. There is a detestable, a forbidding, an all-pervading harshness of tone throughout this correspondence that seems to banish affection, to murder love. Read Letter CLXXVIII., and judge for yourselves. I will quote a passage:

'The more I love you now from the good opinion I have of you, the greater will be my indignation if I should have reason to change it. Hitherto you have had every possible proof of my affection, because you have deserved it, but when you cease to deserve it you may expect every possible mark of my resentment. To leave nothing doubtful upon this important point, I will tell you fairly beforehand by what rule I shall judge of your conduct: by Mr. Harte's account.... If he complains you must be guilty, and I shall not have the least regard for anything you may allege in your own defence.'

Ugh! what a father! Lord Chesterfield despised the Gospels, and made little of St. Paul; yet the New Testament could have taught him something concerning the nature of a father's love. His language is repulsive, repugnant, and yet how few fathers have taken the trouble to write 400 educational letters of great length to their sons! All one can say is that Chesterfield's letters are without natural affection:

'If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, and no man ever loved.'

If affection did not dictate these letters, what did? Could it be ambition? So astute a man as Chesterfield, who was kept well informed as to the impression made by his son, could hardly suppose it likely that the boy would make a name for himself, and thereby confer distinction upon the family of which he was an irregular offshoot. A respectable diplomatic career, with an interval in the House of Commons, was the most that so clear-sighted a man could anticipate for the young Stanhope. Was it literary fame for himself? This, of course, assumes that subsequent publication

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was contemplated by the writer. The dodges and devices of authors are well-nigh infinite and quite beyond conjecture, and it is, of course, possible that Lord Chesterfield kept copies of these letters, which bear upon their faces evidence of care and elaboration. It is not to be supposed for a moment that he ever forgot he had written them. It is hard to believe he never inquired after them and their whereabouts. Great men have been known to write letters which, though they bore other addresses, were really intended for their biographers. It would not have been surprising if Lord Chesterfield wrote these letters intending some day to publish them, but not only is there no warrant for such an opinion, but the opposite is clearly established. It is, no doubt, odd that the son should have carefully preserved more than 400 letters written to him during a period beginning with his tenderest years and continuing whilst he was travelling on the Continent. It seems almost a miracle. What made the son treasure them so carefully? Did he look forward to being his father's biographer? Hardly so at the age of ten, or even twenty. Biographies were not then what they have since become. No doubt in the middle of the eighteenth century letters were more treasured than they are to-day, and young Stanhope's friends may also have thought it wise to encourage him to preserve documentary evidence of the great interest taken in him by his father. None the less, I think the preservation of this correspondence is in the circumstances a most extraordinary though well-established fact.

The son died in 1768 of a dropsy at Avignon, and the news was communicated to the Earl by his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Eugenia Stanhope, of whose existence he was previously unaware. Two grandsons accompanied her. It was a shock; but '*les manieres nobles et aisees, la tournure d'un homme de condition, le ton de la bonne compagnie, les graces le je ne scais quoi qui plait,*' came to Lord Chesterfield's assistance, and he received his son's widow, who was not a pleasing person, and her two boys with kindness and good feeling, and provided for them quite handsomely by his will. The Earl died in 1773, in his seventy-ninth year, and thereupon Mrs. Stanhope, who was in possession of all the original letters addressed to her late husband, carried her wares to market, and made a bargain with Mr. Dodsley for their publication, she to receive L1,575. Mr. Dodsley advertised the forthcoming work, and on that the Earl's executors, relying upon the well-known case of *Pope v. Curl*, decided by Lord Hardwicke in 1741, filed their bill against Mrs. Stanhope, seeking an injunction to restrain publication. The widow put in her sworn Answer, in which she averred that she had, on more occasions than one, mentioned publication to the Earl, and that he, though recovering from her certain written characters of eminent contemporaries, had seemed quite content to let her do what she liked

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with the letters, only remarking that there was too much Latin in them. The executors seem to have moved for what is called an interim injunction—that is, an injunction until trial of the cause, and, from the report in *Ambler*, it appears that Lord Apsley (a feeble creature) granted such an injunction, but recommended the executors to permit the publication if, on seeing a copy of the correspondence, they saw no objection to it. In the result the executors gave their consent, and the publication became an authorized one, so much so that Dodsley was able to obtain an interdict in the Scotch Court preventing a certain Scotch bookseller, called McFarquhar, from reprinting the letters in Edinburgh. Whether the executors believed Mrs. Stanhope's story, or saw no reason to object to the publication of the letters, I do not know, but it is clear that the opposition was a half-hearted one.

It would be hasty to assume that Lord Chesterfield wrote these letters with any intention of publication, and I am therefore left without being able to suggest any strong reason for their existence. A restless, itching pen, perhaps, accounts for them. Some men find a pleasure in writing, even at great length; others, of whom Carlyle was one, though they hate the labour, are yet compelled by some fierce necessity to blacken paper.

At all events, we have Lord Chesterfield's letters, and, having them, they will always have readers, for they are readable.

That the letters are full of wit and wisdom and sound advice is certain. Mr. Strachey, in his preface, seems to be under the impression that in the popular estimate Chesterfield is reckoned an elegant trifler, a man of no serious account. What the popular or vulgar estimate of Chesterfield may be it would be hard to determine, nor is it of the least importance, for no one who knows about Lord Chesterfield can possibly entertain any such opinion. How it came about that so able and ambitious a man made so poor a thing out of life, and failed so completely, is puzzling at first, though a little study would, I think, make the reasons of Chesterfield's failure plain enough.

To prove by extracts from the Letters how wise a man Chesterfield was would be easy, but tiresome; to exhibit him in a repulsive character would be equally easy, but spiteful. I prefer to leave him alone, and to content myself with but one quotation, which has a touch of both wisdom and repulsiveness:

'Consult your reason betimes. I do not say it will always prove an unerring guide, for human reason is not infallible, but it will prove the least erring guide that you can follow. Books and conversation may assist it, but adopt neither blindly and implicitly; try both by that best rule God has given to direct us—reason. Of all the truths do not decline that of thinking. The host of mankind can hardly be said to think; their prejudices are almost all adoptive; and in general I believe it is better that it should be



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so, as such common prejudices contribute more to order and quiet than their own separate reasonings would do, uncultivated as they are. We have many of these useful prejudices in this country which I should be very sorry to see removed. The good Protestant conviction that the Pope is both Antichrist and the Whore of Babylon is a more effectual preservative against Popery than all the solid and unanswerable arguments of Chillingworth.'

THE JOHNSONIAN LEGEND

The ten handsome volumes which the indefatigable and unresting zeal of Dr. Birkbeck Hill, and the high spirit of the Clarendon Press, have edited, arranged, printed, and published for the benefit of the world and the propagation of the Gospel according to Dr. Johnson are pleasant things to look upon. I hope the enterprise has proved remunerative to those concerned, but I doubt it. The parsimony of the public in the matter of books is pitiful. The ordinary purse-carrying Englishman holds in his head a ready-reckoner or scale of charges by which he tests his purchases—so much for a dinner, so much for a bottle of champagne, so much for a trip to Paris, so much for a pair of gloves, and so much for a book. These ten volumes would cost him L4 9s. 3d. 'Whew! What a price for a book, and where are they to be put, and who is to dust them?' Idle questions! As for room, a bicycle takes more room than 1,000 books; and as for dust, it is a delusion. You should never dust books. There let it lie until the rare hour arrives when you want to read a particular volume; then warily approach it with a snow-white napkin, take it down from its shelf, and, withdrawing to some back apartment, proceed to cleanse the tome. Dr. Johnson adopted other methods. Every now and again he drew on huge gloves, such as those once worn by hedgers and ditchers, and then, clutching his folios and octavos, he banged and buffeted them together until he was enveloped in a cloud of dust. This violent exercise over, the good doctor restored the volumes, all battered and bruised, to their places, where, of course, the dust resettled itself as speedily as possible.

Dr. Johnson could make books better than anybody, but his notions of dusting them were primitive and erroneous. But the room and the dust are mere subterfuges. The truth is, there is a disinclination to pay L4 9s. 3d. for the ten volumes containing the complete Johnsonian legend. To quarrel with the public is idiotic and most un-Johnsonian. 'Depend upon it, sir,' said the Sage, 'every state of society is as luxurious as it can be.' We all, a handful of misers excepted, spend more money than we can afford upon luxuries, but what those luxuries are to be is largely determined for us by the fashions of our time. If we do not buy these ten volumes, it is not because we would not like to have them, but because we want the money they cost for something we want more. As for dictating to men how they are to spend their money, it were both a folly and an impertinence.



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These ten volumes ended Dr. Hill's labours as an editor of *Johnson's Life and Personalia*, but did not leave him free. He had set his mind on an edition of the *Lives of the Poets*. This, to the regret of all who knew him either personally or as a Johnsonian, he did not live to see through the press. But it is soon to appear, and will be a storehouse of anecdote and a miracle of cross-references. A poet who has been dead a century or two is amazing good company—at least, he never fails to be so when Johnson tells us as much of his story as he can remember without undue research, with that irony of his, that vast composure, that humorous perception of the greatness and the littleness of human life, that make the brief records of a Spratt, a Walsh, and a Fenton so divinely entertaining. It is an immense testimony to the healthiness of the Johnsonian atmosphere that Dr. Hill, who breathed it almost exclusively for a quarter of a century and upwards, showed no symptoms either of moral deterioration or physical exhaustion. His appetite to the end was as keen as ever, nor was his temper obviously the worse. The task never became a toil, not even a tease. 'You have but two subjects,' said Johnson to Boswell: 'yourself and myself. I am sick of both.' Johnson hated to be talked about, or to have it noticed what he ate or what he had on. For a hundred years now last past he has been more talked about and noticed than anybody else. But Dr. Hill never grew sick of Dr. Johnson.

The *Johnsonian Miscellanies*[A] open with the *Prayers and Meditations*, first published by the Rev. Dr. Strahan in 1785. Strahan was the Vicar of Islington, and into his hands at an early hour one morning Dr. Johnson, then approaching his last days, put the papers, 'with instructions for committing them to the press and with a promise to prepare a sketch of his own life to accompany them.' This promise the doctor was not able to keep, and shortly after his death his reverend friend published the papers just as they were put into his hands. One wonders he had the heart to do it, but the clerical mind is sometimes strangely insensitive to the privacy of thought. But, as in the case of most indelicate acts, you cannot but be glad the thing was done. The original manuscript is at Pembroke College, Oxford. In these *Prayers and Meditations* we see an awful figure. The *solitary* Johnson, perturbed, tortured, oppressed, in distress of body and of mind, full of alarms for the future both in this world and the next, teased by importunate and perplexing thoughts, harassed by morbid infirmities, vexed by idle yet constantly recurring scruples, with an inherited melancholy and a threatened sanity, is a gloomy and even a terrible picture, and forms a striking contrast to the social hero, the triumphant dialectician of Boswell, Mrs. Thrale, and Madame D'Arblay. Yet it is relieved by its inherent humanity, its fellowship and feeling. Dr. Johnson's piety is delightfully full of human nature—far too full to please the poet Cowper, who wrote of the *Prayers and Meditations* as follows:



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'If it be fair to judge of a book by an extract, I do not wonder that you were so little edified by Johnson's Journal. It is even more ridiculous than was poor Rutt's of flatulent memory. The portion of it given us in this day's paper contains not one sentiment worth one farthing, except the last, in which he resolves to bind himself with no more unbidden obligations. Poor man! one would think that to pray for his dead wife and to pinch himself with Church fasts had been almost the whole of his religion.'

[Footnote A: Two volumes. Oxford Clarendon Press, 1897.]

It were hateful to pit one man's religion against another's, but it is only fair to Dr. Johnson's religion to remember that, odd compound as it was, it saw him through the long struggle of life, and enabled him to meet the death he so honestly feared like a man and a Christian. The *Prayers and Meditations* may not be an edifying book in Cowper's sense of the word; there is nothing triumphant about it; it is full of infirmities and even absurdities; but, for all that, it contains more piety than 10,000 religious biographies. Nor must the evidence it contains of weakness be exaggerated. Beset with infirmities, a lazy dog, as he often declared himself to be, he yet managed to do a thing or two. Here, for example, is an entry:

'29, EASTER EVE (1777).

'I rose and again prayed with reference to my departed wife. I neither read nor went to church, yet can scarcely tell how I have been hindered. I treated with booksellers on a bargain, but the time was not long.'

Too long, perhaps, for Johnson's piety, but short enough to enable the booksellers to make an uncommon good bargain for the *Lives of the Poets*. 'As to the terms,' writes Mr. Dilly, 'it was left entirely to the doctor to name his own; he mentioned 200 guineas; it was immediately agreed to.' The business-like Malone makes the following observation on the transaction: 'Had he asked 1,000, or even 1,500, guineas the booksellers, who knew the value of his name, would doubtless have readily given it.' Dr. Johnson, though the son of a bookseller, was the least tradesman-like of authors. The bargain was bad, but the book was good.

A year later we find this record:

'MONDAY, April 20 (1778).

'After a good night, as I am forced to reckon, I rose seasonably and prayed, using the collect for yesterday. In reviewing my time from Easter, 1777, I find a very melancholy and shameful blank. So little has been done that days and months are without any trace. My health has, indeed, been very much interrupted. My nights have been commonly not only restless but painful and fatiguing.... I have written a little of the *Lives*

of the Poets, I think, with all my usual vigour. I have made sermons, perhaps, as readily as formerly. My memory is less faithful in retaining names, and, I am afraid, in



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retaining occurrences. Of this vacillation and vagrancy of mind I impute a great part to a fortuitous and unsettled life, and therefore purpose to spend my life with more method.' This year the 28th of March passed away without memorial. Poor Tetty, whatever were our faults and failings, we loved each other. I did not forget thee yesterday. Couldst thou have lived! I am now, with the help of God, to begin a new life.'

Dr. Hill prints an interesting letter of Mr. Jowett's, in which occur the following observations:

'It is a curious question whether Boswell has unconsciously misrepresented Johnson in any respect. I think, judging from the materials, which are supplied chiefly by himself, that in one respect he has. He has represented him more as a sage and philosopher in his conduct as well as his conversation than he really was, and less as a rollicking "King of Society." The gravity of Johnson's own writings tends to confirm this, as I suspect, erroneous impression. His religion was fitful and intermittent; and when once the ice was broken he enjoyed Jack Wilkes, though he refused to shake hands with Hume. I was much struck with a remark of Sir John Hawkins (excuse me if I have mentioned this to you before): "He was the most humorous man I ever knew."

Mr. Jowett's letter raises some nice points—the Wilkes and Hume point, for example. Dr. Johnson hated both blasphemy and bawd, but he hated blasphemy most. Mr. Jowett shared the doctor's antipathies, but very likely hated bawd more than he did blasphemy. But, as I have already said, the point is a nice one. To crack jokes with Wilkes at the expense of Boswell and the Scotch seems to me a very different thing from shaking hands with Hume. But, indeed, it is absurd to overlook either Johnson's melancholy piety or his abounding humour and love of fun and nonsense. His *Prayers and Meditations* are full of the one, Boswell and Mrs. Thrale and Madame D'Arblay are full of the other. Boswell's *Johnson* has superseded the 'authorized biography' by Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. Hill did well to include in these *Miscellanies* Hawkins' inimitable description of the memorable banquet given at the Devil Tavern, near Temple Bar, in the spring of 1751, to celebrate the publication of Mrs. Charlotte Lennox's first novel. What delightful revelry! what innocent mirth! prolonged though it was till long after dawn. Poor Mrs. Lennox died in distress in 1804, at the age of eighty-three. Could Johnson but have lived he would have lent her his helping hand. He was no fair-weather friend, but shares with Charles Lamb the honour of being able to unite narrow means and splendid munificence.

I must end with an anecdote:

'Henderson asked the doctor's opinion of *Dido* and its author. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "I never did the man an injury. Yet he would read his tragedy to me."



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BOSWELL AS BIOGRAPHER

Boswell's position in English literature cannot be disputed, nor can he ever be displaced from it. He has written our greatest biography. That is all. Theorize about it as much as you like, account for it how you may, the fact remains. 'Alone I did it.' There has been plenty of theorizing. Lord Macaulay took the subject in hand and tossed it up and down for half a dozen pages with a gusto that drove home to many minds the conviction, the strange conviction, that our greatest biography was written by one of the very smallest men that ever lived, 'a man of the meanest and feeblest intellect'—by a dunce, a parasite, and a coxcomb; by one 'who, if he had not been a great fool, would never have been a great writer.' So far Macaulay, *anno Domini* 1831, in the vigorous pages of the *Edinburgh Review*. A year later appears in *Fraser's Magazine* another theory by another hand, not then famous, Mr. Thomas Carlyle. I own to an inordinate affection for Mr. Carlyle as 'literary critic' As philosopher and sage, he has served our turn. We have had the fortune, good or bad, to outlive him; and our sad experience is that death makes a mighty difference to all but the very greatest. The sight of the author of *Sartor Resartus* in a Chelsea omnibus, the sound of Dr. Newman's voice preaching to a small congregation in Birmingham, kept alive in our minds the vision of their greatness—it seemed then as if that greatness could know no limit; but no sooner had they gone away, than somehow or another one became conscious of some deficiency in their intellectual positions—the tide of human thought rushed visibly by them, and it became plain that to no other generation would either of these men be what they had been to their own. But Mr. Carlyle as literary critic has a tenacious grasp, and Boswell was a subject made for his hand. 'Your Scottish laird, says an English naturalist of those days, may be defined as the hungriest and vainest of all bipeds yet known.' Carlyle knew the type well enough. His general description of Boswell is savage:

'Boswell was a person whose mean or bad qualities lay open to the general eye, visible, palpable to the dullest. His good qualities, again, belonged not to the time he lived in; were far from common then; indeed, in such a degree were almost unexampled; not recognisable, therefore, by everyone; nay, apt even, so strange had they grown, to be confounded with the very vices they lay contiguous to and had sprung out of. That he was a wine-bibber and good liver, gluttonously fond of whatever would yield him a little solacement, were it only of a stomachic character, is undeniable enough. That he was vain, heedless, a babbler, had much of the sycophant, alternating with the braggadocio, curiously spiced, too, with an all-pervading dash of the coxcomb; that he gloried much when the tailor by a court suit had made a new man of him;



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that he appeared at the Shakespeare Jubilee with a riband imprinted "Corsica Boswell" round his hat, and, in short, if you will, lived no day of his life without saying and doing more than one pretentious ineptitude, all this unhappily is evident as the sun at noon. The very look of Boswell seems to have signified so much. In that cocked nose, cocked partly in triumph over his weaker fellow-creatures, partly to snuff up the smell of coming pleasure and scent it from afar, in those big cheeks, hanging like half-filled wine-skins, still able to contain more, in that coarsely-protruded shelf mouth, that fat dew-lapped chin; in all this who sees not sensuality, pretension, boisterous imbecility enough? The underpart of Boswell's face is of a low, almost brutish character.'

This is character-painting with a vengeance. Portrait of a Scotch laird by the son of a Scotch peasant. Carlyle's Boswell is to me the very man. If so, Carlyle's paradox seems as great as Macaulay's, for though Carlyle does not call Boswell a great fool in plain set terms, he goes very near it. But he keeps open a door through which he effects his escape. Carlyle sees in Bozzy 'the old reverent feeling of discipleship, in a word, hero-worship.'

'How the babbling Bozzy, inspired only by love and the recognition and vision which love can lend, epitomizes nightly the words of Wisdom, the deeds and aspects of Wisdom, and so, little by little, unconsciously works together for us a whole "Johnsoniad"—a more free, perfect, sunlit and spirit-speaking likeness than for many centuries has been drawn by man of man.'

This I think is a little overdrawn. That Boswell loved Johnson, God forbid I should deny. But that he was inspired only by love to write his life, I gravely question. Boswell was, as Carlyle has said, a greedy man—and especially was he greedy of fame—and he saw in his revered friend a splendid subject for artistic biographic treatment. Here is where both Macaulay and Carlyle are, as I suggest, wrong. Boswell was a fool, but only in the sense in which hundreds of great artists have been fools; on his own lines, and across his own bit of country, he was no fool. He did not accidentally stumble across success, but he deliberately aimed at what he hit. Read his preface and you will discover his method. He was as much an artist as either of his two famous critics. Where Carlyle goes astray is in attributing to discipleship what was mainly due to a dramatic sense. However, theories are no great matter.

Our means of knowledge of James Boswell are derived mainly from himself; he is his own incriminator. In addition to the life there is the Corsican tour, the Hebrides tour, the letters to Erskine and to Temple, and a few insignificant occasional publications in the shape of letters to the people of Scotland, *etc.* With these before him it is impossible for any biographer to approach Bozzy in a devotional attitude; he was all Carlyle calls him. Our sympathies are with his father, who despised him, and with his son, who was ashamed of him. It is indeed strange to think of him staggering, like the drunkard he was, between these two respectable and even stately figures—the Senator of the Court

of Justice and the courtly scholar and antiquary. And yet it is to the drunkard humanity is debtor. Respectability is not everything.



