Charles Lamb

After the painting by William Hazlitt
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EDITOR’S PREFACE

Portia’s comment on Falconbridge, "How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behavior everywhere," might be deftly shifted by a critic to suit this preparation of Lamb’s Essays of Elia. The editor has, indeed, and herewith frankly acknowledges the fact, laid heavy hands on much material gathered by others far more able than he. No one can edit Lamb’s Essays without following the master editors,—Lucas, Ainger, MacDonald,—and the present editor has gladly followed in the tracks of these giants, though, to quote Lowell, “with legs painfully short.” But he trusts that while

"His office than the reaper’s may be meaner,
But still some praise is due unto the gleaner."

For he has garnered the material with only one point in mind—to make a student’s edition, suitable and pleasing to those who may thus be led to a keener and sweeter appreciation of what constitutes real humor. If he has succeeded in doing this, he feels that the motley in the editor’s work will not be much in evidence.

H. E. C.
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BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF THE LIFE OF CHARLES LAMB

1775. Charles Lamb was born in London, in Crown Office Row, Feb. 10. in the Temple. Of the seven children in the Lamb family, three survived their early childhood — Charles, and Mary, ten years older than he, and John, twelve years older.

1781. Charles and Mary Lamb attended William Bird's school in Fetter Lane. "I am sure that neither my sister nor myself brought any [language] out of it but a little of our native English."

1782. He obtained a presentation to a scholarship at Christ's Hospital, where he remained for seven years. Here he met Coleridge, who was to be his lifelong friend. Lamb was a fair student, acquiring a good knowledge of Latin and attaining the rank of deputy-Grecian — the second highest rank in the school.

1789. He secured a clerkship in the South-Sea House, where his brother John was already employed.

1796. He published four sonnets in a volume of Poems by S. T. Coleridge. "The effusions signed C. L.," says Coleridge in the preface to the book, "were written by Mr. Charles Lamb of the India House. Independently of the signature, their superior merit would have sufficiently distinguished them." Of these sonnets one was on Mrs. Siddons, one was "written at midnight by the sea-side after a voyage," and two were on the writer's love for Ann Simmons, the mysterious Alice W——n, of the Essays. According to Lamb himself this love affair was the cause of his mind failing about this time. To use his own characteristic words in a letter to Coleridge, "The six weeks that finished last year and began this, your humble servant spent agreeably in a madhouse at Hoxton." Happily, Lamb never again suffered an attack of insanity. Mary Lamb, however, was never free from occasional attacks of the family curse. In September of this year, Mary, while vii
in a violent frenzy brought on by the family cares and by too close application to needle-work, killed her mother. Lamb's letter to Coleridge, written September 27th, telling about the affair, is one of the most pathetic and forlorn letters ever written. Lamb bound himself to a perpetual guardianship of his sister, and on this condition she was released. She suffered many similar attacks of insanity during her long life, but never again committed any disastrous deed.

1797. Charles and Mary Lamb began their life of "dual loneliness." A second edition of Poems by S. T. Coleridge, to which are now added Poems by Charles Lamb and Charles Lloyd was published. Lamb's contribution to the volume was fifteen sonnets and occasional verses, best characterized by the term "plaintive." He visited Coleridge at Nether Stowey, where he met Wordsworth.

1798. He published a pathetic story entitled A Tale of Rosamund Gray, a "miniature romance." His best-known poem, "The Old Familiar Faces," was published in this year.

1799. Lamb met Thomas Manning, a Cambridge mathematician and orientalist, who was a man of fine intellect and subtle humor,—such a man as befitted Lamb for companionship and correspondence. Lamb described him as the most "wonderful man" he had ever met.

1800. Early in this year Lamb and his sister removed from their Queen Street lodgings to Chapel Street, Pentonville. In the spring Mary fell ill again. Lamb wrote, "Mary got better again, but her constantly being liable to these attacks is dreadful; nor is it the least of our evils that her case and all our story is so well known around us. We are in a manner marked." About this time Lamb began to write paragraphs and trifles for the newspapers.

1801. Lamb removed to No. 16 Mitre Court Buildings, the Temple.

1802. He published a five-act drama in blank verse entitled John Woodvil. This play had been submitted, previous to its publication, to John Kemble, then manager of Drury Lane Theatre, who declined to produce it on the stage. Although the play has some masterly lines in it, it is, nevertheless, crude in structure and in characterization. With his sister, Lamb spent a holiday at Keswick, Coleridge's home.

1803. Lamb wrote one of his most beautiful poems, "Hester," in memory of Hester Savory, a Quaker girl whom he had often
met in his walks about Pentonville. Though he had never spoken to her, he had great admiration for her evident sweetness and goodness, so much admiration, indeed, that one may almost believe that Lamb was in love with her.

1804. Lamb met William Hazlitt, who painted Lamb’s portrait, being at that time as much of a painter as a critic. The two men were different in temperament and in their intellectual bias, but were, none the less, good friends. De Quincey and Lamb met at the India House office late in this year, or possibly early in the following year.

1805. He made his first literary venture for children—a little book of rhymes and pictures entitled The King and Queen of Hearts.

1806. Mr. H., a farce by Lamb, was produced by the proprietors of Drury Lane. It was a failure. “The curtain fell amid a storm of hisses, in which Lamb is said to have taken a conspicuous share” (Ainger). The Tales from Shakespeare was begun. Mary wrote at this time, “You should like to see us, as we often sit writing at one table (but not on one cushion sitting), like Hermia and Helena, in the Midsummer Night’s Dream; or rather like an old Darby and Joan, I taking snuff, and he groaning all the while, and saying he can make nothing of it, which he always says till he has finished, and then he finds out he has made something of it.”

1807. Tales from Shakespeare “by Charles Lamb” was published. For some reason, now unknown, Mary Lamb’s name was omitted on the title-page, although she had paraphrased the comedies. Lamb always maintained that her work was the better. Lamb next set to work on The Adventures of Ulysses, based on Chapman’s translation of the Odyssey. “Chapman is divine, and my abridgment has not quite emptied him of his divinity.”

1808. The Adventures of Ulysses was published. A far more important work, Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who Lived about the Time of Shakespeare, was also published. This book laid the foundation of Lamb’s reputation as a critic, as a student of the drama, and as a great prose writer. Mrs. Leicester’s School (dated 1809), by both Charles and Mary, was published. Of the ten stories in the book, Lamb wrote three.

1809. The Lambs removed to No. 34 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, thence to No. 4 Inner Temple Lane. Poetry for Children, the joint work of Charles and Mary, was published.
1810. Lamb visited Hazlitt at Winterslow. Leigh Hunt projected a new quarterly magazine, the *Reflector*, "to be written mainly by old Christ's Hospitallers, of whom Lamb was not least important." Two of Lamb's best critical essays, those upon Hogarth and Shakespeare's tragedies, were published in the *Reflector*—which lived through only four numbers. The essays named were not published until 1811.

1811-1816. Eventless years. The literary unproductiveness of this period was probably due to Lamb's close confinement and overwork at the India House. In 1815, Lamb's salary rose suddenly from "about £240 to £480, whence it was to mount steadily to £700 in 1821, and to £730 in his last year of office" (Lucas). It was probably in 1815 that Charles and Mary Lamb again visited Mackery End, in Hertfordshire. 1816 was a happy year for the Lambs—though it, too, was a lean year for literature and even for letters.

1817. Lamb removed to No. 20 Russell Street, Covent Garden. This move brought him near to the theatres—Covent Garden Theatre at the back and Drury Lane diagonally just across the way. Thus Lamb added many theatrical personages to his list of friends and acquaintances, notably Miss Kelly, Mundun, and Macready. On December 28th Lamb attended a party at Haydon's in Lisson Grove, a party which has become immortal for two reasons: first because Wordsworth, Lamb, Keats, and Landseer were there, and secondly because it was there that the unfortunate Comptroller of Stamps, a Mr. Kingston, was made the victim of one of Lamb's immortal jokes. The story is told in nearly all biographies of Lamb. (Cf. Ainger's *Life*, p. 85 ff.)

1818. Lamb's complete works were published in two volumes.

1819. He proposed marriage to Fanny Kelly, but was rejected.

1820. Lamb was presented by Hazlitt to the editor of the newly established *London Magazine*. Lamb wrote his first essay, "The South-Sea House," for the August number of the *London*. From this time we may date the high tide of Charles Lamb's genius.

1821. John Lamb, Charles's brother, died. His death inspired Lamb to write his beautiful essay, "Dream-Children."

1822. The Lambs visited France, where Mary had another brief attack of her malady. Lamb left but little record of this visit, and never referred to it in his *Essays*. 

1824. Lamb was in indifferent health and published nothing between December, 1823, and September, 1824. *Elia* was resumed in September with "Blakesmoor in H—shire."

1825. On March 29th Lamb retired from the service of the East India House with a pension of £450. (See notes on "The Superannuated Man.")

1826. He began his "Popular Fallacies" in the January issue of the *New Monthly Magazine*. The *London Magazine* came to an end.

1827. He wrote the exquisite lines "On an Infant Dying as soon as Born"—in memory of the lost child of Tom Hood. In September the Lambs moved to Chase Side, Enfield. (See note on "Old China.")

1828. An American edition of Lamb's *Essays* was published.

1829. Owing to Mary's frequent relapses, Lamb took lodgings with the Westwoods, at their cottage, "forty-two inches nearer London."

1830. Lamb's *Album Verses* was published by Maxon, who was later the husband of the adopted daughter of Charles and Mary Lamb, Emma Isola.

1833. Lamb removed to Bay Cottage, Edmonton. He also published *The Last Essays of Elia*.

1834. In July Coleridge died, and the loss of his lifelong friend was Lamb's death-blow. On December 27th, "murmuring in his last moments the names of his dearest friends, he passed tranquilly out of life." "On the following Saturday his remains were laid in a deep grave in Edmonton churchyard, made in a spot which, about a fortnight before, he had pointed out to his sister on an afternoon's wintry walk, as the place where he wished to be buried."

1847. Mary Lamb died, aged 82, on May 20th.
A SELECTED LIST OF BOOKS RELATING TO LAMB

I. Editions

LUCAS, E. V., Works of Charles and Mary Lamb, 7 vols.  

II. Biography

AIINGER, ALFRED, Charles Lamb, in the “English Men of Letters” series.  
DE QUINCEY, THOMAS, Biographical Essays.  
TALFourd, THOMAS NOON, Memoirs of Charles Lamb, edited and annotated by PERCY FITZGERALD.  
FITZGERALD, PERCY, Charles Lamb, His Friends, His Haunts, and His Books.  
PROCTOR, B. W. (“Barry Cornwall”), Charles Lamb: A Memoir.  
MARTIN, E. B., In the Footprints of Charles Lamb.

III. Criticism and Appreciations

PATER, WALTER, Appreciations.  
PATMORE, P. G., My Friends and Acquaintances.  
ROBINSON, HENRY CRABB, Diary.  
HUNT, LEIGH, Autobiography.  
SWINBURNE, A. C., Miscellanies, essay on “Charles Lamb and George Wither.”  
BIRRELL, AUGUSTINE, Obiter Dicta.  
GILCHRIST, MRS., Mary Lamb.  
STODDARD, R. H., Personal Recollections.  
HUTTON, LAURENCE, Literary Landmarks of London.  
SOUTHEY, C. C., Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey.
LAMB'S PERSONAL TRAITS

In His Schooldays

"Lamb was an amiable, gentle boy, very sensible and keenly observing, indulged by his school-fellows and by his master on account of his infirmity of speech. His countenance was mild, his complexion clear brown, with an expression which might lead you to think that he was of Jewish descent. His eyes were not each of the same color, one was hazel, the other had specks of gray in the iris, mingled as we see red spots in the blood-stone. His step was plantigrade, which made his walk slow and peculiar, adding to the staid appearance of his figure. I never heard his name mentioned without the addition of Charles, although, as there was no other boy of the name of Lamb, the addition was unnecessary; but there was an implied kindness in it, and it was a proof that his gentle manners excited that kindness. His delicate frame and his difficulty of utterance, which was increased by agitation, unfitted him for joining in any boisterous sport." — CHARLES V. LE GRICE.

His Personal Appearance and Some Characteristics

"I do not know whether Lamb had any oriental blood in his veins, but certainly the most marked complexional characteristic of his head was a Jewish look, which pervaded every portion of it, even to the sallow and uniform complexion, and the black and crispy hair standing off loosely from the head, as if every single hair was independent of the rest. The nose, too, was large and slightly hooked, and the chin rounded and elevated to correspond. There was altogether a Rabbinical look about Lamb's head, which was at once striking and impressive."
"Thus much of form chiefly. In point of intellectual character and expression, a finer face was never seen, nor one more fully, however vaguely, corresponding with the mind whose features it interpreted. There was the gravity usually engendered by a life passed in book-learning, without the slightest tinge of that assumption and affectation which almost always attend the gravity so engendered; the intensity and elevation of general expression that mark high genius, without any of its pretension and its oddity: the sadness waiting on fruitless thoughts and baffled aspirations, but no evidences of that spirit of scrowning and contempt which these are apt to engender. Above all, there was a pervading sweetness and gentleness which went straight to the heart of every one who looked on it; and not less so perhaps that it bore about it an air, a something, seeming to tell that it was not put on—for nothing would be more unjust than to tax Lamb with assuming anything, even a virtue, which he did not possess—but preserved and persevered in spite of opposing and contradictory feelings within, that struggled in vain for mastery."

— Peter G. Patmore in My Friends and Acquaintances.

"Charles Lamb had a head worthy of Aristotle, with as fine a heart as ever beat in human bosom, and limbs very fragile to sustain it. . . . There never was a true portrait of Lamb. His features were strongly yet delicately cut; he had a fine eye as well as forehead; and no face carried in it greater marks of thought and feeling. . . . As his frame, so was his genius. It was as fit for thought as could be, and equally as unfit for action; and this rendered him melancholy, apprehensive, humorous, and willing to make the best of everything as it was, both from tenderness of heart, and abhorrence of alteration. His understanding was too great to admit an absurdity; his frame was not strong enough to deliver it from a fear. His sensibility to strong contrasts was the foundation of his humor, which was that of a wit at once melancholy and willing to be pleased. He would beard a superstition, and shudder at the old phantasm while he did
it. One could have imagined him cracking a jest in the teeth of a ghost, and then melting into thin air himself, out of sympathy with the awful." — Leigh Hunt in Autobiography.

His Conversation

"There was — himself, the most delightful, the most provoking, the most witty and sensible of men. He always made the best pun, and the best remark in the course of the evening. His serious conversation, like his serious writing, is his best. No one ever stammered out such fine, piquant, deep, eloquent things in half a dozen half-sentences as he does. His jests scald like tears: and he probes a question with a play upon words. ... There was no fuss or cant about him; nor were his sweets or his sours ever diluted with one particle of affectation.

— William Hazlitt in Conversation of Authors.

His Stammering

"In miscellaneous gatherings Lamb said little unless an opening arose for a pun. And how effectual that sort of small shot was from him, I need not say to anybody who remembers his infirmity of stammering, and his dexterous management of it for purposes of light and shade. He was often able to train the roll of stammers into settling upon the words immediately preceding the effective one, by which means the keynote of the jest or sarcasm, benefitting by the sudden liberation of his embargoed voice, was delivered with the force of a pistol-shot. That stammer was worth an annuity to him as an ally of his wit. Firing under cover of that advantage he did triple execution; for, in the first place, the distressing sympathy of the hearers with his distress of utterance won for him unavoidably the silence of deep attention; and then, whilst he had us all hoaxed into attitude of mute suspense by an appearance of distress that he perhaps did not really feel, down came a plunging shot into the very thick of us, with ten times the effect it would else have had."

— Thomas De Quincey in Biographical Essays.
His Humor

"Charles was frequently merry; but ever at the back of his merriment there reposed a grave depth, in which rich colors and tender lights were inlaid. For his jests sprang from his sensibility; which was as open to pleasure as to pain. This sensibility, if it somewhat impaired his vigor, led him into curious and delicate fancies, and taught him a liking for things of the highest relish, which a mere robust jester never tastes."

— Bryan W. Procter in Charles Lamb: a Memoir.

His Whimsicality

"His style of playful bluntness when speaking to his intimates was strangely pleasant — nay, welcome: it gave you the impression of his liking you well enough to be rough and unceremonious with you: it showed you that he felt at home with you. It accorded with what you knew to be at the root of an ironical assertion he made — that he always gave away gifts, parted with presents, and sold keepsakes. It underlay in sentiment the drollery and reversed truth of his saying to us, 'I always call my sister Maria when we are alone together, Mary when we are with our friends, and Moll before the servants.'"

— Mary Cowden Clarke in Recollections of Writers.