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Boswell had many literary projects and ambitions, and never intended to be known merely as the biographer of Johnson. He proposed to write a life of Lord Kames and to compose memoirs of Hume. It seems he did write a life of Sir Robert Sibbald. He had other plans in his head, but dissipation and a steadily increasing drunkenness destroyed them all. As inveterate book-hunter, I confess to a great fancy to lay hands on his *Dorando: A Spanish Tale*, a shilling book published in Edinburgh during the progress of the once famous Douglas case, and ordered to be suppressed as contempt of court after it had been through three editions. It is said, probably hastily, that no copy is known to exist—a dreary fate which, according to Lord Macaulay, might have attended upon the *Life of Johnson* had the copyright of that work become the property of Boswell's son, who hated to hear it mentioned. It is not, however, very easy to get rid of any book once it is published, and I do not despair of reading *Dorando* before I die.

OLD PLEASURE GARDENS[A]

[Footnote A: *Pleasure Gardens of the Eighteenth Century*, by Warwick Wroth, F.S.A., assisted by Arthur Edgar Wroth. London: Macmillan and Co.]

This is an honest book, disfigured by no fine writing or woeful attempts to make us dance round may-poles with our ancestors. Terribly is our good language abused by the swell-mob of stylists, for whom it is certainly not enough that Chatham's language is their mother's tongue. May the Devil fly away with these artists; though no sooner had he done so than we should be 'wae' for auld Nicky-ben. Mr. Wroth, of the British Museum, and his brother, Mr. Arthur Wroth, are above such vulgar pranks, and never strain after the picturesque, but in the plain garb of honest men carry us about to the sixty-four gardens where the eighteenth-century Londoner, his wife and family—the John Gilpins of the day—might take their pleasure either sadly, as indeed best befits our pilgrim state, or uproariously to deaden the ear to the still small voice of conscience—the pangs of slighted love, the law's delay, the sluggish step of Fortune, the stealthy strides of approaching poverty, or any other of the familiar incidents of our mortal life. The sixty-two illustrations which adorn the book are as honest as the letterpress. There is a most delightful Morland depicting a very stout family indeed regaling itself *sub tegmine fagi*. It is called a 'Tea Party.' A voluminous mother holds in her roomy lap a very fat baby, whose back and neck are full upon you as you stare into the picture. And what a jolly back and innocent neck it is! Enough to make every right-minded woman cry out with pleasure. Then there is the highly respectable father stirring his cup and watching with placid content a gentleman in lace and ruffles attending to the wife, whilst the two elder children play with a wheezy dog.

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In these pages we can see for ourselves the British public—God rest its soul!—enjoying itself. This honest book is full of *la bourgeoisie*. The rips and the painted ladies occasionally, it is true, make their appearance, but they are reduced to their proper proportions. The Adam and Eve Tea Gardens, St. Pancras, have a somewhat rakish sound, calculated to arrest the jaded attention of the debauchee, but what has Mr. Wroth to tell us about them?

'About the beginning of the present century it could still be described as an agreeable retreat, "with enchanting prospects"; and the gardens were laid out with arbours, flowers, and shrubs. Cows were kept for making syllabubs, and on summer afternoons a regular company met to play bowls and trap-ball in an adjacent field. One proprietor fitted out a mimic squadron of frigates in the garden, and the long-room was used a good deal for beanfeasts and tea-drinking parties' (p. 127).

What a pleasant place! Syllabubs! How sweet they sound! Nobody worried then about diphtheria; they only died of it. Mimic frigates, too! What patriotism! These gardens are as much lost as those of the Hesperides. A cemetery swallowed them up—the cemetery which adjoins the old St. Pancras Churchyard. The Tavern, shorn of its amenities, a mere drink-shop, survived as far down the century as 1874, soon after which date it also disappeared. Hornsey Wood House has a name not unknown in the simple annals of tea-drinking. It is now part of Finsbury Park, but in the middle of the last century its long-room 'on popular holydays, such as Whit Sunday, might be seen crowded as early as nine or ten in the morning with a motley assemblage eating rolls and butter and drinking tea at an extravagant price.' 'Hone remembered the old Hornsey Wood House as it stood embowered, and seeming a part of the wood. It was at that time kept by two sisters—Mrs. Lloyd and Mrs. Collier—and these aged dames were usually to be found before their door on a seat between two venerable oaks, wherein swarms of bees hived themselves.'

What a picture is this of these vanished dames! Somewhere, I trust, they are at peace.

'And there, they say, two bright and aged snakes,
Who once were Cadmus and Harmonia,
Bask in the glens or on the warm sea-shore.'

A more raffish place was the Dog and Duck in St. George's Fields, which boasted mineral springs, good for gout, stone, king's evil, sore eyes, and inveterate cancers. Considering its virtue, the water was a cheap liquor, for a dozen bottles could be had at the spa for a shilling. The Dog and Duck, though at last it exhibited depraved tastes, was at one time well conducted. Miss Talbot writes about it to Mrs. Carter, and Dr. Johnson advised his Thralia to try the waters. It was no mean place, but boasted a breakfast-room, a bowling-green, and a swimming-bath 200 feet long and 100 feet (nearly) broad. Mr.



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Wroth narrates the history of its fall with philosophical composure. In the hands of one Hedger the decencies were disregarded, and thieves made merry where once Miss Talbot sipped bohea. One of its frequenters, Charlotte Shaftoe, is said to have betrayed seven of her intimates to the gallows. Few visitors' lists could stand such a strain as Miss Shaftoe put upon hers. In 1799 the Dog and Duck was suppressed, and Bethlehem Hospital now reigns in its stead. 'The Peerless Pool' has a Stevensonian sound. It was a dangerous pond behind Old Street, long known as 'The Parlous or Perilous Pond' 'because divers youth by swimming therein have been drowned.' In 1743 a London jeweller called Kemp took it in hand, turned it into a pleasure bath, and renamed it, happily enough, 'The Peerless Pool.' It was a fine open-air bath, 170 feet long, more than 100 feet broad, and from 3 to 5 feet deep. 'It was nearly surrounded by trees, and the descent was by marble steps to a fine gravel bottom, through which the springs that supplied the pool came bubbling up.' Mr. Kemp likewise constructed a fish-pond. The enterprise met with success, and anglers, bathers, and at due seasons skaters, flocked to 'The Peerless Pool.' Hone describes how every Thursday and Saturday the boys from the Bluecoat School were wont to plunge into its depths. You ask its fate. It has been built over. Peerless Street, the second main turning on the left of the City Road just beyond Old Street in coming from the City, is all that is left to remind anyone of the once Parlous Pool, unless, indeed, it still occasionally creeps into a cellar and drowns cockroaches instead of divers youths. The Three Hats, Highbury Barn, Hampstead Wells, are not places to be lightly passed over. In Mr. Wroth's book you may read about them and trace their fortunes—their fallen fortunes. After all, they have only shared the fate of empires.

Of the most famous London gardens—Marylebone, Ranelagh, and, greatest of them all, Vauxhall—Mr. Wroth writes at, of course, a becoming length. Marylebone Gardens, when at their largest, comprised about 8 acres. Beaumont Street, part of Devonshire Street and of Devonshire Place and Upper Wimpole Street, now occupy their site. Music was the main feature of Marylebone. A band played in the evening. Vocalists at different times drew crowds. Masquerades and fireworks appeared later in the history of the gardens, which usually were open three nights of the week. Dr. Johnson's turbulent behaviour, on the occasion of one of his frequent visits, will easily be remembered. Marylebone, at no period, says Mr. Wroth, attained the vogue of Ranelagh or the universal popularity of Vauxhall. In 1776 the gardens were closed, and two years later the builders began to lay out streets. Ranelagh is, perhaps, the greatest achievement of the eighteenth century. Its Rotunda, built in 1741, is compared by Mr. Wroth to the reading-room of the British Museum. No need to give its dimensions; only look at the print,



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and you will understand what Johnson meant when he declared that the *coup d'oeil* of Ranelagh was the finest thing he had ever seen. The ordinary charge for admission was half a crown, which secured you tea or coffee and bread-and-butter. The gardens were usually open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and the amusements were music, tea-drinking, walking, and talking. Mr. Wroth quotes a Frenchman, who, after visiting Ranelagh in 1800, calls it 'le plus insipide lieu d'amusement que l'on ait pu imaginer,' and even hints at Dante's Purgatory. An earlier victim from Gaul thus records his experience of Ranelagh: 'On s'ennui avec de la mauvaise musique, du the et du beurre.' So true is it that the cheerfulness you find anywhere is the cheerfulness you have brought with you. However, despite the Frenchman, good music and singing were at times to be heard at Ranelagh. The nineteenth century would have nothing to do with Ranelagh, and in 1805 it was pulled down. The site now belongs to Chelsea Hospital. Cuper's Gardens lacked the respectability of Marylebone and the style of Ranelagh, but they had their vogue during the same century. They were finely situated on the south side of the Thames opposite Somerset House. Cuper easily got altered into Cupid; and when on the death of Ephraim Evans in 1740 the business came to be carried on by his widow, a comely dame who knew a thing or two, it proved to be indeed a going concern. But the new Licensing Bill of 1752 destroyed Cupid's Garden, and Mrs. Evans was left lamenting and wholly uncompensated. Of Vauxhall Mr. Wroth treats at much length, and this part of his book is especially rich in illustrations. Every lover of Old London and old times and old prints should add Mr. Wroth's book to his library.

OLD BOOKSELLERS

There has just been a small flutter amongst those who used to be called stationers or text-writers in the good old days, before printing was, and when even Peers of the Realm (now so highly educated) could not sign their names, or, at all events, preferred not to do so—booksellers they are now styled—and the question which agitates them is discount. Having mentioned this, one naturally passes on.

No great trade has an obscurer history than the book trade. It seems to lie choked in mountains of dust which it would be suicidal to disturb. Men have lived from time to time of literary skill—Dr. Johnson was one of them—who had knowledge, extensive and peculiar, of the traditions and practices of 'the trade,' as it is proudly styled by its votaries; but nobody has ever thought it worth his while to make record of his knowledge, which accordingly perished with him, and is now irrecoverably lost.

In old days booksellers were also publishers, frequently printers, and sometimes paper-makers. Jacob Tonson not only owned Milton's *Paradise Lost*—for all time, as he fondly thought, for little did he dream of the fierce construction the House of Lords was to put upon the Copyright Act of Queen Anne—not only was Dryden's publisher, but also kept

shop in Chancery Lane, and sold books across the counter. He allowed no discount, but, so we are told, 'spoke his mind upon all occasions, and flattered no one,' not even glorious John.

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For a long time past the trades of bookselling and book-publishing have been carried on apart. This has doubtless rid booksellers of all the unpopularity which formerly belonged to them in their other capacity. This unpopularity is now heaped as a whole upon the publishers, who certainly need not dread the doom awaiting those of whom the world speaks well.

A tendency of the two trades to grow together again is perhaps noticeable. For my part, I wish they would. Some publishers are already booksellers, but the books they sell are usually only new books. Now it is obvious that the true bookseller sells books both old and new. Some booksellers are occasional publishers. May each usurp—or, rather, reassume—the business of the other, whilst retaining his own!

The world, it must be admitted, owes a great deal of whatever information it possesses about the professions, trades, and occupations practised and carried on in its midst to those who have failed in them. Prosperous men talk 'shop,' but seldom write it. The book that tells us most about booksellers and bookselling in bygone days is the work of a crack-brained fellow who published and sold in the reigns of Queen Anne and George I., and died in 1733 in great poverty and obscurity. I refer to John Dunton, whose *Life and Errors* in the edition in two volumes edited by J.B. Nichols, and published in 1818, is a common book enough in the second-hand shops, and one which may be safely recommended to everyone, except, indeed, to the unfortunate man or woman who is not an adept in the art, craft, or mystery of skipping.

The book will strangely remind the reader of Amory's *Life of John Buncler*—those queer volumes to which many a reader has been sent by Hazlitt's intoxicating description of them in his *Round Table*, and a few perhaps by a shy allusion contained in one of the essays of Elia. The real John Dunton has not the boundless spirits of the fictitious John Buncler; but in their religious fervour, their passion for flirtation, their tireless egotism, and their love of character-sketching, they greatly resemble one another.

It is this last characteristic that imparts real value to Dunton's book, and makes it, despite its verbiage and tortuosity, throb with human interest. For example, he gives us a short sketch of no less than 135 then living London booksellers in this style: 'Mr. Newton is full of kindness and good-nature. He is affable and courteous in trade, and is none of those men of forty whose religion is yet to chuse, for his mind (like his looks) is serious and grave; and his neighbours tell me his understanding does not improve too fast for his practice, for he is not religious by start or sally, but is well fixed in the faith and practice of a Church of England man—and has a handsome wife into the bargain.'

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Most of the 135 booksellers were good men, according to Dunton, but not all. 'Mr. Lee in Lombard Street. Such a pirate, such a cormorant was never before. Copies, books, men, shops, all was one. He held no propriety right or wrong, good or bad, till at last he began to be known; and the booksellers, not enduring so ill a man among them, spewed him out, and off he marched to Ireland, where he acted as *felonious Lee* as he did in London. And as Lee lived a thief, so he died a hypocrite; for being asked on his death-bed if he would forgive Mr. C. (that had formerly wronged him), "Yes," said Lee, "if I die, I forgive him; but if I happen to live, I am resolved to be revenged on him."

The Act of Union destroyed the trade of these pirates, but their felonious editions of eighteenth-century authors still abound. Mr. Gladstone, I need scarcely say, was careful in his Home Rule Bill (which was denounced by thousands who never read a line of it) to withdraw copyright from the scope of action of his proposed Dublin Parliament.

There are nearly eleven hundred brief character-sketches in Dunton's book, of all sorts and kinds, but with a preference for bookish people, divines, both of the Establishment and out of it, printers and authors. Sometimes, indeed, the description is short enough, and tells one very little. To many readers, references so curt to people of whom they never heard, and whose names are recorded nowhere else, save on their mouldering grave-stones, may seem tedious and trivial, but for others they will have a strange fascination. Here are a few examples:

'Affable *Wiggins*. His conversation is general but never impertinent.

'The kind and golden *Venables*. He is so good a man, and so truly charitable, he that will write of him, must still write more.

'Mr. *Bury*—my old neighbour in Redcross Street. He is a plain honest man, sells the best coffee in all the neighbourhood, and lives in this world like a spiritual stranger and pilgrim in a foreign country.

'Anabaptist (alias *Elephant*) *Smith*. He was a man of great sincerity and happy contentment in all circumstances of life.'

If an affection for passages of this kind be condemned as trivial, and akin to the sentimentalism of the man in Calverley's poem who wept over a box labelled 'This side up,' I will shelter myself behind Carlyle, who was evidently deeply moved, as his review of Boswell's Johnson proves, by the life-history of Mr. F. Lewis, 'of whose birth, death, and whole terrestrial *res gestae* this only, and, strange enough, this actually, survives—"Sir, he lived in London, and hung loose upon society. *Stat PARVI hominis umbra.*" On that peg Carlyle's imagination hung a whole biography.



Dunton, who was the son of the Rector of Aston Clinton, was apprenticed, about 1675, to a London bookseller. He had from the beginning a great turn both for religion and love. He, to use his own phrase, 'sat under the powerful ministry of Mr. Doolittle.' 'One Lord's day, and I remember it with sorrow, I was to hear the Rev. Mr. Doolittle, and it was then and there the beautiful Rachel Seaton gave me that fatal wound.'



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The first book Dunton ever printed was by the Rev. Mr. Doolittle, and was of an eminently religious character.

'One Lord's Day (and I am very sensible of the sin) I was strolling about just as my fancy led me, and, stepping into Dr. Annesley's meeting-place—where, instead of engaging my attention to what the Doctor said, I suffered both my mind and eyes to run at random—I soon singled out a young lady that almost charmed me dead; but, having made my inquiries, I found to my sorrow she was pre-engaged.' However, Dunton was content with the elder sister, one of the three daughters of Dr. Annesley. The one he first saw became the wife of the Reverend Samuel Wesley, and the mother of John and Charles. The third daughter is said to have been married to Daniel De Foe.

As soon as he was out of his apprenticeship, Dunton set up business as a publisher and bookseller. He says grimly enough:

'A man should be well furnished with an honest policy if he intends to set out to the world nowadays. And this is no less necessary in a bookseller than in any other tradesman, for in that way there are plots and counter-plots, and a whole army of hackney authors that keep their grinders moving by the travail of their pens. These gormandizers will eat you the very life out of a *copy* so soon as ever it appears, for as the times go, *Original* and *Abridgement* are almost reckoned as necessary as man and wife.'

The mischief to which Dunton refers was permitted by the stupidity of the judges, who refused to consider an abridgment of a book any interference with its copyright. Some learned judges have, indeed, held that an abridger is a benefactor, but as his benefactions are not his own, but another's, a shorter name might be found for him. The law on the subject is still uncertain.

Dunton proceeds: 'Printing was now the uppermost in my thoughts, and hackney authors began to ply me with *specimens* as earnestly and with as much passion and concern as the watermen do passengers with *Oars* and *Scullers*. I had some acquaintance with this generation in my apprenticeship, and had never any warm affection for them, in regard I always thought their great concern lay more in *how much a sheet*, than in any generous respect they bore to the *Commonwealth of Learning*; and indeed the learning itself of these gentlemen lies very often in as little room as their honesty, though they will pretend to have studied for six or seven years in the Bodleian Library, to have turned over the Fathers, and to have read and digested the whole compass both of human and ecclesiastic history, when, alas! they have never been able to understand a single page of St. Cyprian, and cannot tell you whether the Fathers lived before or after Christ.'



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Yet of one of this hateful tribe Dunton is able to speak well. He declares Mr. Bradshaw to have been the best accomplished hackney author he ever met with. He pronounces his style incomparably fine. He had quarrelled with him, but none the less he writes: 'If Mr. Bradshaw is yet alive, I here declare to the world and to him that I freely forgive him what he owes, both in money and books, if he will only be so kind as to make me a visit. But I am afraid the worthy gentleman is dead, for he was wretchedly overrun with melancholy, and the very blackness of it reigned in his countenance. He had certainly performed wonders with his pen, had not his poverty pursued him and almost laid the necessity upon him to be unjust.'

All hackney authors were not poor. Some of the compilers and abridgers made what even now would be considered by popular novelists large sums. Scotsmen were very good at it. Gordon and Campbell became wealthy men. If authors had a turn for politics, Sir Robert Walpole was an excellent paymaster. Arnall, who was bred an attorney, is stated to have been paid L11,000 in four years by the Government for his pamphlets.

'Come, then, I'll comply.
Spirit of Arnall, aid me while I lie!'

It cannot have been pleasant to read this, but then Pope belonged to the opposition, and was a friend of Lord Bolingbroke, and would consequently say anything.

There is not a more interesting and artless autobiography to be read than William Hutton's, the famous bookseller and historian of Birmingham. Hutton has been somewhat absurdly called the English Franklin. He is not in the least like Franklin. He has none of Franklin's supreme literary skill, and he was a loving, generous, and tender-hearted man, which Franklin certainly was not. Hutton's first visit to London was paid in 1749. He walked up from Nottingham, spent three days in London, and then walked back to Nottingham. The jaunt, if such an expression is applicable, cost him eleven shillings less fourpence. Yet he paid his way. The only money he spent to gain admission to public places was a penny to see Bedlam.

Interesting, however, as is Hutton's book, it tells us next to nothing about book-selling, except that in his hands it was a prosperous undertaking.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT COPYRIGHT IN BOOKS

Copyright, which is the exclusive liberty reserved to an author and his assigns of printing or otherwise multiplying copies of his book during certain fixed periods of time, is a right of modern origin.

There is nothing about copyright in Justinian's compilations.



It is a mistake to suppose that books did not circulate freely in the era of manuscripts. St. Augustine was one of the most popular authors that ever lived. His *City of God* ran over Europe after a fashion impossible to-day. Thousands of busy hands were employed, year out and year in, making copies for sale of this famous treatise. Yet Augustine had never heard of copyright, and never received a royalty on sales in his life.

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The word 'copyright' is of purely English origin, and came into existence as follows:

The Stationers' Company was founded by royal charter in 1556, and from the beginning has kept register-books, wherein, first, by decrees of the Star Chamber, afterwards by orders of the Houses of Parliament, and finally by Act of Parliament, the titles of all publications and reprints have had to be entered prior to publication.

None but booksellers, as publishers were then content to be called, were members of the Stationers' Company, and by the usage of the Company no entries could be made in their register-books except in the names of members, and thereupon the book referred to in the entry became the 'copy' of the member or members who had caused it to be registered.

By virtue of this registration the book became, in the opinion of the Stationers' Company, the property *in perpetuity* of the member or members who had effected the registration. This was the 'right' of the stationer to his 'copy.'

Copyright at first is therefore not an author's, but a bookseller's copyright. The author had no part or lot in it unless he chanced to be both an author and a bookseller, an unusual combination in early days. The author took his manuscript to a member of the Stationers' Company, and made the best bargain he could for himself. The stationer, if terms were arrived at, carried off the manuscript to his Company and registered the title in the books, and thereupon became, in his opinion, and in that of his Company, the owner, at common law, in perpetuity of his 'copy.'

The stationers, having complete control over their register-books, made what entries they chose, and all kinds of books, even Homer and the Classics, became the 'property' of its members. The booksellers, nearly all Londoners, respected each other's 'copies,' and jealously guarded access to their registers. From time to time there were sales by auction of a bookseller's 'copies,' but the public—that is, the country booksellers, for there were no other likely buyers—were excluded from the sale-room. A great monopoly was thus created and maintained by the trade. There was never any examination of title to a bookseller's copy. Every book of repute was supposed to have a bookseller for its owner. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* was Mr. Ponder's copy, Milton's *Paradise Lost* Mr. Tonson's copy, *The Whole Duty of Man* Mr. Eyre's copy, and so on. The thing was a corrupt and illegal trade combination.

The expiration of the Licensing Act, and the consequent cessation of the penalties it inflicted upon unlicensed printing, exposed the proprietors of 'copies' to an invasion of their rights, real or supposed, and in 1703, and again in 1706 and 1709, they applied to Parliament for a Bill to protect them against the 'ruin' with which they alleged themselves to be threatened.[A]



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[Footnote A: What the booksellers wanted was not to be left to their common law remedy—*i.e.*, an action of trespass on the case—but to be supplied with penalties for infringement, and especially with the right to seize and burn unauthorized editions.]

In 1710 they got what they asked for in the shape of the famous Statute of Queen Anne, the first copyright law in the world. A truly English measure, ill considered and ill drawn, which did the very last thing it was meant to do—*viz.*, destroy the property it was intended to protect.

By this Act, in which the 'author' first makes his appearance actually in front of the 'proprietor,' it was provided that, *in case of new books*, the author and his assigns should have the sole right of printing them for fourteen years, and if at the end of that time the author was still alive, a second term of fourteen years was conceded. In the case of *existing books*, there was to be but one term—*viz.*, twenty-one years, from August 10, 1710.

Registration at the Stationers' Company was still required, but nothing was said as to who might make the entries, or into whose names they were to be made.

Then followed the desired penalties for infringement. The booksellers thought the terms of years meant no more than that the penalties were to be limited by way of experiment to those periods.

Many years flew by before the Stationers' Company discovered the mischief wrought by the statute they had themselves promoted. To cut a long matter short, it was not until 1774 that the House of Lords decided that, whether there ever had been a perpetuity in literary property at common law or not, it was destroyed by the Act of Queen Anne, and that from and after the passing of that law neither author, assignee, nor proprietor of 'copy' had any exclusive right of multiplication, save for and during the periods of time the statute created.

It was a splendid fight—a Thirty Years' War. Great lawyers were fee'd in it; luminous and lengthy judgments were delivered. Mansfield was a booksellers' man; Thurlow ridiculed the pretensions of the Trade. It can be read about in *Boswell's Johnson* and in Campbell's *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*. The authors stood supinely by, not contributing a farthing towards the expenses. It was a booksellers' battle, and the booksellers were beaten, as they deserved to be.

All this is past history, in which the modern money-loving, motoring author takes scant pleasure. Things are on a different footing now. The Act of 1842 has extended the statutory periods of protection. The perpetuity craze is over. A right in perpetuity to reprint Frank Fustian's novel or Tom Tatter's poem would not add a penny to the present value of the copyright of either of those productions. In business short views must prevail. An author cannot expect to raise money on his hope of immortality.

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Milton's publisher, good Mr. Symonds, probably thought, if he thought about it at all, that he was buying *Paradise Lost* for ever when he registered it as his 'copy' in the books of his Company; but into the calculations he made to discover how much he could afford to give the author posterity did not and could not enter. How was Symonds to know that Milton's fame was to outlive Cleveland's or Flatman's?

How many of the books published in 1905 would have any copyright cash value in A.D. 2000? I do not pause for a reply.

The modern author need have no quarrel with the statutory periods fixed by the Act of 1842,[A] though common-sense has long since suggested that a single term, the author's life and thirty or forty years after, should be substituted for the alternative periods named in the Act.

[Footnote A: Author's life *plus* seven years, or forty-two years from date of publication, whichever term is the longer. The great objection to the second term is that an author's books go out of copyright at different dates, and the earlier editions go out first.]

What the modern author alone desiderates is a big, immediate, and protected market.

The United States of America have been a great disappointment to many an honest British author. In the wicked old days when the States took British books without paying for them they used to take them in large numbers, but now that they have turned honest and passed a law allowing the British author copyright on certain terms, they have in great measure ceased to take; for, by the strangest of coincidences, no sooner were British novels, histories, essays, and the like, protected in America, than there sprang up in the States themselves, novelists, historians, and essayists, not only numerous enough to supply their own home markets, but talented enough to cross the Atlantic in large numbers and challenge us in our own. Such a reward for honesty was not contemplated.

International copyright and the Convention of Berne are things to be proud of and rejoice over. As the first chapter in a Code of Public European Law, they may mark the beginning of a time of settled peace, order, and disarmament, but they have not yet enriched a single author, though hereafter possibly an occasional novelist or play-wright may prosper greatly under their provisions.

The copyright question is now at last really a settled question, save in a single aspect of it. What, if anything, should be done in the case of those authors, few in number, whose literary lives prove longer than the period of statutory protection? Should any distinction in law be struck between a Tennyson and a Tupper? between—But why multiply examples? There is no need to be unnecessarily offensive.



The law and practice of to-day give the meat that remains on the bones of the dead author after the expiration of the statutory period of protection to the Trade. Any publisher who likes to bring out an edition can do so, though by doing so he does not gain any exclusive rights. A brother publisher may compete with him. As a result the public is usually well served with cheap editions of those non-copyright authors whose works are worth reprinting the moment the copyright expires.



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Some lovers of justice, however, think that it is unnecessary all at once to endow the Trade with these windfalls, and that if an author's family, or his or their assignees, were prepared to publish cheap editions immediately after the expiration of the usual period of protection, they ought to be allowed to do so for a further period of, say, forty years. If they failed within a reasonable time either to do so themselves or to arrange for others to do so, this extended period should lapse.

Were this to be the law nobody could say that it was unfair; but it is never likely to be the law. It would take time for discussion, and now there is no time left in which to discuss anything in Parliament. A much-needed Copyright Bill has been in draft for years, has been mentioned in Queen's and King's speeches, but it has never been read even a first time. If it ever is read a first time, its only chance of becoming law will be if it is taken in a lump, as it stands, without consideration or amendment. To such a pass has legislation been reduced in this country!

This draft Bill does not contain any provision for specially protecting the families of authors whose works long outlive their mortal lives. It makes no invidious distinctions. It leaves all the authors to hang together, the quick and the dead. Perhaps this is the better way.

HANNAH MORE ONCE MORE

I have been told by more than one correspondent, and not always in words of urbanity, that I owe an apology to the manes of Miss Hannah More, whose works I once purchased in nineteen volumes for 8s. 6d., and about whom in consequence I wrote a page some ten years ago.[A]

[Footnote A: See *Collected Essays*, ii. 255.]

To be accused of rudeness to a lady who exchanged witticisms with Dr. Johnson, soothed the widowed heart of Mrs. Garrick, directed the early studies of Macaulay, and in the spring of 1815 presented a small copy of her *Sacred Dramas* to Mr. Gladstone, is no light matter. To libel the dead is, I know, not actionable—indeed, it is impossible; but evil-speaking, lying, and slandering are canonical offences from which the obligation to refrain knows no limits of time or place.

I have often felt uneasy on this score, and never had the courage, until this very evening, to read over again what in the irritation of the moment I had been tempted to say about Miss Hannah More, after the outlay upon her writings already mentioned. Eight shillings and sixpence is, indeed, no great sum, but nineteen octavo volumes are a good many books. Yet Richardson is in nineteen volumes in Mangin's edition, and Swift is in nineteen volumes in Scott's edition, and glorious John Dryden lacks but a volume to make a third example. True enough; yet it will, I think, be granted me that

you must be very fond of an author, male or female, if nineteen octavo volumes, all his or hers, are not a little irritating

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and provocative of temper. Think of the room they take! As for selling them, it is not so easy to sell nineteen volumes of a stone-dead author, particularly if you live three miles from a railway-station and do not keep a trap. Elia, the gentle Elia, as it is the idiotic fashion to call a writer who could handle his 'maulies' in a fray as well as Hazlitt himself, has told us how he could never see well-bound books he did not care about, but he longed to strip them so that he might warm his ragged veterans in their spoils. My copy of *Hannah More* was in full calf, but never once did it occur to me—though I, too, have many a poor author with hardly a shirt to his back shivering in the dark corners of the library—to strip her of her warm clothing. And yet I had to do something, and quickly too, for sorely needed was Miss More's shelf. So I buried the nineteen volumes in the garden. 'Out of sight, out of mind,' said I cheerfully, stamping them down.

This has hardly proved to be the case, for though Hannah More is incapable of a literary resurrection, and no one of her nineteen volumes has ever haunted my pillow, exclaiming,

'Think how thou stab'dst me in my prime of youth,'

nevertheless, I have not been able to get quite rid of an uneasy feeling that I was rude to her ten years ago in print—not, indeed, so rude as was her revered friend Dr. Johnson 126 years ago to her face; but then, I have not the courage to creep under the gabardine of our great Moralist.

When, accordingly, I saw on the counters of the trade the daintiest of volumes, hailing, too, from the United States, entitled *Hannah More*,^[A] and perceived that it was a short biography and appreciation of the lady on my mind, I recognised that my penitential hour had at last come. I took the little book home with me, and sat down to read, determined to do justice and more than justice to the once celebrated mistress of Cowslip Green and Barley Wood.

[Footnote A: *Hannah More*, by Marian Harland. New York and London: G.P. Putnam.]

Miss Harland's preface is most engaging. She reminds a married sister how in the far-off days of their childhood in a Southern State their Sunday reading, usually confined or sought to be confined, to 'bound sermons and semi-detached tracts,' was enlivened by the *Works of Hannah More*. She proceeds as follows:

'At my last visit to you I took from your bookshelves one of a set of volumes in uniform binding of full calf, coloured mellowly by the touch and the breath of fifty odd years. They belonged to the dear old home library.... The leaves of the book I held fell apart at *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*.'



I leave my readers to judge how uncomfortable these innocent words made me:

'The usher took six hasty strides
As smit with sudden pain.'

I knew that set of volumes, their distressing uniformity of binding, their full calf. Their very fellows lie mouldering in an East Anglian garden, mellow enough by this time and strangely coloured.



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Circumstances alter cases. Miss Harland thinks that if the life of Charlotte Bronte's mother had been mercifully spared, the authoress of *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* might have grown up more like Hannah More than she actually did. Perhaps so. As I say, circumstances alter cases, and if the works of Hannah More had been in my old home library, I might have read *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain* and *The Search after Happiness* of a Sunday, and found solace therein. But they were not there, and I had to get along as best I could with the *Pilgrim's Progress*, stories by A.L.O.E., the crime-stained page of Mrs. Sherwood's *Tales from the Church Catechism*, and, 'more curious sport than that,' the *Bible in Spain* of the never-sufficiently-bepraised George Borrow.

What, however, is a little odd about Miss Harland's enthusiasm for Hannah More's writings is that it expires with the preface. *There*, indeed, it glows with a beautiful light:

'And *The Search after Happiness!* You cannot have forgotten all of the many lines we learned by heart on Sunday afternoons in the joyful spring-time when we were obliged to clear the pages every few minutes of yellow jessamine bells and purple Wistaria petals flung down by the warm wind.'

This passage lets us into the secret. I suspect in sober truth both Miss Harland and her sister have long since forgotten all the lines in *The Search after Happiness*, but what they have never forgotten, what they never can forget, are the jessamine bells and the Wistaria petals, yellow and purple, blown about in the warm winds that visited their now desolate and forsaken Southern home. Less beautiful things than jessamine and Wistaria, if only they clustered round the house where you were born, are remembered when the lines of far better authors than Miss Hannah More have gone clean out of your head:

'As life wanes, all its cares and strife and toil
Seem strangely valueless, while the old trees
Which grew by our youth's home, the waving mass
Of climbing plants heavy with bloom and dew,
The morning swallows with their songs like words—
All these seem dear, and only worth our thoughts.'

Thus the youthful Browning in his marvellous *Pauline*. The same note is struck after a humbler and perhaps more moving fashion in the following simple strain of William Allingham:

'Four ducks on a pond,
A grass-bank beyond;
A blue sky of spring,
White clouds on the wing;
How little a thing



To remember for years—
To remember with tears!

If this be so—and who, looking into his own heart, but must own that so it is?—it explains how it comes about that as soon as Miss Harland finished her preface, got away from her childhood and began her biography, she has so little to tell us about Miss More's books, and from that little the personal note of enjoyment is entirely wanting. Indeed, though a pious soul, she occasionally cannot restrain her surprise how such ponderous commonplaces ever found a publisher, to say nothing of a reader.



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'Such books as Miss More's,' she says, 'would to-day in America fall from the press like a stone into the depths of the sea of oblivion, creating no more sensation upon the surface than the bursting of a bubble in mid-Atlantic.'

And again:

'That Hannah More was a power for righteousness in her long generation we must take upon the testimony of her best and wisest contemporaries.'

However good may be your intentions, it seems hard to avoid being rude to this excellent lady.

I confess I never liked her love story. Anything more cold-blooded I never read. I am not going to repeat it. Why should I? It is told at length in Miss More's authorized biography in four volumes by William Roberts, Esq. I saw a copy yesterday exposed for sale in New Oxford Street, price 1s. Miss Harland also tells the tale, not without chuckling. I refer the curious to her pages.

Then there are those who can never get rid of the impression that Hannah More 'fagged' her four sisters mercilessly; but who can tell? Some people like being fagged.

Precisely *when* Miss More bade farewell to what in later life she was fond of calling her gay days, when she wrote dull plays and went to stupid Sunday parties, one finds it hard to discover, but at no time did it ever come home to her that she needed repentance herself. She seems always thinking of the sins and shortcomings of her neighbours, rich and poor. Sometimes, indeed, when deluged with flattery, she would intimate that she was a miserable sinner, but that is not what I mean. She concerned herself greatly with the manners of the great, and deplored their cards and fashionable falsehoods. John Newton, captain as he had been of a slaver, saw the futility of such pin-pricks:

'The fashionable world,' so he wrote to Miss More, 'by their numbers form a phalanx not easily impressible, and their habits of life are as armour of proof which renders them not easily vulnerable. Neither the rude club of a boisterous Reformer nor the pointed, delicate weapons of the authoress before me can overthrow or rout them.'

But Miss More never forgot to lecture the rich or to patronize the poor.

Coelebs in Search of a Wife is an impossible book, and I do not believe Miss Harland has read it; but as for the famous *Shepherd*, we are never allowed to forget how Mr. Wilberforce declared a few years before his death, to the admiration of the religious world, that he would rather present himself in heaven with *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain* in his hand than with—what think you?—*Peveril of the Peak*! The bare notion of such a proceeding on anybody's part is enough to strike one dumb with what would be



horror, did not amazement swallow up every other feeling. What rank Arminianism! I am sure the last notion that ever would have entered the head of Sir Walter was to take *Peveiril* to heaven.

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But whatever may be thought of the respective merits of Miss More's nineteen volumes and Sir Walter's ninety-eight, there is no doubt that Barley Wood was as much infested with visitors as ever was Abbotsford. Eighty a week!

'From twelve o'clock until three each day a constant stream of carriages and pedestrians filled the evergreen bordered avenue leading from the Wrinton village road.'

Among them came Lady Gladstone and W.E.G., aged six, the latter carrying away with him the *Sacred Dramas*, to be preserved during a long life.

Miss More was a vivacious and agreeable talker, who certainly failed to do herself justice with her pen. Her health was never good, yet, as she survived thirty-five of her prescribing physicians, her vitality must have been great. Her face in Opie's portrait is very pleasant. If I was rude to her ten years ago, I apologize and withdraw; but as for her books, I shall leave them where they are—buried in a cliff facing due north, with nothing between them and the Pole but leagues upon leagues of a wind-swept ocean.

ARTHUR YOUNG

The name of Arthur Young is a familiar one to all readers of that history which begins with the forebodings of the French Revolution. Thousands of us learnt to be interested in him as the 'good Arthur,' 'the excellent Arthur,' of Thomas Carlyle, a writer who had the art of making not only his own narrative, but the sources of it, attractive. Even 'Carrion-Heath,' in the famous introductory chapter to the *Cromwell*, is invested with a kind of charm, whilst in the stormy firmament of the *French Revolution* the star of Arthur Young twinkles with a mild effulgency. The autobiography of such a man could hardly fail to be interesting.[A] The 'good Arthur' was born in 1741, the younger son of a small 'squarson' who inherited from his father the manor of Bradfield Combust, in Suffolk, but held the living of Thames Ditton. Here he made the acquaintance of the Onslow family, and Speaker Onslow was one of Arthur's godfathers. The Rev. Dr. Young died in 1759, much in debt. The Bradfield property had been settled for life on his wife, who had brought her husband some fortune, and to the manor-house she retired to economize.

[Footnote A: *The Autobiography of Arthur Young*. Edited by M. Betham Edwards. Smith, Elder and Co.]

Arthur's education had been muddled; and an attempt to make a merchant of him having fallen through, he found himself, on his father's death, aged eighteen, 'without education, profession, or employment,' and his whole fortune, during his mother's life, consisting of a copyhold farm of 20 acres, producing as many pounds. In these circumstances, to think of literature was well-nigh inevitable, and, in 1762, the autobiography tells us:

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'I set on foot a periodical publication, entitled the *Universal Museum*, which came out monthly, printed with glorious imprudence on my own account. I waited on Dr. Johnson, who was sitting by the fire so half-dressed and slovenly a figure as to make me stare at him. I stated my plan, and begged that he would favour me with a paper once a month, offering at the same time any remuneration that he might name.'

Here we see dimly prefigured a modern editor prematurely soliciting the support of Great Names. But the Cham of literature, himself the son of a bookseller, would have none of it.

"No, sir," he replied; "such a work would be sure to fail if the booksellers have not the property, and you will lose a great deal of money by it."

"Certainly, sir," I said, "if I am not fortunate enough to induce authors of real talent to contribute."

"No, sir, you are mistaken; such authors will not support such a work, nor will you persuade them to write in it. You will purchase disappointment by the loss of your money, and I advise you by all means to give up the plan."

'Somebody was introduced, and I took my leave.'

The *Universal Museum*, none the less, appeared, but after five numbers Young 'procured a meeting of ten or a dozen booksellers, and had the luck and address to persuade them to take the whole scheme upon themselves.' He then calmly adds, 'I believe no success ever attended it.' It was, indeed, 100 years before its time. Literature abandoned, Young took one of his mother's farms. 'I had no more idea of farming than of physic or divinity,' nor did he, man of European reputation as a farmer though he soon became, ever make farming pay. He had an itching pen, and after four years' farming (1763-1766) he published the result of his experience. Never, surely, before has an author spoken of his first-born as in the autobiography Young speaks of this publication:

'And the circumstance which perhaps of all others in my life I most deeply regretted and considered as a sin of the blackest dye was the publishing of my experience during these four years, which, speaking as a farmer, was nothing but ignorance, folly, presumption, and rascality.'

None the less, it was writing this rascally book that seems to have given him the idea of those agricultural tours which were to make his name famous throughout the world. His Southern tour was in 1767, his Northern in 1768, and his Eastern in 1770. The subject he specially illuminated in these epoch-making books was the rotation of crops, though he occasionally diverged upon deep-ploughing and kindred themes. The tours excited,

for the first time, the agricultural spirit of Great Britain, and their author almost at once became a celebrated man.



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In 1765 Young married the wrong woman, and started upon a career of profound matrimonial discomfort, and even misery; a blunt, truthful writer, he makes no bones about it. It was an unhappy marriage from its beginning in 1765 to its end in 1815. Young himself, though by no means vivacious in this autobiography, where he frankly complains of himself as having no more wit than a fig, was a very popular person with all classes and both sexes. He was an enormous diner-out, and his authority as an agriculturist, united to his undeniable charm as a companion, threw open to him all the great places in the country. But his finances were a perpetual trouble. On carrot seeds and cabbages he was an authority, but from 1766-1775 his income never exceeded L300 a year. He had an excellent mother, whom he dearly loved, and who with the characteristic bluntness of the family bade him think less about carrots and more about his Creator. 'You may call all this rubbish if you please, but a time will come when you will be convinced whose notions are rubbish, yours or mine.' And the old lady was quite right, as mothers so frequently turn out to be. In 1778 Young went over to Ireland as agent to Lord Kingsborough. He got L500 down, and was to have an annual salary of L500 and a house. Young soon got to work, and became anxious to persuade his employer to let his lands direct to the occupying cottar, and so get rid of the middlemen. This did not suit a certain Major Thornhill, a relative and leaseholder, and thereupon a pretty plot was hatched. Lady K. had a Catholic governess, a Miss Crosby, upon whom it was thought my lord occasionally cast the eye of partiality, whilst Arthur himself got on very well with her ladyship, who was heard to pronounce him to be, as he was, 'one of the most lively, agreeable fellows.' Out of these materials the Major and his helpmeet concocted a double plot—namely, to make the lord jealous of the steward, and the lady jealous of the governess, and to cause both lord and lady respectively to believe that the steward was deeply engaged both in abetting the amour of the lord and the governess, and in prosecuting his own amour with the lady. The result was that both governess and steward got notice to quit; but—and this is very Irish—both went off with life annuities, the governess with one of L50 per annum, and the steward with one of L72, and, what is still more odd, we find Young at the end of his life in receipt of his annuity. They were an expensive couple, these two.