His Hatred of Affectation

"The very basis of Lamb's character was laid in horror of affectation. If he found himself by accident using a rather fine word, notwithstanding that it might be the most forcible in that place (the word arrest, suppose, in certain situations for the word catch), he would, if it were allowed to stand, make merry with his own grandiloquence at the moment; and, in after-moments, he would continually ridicule that class of words, by others carried to an extreme of pedantry."

— Thomas De Quincey in Literary Reminiscences.
"Lamb never affected any spurious gravity. Neither did he ever act the Grand Senior. He did not exact that common copy-book respect, which some asinine persons would fain command on account of the mere length of their years. . . . There was nothing of Sir Oracle about Lamb. On the contrary, at sight of a solemn visage that 'creamed and mantled like the standing pool,' he was the first to pitch a mischievous stone to disturb the duck-weed. 'He was a boy-man,' as he truly said of Elia; 'and his manners lagged behind his years.' He liked to herd with people younger than himself. Perhaps, in his fine generalizing way, he thought that, in relation to eternity, we are all contemporaries. However, without reckoning birthdays, it was always 'Hail fellow, well met;,' and although he was my elder by a quarter of a century, he never made me feel, in our excursions, that I was 'taking a walk with the schoolmaster.'"

— Thomas Hood in Literary Reminiscences.

"He was the most humble and unpretending of human beings, the most thoroughly sincere, the most impatient of simulation or dissimulation, and the one who threw himself the most unreservedly for your good opinion upon the plain natural expression of his real qualities, as nature had formed them, without artifice, or design, or disguise more than you find in the most childlike of children."

— Thomas De Quincey in Literary Reminiscences.

His Love for Old Authors

"No one, as I believe, will ever taste the flavor of certain writers as he has done. He was the last true lover of Antiquity. Although he admitted a few of the beauties of modern times, yet in his stronger love he soared backward to old acclivities, and loved to rest there. He had more real knowledge of old English literature than any man whom I ever knew. He was not an antiquarian. He neither hunted after commas, nor scribbled notes which confounded his text. The Spirit of the author descended upon him; and
he felt it. With Burton and Fuller, Jeremy Taylor, and Sir Thomas Browne, he was intimate. The ancient poets, chiefly the dramatic poets, were his especial friends. He knew every point and turn of their wit, all the beauty of their characters; loving each for some one distinguishing particular, and despising none."

— Bryan W. Procter in Charles Lamb: a Memoir.

"Mr. Lamb has the very soul of an antiquarian, as this implies a reflecting humanity; the film of the past hovers forever before him. He is shy, sensitive, the reverse of everything coarse, vulgar, obtrusive, and commonplace. His spirit clothes itself in the garb of elder time, homelier but more durable. . . .

"Mr. Lamb has a distaste to new faces, to new books, to new buildings, to new customs. . . . His affections revert to and settle on the past; but then even this must have something personal and local in it to interest him deeply and thoroughly. He pitches his tent in the suburbs of existing manners, and brings down his account of character to the few straggling remains of the last generation."

— William Hazlitt in Spirit of the Age.

"Mr. Lamb is the only imitator of old English style I can read with pleasure; and he is so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of his authors, that the idea of imitation is almost done away. There is an inward unction, a marrowy vein both in the thought and feeling, an intuition, deep and lively, of his subject, that carries off any quaintness or awkwardness arising from an antiquated style and dress. The matter is completely his own, though the manner is assumed. Perhaps his ideas are altogether so marked and individual, as to require their point and pungency to be neutralized by the affectation of a singular but traditional form of conveyance. Tricked out in the prevailing costume, they would probably seem more startling and out of the way. The old English authors, Burton, Fuller, Coryate, Sir Thomas Browne, are a kind of mediators between us and the more eccentric and whimsical
modern, reconciling us to his peculiarities. I must confess that what I like best of his papers under the signature of Elia (still I do not presume, amidst such excellence, to decide what is most excellent) is the account of Mrs. Battle's 'Opinions on Whist,' which is also the most free from obsolete allusions and turns of expression,—

"'A well of native English undefiled.'"

— William Hazlitt in *Table Talk*.

**His Dislike for the Country**

"Very curious was the antipathy of Charles to objects that are generally so pleasant to other men. It was not a passing humor, but a lifelong dislike. He admired the trees, and the meadows, and murmuring streams in poetry. I have heard him repeat some of Keats's beautiful lines in the 'Ode to the Nightingale,' about the 'pastoral eglantine,' with great delight. But that was another thing: that was an object in its proper place: that was a piece of art. Long ago he had admitted that the mountains of Cumberland were grand objects 'to look at, but' (as he said) 'the houses in the street were the places to live in.' I imagine that he would no more have received the former as an equivalent for his own modest home, than he would have accepted a portrait as a substitute for a friend. He was, beyond all other men whom I have met, essentially metropolitan. He loved 'the sweet security of streets,' as he said; 'I would set up my tabernacle there.'"

— Bryan W. Procter in *Charles Lamb: a Memoir*.

"The country was to Lamb precisely what London is to thoroughly country people born and bred, who, however they may long to see it for the first time, and are lost in a week's empty admiration of its 'sights and wonders,' would literally die of homesickness if compelled to remain long in it. I remember, when wandering once with Lamb among the pleasant scenery about Enfield shortly after his retirement there, I was congratulating him on the change between these walks and his accustomed ones about Islington, Dalston, and
the like. But I soon found that I was treading on tender ground, and he declared afterwards, with a vehemence of expression extremely unusual with him, and almost with tears in his eyes, that the most squalid garret in the most confined and noisome purlieu of London would be a paradise to him, compared with the fairest dwelling placed in the loveliest scenery of 'the country.' 'I hate the country!' he exclaimed, in a tone and with an emphasis which showed not only that the feeling came from the bottom of his soul, but that it was working ungentle and sinister results there, that he was himself almost alarmed at. Away from London, Lamb's spirits seemed to shrink and retire inwards and his body to fade and wither like a plant in an uncongenial soil.'

— Peter G. Patmore in My Friends and Acquaintances.

His Delight in Children

"He delighted in children, and in telling them strange, wild stories. A daughter of Sheridan Knowles used to tell how, as a very little girl, she had been taken out by Charles Lamb for a day's holiday to see all the shows, and how on meeting a Punch's show, they sat down together on a doorstep and saw the entertainment through not only one, but a whole series, which for him as well as for his little companion seemed to have an inexhaustible charm. Once too, I have heard on the same authority, he saw a group of hungry little faces wistfully looking into the window of a pastry cook's shop; he went in and came out, and distributed cakes all around."

— Percy Fitzgerald in Charles Lamb, his Friends, his Haunts, and his Books.

His Heroism

"The fact that distinguished Charles Lamb from other men was his entire devotion to one grand and tender purpose. There is, probably, a romance involved in every life. In his life it exceeded that of others. In gravity, in acuteness, in his noble battle with a great calamity, it was beyond
the rest. Neither the pleasure nor the toil ever distracted him from his holy purpose. Everything was made subservient to it. He had an insane sister, who, in a moment of uncontrovable madness, had unconsciously destroyed her own mother; and to protect and save this sister — a gentle woman, who had watched like a mother over his own infancy — the whole length of his life was devoted. What he endured, through the space of nearly forty years, from the incessant fear and frequent recurrence of his sister's insanity, can now only be conjectured. In this constant and uncomplaining endurance, and in his steady adherence to a great principle of conduct, his life was heroic.”

— Bryan W. Procter in Charles Lamb: a Memoir.

“Except to the few who were acquainted with the tragical occurrences of Lamb's early life, some of his peculiarities seemed strange, — to be forgiven, indeed, to the excellences of his nature and the delicacy of his genius, but still, in themselves, as much to be wondered at as deplored. The sweetness of his character, breathed through his writings, was felt even by strangers; but its heroic aspect was unguessed, even by many of his friends. Let them now consider it, and ask if the annals of self-sacrifice can show anything in human action and endurance more lovely than its self-devotion exhibits! It was not merely that he saw, through the ensanguined cloud of misfortune which had fallen upon his family, the unstained excellence of his sister, whose madness had caused it; that he was ready to take her to his own home with reverential affection, and cherish her through life; that he gave up for her sake all meaner and more selfish love, and all the hopes which youth blends with the passion which disturbs and ennobles it; not even that he did all this cheerfully, and without pluming himself upon his brotherly nobleness as a virtue, or seeking to repay himself (as some uneasy martyrs do) by small instalments of long repining, — but that he carried the spirit of the hour in which he first knew and took his course, to his last.”

— Thomas N. Talfourd in Memoirs of Charles Lamb.
huge charts, which subsequent discoveries have antiquated; — dusty maps of Mexico, dim as dreams, and soundings of the Bay of Panama! The long passages hung with buckets, appended, in idle row, to walls, whose substance might defy any, short of the last, conflagration: with vast ranges of cellarage under all, where dollars and pieces of eight once lay, an "unsunned heap,"¹ for Mammon to have solaced his solitary heart withal — long since dissipated, or scattered into air at the blast of the breaking of that famous Bubble. —

Such is the South-Sea House. At least such it was forty years ago, when I knew it — a magnificent relic! What alterations may have been made in it since, I have had no opportunities of verifying. Time, I take for granted, has not freshened it. No wind has resuscitated the face of the sleeping waters. A thicker crust by this time stagnates upon it. The moths, that were then battenning upon its obsolete ledgers and day-books, have rested from their depredations, but other light generations have succeeded, making fine fretwork among their single and double entries. Layers of dust have accumulated (a superfætation of dirt!) upon the old layers, that seldom used to be disturbed, save by some curious finger, now and then, inquisitive to explore the mode of book-keeping in Queen Anne's reign; or, with less hallowed curiosity, seeking to unveil some of the mysteries of that tremendous hoax, whose extent the petty peculators of our day look back upon with the same expression of incredulous admiration and hopeless ambition of rivalry, as would become the puny face of modern conspiracy contemplating the Titan size of Vaux's superhuman plot.

Peace to the manes of the Bubble! Silence and destitution are upon thy walls, proud house, for a memorial!

Situated, as thou art, in the very heart of stirring and living commerce — amid the fret and fever of speculation — with the Bank, and the 'Change, and the India House

¹ From Milton's Comus, 398. Lamb may also have had in mind the treasury of Mammon as described in the Faerie Queene, Book ii. canto 7, stanzas 3, 4, 5, and 20.
about thee, in the heyday of present prosperity, with their important faces, as it were, insulting thee, their poor neighbor out of business— to the idle and merely contemplative— to such as me, old house! there is a charm in thy quiet:— a cessation — a coolness from business — an indolence almost cloistral — which is delightful! With what reverence have I paced thy great bare rooms and courts at eventide! They spoke of the past:— the shade of some dead accountant, with visionary pen in ear, would flit by me, stiff as in life. Living accounts and accountants puzzle me. I have no skill in figuring. But thy great dead tomes, which scarce three degenerate clerks of the present day could lift from their enshrining shelves — with their old fantastic flourishes and decorative rubric interlacings — their sums in triple columniations, set down with formal superfluity of ciphers — with pious sentences at the beginning, without which our religious ancestors never ventured to open a book of business, or bill of lading — the costly vellum covers of some of them almost persuading us that we are got into some better library — are very agreeable and edifying spectacles. I can look upon these defunct dragons with complacency. Thy heavy odd-shaped ivory-handled penknives (our ancestors had everything on a larger scale than we have hearts for) are as good as anything from Herculaneum. The pounce-boxes of our days have gone retrograde.

The very clerks which I remember in the South-Sea House —I speak of forty years back — had an air very different from those in the public offices that I have had to do with since. They partook of the genius of the place!

They were mostly (for the establishment did not admit of superfluous salaries) bachelors. Generally (for they had not much to do) persons of a curious and speculative turn of mind. Old-fashioned, for a reason mentioned before; humorists, for they were of all descriptions; and, not having been brought together in early life (which has a tendency to assimilate the members of corporate bodies to each other), but, for the most part, placed in this house in ripe or middle age, they necessarily carried into it their
separate habits and oddities, unqualified, if I may so speak, as into a common stock. Hence they formed a sort of Noah’s ark. Odd fishes. A lay-monastery. Domestic retainers in a great house, kept more for show than use. Yet pleasant fellows, full of chat — and not a few among them had arrived at considerable proficiency on the German flute.

The cashier at that time was one Evans, a Cambro-Briton. He had something of the choleric complexion of his countrymen stamped on his visage, but was a worthy, sensible man at bottom. He wore his hair, to the last, powdered and frizzed out, in the fashion which I remember to have seen in caricatures of what were termed, in my young days, *Maccaronies*. He was the last of that race of beaux. Melancholy as a gib-cat over his counter all the forenoon, I think I see him making up his cash (as they call it) with tremulous fingers, as if he feared every one about him was a defaulter; in his hypochondry, ready to imagine himself one; haunted, at least, with the idea of the possibility of his becoming one: his tristful visage clearing up a little over his roast neck of veal at Anderton’s at two (where his picture still hangs, taken a little before his death by desire of the master of the coffee-house which he had frequented for the last five-and-twenty years), but not attaining the meridian of its animation till evening brought on the hour of tea and visiting. The simultaneous sound of his well-known rap at the door with the stroke of the clock announcing six, was a topic of never-failing mirth in the families which this dear old bachelor gladdened with his presence. Then was his *forte*, his glorified hour! How would he chirp and expand over a muffin! How would he dilate into secret history! His countryman, Pennant himself, in particular, could not be more eloquent than he in relation to old and new London — the site of old theatres, churches, streets gone to decay — where Rosamond’s pond stood — the Mulberry Gardens — and the Conduit in Cheap — with many a pleasant anecdote, derived from paternal tradition, of those grotesque figures which Hogarth has immortalized in his picture of *Noon* — the worthy descendants of those heroic confessors, who, flying
to this country from the wrath of Louis the Fourteenth and his dragoons, kept alive the flame of pure religion in the sheltering obscurities of Hog Lane and the vicinity of the Seven Dials!

Deputy, under Evans, was Thomas Tame. He had the air and stoop of a nobleman. You would have taken him for one, had you met him in one of the passages leading to Westminster Hall. By stoop, I mean that gentle bending of the body forwards, which, in great men, must be supposed to be the effect of an habitual condescending attention to the applications of their inferiors. While he held you in converse, you felt strained to the height in the colloquy. The conference over, you were at leisure to smile at the comparative insignificance of the pretensions which had just awed you. His intellect was of the shallowest order. It did not reach to a saw or a proverb. His mind was in its original state of white paper. A sucking babe might have posed him. What was it then? Was he rich? Alas, no! Thomas Tame was very poor. Both he and his wife looked outwardly gentlefolks, when I fear all was not well at all times within. She had a neat meagre person, which it was evident she had not sinned in over-pampering; but in its veins was noble blood. She traced her descent, by some labyrinth of relationship, which I never thoroughly understood, — much less can explain with any heraldic certainty at this time of day, — to the illustrious but unfortunate house of Derwentwater. This was the secret of Thomas's stoop. This was the thought — the sentiment — the bright solitary star of your lives, — ye mild and happy pair, — which cheered you in the night of intellect, and in the obscurity of your station! This was to you instead of riches, instead of rank, instead of glittering attainments: and it was worth them all together. You insulted none with it; but, while you wore it as a piece of defensive armor only, no insult likewise could reach you through it. Decus et solamen.¹

Of quite another stamp was the then accountant, John Tipp. He neither pretended to high blood, nor in good

¹ Honor and consolation, Vergil, Aeneid, x. 858.
truth cared one fig about the matter. He "thought an accountant the greatest character in the world, and himself the greatest accountant in it." Yet John was not without his hobby. The fiddle relieved his vacant hours. He sang, certainly, with other notes than to the Orphean lyre. He did, indeed, scream and scrape most abominably. His fine suite of official rooms in Threadneedle Street, which, without anything very substantial appended to them, were enough to enlarge a man's notions of himself that lived in them (I know not who is the occupier of them now\(^1\)), resounded fortnightly to the notes of a concert of "sweet breasts," as our ancestors would have called them, culled from club-rooms, and orchestras—chorus singers—first and second violoncellos—double basses—and clarionets—who ate his cold mutton, and drank his punch, and praised his ear. He sat like Lord Midas among them. But at the desk Tipp was quite another sort of creature. Thence all ideas, that were purely ornamental, were banished. You could not speak of anything romantic without rebuke. Politics were excluded. A newspaper was thought too refined and abstracted. The whole duty of man consisted in writing off dividend warrants. The striking of the annual balance in the company's books (which, perhaps, differed from the balance of last year in the sum of £25, 1s. 6d.) occupied his days and nights for a month previous. Not that Tipp was blind to the deadness of things (as they called them in the city) in his beloved house, or did not sigh for a return of the old stirring days when South-Sea hopes were young (he was indeed equal to the wielding of any the most intricate accounts of the most flourishing company in these or those days): but to a genuine accountant the difference