In 1780 Young published his *Irish Tour*, which was immediately successful and popular in both kingdoms. In it he attacked the bounty paid on the land-carriage of corn to Dublin. The bounty was, in the session of Parliament next after the publication of Young's book, reduced by one-half, and soon given up entirely. Young maintains that this saved Ireland L80,000 a year. Nobody seems to have said 'Thank you.'



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In May, 1783, was born the child 'Bobbin,' whose death, fourteen years later, was to change the current of Young's life. The following year Arthur Young paid his first visit to France, confining himself, however, to Calais and its neighbourhood, and in the same year his mother died, and, by an arrangement with his eldest brother, 'this patch of landed property,' as Young calls Bradfield, descended upon him. His first famous journey in France was made between May and November, 1787, and cost the marvellously small sum of L118 15s. 2d. His second and third French journeys were made in July, 1788, and in June, 1789. The third was the longest, and extended into 1790. Three years later Young was appointed, by Pitt, Secretary of the then Board of Agriculture. A melancholy account is given by Young of a visit he paid Burke at Gregory's in 1796. Young drove there in the chariot of his fussy chief, Sir John Sinclair, to discover what Burke's intentions might be as to an intended publication of his relating to the price of labour. The account, which occupies four pages, is too long for quotation. It concludes thus:

'I am glad once more to have seen and conversed with the man who I hold to possess the greatest and most brilliant gifts of any penman of the age in which he lived. Whose conversation has often fascinated me, whose eloquence has charmed; whose writings have delighted and instructed the world; whose name will without question descend to the latest posterity. But to behold so great a genius, so deepened with melancholy, stooping with infirmity of body, feeling the anguish of a lacerated mind, and sinking to the grave under accumulated misery—to see all this in a character I venerate, and apparently without resource or comfort, wounded every feeling of my soul, and I left him the next day almost as low-spirited as himself.'

But Young himself was soon to pass into the same Valley of the Shadow, not so much of Death as of Joyless Life. His beloved and idolized Bobbin died on July 14, 1797. She seems to have been a wise little maiden, to whom her father wrote most affectionate letters, full of rather unsuitable details, political and financial and otherwise, and not scrupling to speak of the child's mother in a disagreeable manner. Bobbin replies with delightful composure to these worrying letters:

'I have just got six of the most beautiful little rabbits you ever saw; they skip about so prettily you can't think, and I shall have some more in a few weeks. Having had so much physic, I am right down tired of it. I take it still twice a day—my appetite is better. What can you mind politics so for? I don't think about them.—Well, good-bye, and believe me, dear papa, your dutiful Daughter.'

After poor little Bobbin's death, it happened to Arthur Young even as his mother foretold. Carrots and crows and farming tours hastily retreat, and we find the eminent agriculturist busying himself,



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with the same seriousness and good faith he had devoted to the rotation of the crops, with the sermons and treatises of Clarke and Jortin and Secker and Tillotson, *etc.*, and all to discover what had become of his dear little Bobbin. His outlook upon the world was changed—the great parties at Petworth, at Euston, at Woburn struck him differently; the huge irreligion of the world filled him as for the first time with amazement and horror:

'How few years are passed since I should have pushed on eagerly to Woburn! This time twelve months I dined with the Duke on Sunday—the party not very numerous, but chiefly of rank—the entertainment more splendid than usual there. He expects me to-day, but I have more pleasure in resting, going twice to church, and eating a morsel of cold lamb at a very humble inn, than partaking of gaiety and dissipation at a great table which might as well be spread for a company of heathens as English lords and men of fashion.'

It is all mighty fine calling this religious hypochondria and depression of spirits. It is one of the facts of life. Young stuck to his post, and did his work, and quarrelled with his wife to the end, or nearly so. He cannot have been so lively and agreeable a companion as of old, for we find him in November, 1806, at Euston, endeavouring to impress on the Duke of Grafton that by his tenets he had placed himself entirely under the covenant of works, and that he must be tried for them, and that 'I would not be in such a situation for ten thousand worlds. He was mild and more patient than I expected.' Perhaps, after all, Carlyle was not so far wrong when he praised our aristocracy for their 'politeness.' In 1808 Young became blind. In 1815 his wife died. In 1820 he died himself, leaving behind him seven packets of manuscript and twelve folio volumes of correspondence.

Young's great work, *Travels during the Years 1787, 1788, and 1789, undertaken more particularly with a View of Ascertaining the Cultivation, Wealth, Resources, and National Prosperity of the Kingdom of France*, published in 1792, is one of those books which will always be a great favourite with somebody. It will outlive eloquence and outstay philosophy. It contains some famous passages.

THOMAS PAINE

Proverbs are said to be but half-truths, but 'give a dog a bad name and hang him' is a saying almost as veracious as it is felicitous; and to no one can it possibly be applied with greater force than to Thomas Paine, the rebellious staymaker, the bankrupt tobacconist, the amazing author of *Common-sense*, *The Rights of Man*, and *The Age of Reason*.

Until quite recently Tom Paine lay without the pale of toleration. No circle of liberality was constructed wide enough to include him. Even the scouted Unitarian scouted



Thomas. He was 'the infamous Paine,' 'the vulgar atheist.' Whenever mentioned in pious discourse it was but to be waved on one side as thus: 'No one of my hearers is likely to be led astray by the scurrilous blasphemies of Paine.'

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I can well remember when an asserted intimacy with the writings of Paine marked a man from his fellows and invested him in children's minds with a horrid fascination. The writings themselves were only to be seen in bookshops of evil reputation, and, when hastily turned over with furtive glances, proved to be printed in small type and on villainous paper. For a boy to have bought them and taken them inside a decent home would have been to run the risk of fierce wrath in this life and the threat of it in the next. If ever there was a hung dog, his name was Tom Paine.

But History is, as we know, for ever revising her records. None of her judgments are final. A life of Thomas Paine, in two portly and well-printed volumes, with gilt tops, wide margins, spare leaves at the end, and all the other signs and tokens of literary respectability, has lately appeared. No President, no Prime Minister—nay, no Bishop or Moderator—need hope to have his memoirs printed in better style than are these of Thomas Paine, by Mr. Moncure D. Conway. Were any additional proof required of the complete resuscitation of Paine's reputation, it might be found in the fact that his life *is* in two volumes, though it would have been far better told in one.

Mr. Conway believes implicitly in Paine—not merely in his virtue and intelligence, but that he was a truly great man, who played a great part in human affairs. He will no more admit that Paine was a busybody, inflated with conceit and with a strong dash of insolence, than he will that Thomas was a drunkard. That Paine's speech was undoubtedly plain and his nose undeniably red is as far as Mr. Conway will go. If we are to follow the biographer the whole way, we must not only unhang the dog, but give him sepulture amongst the sceptred Sovereigns who rule us from their urns.

Thomas Paine was born at Thetford, in Norfolk, in January, 1737, and sailed for America in 1774, then being thirty-seven years of age. Up to this date he was a rank failure. His trade was staymaking, but he had tried his hand at many things. He was twice an Excise officer, but was twice dismissed the service, the first time for falsely pretending to have made certain inspections which, in fact, he had not made, and the second time for carrying on business in an excisable article—tobacco, to wit—without the leave of the Board. Paine had married the tobacconist's business, but neither the marriage nor the business prospered; the second was sold by auction, and the first terminated by mutual consent.

Mr. Conway labours over these early days of his hero very much, but he can make nothing of them. Paine was an Excise officer at Lewes, where, so Mr. Conway reminds us, 'seven centuries before Paine opened his office in Lewes, came Harold's son, possibly to take charge of the Excise as established by Edward the Confessor, just deceased.' This device of biographers is a little stale. The Confessor was guiltless of the Excise.

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Paine's going to America was due to Benjamin Franklin, who made Paine's acquaintance in London, and, having the wit to see his ability, recommended him 'as a clerk or assistant-tutor in a school or assistant-surveyor.' Thus armed, Paine made his appearance in Philadelphia, where he at once obtained employment as editor of an intended periodical called the *Pennsylvanian Magazine or American Museum*, the first number of which appeared in January, 1775. Never was anything luckier. Paine was, without knowing it, a born journalist. His capacity for writing on the spur of the moment was endless, and his delight in doing so boundless. He had no difficulty for 'copy', though in those days contributors were few. He needed no contributors. He was 'Atlanticus'; he was 'Vox Populi'; he was 'Aesop.' The unsigned articles were also mostly his. Having at last, after many adventures and false starts, found his vocation, Paine stuck to it. He spent the rest of his days with a pen in his hand, scribbling his advice and obtruding his counsel on men and nations. Both were usually of excellent quality.

Paine was also happy in the moment of his arrival in America. The War of Independence was imminent, and in April, 1775, occurred 'the massacre of Lexington.' The Colonists were angry, but puzzled. They hardly knew what they wanted. They lacked a definite opinion to entertain and a cry to asseverate. Paine had no doubts. He hated British institutions with all the hatred of a civil servant who has had 'the sack.'

In January, 1776, he published his pamphlet *Common-sense*, which must be ranked with the most famous pamphlets ever written. It is difficult to wade through now, but even *The Conduct of the Allies* is not easy reading, and yet between Paine and Swift there is a great gulf fixed. The keynote of *Common-sense* was separation once and for ever, and the establishment of a great Republic of the West. It hit between wind and water, had a great sale, and made its author a personage and, in his own opinion, a divinity.

Paine now became the penman of the rebels. His series of manifestoes, entitled *The Crisis*, were widely read and carried healing on their wings, and in 1777 he was elected Secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs. Charles Lamb once declared that Rousseau was a good enough Jesus Christ for the French, and he was capable of declaring Tom Paine a good enough Milton for the Yankees. However that may be, Paine was an indefatigable and useful public servant. He was a bad gauger for King George, but he was an admirable scribe for a revolution conducted on constitutional principles.

To follow his history through the war would be tedious. What Washington and Jefferson really thought of him we shall never know. He was never mercenary, but his pride was wounded that so little recognition of his astounding services was forthcoming. The ingratitude of Kings was a commonplace; the ingratitude of peoples an unpleasing novelty. But Washington bestirred himself at last, and Paine was voted an estate of 277 acres, more or less, and a sum of money. This was in 1784.



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Three years afterwards Thomas visited England, where he kept good company and was very usefully employed engineering, for which excellent pursuit he would appear to have had great natural aptitude. Blackfriars Bridge had just tumbled down, and it was Paine's laudable ambition to build its successor in iron. But the Bastille fell down as well as Blackfriars Bridge, and was too much for Paine. As Mr. Conway beautifully puts it: 'But again the Cause arose before him; he must part from all—patent interests, literary leisure, fine society—and take the hand of Liberty undowered, but as yet unstained. He must beat his bridge-iron into a key that shall unlock the British Bastille, whose walls he sees steadily closing around the people.' 'Miching mallecho—this means mischief;' and so it proved.

Burke is responsible for the *Rights of Man*. This splendid sentimentalist published his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in November, 1790. Paine immediately sat down in the Angel, Islington, and began his reply. He was not unqualified to answer Burke; he had fought a good fight between the years 1775 and 1784. Mr. Conway has some ground for his epigram, 'where Burke had dabbled, Paine had dived.' There is nothing in the *Rights of Man* which would now frighten, though some of its expressions might still shock, a lady-in-waiting; but to profess Republicanism in 1791 was no joke, and the book was proclaimed and Paine prosecuted. Acting upon the advice of William Blake (the truly sublime), Paine escaped to France, where he was elected by three departments to a seat in the Convention, and in that Convention he sat from September, 1792, to December, 1793, when he was found quarters in the Luxembourg Prison.

This invitation to foreigners to take part in the conduct of the French Revolution was surely one of the oddest things that ever happened, but Paine thought it natural enough so far, at least, as he was concerned. He could not speak a word of French, and all his harangues had to be translated and read to the Convention by a secretary, whilst Thomas stood smirking in the Tribune. His behaviour throughout was most creditable to him. He acted with the Girondists, and strongly opposed and voted against the murder of the King. His notion of a revolution was one by pamphlet, and he shrank from deeds of blood. His whole position was false and ridiculous. He really counted for nothing. The members of the Convention grew tired of his doctrinaire harangues, which, in fact, bored them not a little; but they respected his enthusiasm and the part he had played in America, whither they would gladly he had returned. Who put him in prison is a mystery. Mr. Conway thinks it was the American Minister in Paris, Gouverneur Morris. He escaped the guillotine, and was set free after ten months' confinement.

All this time Washington had not moved a finger in behalf of the author of *Common-sense* and *The Crisis*. Amongst Paine's papers this epigram was found:



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'ADVICE TO THE STATUARY WHO IS TO EXECUTE THE
STATUE OF WASHINGTON.

Take from the mine the coldest, hardest stone;
It needs no fashion—it is Washington.
But if you chisel, let the stroke be rude,
And on his heart engrave—"Ingratitude."

This is hard hitting.

So far we have only had the Republican Paine, the outlaw Paine; the atheist Paine has not appeared. He did so in the *Age of Reason*, first published in 1794-1795. The object of this book was religious. Paine was a vehement believer in God and in the Divine government of the world, but he was not, to put it mildly, a Bible Christian. Nobody now is ever likely to read the *Age of Reason* for instruction or amusement. Who now reads even Mr. Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, which is in effect, though not in substance, the same kind of book? Paine was a coarse writer, without refinement of nature, and he used brutal expressions and hurled his vulgar words about in a manner certain to displease. Still, despite it all, the *Age of Reason* is a religious book, though a singularly unattractive one.

Paine remained in France advocating all kinds of things, including a descent on England, the abduction of the Royal Family, and a Free Constitution. Napoleon sought him out, and assured him that he (Napoleon) slept with the *Rights of Man* under his pillow. Paine believed him.

In 1802 Paine returned to America, after fifteen years' absence.

'Thou stricken friend of man,' exclaims Mr. Conway in a fine passage, 'who hast appealed from the God of Wrath to the God of Humanity, see in the distance that Maryland coast which early voyagers called Avalon, and sing again your song when first stepping on that shore twenty-seven years ago.'

The rest of Paine's life was spent in America without distinction or much happiness. He continued writing to the last, and died bravely on the morning of June 8, 1809.

The Americans did not appreciate Paine's theology, and in 1819 allowed Cobbett to carry the bones of the author of *Common-sense* to England, where—'as rare things will,' so, at least, Mr. Browning sings—they vanished. Nobody knows what has become of them.

As a writer Paine has no merits of a lasting character, but he had a marvellous journalistic knack for inventing names and headings. He is believed to have concocted the two phrases 'The United States of America' and 'The Religion of Humanity.'



Considering how little he had read, his discourses on the theory of government are wonderful, and his views generally were almost invariably liberal, sensible, and humane. What ruined him was an intolerable self-conceit, which led him to believe that his own productions superseded those of other men. He knew off by heart, and was fond of repeating, his own *Common-sense* and the *Rights of Man*. He was destitute of the spirit of research, and was wholly without one shred of humility. He was an oddity, a character, but he never took the first step towards becoming a great man.



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CHARLES BRADLAUGH[A]

[Footnote A: *Charles Bradlaugh: A Record of His Life and Work*. By his daughter, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner. Two vols. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1894.]

Mr. Bradlaugh was a noticeable man, and his life, even though it appears in the unwelcome but familiar shape of two octavo volumes, is a noticeable book. It is useless to argue with biographers; they, at all events, are neither utilitarians nor opportunists, but idealists pure and simple. What is the good of reminding them, being so majestic, of Guizot's pertinent remark, 'that if a book is unreadable it will not be read,' or of the older saying, 'A great book is a great evil'? for all such observations they simply put on one side as being, perhaps, true for others, but not for them. Had *Mr. Bradlaugh's Life* been just half the size it would have had, at least, twice as many readers.

The pity is all the greater because Mrs. Bonner has really performed a difficult task after a noble fashion and in a truly pious spirit. Her father's life was a melancholy one, and it became her duty as his biographer to break a silence on painful subjects about which he had preferred to say nothing. His reticence was a manly reticence; though a highly sensitive mortal, he preferred to put up with calumny rather than lay bare family sorrows and shame. His daughter, though compelled to break this silence, has done so in a manner full of dignity and feeling. The ruffians who in times past slandered the moral character of Bradlaugh will not probably read his life, nor, if they did, would they repent of their baseness. The willingness to believe everything evil of an adversary is incurable, springing as it does from a habit of mind. It was well said by Mr. Mill: 'I have learned from experience that many false opinions may be exchanged for true ones, without in the least altering the habits of mind of which false opinions are the result.' Now that Mr. Bradlaugh is dead, no purpose is served by repeating false accusations as to his treatment of his wife, or of his pious brother, or as to his disregard of family ties; but the next atheist who crops up must not expect any more generous treatment than Bradlaugh received from that particularly odious class of persons of whom it has been wittily said that so great is their zeal for religion, they have never time to say their prayers.

Mr. Bradlaugh will, I suppose, be hereafter described in the dictionaries of biography as 'Freethinker and Politician.' Of the politician there is here no need to speak. He was a Radical of the old-fashioned type. When he first stood for Northampton in 1868, his election address was made up of tempting dishes, which afterwards composed Mr. Chamberlain's famous but unauthorized programme of 1885, with minority representation thrown in. Unpopular thinkers who have been pelted with stones by Christians, slightly the worse for liquor, are



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apt to think well of minorities. Mr. Bradlaugh's Radicalism had an individualistic flavour. He thought well of thrift, thereby incurring censure. Mr. Bradlaugh's politics are familiar enough. What about his freethinking? English freethinkers may be divided into two classes—those who have been educated and those who have had to educate themselves. The former class might apply to their own case the language once employed by Dr. Newman to describe himself and his brethren of the Oratory: 'We have been nourished for the greater part of our lives in the bosom of the great schools and universities of Protestant England; we have been the foster foster-sons of the Edwards and Henries, the Wykehams and Wolseys, of whom Englishmen are wont to make so much; we have grown up amid hundreds of contemporaries, scattered at present all over the country in those special ranks of society which are the very walk of a member of the legislature.'

These first-class free-thinkers have an excellent time of it, and, to use a fashionable phrase, 'do themselves very well indeed.' They move freely in society; their books lie on every table; they hob-a-nob with Bishops; and when they come to die, their orthodox relations gather round them, and lay them in the earth 'in the sure and certain hope'—so, at least, priestly lips are found willing to assert—'of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ.' And yet there was not a dogma of the Christian faith in which they were in a position to profess their belief.

The free-thinkers of the second class, poor fellows! have hitherto led very different lives. Their foster-parents have been poverty and hardship; their school education has usually terminated at eleven; all their lives they have been desperately poor; alone, unaided, they have been left to fight the battle of a Free Press.

Richard Carlile, as honourable a man as most, and between whose religious opinions and (let us say) Lord Palmerston's there was probably no difference worth mentioning, spent nine out of the fifty-two years of his life in prison. Attorney-Generals, and, indeed, every degree of prosecuting counsel have abused this kind of free-thinker, not merely with professional impunity, but amidst popular applause. Judges, speaking with emotion, have exhibited the utmost horror of atheistical opinions, and have railed in good set terms at the wretch who has been dragged before them, and have then, at the rising of the court, proceeded to their club and played cards till dinner-time with a first-class free-thinker for partner.

This is natural and easily accounted for, but we need not be surprised if, in the biographies of second-class freethinkers, bitterness is occasionally exhibited towards the well-to-do brethren who decline what Dr. Bentley, in his Boyle Lectures, called 'the public odium and resentment of the magistrate.'



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Mr. Bradlaugh was a freethinker of the second class. His father was a solicitor's clerk on a salary which never exceeded L2 2s. a week; his mother had been a nursery-maid; and he himself was born in 1833 in Bacchus Walk, Hoxton. At seven he went to a national school, but at eleven his school education ended, and he became an office-boy. At fourteen he was a wharf-clerk and cashier to a coal-merchant. His parents were not much addicted to church-going, but Charles was from the first a serious boy, and became at a somewhat early age a Sunday-school teacher at St. Peter's, Hackney Road. The incumbent, in order to prepare him for Confirmation, set him to work to extract the Thirty-nine Articles out of the four Gospels. Unhappy task, worthy to be described by the pen of the biographer of John Sterling. The youthful wharfinger could not find the Articles in the Gospels, and informed the Rev. J.G. Packer of the fact. His letter conveying this intelligence is not forthcoming, and probably enough contained offensive matter, for Mr. Packer seems at once to have denounced young Bradlaugh as one engaged in atheistical inquiries, to have suspended him from the Sunday-school, to have made it very disagreeable for him at home and with his employer, and to have wound up by giving him three days to change his views or to lose his place.

Mr. Packer has been well abused, but it has never been the fashion to treat youthful atheists with much respect. When Coleridge confided to the Rev. James Boyer that he (S.T. Coleridge) was inclined to atheism, the reverend gentleman had him stripped and flogged. Mr. Packer, however, does seem to have been too hasty, for Bradlaugh did not formally abandon his beliefs until some months after his suspension. He retired for a short season, and studied Hebrew under Mr. James Savage, of Circus Street, Marylebone. He emerged an unbeliever, aged sixteen. Expelled from his wharf, he sold coal on commission, but his principal, if not his only customer, the wife of a baker, discovering that he was an infidel, gave him no more orders, being afraid, so she said, that her bread would smell of brimstone.

In 1850 Bradlaugh published his first pamphlet, *A Few Words on the Christian Creed*, and dedicated it to the unhappy Mr. Packer. But starvation stared him in the face, and in the same year he enlisted in the 7th Dragoon Guards, and spent the next three years in Ireland, where he earned a good character, and on more occasions than one showed that adroitness for which he was afterwards remarkable.

In October, 1853, his mother and sister with great difficulty raised the L30 necessary to buy his discharge, and Bradlaugh returned to London, not only full grown, but well fed. Had he not taken the Queen's shilling he never would have lived to fight the battle he did.

He became a solicitor's clerk on a miserably small pay, and took to lecturing as 'Iconoclast.' In 1855 he was married at St. Philip's Church, Stepney. His lectures and discussions began to assume great proportions, and covered more than twenty years of his life. Terribly hard work they were. Profits there were none, or next to none. Few men have endured greater hardships.



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In 1860 the *National Reformer* was started, and his warfare in the courts began. In 1868 he first stood for Northampton, which he unsuccessfully contested three times. In April, 1880, he was returned to Parliament, and then began the famous struggle with which the constitutional historian will have to deal. After this date the facts are well known. Bradlaugh died on January 30, 1891.

His life was a hard one from beginning to end. He had no advantages. Nobody really helped him or influenced him or mollified him. He had never either money or repose; he had no time to travel, except as a propagandist, no time to acquire knowledge for its own sake; he was often abused but seldom criticised. In a single sentence, he was never taught the extent of his own ignorance.

His attitude towards the Christian religion and the Bible was a perfectly fair one, and ought not to have brought down upon him any abuse whatever. There are more ways than one of dealing with religion. It may be approached as a mystery or as a series of events supported by testimony. If the evidence is trustworthy, if the witnesses are irreproachable, if they submit successfully to examination and cross-examination, then, however remarkable or out of the way may be the facts to which they depose, they are entitled to be believed. This is a mode of treatment with which we are all familiar, whether as applied to the Bible or to the authority of the Church. Nobody is expected to believe in the authority of the Church until satisfied by the exercise of his reason that the Church in question possesses 'the notes' of a true Church. This was the aspect of the question which engaged Bradlaugh's attention. He was critical, legal. He took objections, insisted on discrepancies, cross-examined as to credibility, and came to the conclusion that the case for the supernatural was not made out. And this he did not after the first-class fashion in the study or in octavo volumes, but in the street. His audiences were not Mr. Mudie's subscribers, but men and women earning weekly wages. The coarseness of his language, the offensiveness of his imagery, have been greatly exaggerated. It is now a good many years since I heard him lecture in a northern town on the Bible to an audience almost wholly composed of artisans. He was bitter and aggressive, but the treatment he was then experiencing accounted for this. As an avowed atheist he received no quarter, and he might fairly say with Wilfred Osbaldistone, 'It's hard I should get raps over the costard, and only pay you back in make-believes.'

It was not what Bradlaugh said, but the people he said it to, that drew down upon him the censure of the magistrate, and (unkindest cut of all) the condemnation of the House of Commons.



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Of all the evils from which the lovers of religion do well to pray that their faith may be delivered, the worst is that it should ever come to be discussed across the floor of the House of Commons. The self-elected champions of the Christian faith who then ride into the lists are of a kind well calculated to make Piety hide her head for very shame. Rowdy noblemen, intemperate country gentlemen, sterile lawyers, cynical but wealthy sceptics who maintain religion as another fence round their property, hereditary Nonconformists whose God is respectability and whose goal a baronetcy, contrive, with a score or two of bigots thrown in, to make a carnival of folly, a veritable devil's dance of blasphemy. The debates on Bradlaugh's oath-taking extended over four years, and will make melancholy reading for posterity. Two figures, and two figures only, stand out in solitary grandeur, those of a Quaker and an Anglican—Bright and Gladstone.

The conclusion which an attentive reading of Mr. Bradlaugh's biography forces upon me is that in all probability he was the last freethinker who will be exposed, for many a long day (it would be more than usually rash to write 'ever'), to pains and penalties for uttering his unbelief. It is true the Blasphemy Laws are not yet repealed; it may be true for all I know that Christianity is still part and parcel of the common law; it is possibly an indictable offence to lend *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible* to a friend; but, however these things may be, Mr. Bradlaugh's stock-in-trade is now free of the market-place, where just at present, at all events, its price is low. It has become pretty plain that neither the Fortress of Holy Scripture nor the Rock of Church Authority is likely to be taken by storm. The Mystery of Creation, the unsolvable problem of matter, continue to press upon us more heavily than ever. Neither by Paleys nor by Bradlaughs will religion be either bolstered up or pulled down. Sceptics and Sacramentarians must be content to put up with one another's vagaries for some time to come. Indeed, the new socialists, though at present but poor theologians (one hasty reading of *Lux Mundi* does not make a theologian), are casting favourable eyes upon Sacramentarianism, deeming it to have a distinct flavour of Collectivism. Calvinism, on the other hand, is considered repulsively individualistic, being based upon the notion that it is the duty of each man to secure his own salvation.

But whether Bradlaugh was the last of his race or not, he was a brave man whose life well deserves an honourable place amongst the biographies of those Radicals who have suffered in the cause of Free-thought, and into the fruits of whose labours others have entered.

DISRAELI EX RELATIONE SIR WILLIAM FRASER

The late Sir William Fraser was not, I have been told, a popular person in that society about which he thought so much, and his book, *Disraeli and His Day*, did not succeed in attracting much of the notice of the general reader, and failed, so I, at least, have been made to understand, to win a verdict of approval from the really well informed.



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I consider the book a very good one, in the sense of being valuable. Whatever your mood may be, that of the moralist, cynic, satirist, humourist, whether you love, pity, or despise your fellow-man, here is grist for your mill. It feeds the mind.

Although in form the book is but a stringing together of stories, incidents, and aphorisms, still the whole produces a distinct effect. To state what that effect is would be, I suppose, the higher criticism. It is not altogether disagreeable; it is decidedly amusing; it is clever and somewhat contemptible. Sir William Fraser was a baronet who thought well of his order. He desiderated a tribunal to determine the right to the title, and he opined that the courtesy prefix of 'Honourable,' which once, it appears, belonged to baronets, should be restored to them. Apart from these opinions, ridiculous and peculiar, Sir William Fraser stands revealed in this volume as cast in a familiar mould. The words 'gentleman,' 'White's,' 'Society,' often flow from his pen, and we may be sure were engraven on his heart. He had seen a world wrecked. When he was young, so he tells his readers, the world consisted of at least three, and certainly not more than five, hundred persons who were accustomed night after night during the season to make their appearance at a certain number of houses, which are affectionately enumerated. A new face at any one of these gatherings immediately attracted attention, as, indeed, it is easy to believe it would. 'Anything for a change,' as somebody observes in *Pickwick*.

This is the atmosphere of the book, and Sir William breathes in it very pleasantly. Endowed by Nature with a retentive memory and a literary taste, active if singular, he may be discovered in his own pages moving up and down, in and out of society, supplying and correcting quotations, and gratifying the vanity of distinguished authors by remembering their own writings better than they did themselves. The book makes one clearly comprehend what a monstrous clever fellow the rank and file of the Tory party must have felt Sir William Fraser to be. This, however, is only background. In the front of the picture we have the mysterious outlines, the strange personality, struggling between the bizarre and the romantic, of 'the Jew,' as big George Bentinck was ever accustomed to denominate his leader. Sir William Fraser's Disraeli is a very different figure from Sir Stafford Northcote's. The myth about the pocket Sophocles is rudely exploded. Sir William is certain that Disraeli could not have construed a chapter of the Greek Testament. He found such mythology as he required where many an honest fellow has found it before him—in Lempriere's Dictionary. His French accent, as Sir William records it, was most satisfactory, and a conclusive proof of his *bona-fides*. Disraeli, it is clear, cared as little for literature as he did for art. He admired Gray, as every man with a sense for epithet must; he studied Junius, whose style, so Sir William Fraser believes, he surpassed in his 'Runnymede' letters. Sir William Fraser kindly explains the etymology of this strange word 'Runnymede,' as he also does that of 'Parliament,' which he says is '*Parliamo mente*' (Let us speak our minds). Sir William clearly possessed the learning denied to his chief.



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Beyond apparently imposing upon Sir Stafford Northcote, Disraeli himself never made any vain pretensions to be devoted to pursuits for which he did not care a rap. He once dreamt of an epic poem, and his early ambition urged him a step or two in that direction, but his critical faculty, which, despite all his monstrosities of taste, was vital, restrained him from making a fool of himself, and he forswore the muse, puffed the prostitute away, and carried his very saleable wares to another market, where his efforts were crowned with prodigious success. Sir William Fraser introduces his great man to us as observing, in reply to a question, that revenge was the passion which gives pleasure the latest. A man, he continued, will enjoy that when even avarice has ceased to please. As a matter of fact, Disraeli himself was neither avaricious nor revengeful, and, as far as one can judge, was never tempted to be either. This is the fatal defect of almost all Disraeli's aphorisms: they are dead words, whilst the words of a true aphorism have veins filled with the life of their utterer. Nothing of this sort ever escaped the lips of our modern Sphinx. If he had any faiths, any deep convictions, any rooted principles, he held his tongue about them. He was, Sir William tells us, an indolent man. It is doubtful whether he ever did, apart from the preparation and delivery of his speeches, what would be called by a professional man a hard day's work in his life. He had courage, wit, insight, instinct, prevision, and a thorough persuasion that he perfectly understood the materials he had to work upon and the tools within his reach. Perhaps no man ever gauged more accurately or more profoundly despised that 'world' Sir William Fraser so pathetically laments. For folly, egotism, vanity, conceit, and stupidity, he had an amazing eye. He could not, owing to his short sight, read men's faces across the floor of the House, but he did not require the aid of any optic nerve to see the petty secrets of their souls. His best sayings have men's weaknesses for their text. Sir William's book gives many excellent examples. One laughs throughout.

Sir William would have us believe that in later life Disraeli clung affectionately to dulness—to gentle dulness. He did not want to be surrounded by wits. He had been one himself in his youth, and he questioned their sincerity. It would almost appear from passages in the book that Disraeli found even Sir William Fraser too pungent for him. Once, we are told, the impenetrable Prime Minister quailed before Sir William's reproachful oratory. The story is not of a cock and a bull, but of a question put in the House of Commons by Sir William, who was snubbed by the Home Secretary, who was cheered by Disraeli. This was intolerable, and accordingly next day, being, as good luck would have it, a Friday, when, as all men and members know, 'it is in the power of any member to bring forward any topic he may choose,' Sir William naturally chose the topic nearest to his heart, and 'said a few words on my wrongs.'



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'During my performance I watched Disraeli narrowly. I could not see his face, but I noticed that whenever I became in any way disagreeable—in short, whenever my words really bit—they were invariably followed by one movement. Sitting as he always did with his right knee over his left, whenever the words touched him he moved the pendant leg twice or three times, then curved his foot upwards. I could observe no other sign of emotion, but this was distinct. Some years afterwards, on a somewhat more important occasion at the Conference at Berlin, a great German philosopher, Herr ——, went to Berlin on purpose to study Disraeli's character. He said afterwards that he was most struck by the more than Indian stoicism which Disraeli showed. To this there was one exception. "Like all men of his race, he has one sign of emotion which never fails to show itself—the movement of the leg that is crossed over the other, and of the foot!" The person who told me this had never heard me hint, nor had anyone, that I had observed this peculiar symptom on the earlier occasion to which I have referred.'

Statesmen of Jewish descent, with a reputation for stoicism to preserve, would do well to learn from this story not to swing their crossed leg when tired. The great want about Mr. Disraeli is something to hang the countless anecdotes about him upon. Most remarkable men have some predominant feature of character round which you can build your general conception of them, or, at all events, there has been some great incident in their lives for ever connected with their names, and your imagination mixes the man and the event together. Who can think of Peel without remembering the Corn Laws and the reverberating sentence: 'I shall leave a name execrated by every monopolist who, for less honourable motives, clamours for Protection because it conduces to his own individual benefit; but it may be that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of good-will in the abode of those whose lot it is to labour and to earn their daily bread with the sweat of their brow, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened with a sense of injustice.' But round what are our memories of Disraeli to cluster? Sir William Fraser speaks rapturously of his wondrous mind and of his intellect, but where is posterity to look for evidences of either? Certainly not in Sir William's book, which shows us a wearied wit and nothing more. Carlyle once asked, 'How long will John Bull permit this absurd monkey'—meaning Mr. Disraeli—'to dance upon his stomach?' The question was coarsely put, but there is nothing in Sir William's book to make one wonder it should have been asked. Mr. Disraeli lived to offer Carlyle the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, and that, in Sir William's opinion, is enough to dispose of Carlyle's vituperation; but, after all, the Grand Cross is no answer to anything except an application for it.



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A great many other people are made to cross Sir William Fraser's stage. His comments upon them are lively, independent, and original. He liked Cobden and hated Bright. The reason for this he makes quite plain. He thinks he detected in Cobden a deprecatory manner—a recognition of the sublime truth that he, Richard Cobden, had not been half so well educated as the mob of Tories he was addressing. Bright, on the other hand, was fat and rude, and thought that most country gentlemen and town-bred wits were either fools or fribbles. This was intolerable. Here was a man who not only could not have belonged to the 'world,' but honestly did not wish to, and was persuaded—the gross fellow—that he and his world were better in every respect than the exclusive circles which listened to Sir William Fraser's *bon mots* and tags from the poets. Certainly there was nothing deprecatory about John Bright. He could be quite as insolent in his way as any aristocrat in his. He had a habit, we are told, of slowly getting up and walking out of the House in the middle of Mr. Disraeli's speeches, and just when that ingenious orator was leading up to a carefully prepared point, and then immediately returning behind the Speaker's chair. If this is true, it was perhaps rude, but nobody can deny that it is a Tory dodge of indicating disdain. What was really irritating about Mr. Bright was that his disdain was genuine. He did think very little of the Tory party, and he did not care one straw for the opinion of society. He positively would not have cared to have been made a baronet. Sir William Fraser seems to have been really fond of Disraeli, and the very last time he met his great man in the Carlton Club he told him a story too broad to be printed. The great man pronounced it admirable, and passed on his weary way.

A CONNOISSEUR

It must always be rash to speak positively about human nature, whose various types of character are singularly tough, and endure, if not for ever, for a very long time; yet some types do seem to show signs of wearing out. The connoisseur, for example, here in England is hardly what he was. He has specialized, and behind him there is now the bottomless purse of the multi-millionaire, who buys as he is bidden, and has no sense of prices. If the multi-millionaire wants a thing, why should he not have it? The gaping mob, penniless but appreciative, looks on and cheers his pluck.

Mr. Frederick Locker, about whom I wish to write a few lines, was an old-world connoisseur, the shy recesses of whose soul Addison might have penetrated in the page of a *Spectator*—and a delicate operation it would have been.



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My father-in-law was only once in the witness-box. I had the felicity to see him there. It was a dispute about the price of a picture, and in the course of his very short evidence he hazarded the opinion that the grouping of the figures (they were portraits) was in bad taste. The Judge, the late Mr. Justice Cave, an excellent lawyer of the old school, snarled out, 'Do you think you could explain to *me* what is taste?' Mr. Locker surveyed the Judge through the eye-glass which seemed almost part of his being, with a glance modest, deferential, deprecatory, as if suggesting 'Who am *I* to explain anything to *you*?' but at the same time critical, ironical, and humorous. It was but for one brief moment; the eyeglass dropped, and there came the mournful answer, as from a man baffled at all points: 'No, my lord; I should find it impossible!' The Judge grunted a ready, almost a cheerful, assent.

Properly to describe Mr. Locker, you ought to be able to explain both to judge and jury what you mean by taste. He sometimes seemed to me to be *all* taste. Whatever subject he approached—was it the mystery of religion, or the moralities of life, a poem or a print, a bit of old china or a human being—whatever it might be, it was along the avenue of taste that he gently made his way up to it. His favourite word of commendation was *pleasing*, and if he ever brought himself to say (and he was not a man who scattered his judgments, rather was he extremely reticent of them) of a man, and still more of a woman, that he or she was *unpleasing*, you almost shuddered at the fierceness of the condemnation, knowing, as all Locker's intimate friends could not help doing, what the word meant to him. 'Attractive' was another of his critical instruments. He meets Lord Palmerston, and does not find him 'attractive' (*My Confidences*, p. 155).

This is a temperament which when cultivated, as it was in Mr. Locker's case, by a life-long familiarity with beautiful things in all the arts and crafts, is apt to make its owner very susceptible to what some stirring folk may not unjustly consider the trifles of life. Sometimes Locker might seem to overlook the dominant features, the main object of the existence, either of a man or of some piece of man's work, in his sensitively keen perception of the beauty, or the lapse from beauty, of some trait of character or bit of workmanship. This may have been so. Mr. Locker was more at home, more entirely his own delightful self, when he was calling your attention to some humorous touch in one of Bewick's tail-pieces, or to some plump figure in a group by his favourite Stothard than when handling a Michael Angelo drawing or an amazing Blake. Yet, had it been his humour, he could have played the showman to Michael Angelo and Blake at least as well as to Bewick, Stothard, or Chodowiecki. But a modesty, marvellously mingled with irony, was of the very essence of his nature.

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No man expatiated less. He never expounded anything in his born days; he very soon wearied of those he called 'strong' talkers. His critical method was in a conversational manner to direct your attention to something in a poem or a picture, to make a brief suggestion or two, perhaps to apply an epithet, and it was all over, but your eyes were opened. Rapture he never professed, his tones were never loud enough to express enthusiasm, but his enjoyment of what he considered good, wherever he found it—and he was regardless of the set judgments of the critics—was most intense and intimate. His feeling for anything he liked was fibrous: he clung to it. For all his rare books and prints, if he liked a thing he was very tolerant of its *format*. He would cut a drawing out of a newspaper, frame it, hang it up, and be just as tender towards it as if it were an impression with the unique *remarque*.

Mr. Locker had probably inherited his virtuoso's whim from his ancestors. His great-grandfather was certified by Johnson in his life of Addison to be a gentleman 'eminent for curiosity and literature,' and though his grandfather, the Commodore, who lives for ever in our history as the man who taught Nelson the lesson that saved an Empire—'Lay a Frenchman close, and you will beat him'—was no collector, his father, Edward Hawke Locker, though also a naval man, was not only the friend of Sir Walter Scott, but a most judicious buyer of pictures, prints, and old furniture.

Frederick Locker was born in 1821, in Greenwich Hospital, where Edward Hawke Locker was Civil Commissioner. His mother was the daughter of one of the greatest book-buyers of his time, a man whose library it took nine days to disperse—the Rev. Jonathan Boucher, the friend and opponent of George Washington, an ecclesiastic who might have been first Bishop of Edinburgh, but who died a better thing, the Vicar of Epsom.

Frederick Locker grew up among pretty things in the famous hospital. Water-colours by Lawrence, Prout, Girtin, Turner, Chinnery, Paul Sandby, Cipriani, and other masters; casts after Canova; mezzotints after Sir Joshua; Hogarth's famous picture of David Garrick and his wife, now well hung in Windsor Castle, were about him, and early attracted his observant eye. Yet the same things were about his elder brother Arthur, an exceedingly clever fellow, who remained quite curiously impervious to the impressiveness of pretty things all his days.

Locker began collecting on his own account after his marriage, in 1850, to a daughter of Lord Byron's enemy, the Lord Elgin, who brought the marbles from Athens to Bloomsbury. His first object, at least so he thought, was to make his rooms pretty. From the beginning of his life as a connoisseur he spared himself no pains, often trudging miles, when not wanted at the Admiralty Office, in search of his prey. If any mercantile-minded friend ever inquired what anything had cost, he would be answered with

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a rueful smile, 'Much shoe leather.' He began with old furniture, china, and bric-a-brac, which ere long somewhat inconveniently filled his small rooms. Prices rose, and means in those days were as small as the rooms. No more purchases of Louis Seize and blue majolica and Palissy ware could be made. Drawings by the old masters and small pictures were the next objects of the chase. Here again the long purses were soon on his track, and the pursuit had to be abandoned, but not till many treasures had been garnered. Last of all he became a book-hunter, beginning with little volumes of poetry and the drama from 1590 to 1610; and as time went on the boundaries expanded, but never so as to include black letter.