\(^1\) I have since been informed, that the present tenant of them is a Mr. Lamb, a gentleman who is happy in the possession of some choice pictures, and among them a rare portrait of Milton, which I mean to do myself the pleasure of going to see, and at the same time to refresh my memory with the sight of old scenes. Mr. Lamb has the character of a right-courteous and communicative collector. [Lamb's note.]
of proceeds is as nothing. The fractional farthing is as dear to his heart as the thousands which stand before it. He is the true actor, who, whether his part be a prince or a peasant, must act it with like intensity. With Tipp form was everything. His life was formal. His actions seemed ruled with a ruler. His pen was not less erring than his heart. He is the true actor, who, whether his part be a prince or a peasant, must act it with like intensity. With Tipp form was everything. His life was formal. His actions seemed ruled with a ruler. His pen was not less erring than his heart. He is the true actor, who, whether his part be a prince or a peasant, must act it with like intensity. With Tipp form was everything. His life was formal. His actions seemed ruled with a ruler. His pen was not less erring than his heart. He is the true actor, who, whether his part be a prince or a peasant, must act it with like intensity. With Tipp form was everything. His life was formal. 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but in two forgotten volumes, which I had the good fortune to rescue from a stall in Barbican, not three days ago, and found thee terse, fresh, epigrammatic, as alive. Thy wit is a little gone by in these fastidious days — thy topics are staled by the "new-born gauds"\(^1\) of the time: — but great thou used to be in Public Ledgers, and in Chronicles, upon Chatham, and Shelburne, and Rockingham, and Howe, and Burgoyne, and Clinton, and the war which ended in the tearing from Great Britain her rebellious colonies, — and Keppel, and Wilkes, and Sawbridge, and Bull, and Dunning, and Pratt, and Richmond — and such small politics. —

A little less facetious, and a great deal more obstreperous, was fine rattling, rattleheaded Plumer. He was descended, — not in a right line, reader (for his lineal pretensions, like his personal, favored a little of the sinister bend) — from the Plumers of Hertfordshire. So tradition gave him out; and certain family features not a little sanctioned the opinion. Certainly old Walter Plumer (his reputed author) had been a rake in his days, and visited much in Italy, and had seen the world. He was uncle, bachelor-uncle, to the fine old whig still living, who has represented the county in so many successive parliaments, and has a fine old mansion near Ware. Walter flourished in George the Second’s days, and was the same who was summoned before the House of Commons about a business of franks, with the old Duchess of Marlborough. You may read of it in Johnson’s Life of Cave. Cave came off cleverly in that business. It is certain our Plumer did nothing to discountenance the rumor. He rather seemed pleased whenever it was, with all gentleness, insinuated. But besides his family pretensions, Plumer was an engaging fellow, and sang gloriously. —

Not so sweetly sang Plumer as thou sangest, mild, child-like, pastoral M——; a flute’s breathing less divinely whispering than thy Arcadian melodies, when, in tones worthy of Arden, thou didst chant that song sung by Amiens to the banished duke, which proclaims the winter wind more lenient than for a man to be ungrateful. Thy sire was old surly

\(^1\) Troilus and Cressida, iii, 3. 175.
M——, the unapproachable church-warden of Bishopsgate. He knew not what he did, when he begat thee, like spring, gentle offspring of blustering winter: — only unfortunate in thy ending, which should have been mild, conciliatory, swan-like. ——

Much remains to sing. Many fantastic shapes rise up, but they must be mine in private: — already I have fooled the reader to the top of his bent; else could I omit that strange creature Woollett, who existed in trying the question, and *bought litigations*! — and still stranger, inimitable, solemn Hepworth, from whose gravity Newton might have deduced the law of gravitation. How profoundly would he nib a pen — with what deliberation would he wet a wafer! ——

But it is time to close — night’s wheels are rattling fast over me — it is proper to have done with this solemn mockery.

Reader, what if I have been playing with thee all this while — peradventure the very *names*, which I have summoned up before thee, are fantastic — insubstantial — like Henry Pimpernel, and old John Naps of Greece: ——

Be satisfied that something answering to them has had a being. Their importance is from the past.

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Oxford in the Vacation

Casting a preparatory glance at the bottom of this article — as the very connoisseur in prints, with cursory eye (which, while it reads, seems as though it read not), never fails to consult the *quis sculpsit*¹ in the corner, before he pronounces some rare piece to be a Vivares, or a Woollett — methinks I hear you exclaim, Reader, *Who is Elia??*

Because in my last I tried to divert thee with some half-forgotten humors of some old clerks defunct, in an old house of business, long since gone to decay, doubtless you have already set me down in your mind as one of the self-

¹The signature of the engraver. “Who was the engraver?” is the literal translation.
same college—a votary of the desk—a notched and cropt scrivener—one that sucks his sustenance, as certain sick people are said to do, through a quill.

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

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

Andrew and John, men famous in old times.

—we were used to keep all their days holy, as long back as when I was at school at Christ's. I remember their effigies, by the same token, in the old Baskett Prayer Book. There hung Peter in his uneasy posture—holy Bartlemy
in the troublesome act of flaying, after the famous Marsyas by Spagnoletti.—I honored them all, and could almost have wept the defalcation of Iscariot—so much did we love to keep holy memories sacred:—only methought I a little grudged at the coalition of the better Jude with Simon—clubbing (as it were) their sanctities together, to make up one poor gaudy-day between them—as an economy unworthy of the dispensation.

These were bright visitations in a scholar’s and a clerk’s life—“far off their coming shone.”¹—I was as good as an almanac in those days. I could have told you such a saint’s-day falls out next week, or the week after. Peradventure the Epiphany, by some periodical infelicity, would, once in six years, merge in a Sabbath. Now am I little better than one of the profane. Let me not be thought to arraign the wisdom of my civil superiors, who have judged the further observation of these holy tides to be papistical, superstitious. Only in a custom of such long standing, methinks, if their Holinesses the Bishops had, in decency, been first sounded—but I am wading out of my depths. I am not the man to decide the limits of civil and ecclesiastical authority—I am plain Elia—no Selden, nor Archbishop Usher—though at present in the thick of their books, here in the heart of learning, under the shadow of the mighty Bodley.

I can here play the gentleman, enact the student. To such a one as myself, who has been defrauded in his young years of the sweet food of academic institution, nowhere is so pleasant, to while away a few idle weeks at, as one or other of the Universities. Their vacation, too, at this time of the year, falls in so pat with ours. Here I can take my walks unmolested, and fancy myself of what degree or standing I please. I seem admitted ad eundem.² I fetch up past opportunities. I can rise at the chapel-bell, and dream

¹ *Paradise Lost*, vi. 767–769.
² For *ad eundem gradum*, admitted without examination to the same degree; a privilege mutually granted the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford.
that it rings for me. In moods of humility I can be a Sizar, or a Servitor. When the peacock vein rises, I strut a Gentleman Commoner. In graver moments, I proceed Master of Arts. Indeed I do not think I am much unlike that respectable character. I have seen your dim-eyed vergers, and bed-makers in spectacles, drop a bow or a curtsy, as I pass, wisely mistaking me for something of the sort. I go about in black, which favors the notion. Only in Christ Church reverend quadrangle, I can be content to pass for nothing short of a Seraphic Doctor.

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

Antiquity! thou wondrous charm, what art thou? that, being nothing, art everything! When thou wert, thou wert not antiquity—then thou wert nothing, but hadst a remoter antiquity, as thou calledst it, to look back to with blind veneration; thou thyself being to thyself flat, jejune, modern! What mystery lurks in this retroversion? or what half Januses\(^1\) are we, that cannot look forward with the same idolatry with which we for ever revert! The mighty future is as nothing, being everything! the past is everything, being nothing!

What were thy dark ages? Surely the sun rose as brightly then as now, and man got him to his work in the morning. Why is it we can never hear mention of them without

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\(^{1}\) Januses of one face. — Sir Thomas Browne. [Lamb's note.]
an accompanying feeling, as though a palpable obscure had dimmed the face of things, and that our ancestors wandered to and fro groping!

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

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

Still less have I curiosity to disturb the elder repose of MSS. Those variae lectiones,¹ so tempting to the more erudite palates, do but disturb and unsettle my faith. I am no Herculanean raker. The credit of the three witnesses might have slept unimpeached for me. I leave these curiosities to Porson, and to G. D.—whom, by the way, I found busy as a moth over some rotten archive, rummaged out of some seldom-explored press, in a nook at Oriel. With long poring, he is grown almost into a book. He stood as passive as one by the side of the old shelves. I longed to new-coat him in russia, and assign him his place. He might have mustered for a tall Scapula.

D. is assiduous in his visits to these seats of learning. No inconsiderable portion of his moderate fortune, I apprehend, is consumed in journeys between them and Clifford’s Inn — where, like a dove on the asp’s nest, he has long taken up his unconscious abode, amid an incongruous assembly of attorneys, attorneys’ clerks, apparitors, promoters, vermin of the law, among whom he sits, “in calm and sinless peace.”²

¹ Various readings; referring to the differences in the several manuscripts.

² An adaptation from Wordsworth’s The White Doe of Rylstone, line 48.
The fangs of the law pierce him not — the winds of litigation blow over his humble chambers — the hard sheriff’s officer moves his hat as he passes — legal or illegal discourtesy touches him — none thinks of offering violence or injustice to him — you would as soon “strike an abstract idea.”

D. has been engaged, he tells me, through a course of laborious years, in an investigation into all curious matter connected with the two Universities; and has lately lit upon a MS. collection of charters, relative to C——, by which he hopes to settle some disputed points — particularly that long controversy between them as to priority of foundation. The ardor with which he engages in these liberal pursuits, I am afraid, has not met with all the encouragement it deserved, either here or at C——. Your caputs, and heads of colleges, care less than anybody else about these questions. — Contented to suck the milky fountains of their Alma Maters, without inquiring into the venerable gentlewomen’s years, they rather hold such curiosities to be impertinent — unreverend. They have their good glebe lands in manu,¹ and care not much to rake into the title-deeds. I gather at least so much from other sources, for D. is not a man to complain.

D. started like an unbroke heifer, when I interrupted him. A priori ² it was not very probable that we should have met in Oriel. But D. would have done the same, had I accosted him on the sudden in his own walks in Clifford’s Inn, or in the Temple. In addition to a provoking shortsightedness (the effect of late studies and watchings at the midnight oil), D. is the most absent of men. He made a call the other morning at our friend M.’s in Bedford Square; and, finding nobody at home, was ushered into the hall, where, asking for pen and ink, with great exactitude of purpose he enters me his name in the book — which ordinarily lies about in such places, to record the failures of the untimely or unfortunate visitor — and takes his leave with many ceremonies, and professions of regret. Some two or three hours after, his walking destinies returned

¹ In hand; in their possession. ² Presumptively.
him into the same neighborhood again, and again the quiet image of the fireside circle at M.’s—Mrs. M. presiding at it like a Queen Lar, with pretty A. S. at her side—striking irresistibly on his fancy, he makes another call (forgetting that they were “certainly not to return from the country before that day week”) and disappointed a second time, inquires for pen and paper as before: again the book is brought and in the line just above that in which he is about to print his second name (his re-script)—his first name (scarce dry) looks out upon him like another Sosia, or as if a man should suddenly encounter his own duplicate!—The effect may be conceived. D. made many a good resolution against any such lapses in future. I hope he will not keep them too rigorously.

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

[D. commenced life, after a course of hard study in the house of “pure Emanuel,” as usher to a knavish fanatic schoolmaster at . . ., at a salary of eight pounds per annum, with board and lodging. Of this poor stipend, he never received above half in all the laborious years he served this man. He tells a pleasant anecdote, that when poverty, staring out at his ragged knees, has sometimes compelled him, against the modesty of his nature, to hint at arrears, Dr. —— would take no immediate notice, but after supper, when the school was called together to even-song, he would never fail to introduce some instructive homily against riches, and the corruption of the heart occasioned through the
desire of them — ending with “Lord, keep Thy servants, above all things, from the heinous sin of avarice. Having food and raiment, let us therewithal be content. Give me Agur’s wish” — and the like — which, to the little auditory, sounded like a doctrine full of Christian prudence and simplicity, but to poor D. was a receipt in full for that quarter’s demand at least.

And D. has been under-working for himself ever since; — drudging at low rates for unappreciating booksellers, — wasting his fine erudition in silent corrections of the classics, and in those unostentatious but solid services to learning which commonly fall to the lot of laborious scholars, who have not the heart to sell themselves to the best advantage. He has published poems, which do not sell, because their character is unobtrusive, like his own, and because he has been too much absorbed in ancient literature to know what the popular mark in poetry is, even if he could have hit it. And, therefore, his verses are properly, what he terms them, crotchets; voluntaries; odes to liberty and spring; effusions; little tributes and offerings, left behind him upon tables and window-seats at parting from friends’ houses; and from all the inns of hospitality, where he has been courteously (or but tolerably) received in his pilgrimage. If his muse of kindness halt a little behind the strong lines in fashion in this excitement-loving age, his prose is the best of the sort in the world, and exhibits a faithful transcript of his own healthy, natural mind, and cheerful, innocent tone of conversation.]

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

FIVE AND THIRTY YEARS AGO

In Mr. Lamb’s “Works,” published a year or two since, I find a magnificent eulogy on my old school,¹ such as it was, or now appears to him to have been, between the years 1782 and 1789. It happens, very oddly, that my own standing at Christ’s was nearly corresponding with his; and, with all gratitude to him for his enthusiasm for the cloisters, I think he has contrived to bring together whatever can be said in praise of them, dropping all the other side of the argument most ingeniously.

I remember L. at school; and can well recollect that he had some peculiar advantages, which I and others of his school-fellows had not. His friends lived in town, and were near at hand; and he had the privilege of going to see them, almost as often as he wished, through some invidious distinction, which was denied to us. The present worthy sub-treasurer to the Inner Temple can explain how that happened. He had his tea and hot rolls in a morning, while we were battening upon our quarter of a penny loaf — our crug — moistened with attenuated small beer, in wooden piggins, smacking of the pitched leathern jack it was poured from. Our Monday’s milk porritch, blue and tasteless, and the pease soup of Saturday, coarse and choking, were enriched for him with a slice of “extraordinary bread and butter,” from the hot-loaf of the Temple. The Wednesday’s mess of millet, somewhat less repugnant — (we had three banyan to four meat days in the week) — was endeared to his palate with a lump of double-refined, and a smack of ginger (to make it go down the more glibly) or the fragrant cinnamon. In lieu of our half-pickled Sundays, or quite fresh boiled beef on Thursdays (strong as caro equina²), with detestable marigolds floating in the pail to poison the

¹ Recollections of Christ’s Hospital. [Lamb’s note.] ² Horseflesh.
broth — our scanty mutton scrags on Fridays — and rather more savory, but grudging, portions of the same flesh, rotten-roasted or rare, on the Tuesdays (the only dish which excited our appetites, and disappointed our stomachs, in almost equal proportion) — he had his hot plate of roast veal, or the more tempting griskin (exotics unknown to our palates), cooked in the paternal kitchen (a great thing), and brought him daily by his maid or aunt! I remember the good old relative (in whom love forbade pride) squatting down upon some odd stone in a by-nook of the cloisters, disclosing the viands (of higher regale than those cates which the ravens ministered to the Tishbite); and the contending passions of L. at the unfolding. There was love for the bringer; shame for the thing brought, and the manner of its bringing; sympathy for those who were too many to share in it; and, at top of all, hunger (eldest, strongest of the passions!) predominant, breaking down the stony fences of shame, and awkwardness, and a troubling over-consciousness.

I was a poor friendless boy. My parents, and those who should care for me, were far away. Those few acquaintances of theirs, which they could reckon upon being kind to me in the great city, after a little forced notice, which they had the grace to take of me on my first arrival in town, soon grew tired of my holiday visits. They seemed to them to recur too often, though I thought them few enough; and, one after another, they all failed me, and I felt myself alone among six hundred playmates.

O the cruelty of separating a poor lad from his early homestead! The yearnings which I used to have towards it in those unfledged years! How, in my dreams, would my native town (far in the west) come back, with its church, and trees, and faces! How I would wake weeping, and in the anguish of my heart exclaim upon sweet Calne in Wiltshire!