I dare not say Mr. Locker had all the characteristics of a great collector, or that he was entirely free from the whimsicalities of the tribe of connoisseurs, but he was certainly endowed with the chief qualifications for the pursuit of rarities, and remained clear of the unpleasant vices that so often mar men's most innocent avocations. Mr. Locker always knew what he wanted and what he did not want, and never could be persuaded to take the one for the other; he did not grow excited in the presence of the quarry; he had patience to wait, and to go on waiting, and he seldom lacked courage to buy.

He rode his own hobby-horse, never employing experts as buyers. For quantity he had no stomach. He shrank from numbers. He was not a Bodleian man; he had not the sinews to grapple with libraries. He was the connoisseur throughout. Of the huge acquisitiveness of a Heber or a Huth he had not a trace. He hated a crowd, of whatsoever it was composed. He was apt to apologize for his possessions, and to depreciate his tastes. As for boasting of a treasure, he could as easily have eaten beef at breakfast.

So delicate a spirit, armed as it was for purposes of defence with a rare gift of irony and a very shrewd insight into the weaknesses and noisy falsettos of life, was sure to be misunderstood. The dull and coarse witted found Locker hard to make out. He struck them as artificial and elaborate, perhaps as frivolous, and yet they felt uneasy in his company lest there should be a lurking ridicule behind his quiet, humble demeanour. There was, indeed, always an element of mockery in Locker's humility.

An exceedingly spiteful account of him, in which it is asserted that 'most of his rarest books are miserable copies' (how book-collectors can hate one another!), ends with the reluctant admission: 'He was eminently a gentleman, however, and his manners were even courtly, yet virile.' Such extorted praise is valuable.

I can see him now before me, with a nicely graduated foot-rule in his delicate hand, measuring with grave precision the height to a hair of his copy of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), for the purpose of ascertaining whether it was taller or shorter than one being vaunted for sale in a bookseller's catalogue just to hand. His face, one of much

refinement, was a study, exhibiting alike a fixed determination to discover the exact truth about the copy and a humorous realization of the inherent triviality of the whole business. Locker was a philosopher as well as a connoisseur.



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The Rowfant Library has disappeared. Great possessions are great cares. 'But ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land-rats, water-thieves, and land-thieves—I mean pirates; and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks.' To this list the nervous owner of rare books must add fire, that dread enemy of all the arts. It is often difficult to provide stabling for dead men's hobby-horses. It were perhaps absurd in a world like this to grow sentimental over a parcel of old books. Death, the great unbinder, must always make a difference.

Mr. Locker's poetry now forms a volume of the *Golden Treasury Series*. The *London Lyrics* are what they are. They have been well praised by good critics, and have themselves been made the subject of good verse.

'Apollo made one April day
A new thing in the rhyming way;
Its turn was neat, its wit was clear,
It wavered 'twixt a smile and tear.
Then Momus gave a touch satiric,
And it became a *London Lyric*.'

AUSTIN DOBSON.

In another copy of verses Mr. Dobson adds:

'Or where discern a verse so neat,
So well-bred and so witty—
So finished in its least conceit,
So mixed of mirth and pity?"Pope taught him rhythm, Prior ease,
Praed buoyancy and banter;
What modern bard would learn from these?
Ah, *tempora mutantur!*'

Nothing can usefully be added to criticism so just, so searching, and so happily expressed.

Some of the *London Lyrics* have, I think, achieved what we poor mortals call immortality—a strange word to apply to the piping of so slender a reed, to so slight a strain—yet

'In small proportions we just beauties see.'

It is the simplest strain that lodges longest in the heart. Mr. Locker's strains are never precisely *simple*. The gay enchantment of the world and the sense of its bitter disappointments murmur through all of them, and are fatal to their being simple, but the unpretentiousness of a *London Lyric* is akin to simplicity.



His relation to his own poetry was somewhat peculiar. A critic in every fibre, he judged his own verses with a severity he would have shrunk from applying to those of any other rhyming man. He was deeply dissatisfied, almost on bad terms, with himself, yet for all that he was convinced that he had written some very good verses indeed. His poetry meant a great deal to him, and he stood in need of sympathy and of allies against his own despondency. He did not get much sympathy, being a man hard to praise, for unless he agreed with your praise it gave him more pain than pleasure.

I am not sure that Mr. Dobson agrees with me, but I am very fond of Locker's paraphrase of one of Clement Marot's *Epigrammes*; and as the lines are redolent of his delicate connoisseurship, I will quote both the original (dated 1544) and the paraphrase:



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'DU RYS DE MADAME D'ALLEBRET

'Elle a tres bien ceste gorge d'albastre,
Ce doulx parler, ce cler tainct, ces beaux yeulx:
Mais en effect, ce petit rys follastre,
C'est a mon gre ce qui lui sied le mieulx;
Elle en pourroit les chemins et les lieux
Ou elle passe a plaisir inciter;
Et si ennuy me venoit contrister
Tant que par mort fust ma vie abbatue,
Il me faudroit pour me resusciter
Que ce rys la duguel elle me tue.'

'How fair those locks which now the light wind stirs!
What eyes she has, and what a perfect arm!
And yet methinks that little laugh of hers—
That little laugh—is still her crowning charm.
Where'er she passes, countryside or town,
The streets make festa and the fields rejoice.
Should sorrow come, as 'twill, to cast me down,
Or Death, as come he must, to hush my voice,
Her laugh would wake me just as now it thrills me—
That little, giddy laugh wherewith she kills me.'

'Tis the very laugh of Millamant in *The Way of the World!* 'I would rather,' cried Hazlitt, 'have seen Mrs. Abington's Millamant than any Rosalind that ever appeared on the stage.' Such wishes are idle. Hazlitt never saw Mrs. Abington's Millamant. I have seen Miss Ethel Irving's Millamant, *dulce ridentem*, and it was that little giddy laugh of hers that reminded me of Marot's Epigram and of Frederick Locker's paraphrase. So do womanly charms endure from generation to generation, and it is one of the duties of poets to record them.

In 1867 Mr. Locker published his *Lyra Elegantiarum. A Collection of Some of the Best Specimens of Vers de Societe and Vers d'Occasion in the English Languages by Deceased Authors*. In his preface Locker gave what may now be fairly called the 'classical' definition of the verses he was collecting. 'Vers de societe and vers d'occasion should' (so he wrote) 'be short, elegant, refined and fanciful, not seldom distinguished by heightened sentiment, and often playful. The tone should not be pitched high; it should be idiomatic and rather in the conversational key; the rhythm should be crisp and sparkling, and the rhyme frequent and never forced, while the entire poem should be marked by tasteful moderation, high finish and completeness; for however trivial the subject-matter may be—indeed, rather in proportion to its triviality, subordination to the rules of composition and perfection of execution should be strictly enforced. The definition may be further illustrated by a few examples of pieces, which,



from the absence of some of the foregoing qualities, or from the excess of others, cannot be properly regarded as *vers de societe*, though they may bear a certain generic resemblance to that species of poetry. The ballad of "John Gilpin," for example, is too broadly and simply ludicrous; Swift's "Lines on the Death of Marlborough," and Byron's "Windsor Poetics," are too savage and



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truculent; Cowper's "My Mary" is far too pathetic; Herrick's lyrics to "Blossoms" and "Daffodils" are too elevated; "Sally in our Alley" is too homely and too entirely simple and natural; while the "Rape of the Lock," which would otherwise be one of the finest specimens of *vers de societe* in any language, must be excluded on account of its length, which renders it much too important.'

I have made this long quotation because it is an excellent example of Mr. Locker's way of talking about poets and poetry, and of his intimate, searching, and unaffected criticism.

Lyra Elegantiarum is a real, not a bookseller's collection. Mr. Locker was a great student of verse. There was hardly a stanza of any English poet, unless it was Spenser, for whom he had no great affection, which he had not pondered over and clearly considered as does a lawyer his cases. He delighted in a complete success, and grieved over any lapse from the fold of metrical virtue, over any ill-sounding rhyme or unhappy expression. The circulation of *Lyra Elegantiarum* was somewhat interfered with by a 'copyright' question. Mr. Locker had a great admiration for Landor's short poems, and included no less than forty-one of them, which he chose with the utmost care. Publishers are slow to perceive that the best chance of getting rid of their poetical wares (and Landor was not popular) is to have attention called to the artificer who produced them. The Landorian publisher objected, and the *Lyra* had to be 'suppressed'—a fine word full of hidden meanings. The second-hand booksellers, a wily race, were quick to perceive the significance of this, and have for more than thirty years obtained inflated prices for their early copies, being able to vend them as possessing the *Suppressed Verses*. There is a great deal of Locker in this collection. To turn its pages is to renew intercourse with its editor.

In 1879 another little volume instinct with his personality came into existence and made friends for itself. He called it *Patchwork*, and to have given it any other name would have severely taxed his inventiveness. It is a collection of stories, of *ana*, of quotations in verse and prose, of original matter, of character-sketches, of small adventures, of table-talk, and of other things besides, if other things, indeed, there be. If you know *Patchwork* by heart you are well equipped. It is intensely original throughout, and never more original than when its matter is borrowed. Readers of *Patchwork* had heard of Mr. Creevey long before Sir Herbert Maxwell once again let that politician loose upon an unlettered society.

The book had no great sale, but copies evidently fell into the hands of the more judicious of the pressmen, who kept it by their sides, and every now and again

'Waled a portion with judicious care'



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for quotation in their columns. The *Patchwork* stories thus got into circulation one by one. Kind friends of Mr. Locker's, who had been told, or had discovered for themselves, that he was somewhat of a wag, would frequently regale him with bits of his own *Patchwork*, introducing them to his notice as something they had just heard, which they thought he would like—murdering his own stories to give him pleasure. His countenance on such occasions was a *rendezvous* of contending emotions, a battlefield of rival forces. Politeness ever prevailed, but it took all his irony and sad philosophy to hide his pain. *Patchwork* is such a good collection of the kind of story he liked best that it was really difficult to avoid telling him a story that was *not* in it. I made the blunder once myself with a Voltairean anecdote. Here it is as told in *Patchwork*: "Voltaire was one day listening to a dramatic author reading his comedy, and who said, "Ici le chevalier rit!" He exclaimed: "Le chevalier est *bien* heureux!" I hope I told it fairly well. He smiled sadly, and said nothing, not even *Et tu, Brute!*

In 1886 Mr. Locker printed for presentation a catalogue of his printed books, manuscripts, autograph letters, drawings, and pictures. Nothing of his own figures in this catalogue, and yet in a very real sense the whole is his. Most of the books are dispersed, but the catalogue remains, not merely as a record of rareties and bibliographical details dear to the collector's heart, but as a token of taste. Just as there is, so Wordsworth reminds us, 'a spirit in the woods,' so is there still, brooding over and haunting the pages of the 'Rowfant Catalogue,' the spirit of true connoisseurship. In the slender lists of Locker's 'Works' this book must always have a place.

Frederick Locker died at Rowfant on May 30, 1895, leaving behind him, carefully prepared for the press, a volume he had christened *My Confidences: An Autographical Sketch addressed to My Descendants*.

In due course the book appeared, and was misunderstood at first by many. It cut a strange, outlandish figure among the crowd of casual reminiscences it externally resembled. Glancing over the pages of *My Confidences*, the careless library subscriber encountered the usual number of names of well-known personages, whose appearance is supposed by publishers to add sufficient zest to reminiscences to secure for them a sale large enough, at any rate, to recoup the cost of publication. Yet, despite these names, Mr. Locker's book is completely unlike the modern memoir. Beneath a carefully-constructed, and perhaps slightly artificially maintained, frivolity of tone, the book is written in deadly earnest. Not for nothing did its author choose as one of the mottoes for its title-page, 'Ce ne sont mes gestes que j'ecrie; c'est moy.' It may be said of this book, as of Senancour's *Oberman*:



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'A fever in these pages burns;
Beneath the calm they feign,
A wounded human spirit turns
Here on its bed of pain.'

The still small voice of its author whispers through *My Confidences*. Like Montaigne's *Essays*, the book is one of entire good faith, and strangely uncovers a personality.

As a tiny child Locker was thought by his parents to be very like Sir Joshua Reynolds' picture of Puck, an engraving of which was in the home at Greenwich Hospital, and certainly Locker carried to his grave more than a suspicion of what is called Puckishness. In *My Confidences* there are traces of this quality.

Clearly enough the author of *London Lyrics*, the editor of *Lyra Elegantiarum*, of *Patchwork*, and the whimsical but sincere compiler of *My Confidences* was more than a mere connoisseur, however much connoisseurship entered into a character in which taste played so dominant a part.

Stronger even than taste was his almost laborious love of kindness. He really took too much pains about it, exposing himself to rebuffs and misunderstandings; but he was not without his rewards. All down-hearted folk, sorrowful, disappointed people, the unlucky, the ill-considered, the *mesestimes*—those who found themselves condemned to discharge uncongenial duties in unsympathetic society, turned instinctively to Mr. Locker for a consolation, so softly administered that it was hard to say it was intended. He had friends everywhere, in all ranks of life, who found in him an infinity of solace, and for his friends there was nothing he would not do. It seemed as if he could not spare himself. I remember his calling at my chambers one hot day in July, when he happened to have with him some presents he was in course of delivering. Among them I noticed a bust of Voltaire and an unusually lively tortoise, generally half-way out of a paper bag. Wherever he went he found occasion for kindness, and his whimsical adventures would fill a volume. I sometimes thought it would really be worth while to leave off the struggle for existence, and gently to subside into one of Lord Rowton's homes in order to have the pleasure of receiving in my new quarters a first visit from Mr. Locker. How pleasantly would he have mounted the stair, laden with who knows what small gifts?—a box of mignonette for the window-sill, an old book or two, as likely as not a live kitten, for indeed there was never an end to the variety or ingenuity of his offerings! How felicitous would have been his greeting! How cordial his compliments! How abiding the sense of his unpatronizing friendliness! But it was not to be. One can seldom choose one's pleasures.

In his *Patchwork* Mr. Locker quotes Gibbon's encomium on Charles James Fox. Anyone less like Fox than Frederick Locker it might be hard to discover, but fine qualities are alike wherever they are found lodged; and if Fox was as much entitled as Locker to the full benefit of Gibbon's praise, he was indeed a good fellow.



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'In his tour to Switzerland Mr. Fox gave me two days of free and private society. He seemed to feel and even to envy the happiness of my situation, while I admired the powers of a superior man as they are blended in his character with the softness and simplicity of a child. *Perhaps no human being was ever more perfectly exempted from the taint of malevolence, vanity, and falsehood.*'

OUR GREAT MIDDLE CLASS

The republication of Mr. Arnold's *Friendship's Garland* after an interval of twenty-seven years may well set us all a-thinking. Here it is, in startling facsimile—the white covers, destined too soon to become black, the gilt device, the familiar motto. As we gazed upon it, we found ourselves exclaiming, so vividly did it recall the past:

'It is we, it is we, who have changed.'

Friendship's Garland was a very good joke seven-and-twenty years ago, and though some of its once luminous paint has been rubbed off, and a few of its jests have ceased to effervesce, it is a good joke still. Mr. Bottle's mind, qua mind; the rowdy Philistine Adolescens Leo, Esq.; Dr. Russell, of the *Times*, mounting his war-horse; the tale of how Lord Lumpington and the Rev. Esau Hittall got their degrees at Oxford; and many another ironic thrust which made the reader laugh 'while the hair was yet brown on his head,' may well make him laugh still, 'though his scalp is almost hairless, and his figure's grown convex.' Since 1871 we have learnt the answer to the sombre lesson, 'What is it to grow old?' But, thank God! we can laugh even yet.

The humour and high spirits of *Friendship's Garland* were, however, but the gilding of a pill, the artificial sweetening of a nauseous draught. In reality, and joking apart, the book is an indictment at the bar of *Geist* of the English people as represented by its middle class and by its full-voiced organ, the daily press. Mr. Arnold invented Arminius to be the mouthpiece of this indictment, the traducer of our 'imperial race,' because such blasphemies could not artistically have been attributed to one of the number. He made Arminius a Prussian because in those far-off days Prussia stood for Von Humboldt and education and culture, and all the things Sir Thomas Bazley and Mr. Miall were supposed to be without. Around the central figure of Arminius the essentially playful fancy of Mr. Arnold grouped other figures, including his own. What an old equity draughtsman would call 'the charging parts' of the book consist in the allegations that the Government of England had been taken out of the hands of an aristocracy grown barren of ideas and stupid beyond words, and entrusted to a middle class without noble traditions, wretchedly educated, full of *Ungeist*, with a passion for clap-trap, only wanting to be left alone to push trade and make money; so ignorant as to believe that feudalism can be abated without any heroic Stein,



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by providing that in one insignificant case out of a hundred thousand, land shall not follow the feudal law of descent; without a single vital idea or sentiment or feeling for beauty or appropriateness; well persuaded that if more trade is done in England than anywhere else, if personal independence is without a check, and newspaper publicity unbounded, that is, by the nature of things, to be great; misled every morning by the magnificent *Times* or the 'rowdy' *Telegraph*; desperately prone to preaching to other nations, proud of being able to say what it likes, whilst wholly indifferent to the fact that it has nothing whatever to say.

Such, in brief, is the substance of this most agreeable volume. Its message was lightly treated by the grave and reverend seigniors of the State. The magnificent *Times*, the rowdy *Telegraph*, continued to preach their gospels as before; but for all that Mr. Arnold found an audience fit, though few, and, of course, he found it among the people he abused. The barbarians, as he called the aristocracy, were not likely to pay heed to a professor of poetry. Our working classes were not readers of the *Pall Mall Gazette* or purchasers of four-and-sixpenny tracts bound in white cloth. No; it was the middle class, to whom Mr. Arnold himself belonged, who took him to honest hearts, stuck his photograph upon their writing-tables, and sounded his praises so loudly that his fame even reached the United States of America, where he was promptly invited to lecture, an invitation he accepted. But for the middle classes Mr. Arnold would have had but a poor time of it. They did not mind being insulted; they overlooked exaggeration; they pardoned ignorance—in a word, they proved teachable. Yet, though meek in spirit, they have not yet inherited the earth; indeed, there are those who assert that their chances are gone, their sceptre for ever buried. It is all over with the middle-class. Tuck up its muddled head! Tie up its chin!

A rabble of bad writers may now be noticed pushing their vulgar way along, who, though born and bred in the middle classes, and disfigured by many of the very faults Mr. Arnold deplored, yet make it a test of their membership, an 'open sesame' to their dull orgies, that all decent, sober-minded folk, who love virtue, and, on the whole, prefer delicate humour to sickly lubricity, should be labelled 'middle class.'

Politically, it cannot but be noticed that, for good or for ill, the old middle-class audience no longer exists in its integrity. The crowds that flocked to hear Cobden and Bright, that abhorred slavery, that cheered Kossuth, that hated the income-tax, are now watered down by a huge population who do not know, and do not want to know, what the income-tax is, but who do want to know what the Government is going to do for them in the matter of shorter hours, better wages, and constant employment. Will the rabble, we wonder, prove as teachable as the middle class?

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Will they consent to be told their faults as meekly? Will they buy the photograph of their physician, or heave half a brick at him? It remains to be seen. In the meantime it would be a mistake to assume that the middle class counts for nothing, even at an election. As to ideas, have we got any new ones since 1871? 'To be consequent and powerful,' says Arminius, 'men must be bottomed on some vital idea or sentiment which lends strength and certainty to their action.' There are those who tell us that we have at last found this vital idea in those conceptions of the British Empire which Mr. Chamberlain so vigorously trumpets. To trumpet a conception is hardly a happy phrase, but, as Mr. Chamberlain plays no other instrument, it is forced upon me. Would that we could revive Arminius, to tell us what he thinks of our new Ariel girdling the earth with twenty Prime Ministers, each the choicest product of a self-governing and deeply-involved colony. Is it a vital or a vulgar idea? Is it merely a big theory or really a great one? Is it the ornate beginning of a Time, or but the tawdry ending of a period? At all events, it is an idea unknown to Arminius von Thunder-Ten-Tronckh, and we ought to be, and many are, thankful for it.

TAR AND WHITEWASH

I am, I confess it, hard to please. If a round dozen of Bad Women, all made in England too, does not satisfy me, what will? What ails the fellow at them? Yet was I at first dissatisfied, and am, therefore, glad to notice that whilst I was demurring and splitting hairs the great, generous public was buying the *Lives of Twelve Bad Women*, by Arthur Vincent, and putting it into a second edition. This is as it should be. When the excellent Dean Burgon dubbed his dozen biographies *Twelve Good Men*, it probably never occurred to him that the title suggested three companion volumes; but so it did, and two of them, *Twelve Bad Men* and *Twelve Bad Women*, have made their appearance. I still await, with great patience, *Twelve Good Women*. Twelve was the number of the Apostles. Had it not been, one might be tempted to ask, Why twelve? But as there must be some limit to bookmaking, there is no need to quarrel with an arithmetical limit.