To this late hour of my life, I trace impressions left by the recollection of those friendless holidays. The long warm days of summer never return but they bring with them a gloom from the haunting memory of those whole-day leaves
when, by some strange arrangement, we were turned out, for the live-long day, upon our own hands, whether we had friends to go to, or none. I remember those bathing-excursions to the New River, which L. recalls with such relish, better, I think, than he can — for he was a home-seeking lad, and did not much care for such water-pastimes: — How merrily we would sally forth into the fields; and strip under the first warmth of the sun; and wanton like young dace in the streams; getting us appetites for noon, which those of us that were penniless (our scantly morning crust long since exhausted) had not the means of allaying — while the cattle, and the birds, and the fishes, were at feed about us, and we had nothing to satisfy our cravings — the very beauty of the day, and the exercise of the pastime, and the sense of liberty, setting a keener edge upon them! — How faint and languid, finally, we would return, towards night-fall, to our desired morsel, half-rejoicing, half-reluctant, that the hours of our uneasy liberty had expired!

It was worse in the days of winter, to go prowling about the streets objectless — shivering at cold windows of print shops, to extract a little amusement; or haphazardly, as a last resort, in the hopes of a little novelty, to pay a fifty-times repeated visit (where our individual faces should be as well known to the warden as those of his own charges) to the Lions in the Tower — to whose levée, by courtesy immemorial, we had a prescriptive title to admission.

L.'s governor (so we called the patron who presented us to the foundation) lived in a manner under his paternal roof. Any complaint which he had to make was sure of being attended to. This was understood at Christ's, and was an effectual screen to him against the severity of masters, or worse tyranny of the monitors. The oppressions of these young brutes are heart-sickening to call to recollection. I have been called out of my bed, and waked for the purpose, in the coldest winter nights — and this not once, but night after night — in my shirt, to receive the discipline of a leathern thong, with eleven other sufferers, because it pleased my callow overseer, when there has been any talking heard
after we were gone to bed, to make the six last beds in the dormitory, where the youngest children of us slept, answerable for an offence they neither dared to commit, nor had the power to hinder. — The same execrable tyranny drove the younger part of us from the fires, when our feet were perishing with snow; and, under the cruellest penalties, forbade the indulgence of a drink of water, when we lay in sleepless summer nights, fevered with the season and the day's sports.

There was one H——, who, I learned in after days, was seen expiating some maturer offence in the hulks. (Do I flatter myself in fancying that this might be the planter of that name, who suffered — at Nevis, I think, or St. Kitts, — some few years since? My friend Tobin was the benevolent instrument of bringing him to the gallows.) This petty Nero actually branded a boy, who had offended him, with a red-hot iron; and nearly starved forty of us, with exacting contributions, to the one half of our bread, to pamper a young ass, which, incredible as it may seem, with the connivance of the nurse's daughter (a young flame of his) he had contrived to smuggle in, and keep upon the leads of the ward, as they called our dormitories. This game went on for better than a week, till the foolish beast, not able to fare well but he must cry roast meat — happier than Caligula's minion, could he have kept his own counsel — but, foolisher, alas! than any of his species in the fables — waxing fat, and kicking, in the fulness of bread, one unlucky minute would needs proclaim his good fortune to the world below; and, laying out his simple throat, blew such a ram's horn blast, as (toppling down the walls of his own Jericho) set concealment any longer at defiance. The client was dismissed, with certain attentions, to Smithfield; but I never understood that the patron underwent any censure on the occasion. This was in the stewardship of L.'s admired Perry.

Under the same facile administration, can L. have forgotten the cool impunity with which the nurses used to carry away openly, in open platters, for their own tables, one out of two of every hot joint, which the careful matron had been seeing scrupulously weighed out for our dinners? These things
CHRIST'S HOSPITAL
were daily practised in that magnificent apartment, which L. (grown connoisseur since, we presume) praises so highly for the grand paintings "by Verrio and others," with which it is "hung round and adorned." But the sight of sleek well-fed blue-coat boys in pictures was, at that time, I believe, little consolatory to him, or us, the living ones, who saw the better part of our provisions carried away before our faces by harpies; and ourselves reduced (with the Trojan in the hall of Dido)

To feed our mind with idle portraiture.¹

L. has recorded the repugnance of the school to gags, or the fat of fresh beef boiled; and sets it down to some superstition. But these unctuous morsels are never grateful to young palates (children are universally fat-haters), and in strong, coarse, boiled meats, unsalted, are detestable. A gag-eater in our time was equivalent to a goule, and held in equal detestation. — suffered under the imputation:

. . . . 'Twas said
He ate strange flesh.²

He was observed, after dinner, carefully to gather up the remnants left at his table (not many, nor very choice fragments, you may credit me) — and, in an especial manner, these disreputable morsels, which he would convey away, and secretly stow in the settle that stood at his bedside. None saw when he ate them. It was rumored that he privately devoured them in the night. He was watched, but no traces of such midnight practices were discoverable. Some reported, that, on leave-days, he had been seen to carry out of the bounds a large blue check handkerchief, full of something. This then must be the accursed thing. Conjecture next was at work to imagine how he could dispose of it. Some said he sold it to the beggars. This belief generally prevailed. He went about moping. None spake to him. No one would play with him. He was excommunicated; put out of the pale of the school. He was too powerful a

¹ Cf. Vergil's Æneid, i. 464. ² Cf. Antony and Cleopatra, i. 4. 67–68.
boy to be beaten, but he underwent every mode of that negative punishment, which is more grievous than many stripes. Still he persevered. At length he was observed by two of his school-fellows, who were determined to get at the secret, and had traced him one leave-day for that purpose, to enter a large worn-out building, such as there exist specimens of in Chancery Lane, which are let out to various scales of pauperism, with open door, and a common staircase. After him they silently slunk in, and followed by stealth up four flights, and saw him tap at a poor wicket, which was opened by an aged woman, meanly clad. Suspicion was now ripened into certainty. The informers had secured their victim. They had him in their toils. Accusation was formally preferred, and retribution most signal was looked for. Mr. Hathaway, the then steward (for this happened a little after my time), with that patient sagacity which tempered all his conduct, determined to investigate the matter, before he proceeded to sentence. The result was, that the supposed mendicants, the receivers or purchasers of the mysterious scraps, turned out to be the parents of ——, an honest couple come to decay, — whom this seasonable supply had, in all probability, saved from mendicancy: and that this young stork, at the expense of his own good name, had all this while been only feeding the old birds! — The governors on this occasion, much to their honor, voted a present relief to the family of ——, and presented him with a silver medal. The lesson which the steward read upon rash judgment, on the occasion of publicly delivering the medal to ——, I believe, would not be lost upon his auditory. — I had left school then, but I well remember ——. He was a tall, shambling youth, with a cast in his eye, not at all calculated to conciliate hostile prejudices. I have since seen him carrying a baker’s basket. I think I heard he did not do quite so well by himself as he had done by the old folks.

I was a hypochondriac lad; and the sight of a boy in fetters, upon the day of my first putting on the blue clothes, was not exactly fitted to assuage the natural terrors of initiation. I was of tender years, barely turned of seven; and had
only read of such things in books, or seen them but in dreams. I was told he had run away. This was the punishment for the first offence. — As a novice I was soon after taken to see the dungeons. These were little, square, Bedlam cells, where a boy could just lie at his length upon straw and a blanket — a mattress, I think, was afterwards substituted — with a peep of light, let in askance, from a prison-orifice at top, barely enough to read by. Here the poor boy was locked in by himself all day, without sight of any but the porter who brought him his bread and water — who might not speak to him; — or of the beadle, who came twice a week to call him out to receive his periodical chastisement, which was almost welcome, because it separated him for a brief interval from solitude: — and here he was shut up by himself of nights, out of the reach of any sound, to suffer whatever horrors the weak nerves, and superstition incident to his time of life, might subject him to.¹ This was the penalty for the second offence. Wouldst thou like, Reader, to see what became of him in the next degree?

The culprit, who had been a third time an offender, and whose expulsion was at this time deemed irreversible, was brought forth, as at some solemn auto da fé,² arrayed in uncouth and most appalling attire—all trace of his late "watchet weeds" carefully effaced, he was exposed in a jacket, resembling those which London lamplighters formerly delighted in, with a cap of the same. The effect of this divestiture was such as the ingenious devisers of it could have anticipated. With his pale and frightened features, it was as if some of those disfigurements in Dante had seized upon him. In this dis-

¹ One or two instances of lunacy, or attempted suicide, accordingly, at length convinced the governors of the impolicy of this part of the sentence, and the midnight torture to the spirits was dispensed with. — This fancy of dungeons for children was a sprout of Howard's brain; for which (saving the reverence due to Holy Paul) methinks I could willingly spit upon his statue. [Lamb’s note.]

² Act of faith (Portuguese). The ceremony of executing a judgment of the Inquisition by which a heretic was condemned to be burned.
guisement he was brought into the hall (L.'s favorite state-
room), where awaited him the whole number of his school-
fellows, whose joint lessons and sports he was thenceforth to
share no more; the awful presence of the steward, to be seen
for the last time; of the executioner beadle, clad in his state
robe for the occasion; and of two faces more, of direr import,
because never but in these extremities visible. These were
governors; two of whom, by choice, or charter, were always
accustomed to officiate at these Ultima Supplicia;¹ not to
mitigate (so at least we understood it), but to enforce the
uttermost stripe. Old Bamber Gascoigne, and Peter Aubert,
I remember, were colleagues on one occasion, when the beadle
turning rather pale, a glass of brandy was ordered to
prepare him for the mysteries. The scourging was, after the old
Roman fashion, long and stately. The lictor accompanied
the criminal quite round the hall. We were generally too
faint with attending to the previous disgusting circumstances
to make accurate report with our eyes of the degree of corporal
suffering inflicted. Report, of course, gave out the back
knotty and livid. After scourging, he was made over, in his
San Benito, to his friends, if he had any (but commonly such
poor runagates were friendless), or to his parish officer, who,
to enhance the effect of the scene, had his station allotted to
him on the outside of the hall gate.

These solemn pageantries were not played off so often as
to spoil the general mirth of the community. We had
plenty of exercise and recreation after school hours; and,
for myself, I must confess that I was never happier than in
them. The Upper and the Lower Grammar Schools were held
in the same room; and an imaginary line only divided their
bounds. Their character was as different as that of the
inhabitants on the two sides of the Pyrenees. The Rev.
James Boyer was the Upper Master, but the Rev. Matthew
Field presided over that portion of the apartment of which I
had the good fortune to be a member. We lived a life as
careless as birds. We talked and did just what we pleased,
and nobody molested us. We carried an accidence, or a

¹ Extreme punishments, i.e. capital punishments.
grammar, for form; but, for any trouble it gave us, we might take two years in getting through the verbs deponent, and another two in forgetting all that we had learned about them. There was now and then the formality of saying a lesson, but if you had not learned it, a brush across the shoulders (just enough to disturb a fly) was the sole remonstrance. Field never used the rod; and in truth he wielded the cane with no great good will — holding it "like a dancer." ¹ It looked in his hands rather like an emblem than an instrument of authority; and an emblem, too, he was ashamed of. He was a good easy man, that did not care to ruffle his own peace, nor perhaps set any great consideration upon the value of juvenile time. He came among us, now and then, but often staid away whole days from us; and when he came, it made no difference to us — he had his private room to retire to, the short time he staid, to be out of the sound of our noise. Our mirth and uproar went on. We had classics of our own, without being beholden to "insolent Greece or haughty Rome," ² that passed current among us — Peter Wilkins — The Adventures of the Hon. Capt. Robert Boyle — the Fortunate Blue-Coat Boy — and the like. Or we cultivated a turn for mechanic or scientific operations; making little sun-dials of paper; or weaving those ingenious parentheses, called cat-cradles; or making dry peas to dance upon the end of a tin pipe; or studying the art military over that laudable game "French and English," and a hundred other such devices to pass away the time — mixing the useful with the agreeable — as would have made the souls of Rousseau and John Locke chuckle to have seen us.

Matthew Field belonged to that class of modest divines who affect to mix in equal proportion the gentleman, the scholar, and the Christian; but, I know not how, the first ingredient is generally found to be the predominating dose in the composition. He was engaged in gay parties, or with his courtly bow at some episcopal levée, when he should have been attending upon us. He had for many years the classical charge

¹ Antony and Cleopatra, iii. 2. 35–36.
² From Ben Jonson's Lines on Shakespeare.
of a hundred children, during the four or five first years of their education; and his very highest form seldom proceeded further than two or three of the introductory fables of Phædrus. How things were suffered to go on thus, I cannot guess. Boyer, who was the proper person to have remedied these abuses, always affected, perhaps felt, a delicacy in interfering in a province not strictly his own. I have not been without my suspicions, that he was not altogether displeased at the contrast we presented to his end of the school. We were a sort of Helots to his young Spartans. He would sometimes, with ironic deference, send to borrow a rod of the Under Master, and then, with sardonic grin, observe to one of his upper boys, “how neat and fresh the twigs looked.” While his pale students were battering their brains over Xenophon and Plato, with a silence as deep as that enjoined by the Samite, we were enjoying ourselves at our ease in our little Goshen. We saw a little into the secrets of his discipline, and the prospect did but the more reconcile us to our lot. His thunders rolled innocuous for us; his storms came near, but never touched us; contrary to Gideon’s miracle, while all around were drenched, our fleece was dry. His boys turned out the better scholars; we, I suspect, have the advantage in temper. His pupils cannot speak of him without something of terror allaying their gratitude; the remembrance of Field comes back with all the soothing images of indolence, and summer slumbers, and work like play, and innocent idleness, and Elysian exemptions, and life itself a “playing holiday.”

Though sufficiently removed from the jurisdiction of Boyer, we were near enough (as I have said) to understand a little of his system. We occasionally heard sounds of the Ullulantes, and caught glances of Tartarus. B. was a rabid pedant. His English style was crampt to barbarism. His Easter anthems (for his duty obliged him to those periodical flights) were grating as scannell pipes. — He would laugh —

1 Cowley. [Lamb’s note.]  
2 I. Henry IV. i. 2. 227.  
3 In this and everything B. was the antipodes of his coadjutor. While the former was digging his brains for crude anthems, worth
ay, and heartily — but then it must be at Flaccus’s quibble about *Rex* \(^1\) — or at the *tristis severitas in vultu*, \(^2\) or *inspicere in patinas*, \(^3\) of Terence — thin jests, which at their first broaching could hardly have had *vis* enough to move a Roman muscle. — He had two wigs, both pedantic, but of different omen. The one serene, smiling, fresh powdered, betokening a mild day. The other, an old discolored, unkempt, angry caxon, denoting frequent and bloody execution. Woe to the school, when he made his morning appearance in his *passy*, or *passionate wig*. No comet expounded surer. — J. B. had a heavy hand. I have known him double his knotty fist at a poor trembling child (the maternal milk hardly dry upon its lips) with a “Sirrah, do you presume to set your wits at me?” — Nothing was more common than to see him make a headlong entry into the schoolroom, from his inner recess, or library, and, with turbulent eye, singling out a lad, roar out, “Od’s my life, \(^4\) sirrah” (his favorite adjuration), “I have a great mind to whip you,” — then, with as sudden a retracting impulse, fling back into his lair — and, after a cooling lapse of some minutes (during which all but the culprit had totally forgotten the context), drive headlong out again, piecing out his imperfect sense, as if it had been some Devil’s Litany, with the expletory yell — “*and I will too.*” — In his gentler moods, when the *rabidus furor* \(^5\) was

a pig-nut, F. would be recreating his gentlemanly fancy in the more flowery walks of the Muses. A little dramatic effusion of his, under the name of Vertumnus and Pomona, is not yet forgotten by the chroniclers of that sort of literature. It was accepted by Garrick, but the town did not give it their sanction. — B. used to say of it in a way of half-compliment, half-irony, that it was *too classical for representation.* [Lamb’s note.]

\(^1\) Flaccus, *i.e.* Horace, in his *Satires*, Book I. vii. 33, plays on the word *Rex*, where the word has the double meaning of a “king” (the literal translation of the word) and also of an individual.

\(^2\) Puritanic rigor in his countenance.

\(^3\) To look into the stew-pans. In Terence’s play entitled *Adelphi*, a father advises his son to look into the lives of men as into a mirror, and a slave, who hears the advice, counsels the kitchen scullions to look into the stew-pans as into a mirror.

\(^4\) As God is my life.

\(^5\) Raging frenzy or madness.
assuaged, he had resort to an ingenious method, peculiar, for what I have heard, to himself, of whipping the boy, and reading the Debates, at the same time; a paragraph, and a lash between; which in those times, when parliamentary oratory was most at a height and flourishing in these realms, was not calculated to impress the patient with a veneration for the diffuser graces of rhetoric.

Once, and but once, the uplifted rod was known to fall ineffectual from his hand — when droll squinting W—— having been caught putting the inside of the master's desk to a use for which the architect had clearly not designed it, to justify himself, with great simplicity averred, that he did not know that the thing had been forewarned. This exquisite irrecognition of any law antecedent to the oral or declaratory, struck so irresistibly upon the fancy of all who heard it (the pedagogue himself not excepted) that remission was unavoidable.

L. has given credit to B.'s great merits as an instructor. Coleridge, in his literary life, has pronounced a more intelligible and ample encomium on them. The author of the Country Spectator doubts not to compare him with the ablest teachers of antiquity. Perhaps we cannot dismiss him better than with the pious ejaculation of C—— when he heard that his old master was on his death-bed: "Poor J. B.!— may all his faults be forgiven; and may he be wafted to bliss by little cherub boys, all head and wings, with no bottoms to reproach his sublunary infirmities."

Under him were many good and sound scholars bred. — First Grecian of my time was Lancelot Pepys Stevens, kindest of boys and men, since Co-grammar-master (and inseparable companion) with Dr. T——e. What an edifying spectacle did this brace of friends present to those who remembered the anti-socialities of their predecessors! — You never met the one by chance in the street without a wonder, which was quickly dissipated by the almost immediate sub-appearance of the other. Generally arm-in-arm, these kindly coadjutors lightened for each other the toilsome duties of their profession, and when, in advanced age, one found it
convenient to retire, the other was not long in discovering that it suited him to lay down the fasces also. Oh, it is pleasant, as it is rare, to find the same arm linked in yours at forty, which at thirteen helped it to turn over the Cicero De Amicitia, or some tale of Antique Friendship, which the young heart even then was burning to anticipate! — Co-Grecian with S. was Th——, who has since executed with ability various diplomatic functions at the Northern courts. Th—— was a tall, dark, saturnine youth, sparing of speech, with raven locks. — Thomas Fanshaw Middleton followed him (now Bishop of Calcutta), a scholar and a gentleman in his teens. He has the reputation of an excellent critic; and is author (besides the Country Spectator) of a Treatise on the Greek Article, against Sharpe. — M. is said to bear his mitre high in India, where the regni novitas (I dare say) sufficiently justifies the bearing. A humility quite as primitive as that of Jewel or Hooker might not be exactly fitted to impress the minds of those Anglo-Asiatic diocesans with a reverence for home institutions; and the church which those fathers watered. The manners of M. at school, though firm, were mild and unassuming. — Next to M. (if not senior to him) was Richards, author of the Aboriginal Britons, the most spirited of the Oxford Prize Poems; a pale, studious Grecian. — Then followed poor S——, ill-fated M——! of these the Muse is silent.

Finding some of Edward's race
Unhappy, pass their annals by.

Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before

1 Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.) was a Roman lawyer and orator who wrote a memorable essay entitled De Amicitia — On Friendship.
2 From Vergil's Æneid, i. 563:
   "An infant realm and fortune hard
   Compel me thus my shores to guard."
3 Prior's Carmen Seculare for 1700, stanza viii:
   "Finding some of Stuart's race
   Unhappy, pass their annals by."
thee — the dark pillar not yet turned — Samuel Taylor Coleridge — Logician, Metaphysician, Bard! — How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the speech and the garb of the young Mirandula), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblichus, or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar — while the walls of the old Grey Friars reëchoed to the accents of the inspired charity-boy! — Many were the "wit-combats" (to dally awhile with the words of old Fuller), between him and C. V. Le G——, "which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon, and an English man of war: Master Coleridge, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid, but slow in his performances. C. V. L., with the English man of war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Nor shalt thou, their compeer, be quickly forgotten, Allen, with the cordial smile, and still more cordial laugh, with which thou wert wont to make the old Cloisters shake, in thy cognizance of some poignant jest of theirs; or the anticipation of some more material, and peradventure practical one, of thine own. Extinct are those smiles, with that beautiful countenance, with which (for thou wert the Nireus formosus ¹ of the school), in the days of thy maturer waggery, thou didst disarm the wrath of infuriated town-damsel, who, incensed by provoking pinch, turning tigress-like round, suddenly converted by thy angel-look, exchanged the half-formed terrible "bl——," for a gentler greeting — "bless thy handsome face!"

Next follow two, who ought to be now alive, and the friends of Elia — the junior Le G—— and F——; who impelled, the former by a roving temper, the latter by too quick a sense

¹ "Nireus, the most beauteous man that came up under Ilios of all the Danaans after the noble son of Peleus." — Homer's Iliad, ii. 673. Lang, Leaf, and Meyers' translation.
of neglect — ill capable of enduring the slights poor Sizars are sometimes subject to in our seats of learning — exchanged their Alma Mater for the camp; perishing, one by climate, and one on the plains of Salamanca: — Le G——, sanguine, volatile, sweet-natured; F——, dogged, faithful, anticipative of insult, warm-hearted, with something of the old Roman height about him.

Fine, frank-hearted Fr——, the present master of Hertford, with Marmaduke T——, mildest of Missionaries — and both my good friends still — close the catalogue of Grecians in my time.

THE TWO RACES OF MEN

The human species, according to the best theory I can form of it, is composed of two distinct races, the men who borrow, and the men who lend. To these two original diversities may be reduced all those impertinent classifications of Gothic and Celtic tribes, white men, black men, red men. All the dwellers upon earth, "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites," 1 flock hither, and do naturally fall in with one or other of these primary distinctions. The infinite superiority of the former, which I choose to designate as the great race, is discernible in their figure, port, and a certain instinctive sovereignty. The latter are born degraded. "He shall serve his brethren." 2 There is something in the air of one of this cast, lean and suspicious; contrasting with the open, trusting, generous manners of the other.

Observe who have been the greatest borrowers of all ages — Alcibiades — Falstaff — Sir Richard Steele — our late incomparable Brinsley — what a family likeness in all four!

What a careless, even deportment hath your borrower! what rosy gills! what a beautiful reliance on Providence doth he manifest, — taking no more thought than lilies! What contempt for money, — accounting it (yours and mine especially) no better than dross! 3 What a liberal confounding

1 Acts ii. 9. 2 Genesis ix. 25.
of those pedantic distinctions of \textit{meum} and \textit{tuum}! or rather, what a noble simplification of language (beyond Tooke), resolving these supposed opposites into one clear, intelligible pronoun adjective! — What near approaches doth he make to the primitive \textit{community}, — to the extent of one half of the principle at least! —

He is the true taxer who "calleth all the world up to be taxed;" \(^1\) and the distance is as vast between him and \textit{one of us}, as subsisted between the Augustan Majesty and the poorest obolary Jew that paid it tribute-pittance at Jerusalem! — His exactions, too, have such a cheerful, voluntary air! So far removed from your sour parochial or state-gatherers, — those ink-horn varlets, who carry their want of welcome in their faces! He cometh to you with a smile, and troubleth you with no receipt; confining himself to no set season. Every day is his Candlemas, or his feast of Holy Michael. He applieth the \textit{lene tormentum} \(^2\) of a pleasant look to your purse, — which to that gentle warmth expands her silken leaves, as naturally as the cloak of the traveler, for which sun and wind contended! \(^3\) He is the true Propontic which never ebbeth! The sea which taketh handsomely at each man's hand. In vain the victim, whom he delighteth to honor, struggles with destiny; he is in the net. Lend therefore cheerfully, O man ordained to lend — that thou lose not in the end, with thy worldly penny, the reversion promised. Combine not preposterously in thine own person the penalties of Lazarus and of Dives! — but, when thou seest the proper authority coming, meet it smilingly, as it were half-way. Come, a handsome sacrifice! See how light \textit{he} makes of it! Strain not courtesies with a noble enemy.

Reflections like the foregoing were forced upon my mind by the death of my old friend, Ralph Bigod, Esq., who parted

\(^1\) \textit{Luke} ii. 1.

\(^2\) A gentle or mild stimulus; so used by Horace, where the expression is descriptive of the influence of wine.

\(^3\) In \textit{Æsop's} fable the Sun and the Wind contend with a traveler to take off his cloak. The Wind only makes the traveler wrap his cloak the closer; the warm Sun, however, causes him to doff it.
this life on Wednesday evening; dying, as he had lived, without much trouble. He boasted himself a descendant from mighty ancestors of that name, who heretofore held ducal dignities in this realm. In his actions and sentiments he believed not the stock to which he pretended. Early in life he found himself invested with ample revenues; which, with that noble disinterestedness which I have noticed as inherent in men of the great race, he took almost immediate measures entirely to dissipate and bring to nothing: for there is something revolting in the idea of a king holding a private purse; and the thoughts of Bigod were all regal. Thus furnished, by the very act of disfurnishment; getting rid of the cumbersome luggage of riches, more apt (as one sings)

To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise,\(^1\)

he set forth, like some Alexander, upon his great enterprise, “borrowing and to borrow!”\(^1\)

In his periegesis, or triumphant progress throughout this island, it has been calculated that he laid a tythe part of the inhabitants under contribution. I reject this estimate as greatly exaggerated:— but having had the honor of accompanying my friend, divers times, in his perambulations about this vast city, I own I was greatly struck at first with the prodigious number of faces we met, who claimed a sort of respectful acquaintance with us. He was one day so obliging as to explain the phenomenon. It seems, these were his tributaries; feeders of his exchequer; gentlemen, his good friends (as he was pleased to express himself), to whom he had occasionally been beholden for a loan. Their multitudes did no way disconcert him. He rather took a pride in numbering them; and, with Comus, seemed pleased to be “stocked with so fair a herd.”\(^2\)

With such sources, it was a wonder how he contrived to keep his treasury always empty. He did it by force of an aphorism, which he had often in his mouth, that “money kept longer than three days stinks.” So he made use of it

\(^1\) *Paradise Regained*, ii. 455.  
\(^2\) *Comus*, 151–153.
while it was fresh. A good part he drank away (for he was an excellent toss-pot), some he gave away, the rest he threw away, literally tossing and hurling it violently from him—as boys do burrs, or as if it had been infectious,—into ponds, or ditches, or deep holes, inscrutable cavities of the earth;—or he would bury it (where he would never seek it again) by a river's side under some bank, which (he would facetiously observe) paid no interest—but out away from him it must go peremptorily, as Hagar's offspring into the wilderness, while it was sweet. He never missed it. The streams were perennial which fed his fisc. When new supplies became necessary, the first person that had the felicity to fall in with him, friend or stranger, was sure to contribute to the deficiency. For Bigod had an undeniable way with him. He had a cheerful, open exterior, a quick jovial eye, a bald forehead, just touched with grey (cana fides'). He anticipated no excuse, and found none. And, waiving for a while my theory as to the great race, I would put it to the most untheorizing reader, who may at times have disposable coin in his pocket, whether it is not more repugnant to the kindliness of his nature to refuse such a one as I am describing, than to say no to a poor petitionary rogue (your bastard borrower), who, by his mumping visnomy, tells you that he expects nothing better; and, therefore, whose preconceived notions and expectations you do in reality so much less shock in the refusal.

When I think of this man; his fiery glow of heart; his swell of feeling; how magnificent, how ideal he was; how great at the midnight hour; and when I compare with him the companions with whom I have associated since, I grudge the saving of a few idle ducats, and think that I am fallen into the society of lenders, and little men.

To one like Elia, whose treasures are rather case in leather covers than closed in iron coffers, there is a class of alienators more formidable than that which I have touched upon; I mean your borrowers of books—those mutilators of collections, spoilers of the symmetry of shelves, and creators of odd

1 The honor due to gray hairs. Vergil's Æneid, i. 292.
THE TWO RACES OF MEN

volumes. There is Comberbatch, matchless in his depredations!

That foul gap in the bottom shelf facing you, like a great eye-tooth knocked out — (you are now with me in my little back study in Bloomsbury, Reader!) — with the huge Switzer-like tomes on each side (like the Guildhall giants, in their reformed posture, guardant of nothing) once held the tallest of my folios, *Opera Bonaventurae,*¹ choice and massy divinity, to which its two supporters (school divinity also, but of a lesser calibre, — Bellarmine, and Holy Thomas) showed but as dwarfs, — itself an Ascapart! — *that* Comberbatch abstracted upon the faith of a theory he holds, which is more easy, I confess, for me to suffer by than to refute, namely, that "the title to property in a book" (my Bonaventure, for instance) "is in exact ratio to the claimant's powers of understanding and appreciating the same." Should he go on acting upon this theory, which of our shelves is safe?

The slight vacuum in the left-hand case — two shelves from the ceiling — scarcely distinguishable but by the quick eye of a loser — was whilom the commodious resting-place of Browne on Urn Burial. C. will hardly allege that he knows more about that treatise than I do, who introduced it to him, and was indeed the first (of the moderns) to discover its beauties — but so have I known a foolish lover to praise his mistress in the presence of a rival more qualified to carry her off than himself. — Just below, Dodsley's dramas want their fourth volume, where Vittoria Corombona is! The remainder nine are as distasteful as Priam's refuse sons, when the Fates borrowed Hector. Here stoqd the Anatomy of Melancholy, in sober state. — There loitered the Complete Angler; quiet as in life, by some stream side. In yonder nook, John Buncle, a widower-volume, with "eyes closed," mourns his ravished mate.

One justice I must do my friend, that if he sometimes, like the sea, sweeps away a treasure, at another time, sea-like, he throws up as rich an equivalent to match it. I

¹ The works of St. Bonaventura, the 'Seraphic Doctor.'
have a small under-collection of this nature (my friend's gatherings in his various calls), picked up, he has forgotten at what odd places, and deposited with as little memory at mine. I take in these orphans, the twice-deserted. These proselytes of the gate are welcome as the true Hebrews. There they stand in conjunction; natives, and naturalized. The latter seem as little disposed to inquire out their true lineage as I am.—I charge no warehouse-room for these deodands, nor shall ever put myself to the ungentlemanly trouble of advertising a sale of them to pay expenses.

To lose a volume to C. carries some sense and meaning in it. You are sure that he will make one hearty meal on your viands, if he can give no account of the platter after it. But what moved thee, wayward, spiteful K., to be so importunate to carry off with thee, in spite of tears and adjurations to thee to forbear, the Letters of that princely woman, the thrice noble Margaret Newcastle?—knowing at the time, and knowing that I knew also, thou most assuredly wouldst never turn over one leaf of the illustrious folio:—what but the mere spirit of contradiction, and childish love of getting the better of thy friend?—Then, worst cut of all! to transport it with thee to the Gallican land—.

Unworthy land to harbor such a sweetness,
A virtue in which all ennobling thoughts dwelt,
Pure thoughts, kind thoughts, high thoughts, her sex's wonder!

—hadst thou not thy play-books, and books of jests and fancies, about thee, to keep thee merry, even as thou keepest all companies with thy quips and mirthful tales? Child of the Green-room, it was unkindly done of thee. Thy wife, too, that part-French, better-part-Englishwoman!—that she could fix upon no other treatise to bear away, in kindly token of remembering us, than the works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brook—of which no Frenchman, nor woman of France, Italy, or England, was ever by nature constituted to comprehend a tittle! Was there not Zimmerman on Solitude?
Reader, if haply thou art blessed with a moderate collection, be shy of showing it; or if thy heart overfloweth to lend them, lend thy books; but let it be to such a one as S. T. C. — he will return them (generally anticipating the time appointed) with usury; enriched with annotations, tripling their value. I have had experience. Many are these precious MSS. of his — (in matter oftentimes, and almost in quantity not unfrequently, vying with the originals) in no very clerkly hand — legible in my Daniel; in old Burton; in Sir Thomas Browne; and those abstruser cogitations of the Greville, now, alas! wandering in Pagan lands. — I counsel thee, shut not thy heart, nor thy library, against S. T. C.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Every man hath two birth-days: two days at least, in every year, which set him upon revolving the lapse of time, as it affects his mortal duration. The one is that which in an especial manner he termeth his. In the gradual desuetude of old observances, this custom of solemnizing our proper birthday hath nearly passed away, or is left to children, who reflect nothing at all about the matter, nor understand anything in it beyond cake and orange. But the birth of a New Year is of an interest too wide to be pretermitted by king or cobbler. No one ever regarded the First of January with indifference. It is that from which all date their time, and count upon what is left. It is the nativity of our common Adam.

Of all sound of all bells — (bells, the music highest bordering upon heaven) — most solemn and touching is the peal which rings out the Old Year. I never hear it without a gathering-up of my mind to a concentration of all the images that have been diffused over the past twelvemonth; all I have done or suffered, performed or neglected, in that regretted time. I begin to know its worth, as when a person
dies. It takes a personal color; nor was it a poetical flight in a contemporary, when he exclaimed —

I saw the skirts of the departing Year.¹

It is no more than what in sober sadness every one of us seems to be conscious of, in that awful leave-taking. I am sure I felt it, and all felt it with me, last night; though some of my companions affected rather to manifest an exhilaration at the birth of the coming year, than any very tender regrets for the decease of its predecessor. But I am none of those who —

Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.²

I am naturally, beforehand, shy of novelties; new books, new faces, new years, — from some mental twist which makes it difficult in me to face the prospective. I have almost ceased to hope; and am sanguine only in the prospects of other (former years). I plunge into foregone visions and conclusions. I encounter pell-mell with past disappointments. I am armor-proof against old discouragements. I forgive, or overcome in fancy, old adversaries. I play over again for love, as the gamesters phrase it, games for which I once paid so dear. I would scarce now have any of those untoward accidents and events of my life reversed. I would no more alter them than the incidents of some well-contrived novel. Methinks, it is better that I should have pined away seven of my goldenest years, when I was thrall to the fair hair, and fairer eyes, of Alice W——n, than that so passionate a love adventure should be lost. It was better that our family should have missed that legacy, which old Dorrell cheated us of, than that I should have at this moment two thousand pounds in banco,³ and be without the idea of that specious old rogue.