My criticism upon the Dean's dozen was that they were not by any means, all of them, conspicuously good men; for, to name one only, who would call old Dr. Routh, the President of Magdalen, a particularly good man? In a sense, all Presidents, Provosts, Principals, and Masters of Colleges are good men—in fact, they must be so by the statutes—but to few of them are given the special notes of goodness. Dr. Routh was a remarkable man, a learned man, perhaps a pious man—undeniably, when he came to die, an old man—but he was no better than his colleagues. This weakness of classification has run all through the series, and it is my real quarrel with it. I do not understand the principle



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of selection. I did not understand the Dean's test of goodness, nor do I understand Mr. Seccombe's or Mr. Vincent's test of badness. What do we mean by a good man or a bad one, a good woman or a bad one? Most people, like the young man in the song, are 'not very good, nor yet very bad.' We move about the pastures of life in huge herds, and all do the same things, at the same times, and for the same reasons. 'Forty feeding like one.' Are we mean? Well, we have done some mean things in our time. Are we generous? Occasionally we are. Were we good sons or dutiful daughters? We have both honoured and dishonoured our parents, who, in their turn, had done the same by theirs. Do we melt at the sight of misery? Indeed we do. Do we forget all about it when we have turned the corner? Frequently that is so. Do we expect to be put to open shame at the Great Day of Judgment? We should be terribly frightened of this did we not cling to the hope that amidst the shocking revelations then for the first time made public our little affairs may fail to attract much notice. Judged by the standards of humanity, few people are either good or bad. 'I have not been a great sinner,' said the dying Nelson; nor had he—he had only been made a great fool of by a woman. Mankind is all tarred with the same brush, though some who chance to be operated upon when the brush is fresh from the barrel get more than their share of the tar. The biography of a celebrated man usually reminds me of the outside of a coastguard's cottage—all tar and whitewash. These are the two condiments of human life—tar and whitewash—the faults and the excuses for the faults, the passions and pettinesses that make us occasionally drop on all fours, and the generous aspirations that at times enable us, if not to stand upright, at least to adopt the attitude of the kangaroo. It is rather tiresome, this perpetual game of French and English going on inside one. True goodness and real badness escape it altogether. A good man does not spend his life wrestling with the Powers of Darkness. He is victor in the fray, and the most he is called upon to do is every now and again to hit his prostrate foe a blow over the costard just to keep him in his place. Thus rid of a perpetual anxiety, the good man has time to grow in goodness, to expand pleasantly, to take his ease on Zion. You can see in his face that he is at peace with himself—that he is no longer at war with his elements. His society, if you are fond of goodness, is both agreeable and medicinal; but if you are a bad man it is hateful, and you cry out with Mr. Love-lust in Bunyan's Vanity Fair: 'Away with him. I cannot endure him; he is for ever condemning my way.'

Not many of Dean Burgon's biographies reached this standard. The explanation, perhaps, is that the Dean chiefly moved in clerical circles where excellence is more frequently to be met with than goodness.



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In the same way a really bad man is one who has frankly said, 'Evil, be thou my good.' Like the good man, though for a very different reason, the bad one has ceased to make war with the devil. Finding a conspiracy against goodness going on, the bad man joins it, and thus, like the good man, is at peace with himself. The bad man is bent upon his own way, to get what he wants, no matter at what cost. Human lives! What do they matter? A woman's honour! What does that matter? Truth and fidelity! What are they? To know what you want, and not to mind what you pay for it, is the straight path to fame, fortune, and hell-fire. Careers, of course, vary; to dominate a continent or to open a corner shop as a pork-butcher's, plenty of devilry may go to either ambition. Also, genius is a rare gift. It by no means follows that because you are a bad man you will become a great one; but to be bad, and at the same time unsuccessful, is a hard fate. It casts a little doubt upon a man's badness if he does not, at least, make a little money. It is a poor business accompanying badness on to a common scaffold, or to see it die in a wretched garret. That was one of my complaints with Mr. Seccombe's Twelve Bad Men. Most of them came to violent ends. They were all failures.

But I have kept these twelve ladies waiting a most unconscionable time. Who are they? There are amongst them four courtesans: Alice Perrers, one of King Edward III.'s misses; Barbara Villiers, one of King Charles II.'s; Mrs. Mary Anne Clarke, who had to be content with a royal Duke; and Mrs. Con Phillips. Six members of the criminal class: Alice Arden, Moll Cutpurse, Jenny Diver, Elizabeth Brownrigg, Elizabeth Canning, and Mary Bateman; and only two ladies of title, Frances Howard, Countess of Somerset, and Elizabeth Chudleigh, Duchess of Kingston. Of these twelve bad women one-third were executed, Alice Arden being burnt at Canterbury, Jenny Diver and Elizabeth Brownrigg being hung at Tyburn, and Mary Bateman suffering the same fate at Leeds. Elizabeth Canning was sentenced to seven years' transportation, and, indeed, if their biographers are to be believed, all the other ladies made miserable ends. There is nothing triumphant about their badness. Even from the point of view of this world they had better have been good. In fact, squalor is the badge of the whole tribe. Some of them, probably—Elizabeth Brownrigg, for example—were mad. This last-named poor creature bore sixteen children to a house-painter and plasterer, and then became a parish mid-wife, and only finally a baby-farmer. Her cruelty to her apprentices had madness in every detail. To include her in this volume was wholly unnecessary. She lives but in George Canning's famous parody on Southey's sonnet to the regicide Marten.

With those sentimentalists who maintain that all bad people are mad I will have no dealings. It is sheer nonsense; lives of great men all remind us it is sheer nonsense. Some of our greatest men have been infernal scoundrels—pre-eminently bad men—with nothing mad about them, unless it be mad to get on in the world and knock people about in it.



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Twelve Bad Women contains much interesting matter, but, on the whole, it is depressing. It seems very dull to be bad. Perhaps the editor desired to create this impression; if so, he has succeeded. Hannah More had fifty times more fun in her life than all these courtesans and criminals put together. The note of jollity is entirely absent. It was no primrose path these unhappy women traversed, though that it led to the everlasting bonfire it were unchristian to doubt. The dissatisfaction I confessed to at the beginning returns upon me as a cloud at the end; but, for all that, I rejoice the book is in a second edition, and I hope soon to hear it is in a third, for it has a moral tendency.

ITINERARIES

Anyone who is teased by the notion that it would be pleasant to be remembered, in the sense of being read, after death, cannot do better to secure that end than compose an Itinerary and leave it behind him in manuscript, with his name legibly inscribed thereon. If an honest bit of work, noting distances, detailing expenses, naming landmarks, moors, mountains, harbours, docks, buildings—indeed, anything which, as lawyers say, savours of realty—and but scantily interspersed with reflections, and with no quotations, why, then, such a piece of work, however long publication may be delayed—and a century or two will not matter in the least—cannot fail, whenever it is printed, to attract attention, to excite general interest and secure a permanent hold in every decent library in the kingdom.

Time cannot stale an Itinerary. *Iter, Via, Actus* are words of pith and moment. Stage-coaches, express trains, motor-cars, have written, or are now writing, their eventful histories over the face of these islands; but, whatever changes they have made or are destined to make, they have left untouched the mystery of the road, although for the moment the latest comer may seem injuriously to have affected its majesty.

The Itinerist alone among authors is always sure of an audience. No matter where, no matter when, he has but to tell us how he footed it and what he saw by the wayside, and we must listen. How can we help it? Two hundred years ago, it may be, this Itinerist came through our village, passed by the wall of our homestead, climbed our familiar hill, and went on his way; it is perhaps but two lines and a half he can afford to give us, but what lines they are! How different with sermons, poems, and novels! On each of these is the stamp of the author's age; sentiments, fashions, thoughts, faiths, phraseology, all worn out—cold, dirty grate, where once there was a blazing fire. Cheerlessness personified! Leland's anti-Papal treatise in forty-five chapters remains in learned custody—a manuscript; a publisher it will never find. We still have Papists and anti-Papists; in this case the fire still blazes, but the grates are of an entirely different



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construction. Leland's treatise is out of date. But his *Itinerary* in nine volumes, a favourite book throughout the eighteenth century, which has graced many a bookseller's catalogue for the last hundred years, and seldom without eliciting a purchaser—Leland's *Itinerary* is to-day being reprinted under the most able editorship. The charm of the road is irresistible. The *Vicar of Wakefield* is a delightful book, with a great tradition behind it and a future still before it; but it has not escaped the ravages of time, and I would, now, at all events, gladly exchange it for Oliver Goldsmith's *Itinerary through Germany with a Flute!*

Vain authors, publisher's men, may write as they like about *Shakespeare's* country, or *Scott's* country, or *Carlyle's* country, or *Crockett's* country, but—

'Oh, good gigantic smile of the brown old earth!

the land laughs at the delusions of the men who hurriedly cross its surface.

'Rydal and Fairfield are there,—
In the shadow Wordsworth lies dead.
So it is, so it will be for aye,
Nature is fresh as of old,
Is lovely, a mortal is dead.'

These reflections, which by themselves would be enough to sink even an *Itinerary*, seemed forced upon me by the publication of *A Journey to Edenborough in Scotland by Joseph Taylor, Late of the Inner Temple, Esquire*. This journey was made two hundred years ago in the Long Vacation of 1705, but has just been printed from the original manuscript, under the editorship of Mr. William Cowan, by the well-known Edinburgh bookseller, Mr. Brown, of Princes Street, to whom all lovers of things Scottish already owe much.

Nobody can hope to be less known than this our latest *Itinerist*, for not only is he not in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, but it is at present impossible to say which of two Joseph Taylors he was. The House of the Winged Horse has ever had Taylors on its roll, the sign of the Middle Temple, a very fleecy sheep, being perhaps unattractive to the clan, and in 1705 it so happened that not only were there two Taylors, but two Joseph Taylors, entitled to write themselves 'of the Inner Temple, Esquire.' Which was the *Itinerist*? Mr. Cowan, going by age, thinks that the *Itinerist* can hardly have been the Joseph Taylor who was admitted to the Inn in 1663, as in that case he must have been at least fifty-eight when he travelled to Edinburgh. For my part, I see nothing in the *Itinerary* to preclude the possibility of its author having attained that age at the date of its composition. I observe in the *Itinerary* references which point to the *Itinerist* being a Kentish man, and he mentions more than once his 'Cousin D'aeth.' Research among



the papers of the D'aeths of Knowlton Court, near Dover, might result in the discovery which of these two Taylors really was the Itinerist. As nothing else is at present known about either, the investigation could probably be made without passion or party or even religious bias. It might be best begun by Mr. Cowan telling us in whose custody he found the manuscript, and how it came there. These statements should always be made when old manuscripts are first printed.



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The journey began on August 2, 1705. The party consisted of Mr. Taylor and his two friends, Mr. Harrison and Mr. Sloman. They travelled on horseback, and often had difficulties with the poor beast that carried their luggage. They reached Edinburgh in the evening of August 31, and left it on their return journey on September 8, and got home on the 25th of the same month. The *Itinerary* concludes as follows:

'Thus we spent almost 2 months in a Journy of many 100 miles, sometimes thro' very charming Countryes, and at other times over desolate and Barren Mountaines, and yet met with no particular misfortune in all the Time.'

I may say at once of these three Itinerists—Mr. Taylor, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Sloman—that they appear to have been thoroughly commonplace, well behaved, occasionally hilarious Englishmen, ready to endure whatever befell them, if unavoidable; accustomed to take their ease in their inn and to turn round and look at any pretty woman they might chance to meet on their travels. Their first experience of what the Itinerist calls 'the prodigies of Nature,' 'at once an occasion both of Horrour and Admiration,' was in the Peak Country 'described in poetry by the ingenious Mr. Cotton.' This part of the world they 'did' with something of the earnestness of the modern tourist. But I hardly think they enjoyed themselves. The 'prodigious' caverns and strange petrifications shocked them; 'nothing can be more terrible or shocking to Nature.' Mam Tor, with its 1,710 feet, proved very impressive, 'a vast high mountain reaching to the very clouds.' This gloom of the Derbyshire hills and stony valleys was partially dispelled for our travellers by a certain 'fair Gloriana' they met at Buxton, with whom they had great fun, 'so much the greater, because we never expected such heavenly enjoyments in so desolate a country.' If it be on susceptibilities of this nature that Mr. Cowan rests his case for thinking that the Itinerist can hardly have attained 'the blasted antiquity' of fifty-eight, we must think Mr. Cowan a trifle hasty, or a very young man, perhaps under forty, which is young for an editor.

After describing, somewhat too much like an auctioneer, the splendours of Chatsworth, 'a Paradise in the deserts of Arabia,' the Itinerist proceeds on his way north through Nottingham to Belvoir Castle, where 'my Lord Rosses Gentleman (to whom Mr. Harrison was recommended) entertained us by his Lordship's command with good wine and the best of malt liquors which the cellar abounds with'; the pictures in the Long Gallery were shown them by 'my Lord himself.' At Doncaster, 'a neat market-town which consists only in one long street,' they had some superlative salmon just taken out of the river. By Knaresborough Spaw, where they drank the waters and had icy cold baths, and dined at the ordinary with a parson whose conversation startled the propriety of the Templar, the travellers made their way to York, and for the first and last time a few pages of *Guide Book* are improperly introduced. Then on to Scarborough.



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'The next morning early we left Scarborough and travelled through a dismal road, particularly near Robins Hood Bay; we were obliged to lead our horses, and had much ado to get down a vast craggy mountain which lyes within a quarter of a mile of it. The Bay is about a mile broad, and inhabited by poor fishermen. We stopt to taste some of their liquor and discourse with them. They told us the French privateers came into the Very Bay and took 2 of their Vessels but the day before, which were ransom'd for L25 a piece. We saw a great many vessels lying upon the Shore, the masters not daring to venture out to sea for fear of undergoing the same fate.'

We boast too readily of our inviolate shores.

A curious description is given of the Duke of Buckingham's alum works near Whitby. The travellers then procured a guide, and traversed 'the vast moors which lye between Whitby and Gisborough.' The civic magnificence of Newcastle greatly struck our travellers, who, happier than their modern successors, were able to see the town miles off. The Itinerist quotes with gusto the civic proverb that the men of Newcastle pay nothing for the Way, the Word, or the Water, 'for the Ministers of Religion are maintained, the streets paved, and the Conduits kept up at the publick charge.' A disagreeable account is given of the brutishness of the people employed in the salt works at Tynemouth. At Berwick the travellers got into trouble with the sentry, but the mistake was rectified with the captain of the guard over '2 bowles of punch, there being no wine in the town.'

Scotland was now in sight, and the travellers became grave, as befitted the occasion. They were told that the journey that lay before them was extremely dangerous, that 'twould be difficult to escape with their lives, much less (ominous words) without 'the distemper of the country.' But Mr. Taylor, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Sloman were as brave as Mr. Pickwick, and they would on. 'Yet notwithstanding all these sad representations, we resolv'd to proceed and stand by one another to the last.'

What the Itinerists thought of Scotland when they got there is not for me to say. I was once a Scottish member.

They arrived in Edinburgh at a great crisis in Scottish history. They saw the Duke of Argyll, as Queen Anne's Lord High Commissioner, go to the Parliament House in this manner:

'First a coach and six Horses for his Gentlemen, then a Trumpet, then his own coach with six white horses, which were very fine, being those presented by King William to the Duke of Queensbury, and by him sold to the Duke of Argyle for L300; next goes a troop of Horse Guards, cloathed like my Lord of Oxford's Regiment, but the horses are of several colours; and the Lord Chancellor and the Secretary of State, and the Lord Chief Justice Clerk, and other officers of State close the cavalcade in coaches and six horses. Thus the Commissioner



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goes and returns every day.'

The Itinerists followed the Duke and his procession into the Parliament House, and heard debated the great question—the greatest of all possible questions for Scotland—whether this magnificence should cease, whether there should be an end of an auld sang—in short, whether the proposed Act of Union should be proceeded with. By special favour, our Itinerists had leave to stand upon the steps of the throne, and witnessed a famous fiery and prolonged debate, the Duke once turning to them and saying, *sotto voce*, 'It is now deciding whether England and Scotland shall go together by the ears.' How it was decided we all know, and that it was wisely decided no one doubts; yet, when we read our Itinerist's account of the Duke's coach and horses, and the cavalcade that followed him, and remember that this was what happened every day during the sitting of the Parliament, and must not be confounded with the greater glories of the first day of a Parliament, when every member, be he peer, knight of the shire, or burgh member, had to ride on horseback in the procession, it is impossible not to feel the force of Miss Grisel Dalmahoy's appeal in the *Heart of Midlothian*, she being an ancient sempstress, to Mr. Saddletree, the harness-maker:

'And as for the Lords of States ye suld mind the riding o' the Parliament in the gude auld time before the Union. A year's rent o' mony a gude estate gaed for horse-graith and harnessing, forby broidered robes and foot-mantles that wad hae stude by their lane with gold and brocade, and that were muckle in my ain line.'

The graphic account of a famous debate given by Taylor is worth comparing with the *Lockhart Papers* and Hill Burton. The date is a little troublesome. According to our Itinerist, he heard the discussion as to whether the Queen or the Scottish Parliament should nominate the Commissioners. Now, according to the histories, this all-important discussion began and ended on September 1, but our Itinerist had only arrived in Edinburgh the night before the first, and gives us to understand that he owed his invitation to be present to the fact that whilst in Edinburgh he and his friends had had the honour to have several lords and members of Parliament to dine, and that these guests informed him 'of the grand day when the Act was to be passed or rejected.' The Itinerist's account is too particular—for he gives the result of the voting—to admit of any possibility of a mistake, and he describes how several of the members came afterwards to his lodgings, and, so he writes, 'embraced us with all the outward marks of love and kindness, and seemed mightily pleased at what was done, and told us we should now be no more English and Scotch, but Brittons.' In the matter of nomenclature, at all events, the promises of the Union have not been carried out.

After September 1 the Parliament did not meet till the 4th, when an Address was passed to the Queen, but apparently without any repetition of debate. So it really is a little difficult to reconcile the dates. Perhaps Itinerists are best advised to keep off public events.



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How our travellers escaped the 'national distemper' and journeyed home by Ecclefechan, Carlisle, Shap Fell, Liverpool, Chester, Coventry, and Warwick must be read in the *Journey* itself, which, though it only occupies 182 small pages, is full of matter and even merriment; in fact, it is an excellent itinerary.

EPITAPHS

Epitaphs, if in rhyme, are the real literature of the masses. They need no commendation and are beyond all criticism. A Cambridge don, a London bus-driver, will own their charm in equal measure. Strange indeed is the fascination of rhyme. A commonplace hitched into verse instantly takes rank with Holy Scripture. This passion for poetry, as it is sometimes called, is manifested on every side; even tradesmen share it, and as the advertisements in our newspapers show, are willing to pay small sums to poets who commend their wares in verse. The widow bereft of her life's companion, the mother bending over an empty cradle, find solace in thinking what doleful little scrag of verse shall be graven on the tombstone of the dead. From the earliest times men have sought to squeeze their loves and joys, their sorrows and hatreds, into distichs and quatrains, and to inscribe them somewhere, on walls or windows, on sepulchral urns and gravestones, as memorials of their pleasure or their pain.

'Hark! how chimes the passing bell—
There's no music to a knell;
All the other sounds we hear
Flatter and but cheat our ear.'

So wrote Shirley the dramatist, and so does he truthfully explain the popularity of the epitaph as distinguished from the epigram. Who ever wearies of Martial's 'Erotion'?—

'Hic festinata requiescit Erotion umbra,
Crimine quam fati sexta peremit hiems.
Quisquis eris nostri post me regnator agelli
Manibus exiguis annua justa dato.
Sic lare perpetuo, sic turba sospite, solus
Flebilis in terra sit lapis iste tua'—

so prettily Englished by Leigh Hunt:

'Underneath this greedy stone
Lies little sweet Erotion,
Whom the Fates with hearts as cold
Nipped away at six years old.
Those, whoever thou may'st be,
That hast this small field after me,



Let the yearly rites be paid
To her little slender shade;
So shall no disease or jar
Hurt thy house or chill thy Lar,
But this tomb be here alone
The only melancholy stone.'

Our English epitaphs are to be found scattered up and down our country churchyards —'uncouth rhymes,' as Gray calls them, yet full of the sombre philosophy of life. They are fast becoming illegible, worn out by the rain that raineth every day, and our prim, present-day parsons do not look with favour upon them, besides which—to use a clumsy phrase—besides which most of our churchyards are now closed against burials, and without texts there can be no sermons:



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'I'll stay and read my sermon here,
And skulls and bones shall be my text.