In a degree beneath manhood, it is my infirmity to look

¹ Coleridge's Ode to the Departing Year, 1796.
² Pope's Homer's Odyssey, xvi. 84.
³ Italian. Literally, in the bank; standing to my credit.
back upon those early days. Do I advance a paradox when I say that, skipping over the intervention of forty years, a man may have leave to love himself, without the imputation of self-love?

If I know aught of myself, no one whose mind is introspective — and mine is painfully so — can have a less respect for his present identity than I have for the man Elia. I know him to be light, and vain, and humorous; a notorious . . . ; addicted to . . . ; averse from counsel, neither taking it, nor offering it; — . . . besides; a stammering buffoon; what you will; lay it on, and spare not; I subscribe to it all, and much more, than thou canst be willing to lay at his door — but for the child Elia — that "other me," there, in the background — I must take leave to cherish the remembrance of that young master — with as little reference, I protest, to this stupid changeling of five-and-forty, as if it had been a child of some other house, and not of my parents. I can cry over its patient small-pox at five, and rougher medicaments. I can lay its poor fevered head upon the sick pillow at Christ's, and wake with it in surprise at the gentle posture of maternal tenderness hanging over it, that unknown had watched its sleep. I know how it shrank from any the least color of falsehood. — God help thee, Elia, how art thou changed! — Thou art sophisticated. — I know how honest, how courageous (for a weakling) it was — how religious, how imaginative, how hopeful! From what have I not fallen, if the child I remember was indeed myself, — and not some dissembling guardian, presenting a false identity, to give the rule to my unpractised steps, and regulate the tone of my moral being!

That I am fond of indulging, beyond a hope of sympathy, in such retrospection, may be the symptom of some sickly idiosyncrasy. Or is it owing to another cause: simply, that being without wife or family, I have not learned to project myself enough out of myself; and having no offspring of my own to dally with, I turn back upon memory, and adopt my own early idea, as my heir and favorite? If these speculations seem fantastical to thee, Reader (a busy man, per-
chance), if I tread out of the way of thy sympathy, and am singularly conceited only, I retire, impenetrable to ridicule, under the phantom cloud of Elia.

The elders, with whom I was brought up, were of a character not likely to let slip the sacred observance of any old institution; and the ringing out of the Old Year was kept by them with circumstances of peculiar ceremony. — In those days the sound of those midnight chimes, though it seemed to raise hilarity in all around me, never failed to bring a train of pensive imagery into my fancy. Yet I then scarce conceived what it meant, or thought of it as a reckoning that concerned me. Not childhood alone, but the young man till thirty, never feels practically that he is mortal. He knows it indeed, and, if need were, he could preach a homily on the fragility of life; but he brings it not home to himself, any more than in a hot June we can appropriate to our imagination the freezing days of December. But now, shall I confess a truth? — I feel these audits but too powerfully. I begin to count the probabilities of my duration, and to grudge at the expenditure of moments and shortest periods, like misers' farthings. In proportion as the years both lessen and shorten, I set more count upon their periods, and would fain lay my ineffectual finger upon the spoke of the great wheel. I am not content to pass away "like a weaver's shuttle."¹ Those metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity; and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth; the face of town and country; the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here. I am content to stand still at the age to which I am arrived; I, and my friends: to be no younger, no richer, no handsomer. I do not want to be weaned by age; or drop, like mellow fruit, as they say, into the grave. — Any alteration, on this earth of mine, in diet or in lodging, puzzles and discomposes me. My household gods plant a terrible fixed foot, and are not rooted

¹ _Job_ vii. 6.
up without blood. They do not willingly seek Lavinian shores. A new state of being staggers me.

Sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful glass, and candle-light, and fireside conversations, and innocent vanities, and jests, and irony itself — do these things go out with life?

Can a ghost laugh, or shake his gaunt sides, when you are pleasant with him?

And you, my midnight darlings, my Folios; must I part with the intense delight of having you (huge armfuls) in my embraces? Must knowledge come to me, if it come at all, by some awkward experiment of intuition, and no longer by this familiar process of reading?

Shall I enjoy friendships there, wanting the smiling indications which point me to them here, — the recognizable face — the "sweet assurance of a look?"¹

In winter this intolerable disinclination to dying — to give it its mildest name — does more especially haunt and beset me. In a genial August noon, beneath a sweltering sky, death is almost problematic. At those times do such poor snakes as myself enjoy an immortality. Then we expand and burgeon. Then we are as strong again, as valiant again, as wise again, and a great deal taller. The blast that nips and shrinks me, puts me in thoughts of death. All things allied to the insubstantial, wait upon that master feeling; cold, numbness, dreams, perplexity; moonlight itself, with its shadowy and spectral appearances, — that cold ghost of the sun, or Phæbus’s sickly sister, like that innutritious one denounced in the Canticles: — I am none of her minions — I hold with the Persian.²

Whatsoever thwarts, or puts me out of my way, brings

¹ Adapted from Roydon’s Elegy on Sir Philip Sidney:

"A sweet attractive kind of grace,
A full assurance given by looks."

² Sun-worship had its origin in Persia.
death, unto my mind. All partial evils, like humors, run into that capital plague-sore. — I have heard some profess an indifference to life. Such hail the end of their existence as a port of refuge; and speak of the grave as of some soft arms, in which they may slumber as on a pillow. Some have wooed death —— but out upon thee, I say, thou foul, ugly phantom! I detest, abhor, execrate, and (with Friar John) give thee to six-score thousand devils, as in no instance to be excused or tolerated, but shunned as a universal viper; to be branded, proscribed, and spoken evil of! In no way can I be brought to digest thee, thou thin, melancholy Privation, or more frightful and confounding Positive!

Those antidotes, prescribed against the fear of thee, are altogether frigid and insulting, like thyself. For what satisfaction hath a man, that he shall “lie down with kings and emperors in death,” who in his lifetime never greatly coveted the society of such bed-fellows? — or, forsooth, that “so shall the fairest face appear”? — why, to comfort me, must Alice W——n be a goblin? More than all, I conceive disgust at those impertinent and misbecoming familiarities, inscribed upon your ordinary tombstones. Every dead man must take upon himself to be lecturing me with his odious truism, that “Such as he now is, I must shortly be.” Not so shortly, friend, perhaps, as thou imagine’st. In the meantime I am alive. I move about. I am worth twenty of thee. Know thy betters! Thy New Years’ Days are past. I survive, a jolly candidate for 1821. Another cup of wine — and while that turn-coat bell, that just now mournfully chanted the obsequies of 1820 departed, with changed notes lustily rings in a successor, let us attune to its peal the song made on a like occasion, by hearty, cheerful Mr. Cotton.

THE NEW YEAR

Hark, the cock crows, and yon bright star
Tells us the day himself's not far;
And see where, breaking from the night,
He gilds the western hills with light.
With him old Janus doth appear,
Peeping into the future year,
With such a look as seems to say
The prospect is not good that way.
Thus do we rise ill sights to see,
And 'gainst ourselves to prophesy;
When the prophetic fear of things
A more tormenting mischief brings,
More full of soul-tormenting gall
Than direst mischiefs can befall.
But stay! but stay! methinks my sight,
Better informed by clearer light,
Discerns sereneness in that brow
That all contracted seemed but now.
His revers’d face may show distaste,
And frown upon the ills are past;
But that which this way looks is clear,
And smiles upon the New-born Year.
He looks too from a place so high,
The Year lies open to his eye;
And all the moments open are
To the exact discoverer.
Yet more and more he smiles upon
The happy revolution.
Why should we then suspect or fear
The influences of a year,
So smiles upon us the first morn,
And speaks us good so soon as born?
Plague on’t! the last was ill enough,
This cannot but make better proof;
Or, at the worst, as we brush’d through
The last, why so we may this too;
And then the next in reason should
Be superexcellently good:
For the worst ills (we daily see)
Have no more perpetuity
Than the best fortunes that do fall;
Which also bring us wherewithal
Longer their being to support,
Than those do of the other sort:
And who has one good year in three,
And yet repines at destiny,
Appears ungrateful in the case,
And merits not the good he has.
Then let us welcome the New Guest
With lusty brimmers of the best:
Mirth always should Good Fortune meet,
And render e’en Disaster sweet:
And though the Princess turn her back,
Let us but line ourselves with sack,
We better shall by far hold out,
Till the next Year she face about.

How say you, Reader — do not these verses smack of the rough magnanimity of the old English vein? Do they not fortify like a cordial; enlarging the heart, and productive of sweet blood, and generous spirits, in the concoction? Where be those puling fears of death, just now expressed or affected? — Passed like a cloud — absorbed in the purging sunlight of clear poetry — clean washed away by a wave of genuine Helicon, your only Spa for these hypochondries. And now another cup of the generous! and a merry New Year, and many of them, to you all, my masters!

MRS. BATTLE'S OPINIONS ON WHIST

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

Sarah Battle was none of that breed. She detested them,

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1 This was before the introduction of rugs, Reader. You must remember the intolerable crash of the unswept cinders betwixt your foot and the marble. [Lamb's note.]

2 As if a sportsman should tell you he liked to kill a fox one day and lose him the next. [Lamb's note.]
as I do, from her heart and soul; and would not, save upon a striking emergency, willingly seat herself at the same table with them. She loved a thorough-paced partner, a determined enemy. She took, and gave, no concessions. She hated favors. She never made a revoke, nor ever passed it over in her adversary without exacting the utmost forfeiture. She fought a good fight: cut and thrust. She held not her good sword (her cards) "like a dancer." She sat bolt upright; and neither showed you her cards, nor desired to see yours. All people have their blind side — their superstitions; and I have heard her declare, under the rose, that Hearts was her favorite suit.

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

Pope was her favorite author: his Rape of the Lock her favorite work. She once did me the favor to play over with me (with the cards) his celebrated game of Ombre in that poem; and to explain to me how far it agreed with, and in what points it would be found to differ from, tradrille. Her illustrations were apposite and poignant; and I had the pleasure of sending the substance of them to Mr. Bowles; but I suppose they came too late to be inserted among his ingenious notes upon that author.
Quadrille, she has often told me, was her first love; but whist had engaged her maturer esteem. The former, she said, was showy and specious, and likely to allure young persons. The uncertainty and quick shifting of partners—a thing which the constancy of whist abhors; the dazzling supremacy and regal investiture of Spadille—absurd, as she justly observed, in the pure aristocracy of whist, where his crown and garter give him no proper power above his brother-nobility of the Aces;—the giddy vanity, so taking to the inexperienced, of playing alone; above all, the overpowering attractions of a Sans Prendre Vole, to the triumph of which there is certainly nothing parallel or approaching, in the contingencies of whist;—all these, she would say, make quadrille a game of captivation to the young and enthusiastic. But whist was the solider game: that was her word. It was a long meal; not, like quadrille, a feast of snatches. One or two rubbers might co-extend in duration with an evening. They gave time to form rooted friendships, to cultivate steady enmities. She despised the chance-started, capricious, and ever-fluctuating alliances of the other. The skirmishes of quadrille, she would say, reminded her of the petty ephemeral embroilments of the little Italian states, depicted by Machiavel: perpetually changing postures and connections; bitter foes to-day, sugared darlings to-morrow; kissing and scratching in a breath;—but the wars of whist were comparable to the long, steady, deep-rooted, rational antipathies of the great French and English nations.

A grave simplicity was what she chiefly admired in her favorite game. There was nothing silly in it, like the nob in cribbage—nothing superfluous. No flushes—that most irrational of all pleas that a reasonable being can set up:—that any one should claim four by virtue of holding cards of the same mark and color, without reference to the playing of the game, or the individual worth or pretensions of the cards themselves! She held this to be a solecism; as pitiful an ambition at cards as alliteration is in authorship. She despised superficiality, and looked deeper than the colors of

1 See Quadrille in the Explanatory Index.
MRS. BATTLE'S OPINIONS ON WHIST

things. — Suits were soldiers, she would say, and must have a uniformity of array to distinguish them: but what should we say to a foolish squire, who should claim a merit from dressing up his tenantry in red jackets, that never were to be marshalled — never to take the field? — She even wished that whist were more simple than it is; and, in my mind, would have stripped it of some appendages, which, in the state of human frailty, may be venially, and even commendably, allowed of. She saw no reason for the deciding of the trump by the turn of the card. Why not one suit always trumps? — Why two colors, when the mark of the suits would have sufficiently distinguished them without it?

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

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

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

The former bequest (which I do not least value) I have kept with religious care; though she herself, to confess a truth, was never greatly taken with cribbage. It was an essentially vulgar game, I have heard her say, — disputing with her uncle, who was very partial to it. She could never heartily bring her mouth to pronounce "Go," \(^1\) or "That's a go."\(^1\) She called it an ungrammatical game. The pegging teased her. I once knew her to forfeit a rubber (a five-dollar stake) because she would not take advantage of the turn-up knave, which would have given it her, but which she must have claimed by the disgraceful tenure of declaring "two for his heels."\(^1\) There is something extremely genteel in this sort of self-denial. Sarah Battle was a gentlewoman born.

Piquet she held the best game at the cards for two persons, though she would ridicule the pedantry of the terms — such as pique — repique — the capot — they savored (she thought) of affectation. But games for two, or even three, she never greatly cared for. She loved the quadrate, or square. She would argue thus: — Cards are warfare: the ends are gain, with glory. But cards are war, in disguise of a sport: when single adversaries encounter, the ends proposed are too palpable. By themselves, it is too close a fight; with spectators, it is not much bettered. No looker-on can be interested, except for a bet, and then it is a mere affair of money; he cares not for your luck sympathetically, or for

\(^1\) See Cribbage in the Explanatory Index.
MRS. BATTLE'S OPINIONS ON WHIST

your play. — Three are still worse; a mere naked war of every man against every man, as in cribbage, without league or alliance; or a rotation of petty and contradictory interests, a succession of heartless leagues, and not much more hearty infractions of them, as in tradrille. — But in square games (she meant whist), all that is possible to be attained in card-playing is accomplished. There are the incentives of profit with honor, common to every species — though the latter can be but very imperfectly enjoyed in those other games, where the spectator is only feebly a participator. But the parties in whist are spectators and principals too. They are a theatre to themselves, and a looker-on is not wanted. He is rather worse than nothing, and an impertinence. Whist abhors neutrality, or interests beyond its sphere. You glory in some surprising stroke of skill or fortune, not because a cold — or even an interested — bystander witnesses it, but because your partner sympathizes in the contingency. You win for two. You triumph for two. Two are exalted. Two again are mortified; which divides their disgrace, as the conjunction doubles (by taking off the invidiousness) your glories. Two losing to two are better reconciled, than one to one in that close butchery. The hostile feeling is weakened by multiplying the channels. War becomes a civil game. By such reasonings as these the old lady was accustomed to defend her favorite pastime.

No inducement could ever prevail upon her to play at any game, where chance entered into the composition, for nothing. Chance, she would argue — and here again, admire the subtlety of her conclusion; — chance is nothing, but where something else depends upon it. It is obvious that cannot be glory. What rational cause of exultation could it give to a man to turn up size ace a hundred times together by himself? or before spectators, where no stake was depending? — Make a lottery of a hundred thousand tickets with but one fortunate number — and what possible principle of our nature, except stupid wonderment, could it gratify to gain that number as many times successively, without a prize? Therefore she disliked the mixture of chance in backgammon,
where it was not played for money. She called it foolish, and those people idiots, who were taken with a lucky hit under such circumstances. Games of pure skill were as little to her fancy. Played for a stake, they were a mere system of over-reaching. Played for glory, they were a mere setting of one man's wit,—his memory, or combination-faculty rather—against another's; like a mock-engagement at a review, bloodless and profitless. She could not conceive a game wanting the spritely infusion of chance, the handsome excuses of good fortune. Two people playing at chess in a corner of a room, whilst whist was stirring in the centre, would inspire her with insufferable horror and ennui. Those well-cut similitudes of Castles and Knights, the imagery of the board, she would argue (and I think in this case justly), were entirely misplaced and senseless. Those hard head-contests can in no instance ally with the fancy. They reject form and color. A pencil and dry slate (she used to say) were the proper arena for such combatants.