* * * *

Here learn that glory and disgrace,
Wisdom and Folly, pass away,
That mirth hath its appointed space,
That sorrow is but for a day;
That all we love and all we hate,
That all we hope and all we fear,
Each mood of mind, each turn of fate,
Must end in dust and silence here.'

The best epitaphs are the grim ones. Designed, as epitaphs are, to arrest and hold in their momentary grasp the wandering attention and languid interest of the passer-by, they must hit him hard and at once, and this they can only do by striking some very responsive chord, and no chords are so immediately responsive as those which relate to death and, it may be, judgment to come.

Mr. Aubrey Stewart, in his interesting *Selection of English Epigrams and Epitaphs*, published by Chapman and Hall, quotes an epitaph from a Norfolk churchyard which I have seen in other parts of the country. The last time I saw it was in the Forest of Dean. It is admirably suited for the gravestone of any child of very tender years, say four:

'When the Archangel's trump shall blow
And souls to bodies join,
Many will wish their lives below
Had been as short as mine.'

It is uncouth, but it is warranted to grip.

Frequently, too, have I noticed how constantly the attention is arrested by Pope's well-known lines from his magnificent 'Verses to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady,' which are often to be found on tombstones:

'So peaceful rests without a stone and name
What once had beauty, titles, wealth, and fame.
How loved, how honoured once avails thee not,
To whom related or by whom begot.
A heap of dust alone remains of thee;
'Tis all thou art and all the proud shall be.'



I wish our modern poetasters who deny Pope's claim to be a poet no worse fate than to lie under stones which have engraved upon them the lines just quoted, for they will then secure in death what in life was denied them—the ear of the public.

Next to the grim epitaph, I should be disposed to rank those which remind the passer-by of his transitory estate. In different parts of the country—in Cumberland and Cornwall, in Croyland Abbey, in Llangollen Churchyard, in Melton Mowbray—are to be found lines more or less resembling the following:

'Man's life is like unto a winter's day,
Some break their fast and so depart away,
Others stay dinner then depart full fed,
The longest age but sups and goes to bed.
O reader, there behold and see
As we are now, so thou must be.'

The complimentary epitaph seldom pleases. To lie like a tombstone has become a proverb. Pope's famous epitaph on Newton:

'Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night,
God said, Let Newton be! and all was light.'



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is hyperbolic and out of character with the great man it seeks to honour. It was intended for Westminster Abbey. I rejoice at the preference given to prose Latinity.

The tender and emotional epitaphs have a tendency to become either insipid or silly. But Herrick has shown us how to rival Martial:

'UPON A CHILD THAT DIED.

Here she lies a pretty bud
Lately made of flesh and blood;
Who as soon fell fast asleep
As her little eyes did peep.
Give her strewings, but not stir
The earth that lightly covers her.'

Mr. Dodd, the editor of the admirable volume called *The Epigrammatists*, published in Bohn's Standard Library, calls these lines a model of simplicity and elegance. So they are, but they are very vague. But then the child was very young. Erotion, one must remember, was six years old. Ben Jonson's beautiful epitaph on S.P., a child of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel, beginning,

'Weep with me all you that read
This little story;
And know for whom the tear you shed
Death's self is sorry,'

is fine poetry, but it is not life or death as plain people know those sober realities. The flippant epitaph is always abominable. Gay's, for example:

'Life is a jest, and all things show it.
I thought so once, but now I know it.'

But *does* he know it? Ay, there's the rub! The note of Christianity is seldom struck in epitaphs. There is a deep-rooted paganism in the English people which is for ever bubbling up and asserting itself in the oddest of ways. Coleridge's epitaph for himself is a striking exception:

'Stop, Christian passer-by! stop, child of God,
And read with gentle breast, Beneath this sod
A poet lies, or that which once seemed he.
O lift one thought in prayer for S.T.C,
That he who many a year with toil of breath
Found death in life, may here find life in death!



Mercy for praise—to be forgiven for fame,
He ask'd and hoped through Christ. Do thou the same.'

'HANSARD'

'Men are we, and must mourn when e'en the shade of that which once was great has passed away.' This quotation—which, in obedience to the prevailing taste, I print as prose—was forced upon me by reading in the papers an account of some proceedings in a sale-room in Chancery Lane last Tuesday,[A] when the entire stock and copyright of *Hansard's Parliamentary History and Debates* were exposed for sale, and, it must be added, to ridicule. Yet 'Hansard' was once a name to conjure with. To be in it was an ambition—costly, troublesome, but animating; to know it was, if not a liberal education, at all events almost certain promotion; whilst to possess it for your very own was the outward and visible sign of serious statesmanship. No wonder that unimaginative men still believed that *Hansard* was a property with money in it.



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Is it not the counterpart of Parliament, its dark and majestic shadow thrown across the page of history? As the pious Catholic studies his *Acta Sanctorum*, so should the constitutionalist love to pore over the *ipsissima verba* of Parliamentary gladiators, and read their resolutions and their motions. Where else save in the pages of *Hansard* can we make ourselves fully acquainted with the history of the Mother of Free Institutions? It is, no doubt, dull, but with the soberminded a large and spacious dulness like that of *Hansard's Debates* is better than the incongruous chirpings of the new 'humourists.' Besides, its dulness is exaggerated. If a reader cannot extract amusement from it the fault is his, not *Hansard's*. But, indeed, this perpetual talk of dulness and amusement ought not to pass unchallenged. Since when has it become a crime to be dull? Our fathers were not ashamed to be dull in a good cause. We are ashamed, but without ceasing to be dull.

[Footnote A: March 8, 1902.]

But it is idle to argue with the higgles of the market. 'Things are what they are,' said Bishop Butler in a passage which has lost its freshness; that is to say, they are worth what they will fetch. 'Why, then, should we desire to be deceived?' The test of truth remains undiscovered, but the test of present value is the auction mart. Tried by this test, it is plain that *Hansard* has fallen upon evil days. The bottled dreariness of Parliament is falling, falling, falling. An Elizabethan song-book, the original edition of Gray's *Elegy*, or *Peregrine Pickle*, is worth more than, or nearly as much as, the 458 volumes of *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*. Three complete sets were sold last Tuesday; one brought L110, the other two but L70 each. And yet it is not long ago since a *Hansard* was worth three times as much. Where were our young politicians? There are serious men on both sides of the House. Men of their stamp twenty years ago would not have been happy without a *Hansard* to clothe their shelves with dignity and their minds with quotations. But these young men were not bidders.

As the sale proceeded, the discredit of *Hansard* became plainer and plainer. For the copyright, including, of course, the goodwill of the name—the right to call yourself 'Hansard' for years to come—not a penny was offered, and yet, as the auctioneer feelingly observed, only eighteen months ago it was valued at L60,000. The cold douche of the auction mart may brace the mind, but is apt to lower the price of commodities of this kind. Then came incomplete and unbound sets, with doleful results. For forty copies of the 'Indian Debates' for 1889 only a penny a copy was offered. It was rumoured that the bidder intended, had he been successful, to circulate the copies amongst the supporters of a National Council for India; but his purpose was frustrated by the auctioneer, who, mindful of the honour



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of the Empire, sorrowfully but firmly withdrew the lot, and proceeded to the next, amidst the jeers of a thoroughly demoralized audience. But this subject why pursue? It is, for the reason already cited at the beginning, a painful one. The glory of *Hansard* has departed for ever. Like a new-fangled and sham religion, it began in pride and ended in a police-court, instead of beginning in a police-court and ending in pride, which is the now well-defined course of true religion.

The fact that nobody wants *Hansard* is not necessarily a rebuff to Parliamentary eloquence, yet these low prices jump with the times and undoubtedly indicate an impatience of oratory. We talk more than our ancestors, but we prove our good faith by doing it very badly. We have no Erskines at the Bar, but trials last longer than ever. There are not half a dozen men in the House of Commons who can make a speech, properly so called, but the session is none the shorter on that account. *Hansard's Debates* are said to be dull to read, but there is a sterner fate than reading a dull debate: you may be called upon to listen to one. The statesmen of the time must be impervious to dulness; they must crush the artist within them to a powder. The new people who have come bounding into politics and are now claiming their share of the national inheritance are not orators by nature, and will never become so by culture; but they mean business, and that is well. Caleb Garth and not George Canning should be the model of the virtuous politician of the future.

CONTEMPT OF COURT

The late Mr. Carlyle has somewhere in his voluminous but well-indexed writings a highly humorous and characteristic passage in which he, with all his delightful gusto, dilates upon the oddity of the scene where a withered old sinner perched on a bench, quaintly attired in red turned up with ermine, addresses another sinner in a wooden pew, and bids him be taken away and hung by the neck until he is dead; and how the sinner in the pew, instead of indignantly remonstrating with the sinner on the bench, 'Why, you cantankerous old absurdity, what are you about taking my life like that?' usually exhibits signs of great depression, and meekly allows himself to be conducted to his cell, from whence in due course he is taken and throttled according to law.

This situation described by Carlyle is doubtless mighty full of humour; but, none the less, were any prisoner at the bar to adopt Craigenputtock's suggestion, he would only add to the peccadillo of murder the grave offence of contempt of court, which has been defined 'as a disobedience to the court, an opposing or despising the authority, justice, and dignity thereof.'

The whole subject of Contempt is an interesting and picturesque one, and has been treated after an interesting and picturesque yet accurate and learned fashion by a well-

known lawyer, in a treatise[A] which well deserves to be read not merely by the legal practitioner, but by the student of constitutional law and the nice observer of our manners and customs.



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[Footnote A: *Contempt of Court, etc.* By J.F. Oswald, Q.C. London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited.]

An ill-disposed person may exhibit contempt of court in divers ways—for example, he may scandalize the the court itself, which may be done not merely by the extreme measure of hurling missiles at the presiding judge, or loudly contemning his learning or authority, but by ostentatiously reading a newspaper in his presence, or laughing uproariously at a joke made by somebody else. Such contempts, committed as they are *in facie curiae*, are criminal offences, and may be punished summarily by immediate imprisonment without the right of appeal. It speaks well both for the great good sense of the judges and for the deep-rooted legal instincts of our people that such offences are seldom heard of. It would be impossible nicely to define what measure of freedom of manners should be allowed in a court of justice, which, as we know, is neither a church nor a theatre, but, as a matter of practice, the happy mean between an awe-struck and unmanly silence and free-and-easy conversation is well preserved. The practising advocate, to avoid contempt and obtain, if instructed so to do, a hearing, must obey certain sumptuary laws, for not only must he don the horsehair wig, the gown, and bands of his profession, but his upper clothing must be black, nor should his nether garment be otherwise than of sober hue. Mr. Oswald reports Mr. Justice Byles as having once observed to the late Lord Coleridge whilst at the Bar: 'I always listen with little pleasure to the arguments of counsel whose legs are encased in light gray trousers.' The junior Bar is growing somewhat lax in these matters. Dark gray coats are not unknown, and it was only the other day I observed a barrister duly robed sitting in court in a white waistcoat, apparently oblivious of the fact that whilst thus attired no judge could possibly have heard a word he said. However, as he had nothing to say, the question did not arise. It is doubtless the increasing Chamber practice of the judges which has occasioned this regrettable laxity. In Chambers a judge cannot summarily commit for contempt, nor is it necessary or customary for counsel to appear before him in robes. Some judges object to fancy waistcoats in Chambers, but others do not. The late Sir James Bacon, who was a great stickler for forensic propriety, and who, sitting in court, would not have allowed a counsel in a white waistcoat to say a word, habitually wore one himself when sitting as vacation judge in the summer.

It must not be supposed that there can be no contempt out of court. There can. To use bad language on being served with legal process is to treat the court from whence such process issued with contempt. None the less, considerable latitude of language on such occasions is allowed. How necessary it is to protect the humble officers of the law who serve writs and subpoenas is proved by the case of one Johns,

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who was very rightly committed to the Fleet in 1772, it appearing by affidavit that he had compelled the poor wretch who sought to serve him with a subpoena to devour both the parchment and the wax seal of the court, and had then, after kicking him so savagely as to make him insensible, ordered his body to be cast into the river. No amount of irritation could justify such conduct. It is no contempt to tear up the writ or subpoena in the presence of the officer of the court, because, the service once lawfully effected, the court is indifferent to the treatment of its stationery; but such behaviour, though lawful, is childish. To obstruct a witness on his way to give evidence, or to threaten him if he does give evidence, or to tamper with the jury, are all serious contempts. In short, there is a divinity which hedges a court of justice, and anybody who, by action or inaction, renders the course of justice more difficult or dilatory than it otherwise would be, incurs the penalty of contempt. Consider, for example, the case of documents and letters. Prior to the issue of a writ, the owner of documents and letters may destroy them, if he pleases—the fact of his having done so, if litigation should ensue on the subject to which the destroyed documents related, being only matter for comment—but the moment a writ is issued the destruction by a defendant of any document in his possession relating to the action is a grave contempt, for which a duchess was lately sent to prison. There is something majestic about this. No sooner is the aid of a court of law invoked than it assumes a seizin of every scrap of writing which will assist it in its investigation of the matter at issue between the parties, and to destroy any such paper is to obstruct the court in its holy task, and therefore a contempt.

To disobey a specific order of the court is, of course, contempt. The old Court of Chancery had a great experience in this aspect of the question. It was accustomed to issue many peremptory commands; it forbade manufacturers to foul rivers, builders so to build as to obstruct ancient lights, suitors to seek the hand in matrimony of its female wards, Dissenting ministers from attempting to occupy the pulpits from which their congregations had by vote ejected them, and so on through almost all the business of this mortal life. It was more ready to forbid than to command; but it would do either if justice required it. And if you persisted in doing what the Court of Chancery told you not to do, you were committed; whilst if you refused to do what it had ordered you to do, you were attached; and the difference between committal and attachment need not concern the lay mind.



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To pursue the subject further would be to plunge into the morasses of the law where there is no footing for the plain man; but just a word or two may be added on the subject of punishment for contempt. In old days persons who were guilty of contempt *in facie curiae* had their right hands cut off, and Mr. Oswald prints as an appendix to his book certain clauses of an Act of Parliament of Henry VIII. which provide for the execution of this barbarous sentence, and also (it must be admitted) for the kindly after-treatment of the victim, who was to have a surgeon at hand to sear the stump, a sergeant of the poultry with a cock ready for the surgeon to wrap about the stump, a sergeant of the pantry with bread to eat, and a sergeant of the cellar with a pot of red wine to drink.

Nowadays the penalty for most contempts is costs. The guilty party in order to purge his contempt has to pay all the costs of a motion to commit and attach. The amount is not always inconsiderable, and when it is paid it would be idle to apply to the other side for a pot of red wine. They would only laugh at you. Our ancestors had a way of mitigating their atrocities which robs the latter of more than half their barbarity. Costs are an unmitigable atrocity.

5 EDWARD VII., CHAPTER 12

The appearance of this undebated Act of Parliament in the attenuated volume of the Statutes of 1905 almost forces upon sensitive minds an unwelcome inquiry as to what is the attitude proper to be assumed by an emancipated but trained intelligence towards a decision of the House of Lords, sitting judicially as the highest (because the last) Court of Appeal.

So far as the *parties* to the litigation are concerned, the decision, if of a final character, puts an end to the *lis*. Litigation must, so at least it has always been assumed, end somewhere, and in these realms it ends with the House of Lords. Higher you cannot go, however litigiously minded.

In the vast majority of appeal cases a final appeal not only ends the *lis*, but determines once for all the rights of the parties to the subject-matter. The successful litigant leaves the House of Lords quieted in his possession or restored to what he now knows to be his own, conscious of a victory, final and complete; whilst the unsuccessful litigant goes away exceeding sorrowful, knowing that his only possible revenge is to file his petition in bankruptcy.

This, however, is not always so.

In August, 1904, the House of Lords decided in a properly constituted *lis* that a particular ecclesiastical body in Scotland, somewhat reduced in numbers, but existent and militant, was entitled to certain property held in trust for the use and behoof of the Free Church of Scotland. There is no other way of holding property than by a legal title. Sometimes that title has been created by an Act of Parliament, and sometimes it is



a title recognised by the general laws and customs of the realm, but a legal title it has got to be. Titles are never matters of rhetoric, nor are they *jure divino*, or conferred in answer to prayer; they are strictly legal matters, and it is the very particular business of courts of law, when properly invoked, to recognise and enforce them.



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In the case I have in mind there were two claimants to the subject-matter—the Free Church and the United Free Church—and the House of Lords, after a great argle-bargle, decided that the property in question belonged to the Free Church.

Thereupon the expected happened. A hubbub arose in Scotland and elsewhere, and in consequence of the hubbub an Act of Parliament has somewhat coyly made its appearance in the Statute Book (5 Edward VII., chapter 12) appointing and authorizing Commissioners to take away from the successful litigant a certain portion of the property just declared to be his, and to give it to the unsuccessful litigant.

The reasons alleged for taking away by statute from the Free Church some of the property that belongs to it are that the Free Church is not big enough to administer satisfactorily all the property it possesses; and that the State may reasonably refuse to allow a religious body to have more property than it can in the opinion of State-appointed Commissioners usefully employ in the propagation of its religion. Let the reasons be well noted. They have made their appearance before in history. These were the reasons alleged by Henry VIII. for the suppression of the smaller monasteries. The State, having made up its mind to take away from the Free Church so much of its property as the Commissioners may think it cannot usefully administer, then proceeds, by this undebated Act of Parliament, to give the overplus to the unsuccessful litigant, the United Free Church. Why to them? It will never do to answer this question by saying because it is always desirable to return lost property to its true owner, since so to reply would be to give the lie direct to a decision of the Final Court of Appeal on a question of property.

In the eye—I must not write the blind eye—of the law, this parliamentary gift to the United Free Church is not a *giving back* but an *original free gift* from the State by way of endowment to a particular denomination of Presbyterian dissenters. In theory the State could have done what it liked with so much of the property of the Free Church as that body is not big enough to spend upon itself. It might, for example, have divided it between Presbyterians generally, or it might have left it to the Free Church to say who was to be the disponent of its property.

As a matter of hard fact, the State had no choice in the matter. It could not select, or let the Free Church select, the object of its bounty. The public sense (a vague term) demanded that the United Free Church should not be required to abide by the decision of the House of Lords, but should have given to it whatever property could, under any decent pretext of public policy and by Act of Parliament, be taken away from the Free Church. If the pretext of the inability of the Free Church to administer its own estate had not been forthcoming, some other pretext must and would have been discovered.



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Having regard, then, to 5 Edward VII., chapter 12, how ought one to feel towards the decision of the House of Lords in the Scottish Churches case? In public life you can usually huddle up anything, if only all parties, for reasons, however diverse, of their own, are agreed upon what is to be done. Like many another Act of Parliament, 5 Edward VII., chapter 12, was bought with a sum of money. Nobody, not even Lord Robertson, really wanted to debate or discuss it, least of all to discover the philosophy of it. But in an essay you can huddle up nothing. At all hazards, you must go on. This is why so many essayists have been burnt alive.

First.—Was the decision wrong? ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ If it was right—

Second.—Was the law, in pursuance of which the decision was given, so manifestly unjust as to demand, not the alteration of the law for the future, but the passage through Parliament, *ex post facto*, of an Act to prevent the decision from taking effect between the parties according to its tenour?

Third.—Supposing the decision to be right, and the law it expounded just and reasonable in general, was there anything in the peculiar circumstances of the successful litigant, and in the sources from which a considerable portion of the property was derived, to justify Parliamentary interference and the provisions of 5 Edward VII., chapter 12?

Number Three, being the easiest way out of the difficulty, has been adopted. The *decision* remains untouched, the *law* it expounds remains unaltered—nothing has gone, except the *order* of the Final Court giving effect to the untouched decision and to the unaltered law. *That* has been tampered with for the reasons suggested in *Number Three*.

John Locke was fond of referring questions to something he called ‘the bulk of mankind’—an undefinable, undignified, unsalaried body, of small account at the beginning of controversies, but all-powerful at their close.

My own belief is that eventually ‘the bulk of mankind’ will say bluntly that the House of Lords went wrong in these cases, and that the Act of Parliament was hastily patched up to avert wrong, and to do substantial justice between the parties.

If asked, What can ‘the bulk of mankind’ know about law? I reply, with great cheerfulness, ‘Very little indeed.’ But suppose that the application of law to a particular *lis* requires precise and full knowledge of all that happened during an ecclesiastical contest, and, in addition, demands a grasp of the philosophy of religion, and the ascertainment of true views as to the innate authority of a church and the development of doctrine, would there be anything very surprising if half a dozen eminent authorities in our Courts of Law and Equity were to go wrong?

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Between a frank admission of an incomplete consideration of a complicated and badly presented case and such blunt *ex post facto* legislation as 5 Edward VII., chapter 12, I should have preferred the former. The Act is what would once have been called a dangerous precedent. To-day precedents, good or bad, are not much considered. If we want to do a thing, we do it, precedent or no precedent. So far we have done so very little that the question has hardly arisen. If our Legislature ever reassumes activity under new conditions, and in obedience to new impulses, it may be discovered whether bad precedents are dangerous or not.

THE END