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

With great deference to the old lady's judgment on these matters, I think I have experienced some moments in my life when playing at cards for nothing has even been agreeable. When I am in sickness, or not in the best spirits, I sometimes call for the cards, and play a game at piquet for love with my cousin Bridget — Bridget Elia.
I grant there is something sneaking in it: but with a toothache, or a sprained ankle,—when you are subdued and humble,—you are glad to put up with an inferior spring of action.

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

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

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

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

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**A CHAPTER ON EARS**

I have no ear. —

Mistake me not, Reader—nor imagine that I am by nature destitute of those exterior twin appendages, hanging ornaments, and (architecturally speaking) handsome volutes to the human capital. Better my mother had never borne me. —I am, I think, rather delicately than copiously provided with those conduits; and I feel no disposition to envy the mule for his plenty, or the mole for her exactness, in those ingenious labyrinthine inlets—those indispensable side-intelligencers.

^1* Won all the tricks, thus adding forty points to the score.*
Neither have I incurred, or done anything to incur, with Defoe, that hideous disfigurement, which constrained him to draw upon assurance — to feel "quite unabashed,"¹ and at ease upon that article. I was never, I thank my stars, in the pillory; nor, if I read them aright, is it within the compass of my destiny, that I ever should be.

When therefore I say that I have no ear, you will understand me to mean — for music. To say that this heart never melted at the concord of sweet sounds, would be a foul self-libel. "Water parted from the sea"² never fails to move it strangely. So does "In infancy."² But they were used to be sung at her harpsichord (the old-fashioned instrument in vogue in those days) by a gentlewoman — the gentlest, sure, that ever merited the appellation — the sweetest — why should I hesitate to name Mrs. S——, once the blooming Fanny Weatheral of the Temple — who had power to thrill the soul of Elia, small imp as he was, even in his long coats; and to make him glow, tremble, and blush with a passion, that not faintly indicated the day-spring of that absorbing sentiment, which was afterwards destined to overwhelm and subdue his nature quite, for Alice W——n.

I even think that sentimentally I am disposed to harmony. But organically I am incapable of a tune. I have been practising "God save the King" all my life; whistling and humming of it over to myself in solitary corners; and am not yet arrived, they tell me, within many quavers of it. Yet hath the loyalty of Elia never been impeached.

I am not without suspicion that I have an undeveloped faculty of music within me. For thrumming, in my wild way, on my friend A.'s piano, the other morning, while he was engaged in an adjoining parlor,—on his return he was pleased to say, "he thought it could not be the maid!" On his first surprise at hearing the keys touched in somewhat an airy

¹ "Earless on high stood, unabashed, Defoe." — Dunciad. [Lamb's note.]
² Songs by Arne in Artaxerxes, the first play that Lamb ever attended, when he was "not past six years old." The event is recorded in the essay entitled "My First Play."
and masterful way, not dreaming of me, his suspicions had lighted on Jenny. But a grace, snatched from a superior refinement, soon convinced him that some being—technically perhaps deficient, but higher informed from a principle common to all the fine arts—had swayed the keys to a mood which Jenny, with all her (less cultivated) enthusiasm, could never have elicited from them. I mention this as a proof of my friend's penetration, and not with any view of disparaging Jenny.

Scientifically I could never be made to understand (yet have I taken some pains) what a note in music is; or how one note should differ from another. Much less in voices can I distinguish a soprano from a tenor. Only sometimes the thorough-bass I contrive to guess at, from its being supereminently harsh and disagreeable. I tremble, however, for my misapplication of the simplest terms of that which I disclaim. While I profess my ignorance, I scarce know what to say I am ignorant of. I hate, perhaps, by misnomers. *Sostenuto*¹ and *adagio* ² stand in the like relation of obscurity to me; and *Sol, Fa, Mi, Re*, is as conjuring as *Baralipton*.²

It is hard to stand alone in an age like this,—(constituted to the quick and critical perception of all harmonious combinations, I verily believe, beyond all preceding ages, since Jubal stumbled upon the gamut,)—to remain, as it were, singly unimpressible to the magic influences of an art which is said to have such an especial stroke at soothing, elevating, and refining the passions.—Yet, rather than break the candid current of my confessions, I must avow to you that I have received a great deal more pain than pleasure from this so cried-up faculty.

I am constitutionally susceptible of noises. A carpenter's

¹ *Sostenuto*: a musical term meaning sustained or prolonged. *Adagio* means slowly.
² A technical term used in logic. Lamb means that the technics of music are as unmeaning to him as the term *Baralipton* is to a man who knows sound logical argument, but who would be confused if he were to name the steps in his arguments by the technical terms used in logic.
hammer, in a warm summer noon, will fret me into more than midsummer madness. But those unconnected, unset sounds, are nothing to the measured malice of music. The ear is passive to those single strokes; willingly enduring stripes while it hath no task to con. To music it cannot be passive. It will strive — mine at least will — 'spite of its inaptitude, to thrd the maze; like an unskilled eye painfully poring upon hieroglyphics. I have sat through an Italian Opera, till, for sheer pain, and inexplicable anguish, I have rushed out into the noisiest places of the crowded streets, to solace myself with sounds which I was not obliged to follow, and get rid of the distracting torment of endless, fruitless, barren attention! I take refuge in the unpretending assemblage of honest common-life sounds; — and the purgatory of the Enraged Musician becomes my paradise.

I have sat at an Oratorio (that profanation of the purposes of the cheerful playhouse) watching the faces of the auditory in the pit (what a contrast to Hogarth's Laughing Audience!) immovable, or affecting some faint emotion — till (as some have said, that our occupations in the next world will be but a shadow of what delighted us in this) I have imagined myself in some cold Theatre in Hades, where some of the forms of the earthly one should be kept up, with none of the enjoyment; or like that

—— Party in a parlor
All silent, and all DAMNED.¹

Above all, those insufferable concertos, and pieces of music, as they are called, do plague and embitter my apprehension. — Words are something; but to be exposed to an endless battery of mere sounds; to be long a dying; to lie stretched upon a rack of roses; to keep up languor by unintermitted effort; to pile honey upon sugar, and sugar upon honey, to an interminable tedious sweetness; to fill up sound with feeling, and strain ideas to keep pace with it; to gaze on empty frames, and be forced to make the pictures for your-

¹ From a stanza in Wordsworth's first edition of *Peter Bell*, afterwards omitted.
self; to read a book all stops and be obliged to supply the verbal matter; to invent extempore tragedies to answer to the vague gestures of an inexplicable rambling mime — these are faint shadows of what I have undergone from a series of the ablest-executed pieces of this empty instrumental music.

I deny not, that in the opening of a concert, I have experienced something vastly lulling and agreeable: — afterwards followeth the languor and the oppression. — Like that disappointing book in Patmos; or, like the comings on of melancholy, described by Burton, doth music make her first insinuating approaches: — "Most pleasant it is to such as are melancholy given, to walk alone in some solitary grove, betwixt wood and water, by some brook side, and to meditate upon some delightsome and pleasant subject, which shall affect him most, amabilis insania,¹ and mentis gratissimus error.²

A most incomparable delight to build castles in the air, to go smiling to themselves, acting an infinite variety of parts, which they suppose, and strongly imagine, they act, or that they see done. — So delightsome these toys at first, they could spend whole days and nights without sleep, even whole years in such contemplations, and fantastical meditations, which are like so many dreams, and will hardly be drawn from them — winding and unwinding themselves as so many clocks, and still pleasing their humors, until at the last the SCENE TURNS UPON A SUDDEN, and they being now habitated to such meditations and solitary places, can endure no company, can think of nothing but harsh and distasteful subjects. Fear, sorrow, suspicion, subrusticus pudor,² discontent, cares, and weariness of life, surprise them on a sudden, and they can think of nothing else: continually suspecting, no sooner are their eyes open, but this infernal plague of melancholy seizeth on them, and terrifies their souls, representirg some dismal object to their minds; which now, by no means, no labor, no persuasions, they can avoid, they cannot be rid of, they cannot resist."

Something like this "SCENE TURNING" I have experienced

¹ Delightful madness and a most pleasing hallucination.
² Rustic bashfulness.
at the evening parties, at the house of my good Catholic friend Nov——; who, by the aid of a capital organ, himself the most finished of players, converts his drawing-room into a chapel, his week days into Sundays, and these latter into minor heavens.

When my friend commences upon one of those solemn anthems, which peradventure struck upon my heedless ear, rambling in the side aisles of the dim Abbey, some five and thirty years since, wakening a new sense, and putting a soul of old religion into my young apprehension — (whether it be that, in which the Psalmist, weary of the persecutions of bad men, wisheth to himself dove’s wings—or that other which, with a like measure of sobriety and pathos, inquireth by what means the young man shall best cleanse his mind) — a holy calm pervadeth me. — I am for the time

——— rapt above earth,
   And possess joys not promised at my birth.

But when this master of the spell, not content to have laid a soul prostrate, goes on, in his power, to inflict more bliss than lies in her capacity to receive,—impatient to overcome her “earthly” with his “heavenly,” — still pouring in, for protracted hours, fresh waves and fresh from the sea of sound, or from that inexhausted German ocean, above which, in triumphant progress, dolphin-seated, ride those Arions Haydn and Mozart, with their attendant Tritons, Bach, Beethoven, and a countless tribe, whom to attempt to reckon up would but plunge me again in the deeps, — I stagger under the weight of harmony, reeling to and fro at my wits’ end; — clouds, as of frankincense, oppress me — priests, altars, censers, dazzle before me — the genius of his religion hath me in her toils — a shadowy triple tiara invests the brow of my friend, late so naked, so ingenuous — he is

1 I have been there, and still would go —
   "Tis like a little heaven below. — DR. WATTS.  [Lamb’s note.]

2 Cf. Walton’s The Complete Angler, I. ch. iv.:
   "I was for that time lifted above earth;
   And possesst joys not promised by my birth."
Pope,—and by him sits, like as in the anomaly of dreams, a she-Pope too,—tri-cornonated like himself!—I am converted, and yet a Protestant;—at once *malleus hereticorum*, and myself grand heresiarch: or three heresies centre in my person:—I am Marcion, Ebion, and Cerinthus—Gog and Magog—what not?—till the coming in of the friendly supper-tray dissipates the figment, and a draught of true Lutheran beer (in which chiefly my friend shows himself no bigot) at once reconciles me to the rationalities of a purer faith; and restores to me the genuine unterrifying aspects of my pleasant-countenanced host and hostess.

**A QUAKERS’ MEETING**

Still-born Silence! thou that art  
Flood-gate of the deeper heart!  
Offspring of a heavenly kind!  
Frost o’ the mouth, and thaw o’ the mind!  
Secrecy’s confidant, and he  
Who makes religion mystery!  
Admiration’s speaking’st tongue!  
Leave, thy desert shades among,  
Reverend hermits’ hallow’d cells,  
Where retired devotion dwells!  
With thy enthusiasms come,  
Seize our tongues, and strike us dumb!  

Reader, would’st thou know what true peace and quiet mean; would’st thou find a refuge from the noises and clamors of the multitude; would’st thou enjoy at once solitude and society; would’st thou possess the depth of thine own spirit in stillness, without being shut out from the consolatory faces of thy species; would’st thou be alone and yet accompanied; solitary, yet not desolate; singular, yet not without some to keep thee in countenance; a unit

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1 Hammer of heretics. A book with this title was written by the German, Johann Faber (1478–1541), who opposed the Protestant Revolt.

2 From *Poems of all Sorts*, by Richard Fleckno, 1653.
in aggregate; a simple in composite:—come with me into a Quakers’ Meeting.

Dost thou love silence deep as that “before the winds were made”? go not out into the wilderness, descend not into the profundities of the earth; shut not up thy case-ments; nor pour wax into the little cells of thy ears, with little-faithed self-mistrusting Ulysses.—Retire with me into a Quakers’ Meeting.

For a man to refrain even from good words, and to hold his peace, it is commendable; but for a multitude, it is great mastery.

What is the stillness of the desert compared with this place? what the uncommunicating muteness of fishes?—here the goddess reigns and revels.—“Boreas, and Cesias, and Argestes loud,” do not with their inter-confounding uproars more augment the brawl—nor the waves of the blown Baltic with their clubbed sounds—than their opposite (Silence her sacred self) is multiplied and rendered more intense by numbers and by sympathy. She too hath her deeps, that call unto deeps. Negation itself hath a positive more and less; and closed eyes would seem to obscure the great obscurity of midnight.

There are wounds which an imperfect solitude cannot heal. By imperfect I mean that which a man enjoyeth by himself. The perfect is that which he can sometimes attain in crowds, but nowhere so absolutely as in a Quakers’ Meeting.—Those first hermits did certainly understand this principle, when they retired into Egyptian solitudes, not singly, but in shoals, to enjoy one another’s want of conversation. The Carthusian is bound to his brethren by this agreeing spirit of incommunicativeness. In secular occasions, what so pleasant as to be reading a book through a

1 “The ship stood still, Ulysses guessed that the island of the Sirens was not far off, and that they had charmed the air so with their magic singing. Therefore he made him cakes of wax, as Ciree had instructed him, and stopped the ears of his men with them.” Lamb’s Adventures of Ulysses, Chapter III.

2 Paradise Lost, x. 699. The north, the northeast, and the northwest winds.
long winter evening, with a friend sitting by — say, a wife —
he, or she, too (if that be probable), reading another without
interruption, or oral communication? — can there be no
sympathy without the gabble of words? — away with this
inhuman, shy, single, shade-and-cavern-haunting solitariness.
Give me, Master Zimmerman, a sympathetic solitude.

To pace alone in the cloisters or side aisles of some cathedr
al, time-stricken;

Or under hanging mountains,
Or by the fall of fountains;¹

is but a vulgar luxury compared with that which those
enjoy who come together for the purposes of more complete,
abstracted solitude. This is the loneliness "to be felt." — The Abbey Church of Westminster hath nothing
so solemn, so spirit soothing, as the naked walls and benches
of a Quakers' Meeting. Here are no tombs, no inscriptions,

— Sands, ignoble things,
Dropt from the ruined sides of kings — ²

but here is something which throws Antiquity herself into
the foreground — SILENCE — eldest of things — language of
old Night — primitive discouer — to which the insolent
decays of mouldering grandeur have but arrived by a violent,
and, as we may say, unnatural progression.

How reverend is the view of these hushed heads,
Looking tranquillity! ³

Nothing-plotting, nought-caballing, unmischievous synod!
convocation without intrigue! parliament without debate!
what a lesson dost thou read to council, and to consistory! —
if my pen treat of you lightly — as haply it will wander —
yet my spirit hath gravely felt the wisdom of your custom,
when, sitting among you in deepest peace, which some out-
welling tears would rather confirm than disturb, I have re-
verted to the times of your beginnings, and the sowings of

¹ Pope's Ode to St. Cecilia's Day.
³ Cf. Congreve's Mourning Bride, ii. 1.
the seed by Fox and Dewesbury. — I have witnessed that which brought before my eyes your heroic tranquillity, inflexible to the rude jests and serious violences of the insolent soldiery, republican or royalist, sent to molest you — for ye sate betwixt the fires of two persecutions, the outcast and off-scouring of church and presbytery. — I have seen the reeling sea-ruffian, who had wandered into your receptacle with the avowed intention of disturbing your quiet, from the very spirit of the place receive in a moment a new heart, and presently sit among ye as a lamb amidst lambs. And I remember Penn before his accusers, and Fox in the bail dock, where he was lifted up in spirit, as he tells us, and "the Judge and the Jury became as dead men under his feet."

Reader, if you are not acquainted with it, I would recommend to you, above all church-narratives, to read Sewel's History of the Quakers. It is in folio, and is the abstract of the journals of Fox and the primitive Friends. It is far more edifying and affecting than anything you will read of Wesley and his colleagues. Here is nothing to stagger you, nothing to make you mistrust, no suspicion of alloy, no drop or dreg of the worldly or ambitious spirit. You will here read the true story of that much-injured, ridiculed man (who perhaps hath been a byword in your mouth) — James Naylor: what dreadful sufferings, with what patience, he endured, even to the boring through of his tongue with red-hot irons, without a murmur; and with what strength of mind, when the delusion he had fallen into, which they stigmatized for blasphemy, had given way to clearer thoughts, he could renounce his error, in a strain of the beautifullest humility, yet keep his first grounds, and be a Quaker still! — so different from the practice of your common converts from enthusiasm, who, when they apostatize, apostatize all, and think they can never get far enough from the society of their former errors, even to the renunciation of some saving truths, with which they had been mingled, not implicated.

Get the writings of John Woolman by heart; and love the early Quakers.

How far the followers of these good men in our days
have kept to the primitive spirit, or in what proportion they have substituted formality for it, the Judge of Spirits can alone determine. I have seen faces in their assemblies upon which the dove sate visibly brooding. Others, again, I have watched, when my thoughts should have been better engaged, in which I could possibly detect nothing but a blank inanity. But quiet was in all, and the disposition to unanimity, and the absence of the fierce controversial workings. — If the spiritual pretensions of the Quakers have abated, at least they make few pretences. Hypocrites they certainly are not, in their preaching. It is seldom, indeed, that you shall see one get up amongst them to hold forth. Only now and then a trembling, female, generally ancient, voice is heard — you cannot guess from what part of the meeting it proceeds — with a low, buzzing, musical sound, laying out a few words which "she thought might suit the condition of some present," with a quaking diffidence, which leaves no possibility of supposing that anything of female vanity was mixed up, where the tones were so full of tenderness, and a restraining modesty. — The men, for what I have observed, speak seldomer.

Once only, and it was some years ago, I witnessed a sample of the old Foxian orgasm. It was a man of giant stature, who, as Wordsworth phrases it, might have danced "from head to foot equipt in iron mail."1 His frame was of iron too. But he was malleable. I saw him shake all over with the spirit—I dare not say, of delusion. The strivings of the outer man were unutterable — he seemed not to speak, but to be spoken from. I saw the strong man bowed down, and his knees to fail — his joints all seemed loosening — it was a figure to set off against Paul preaching — the words he uttered were few, and sound — he was evidently resisting his will — keeping down his own word-wisdom with more mighty effort than the world’s orators strain for theirs. "He had been a wit in his youth," he told us, with expressions of a sober remorse. And it was not till long after the im-

1 Cf. Wordsworth's "'Tis said that some have died for love."
pression had begun to wear away that I was enabled, with something like a smile, to recall the striking incongruity of the confession — understanding the term in its worldly acceptation — with the frame and physiognomy of the person before me. His brow would have scared away the Levites — the Jocos Risus-que — faster than the Loves fled the face of Dis at Enna. — By wit, even in his youth, I will be sworn he understood something far within the limits of an allowable liberty.

More frequently the Meeting is broken up without a word having been spoken. But the mind has been fed. You go away with a sermon not made with hands. You have been in the milder caverns of Trophonius; or as in some den, where that fiercest and savagest of all wild creatures, the TONGUE, that unruly member, has strangely lain tied up and captive. You have bathed with stillness. — O, when the spirit is sore fretted, even tired to sickness of the janglings and nonsense-noises of the world, what a balm and a solace it is to go and seat yourself, for a quiet half-hour, upon some undisputed corner of a bench, among the gentle Quakers!

Their garb and stillness conjoined, present a uniformity, tranquil and herd-like — as in the pasture — "forty feeding like one."  

The very garments of a Quaker seem incapable of receiving a soil; and cleanliness in them to be something more than the absence of its contrary. Every Quakeress is a lily; and when they come up in bands to their Whitsun conferences, whitening the easterly streets of the metropolis, from all parts of the United Kingdom, they show like troops of the Shining Ones.

1 Wordsworth's Lines Written in March.
IMPERFECT SYMPATHIES

I am of a constitution so general, that it consorts and sympathizeth with all things; I have no antipathy, or rather idiosyncrasy, in anything. Those national repugnancies do not touch me, nor do I behold with prejudice the French, Italian, Spaniard, or Dutch. — Religio Medici.

That the author of the Religio Medici, mounted upon the airy stilts of abstraction, conversant about notional and conjectural essences; in whose categories of Being the possible took the upper hand of the actual; should have overlooked the impertinent individualities of such poor concretions as mankind, is not much to be admired. It is rather to be wondered at, that in the genus of animals he should have condescended to distinguish that species at all. For myself — earth-bound and fettered to the scene of my activities, —

Standing on earth, not rapt above the sky,¹

I confess that I do feel the differences of mankind, national or individual, to an unhealthy excess. I can look with no indifferent eye upon things or persons. Whatever is, is to me a matter of taste or distaste; or when once it becomes indifferent, it begins to be disrelishing. I am, in plainer words, a bundle of prejudices — made up of likings and dislikings — the veriest thrall to sympathies, apathies, antipathies. In a certain sense, I hope it may be said of me that I am a lover of my species. I can feel for all indifferently, but I cannot feel towards all equally. The more purely-English word that expresses sympathy, will better explain my meaning. I can be a friend to a worthy man, who upon another account cannot be my mate or fellow. I cannot like all people alike.²

¹ Cf. Paradise Lost, vii. 23.
² I would be understood as confining myself to the subject of imperfect sympathies. To nations or classes of men there can be
I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They cannot like me—and in truth, I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. There is something more plain and ingenuous in their mode of proceeding. We know one another at first sight. There is an order of imperfect intellects (under which mine must be content to rank) which in its constitution is essentially anti-Caledonian. The owners of the sort of faculties I allude to, have minds rather suggestive than comprehensive. They have no pretences to much clearness or precision in their ideas, or in their manner of expressing them. Their intellectual wardrobe (to confess fairly) has few whole pieces in it. They are content with fragments and scattered pieces of Truth. She presents no full front to them—a feature or side-face at the most. Hints and glimpses, germs and crude essays at a system, is the utmost they pretend to. They beat up a little game peradventure—and leave it to knottier heads, more robust con-

no direct antipathy. There may be individuals born and constellated so opposite to another individual nature, that the same sphere cannot hold them. I have met with my moral antipodes, and can believe the story of two persons meeting (who never saw one another in their lives) and instantly fighting.

— We by proof find there should be
'Twixt man and man such an antipathy,
That though he can show no just reason why
For any former wrong or injury,
Can neither find a blemish in his fame,
Nor aught in face or feature justly blame,
Can challenge or accuse him of no evil,
Yet notwithstanding hates him as a devil.

The lines are from old Heywood's Hierarchie of Angels, and he subjoins a curious story in confirmation, of a Spaniard who attempted to assassinate a king Ferdinand of Spain, and being put to the rack could give no other reason for the deed but an inveterate antipathy which he had taken to the first sight of the king.

— The cause which to that act compell'd him
Was, he ne'er loved him since he first beheld him.

[Lamb's note.]
stitutions, to run it down. The light that lights them is not steady and polar, but mutable and shifting: waxing, and again waning. Their conversation is accordingly. They will throw out a random word in or out of season, and be content to let it pass for what it is worth. They cannot speak always as if they were upon their oath — but must be understood, speaking or writing, with some abatement. They seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in the green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries as they arise, without waiting for their full development. They are no systematizers, and would but err more by attempting it. Their minds, as I said before, are suggestive merely. The brain of a true Caledonian (if I am not mistaken) is constituted upon quite a different plan. His Minerva is born in panoply. You are never admitted to see his ideas in their growth — if, indeed, they do grow, and are not rather put together upon principles of clock-work. You never catch his mind in an undress. He never hints or suggests anything, but unlades his stock of ideas in perfect order and completeness. He brings his total wealth into company, and gravely unpacks it. His riches are always about him. He never stoops to catch a glittering something in your presence to share it with you, before he quite knows whether it be true touch or not. You cannot cry halves to anything that he finds. He does not find, but bring. You never witness his first apprehension of a thing. His understanding is always at its meridian — you never see the first dawn, the early streaks. — He has no falterings of self-suspicion. Surmises, guesses, misgivings, half-intuitions, semi-consciousnesses, partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions, have no place in his brain or vocabulary. The twilight of dubiety never falls upon him. Is he orthodox — he has no doubts. Is he an infidel — he has none either. Between the affirmative and the negative there is no border-land with him. You cannot hover with him upon the confines of truth, or wander in the maze of a probable argument. He always keeps the path. You cannot make excursions with him — for he sets you right. His taste
never fluctuates. His morality never abates. He cannot compromise, or understand middle actions. There can be but a right and a wrong. His conversation is as a book. His affirmations have the sanctity of an oath. You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. "A healthy book!"—said one of his countrymen to me, who had ventured to give that appellation to John Buncle,—"Did I catch rightly what you said? I have heard of a man in health, and of a healthy state of body, but I do not see how that epithet can be properly applied to a book." Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher upon your irony, if you are unhappily blest with a vein of it. Remember you are upon your oath. I have a print of a graceful female after Leonardo da Vinci, which I was showing off to Mr. ——. After he had examined it minutely, I ventured to ask him how he liked my beauty (a foolish name it goes by among my friends)—when he very gravely assured me, that "he had considerable respect for my character and talents" (so he was pleased to say), "but had not given himself much thought about the degree of my personal pretensions." The misconception staggered me, but did not seem much to disconcert him. — Persons of this nation are particularly fond of affirning a truth—which nobody doubts. They do not so properly affirm, as announce it. They do indeed appear to have such a love of truth (as if, like virtue, it were valuable for itself) that all truth becomes equally valuable, whether the proposition that contains it be new or old, disputed, or such as is impossible to become a subject of disputation. I was present not long since at a party of North Britons, where a son of Burns was expected; and happened to drop a silly expression (in my South British way), that I wished it were the father instead of the son—when four of them started up at once to inform me, that "that was impossible, because he was dead." An impracticable wish, it seems, was more than they could conceive. Swift has hit off this part of their character, namely, their love of truth, in his biting way, but with an illiberality
that necessarily confines the passage to the margin. The tediousness of these people is certainly provoking. I wonder if they ever tire one another! — In my early life I had a passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns. I have sometimes foolishly hoped to ingratiate myself with his countrymen by expressing it. But I have always found that a true Scot resents your admiration of his compatriot even more than he would your contempt of him. The latter he imputes to your "imperfect acquaintance with many of the words which he uses;" and the same objection makes it a presumption in you to suppose that you can admire him. — Thomson they seem to have forgotten. Smollett they have neither forgotten nor forgiven for his delineation of Rory and his companion, upon their first introduction to our metropolis. — Speak of Smollett as a great genius, and they will retort upon you Hume's History compared with his Continuation of it. What if the historian had continued Humphrey Clinker?

I have, in the abstract, no disrespect for Jews. They are a piece of stubborn antiquity, compared with which Stonehenge is in its nonage. They date beyond the pyramids. But I should not care to be in habits of familiar intercourse with any of that nation. I confess that I have not the nerves to enter their synagogues. Old prejudices cling about me. I cannot shake off the story of Hugh of Lincoln. Centuries of injury, contempt, and hate, on the one side, — of cloaked revenge, dissimulation, and hate, on the other, between our-and their fathers, must and ought to affect the blood of the children. I cannot believe it can run clear and kindly yet; or that a few fine words, such as

1 There are some people who think they sufficiently acquit themselves, and entertain their company, with relating facts of no consequence, not at all out of the road of such common incidents as happen every day; and this I have observed more frequently among the Scots than any other nation, who are very careful not to omit the minutest circumstances of time or place; which kind of discourse, if it were not a little relieved by the uncouth terms and phrases, as well as accent and gesture, peculiar to that country, would be hardly tolerable. — *Hints towards an Essay on Conversation.* [Lamb's note.]
candor, liberality, the light of a nineteenth century, can close up the breaches of so deadly a disunion. A Hebrew is nowhere congenial to me. He is least distasteful on 'Change — for the mercantile spirit levels all distinctions, as all are beauties in the dark. I boldly confess that I do not relish the approximation of Jew and Christian, which has become so fashionable. The reciprocal endearments have, to me, something hypocritical and unnatural in them. I do not like to see the Church and Synagogue kissing and congeeing in awkward postures of an affected civility. If they are converted, why do they not come over to us altogether? Why keep up a form of separation, when the life of it is fled? If they can sit with us at table, why do they kick at our cookery? I do not understand these half convertites. Jews christianizing — Christians judaizing — puzzle me. I like fish or flesh. A moderate Jew is a more confounding piece of anomaly than a wet Quaker. The spirit of the synagogue is essentially separative. B—— would have been more in keeping if he had abided by the faith of his forefathers. There is a fine scorn in his face, which nature meant to be of —— Christians. The Hebrew spirit is strong in him, in spite of his proselytism. He cannot conquer the Shibboleth. How it breaks out, when he sings, "The Children of Israel passed through the Red Sea!" The auditors, for the moment, are as Egyptians to him, and he rides over our necks in triumph. There is no mistaking him. B—— has a strong expression of sense in his countenance, and it is confirmed by his singing. The foundation of his vocal excellence is sense. He sings with understanding, as Kemble delivered dialogue. He would sing the Commandments, and give an appropriate character to each prohibition. His nation, in general, have not over-sensible countenances. How should they? — but you seldom see a silly expression among them. — Gain, and the pursuit of gain, sharpen a man’s visage. I never heard of an idiot being born among them. — Some admire the Jewish female-physiognomy. I admire it — but with trembling. Jael had those full dark inscrutable eyes.

In the Negro countenance you will often meet with strong
traits of benignity. I have felt yearnings of tenderness towards some of these faces — or rather masks — that have looked out kindly upon one in casual encounters in the streets and highways. I love what Fuller beautifully calls — these "images of God cut in ebony." But I should not like to associate with them, to share my meals and my good nights with them — because they are black.

I love Quaker ways, and Quaker worship. I venerate the Quaker principles. It does me good for the rest of the day when I meet any of their people in my path. When I am ruffled or disturbed by any occurrence, the sight, or quiet voice of a Quaker, acts upon me as a ventilator, lightening the air, and taking off a load from the bosom. But I cannot like the Quakers (as Desdemona would say) "to live with them." I am all over sophisticated — with humors, fancies, craving hourly sympathy. I must have books, pictures, theatres, chit-chat, scandal, jokes, ambiguities, and a thousand whim-whams, which their simpler taste can do without. I should starve at their primitive banquet. My appetites are too high for the salads which (according to Evelyn) Eve dressed for the angel;¹ my gusto too excited

To sit a guest with Daniel at his pulse.²

The indirect answers which Quakers are often found to return to a question put to them may be explained, I think, without the vulgar assumption, that they are more given to evasion and equivocating than other people. They naturally look to their words more carefully, and are more cautious of committing themselves. They have a peculiar character to keep up on this head. They stand in a manner upon their veracity. A Quaker is by law exempted from taking an oath. The custom of resorting to an oath in extreme cases, sanctified as it is by all religious antiquity, is apt (it must be confessed) to introduce into the laxer sort of minds the notion of two kinds of truth — the one applicable to the solemn affairs of justice, and the other to the common proceedings of daily intercourse. As truth bound upon the conscience by an

¹ *Paradise Lost*, v. 315 ff. ² *Paradise Regained*, ii. 278.
oath can be but truth, so in the common affirmations of the shop and the market-place a latitude is expected and conceded upon questions wanting this solemn covenant. Something less than truth satisfies. It is common to hear a person say, "You do not expect me to speak as if I were upon my oath." Hence a great deal of incorrectness and inadvertency, short of falsehood, creeps into ordinary conversation; and a kind of secondary or laic-truth is tolerated, where clergy-truth — oath-truth, by the nature of the circumstances, is not required. A Quaker knows none of this distinction. His simple affirmation being received upon the most sacred occasions, without any further test, stamps a value upon the words which he is to use upon the most indifferent topics of life. He looks to them, naturally, with more severity. You can have of him no more than his word. He knows, if he is caught tripping in a casual expression, he forfeits, for himself at least, his claim to the invidious exemption. He knows that his syllables are weighed — and how far a consciousness of this particular watchfulness, exerted against a person, has a tendency to produce indirect answers, and a diverting of the question by honest means, might be illustrated, and the practice justified, by a more sacred example than is proper to be adduced upon this occasion. The admirable presence of mind, which is notorious in Quakers upon all contingencies, might be traced to this imposed self-watchfulness — if it did not seem rather an humble and secular scion of that old stock of religious constancy, which never bent or faltered, in the Primitive Friends, or gave way to the winds of persecution, to the violence of judge or accuser, under trials and racking examinations. "You will never be the wiser, if I sit here answering your questions till midnight," said one of those upright Justicers to Penn, who had been putting law-cases with a puzzling subtlety. "Thereafter as the answers may be," retorted the Quaker. The astonishing composure of this people is sometimes ludicrously displayed in lighter instances. — I was travelling in a stage-coach with three male Quakers, buttoned up in the straitest nonconformity of their sect. We stopped to bait at Andover, where a meal,
partly tea apparatus, partly supper, was set before us. My friends confined themselves to the tea-table. I in my way took supper. When the landlady brought in the bill, the eldest of my companions discovered that she had charged for both meals. This was resisted. Mine hostess was very clamorous and positive. Some mild arguments were used on the part of the Quakers, for which the heated mind of the good lady seemed by no means a fit recipient. The guard came in with his usual peremptory notice. The Quakers pulled out their money and formally tendered it — so much for tea — I, in humble imitation, tendering mine — for the supper which I had taken. She would not relax in her demand. So they all three quietly put up their silver, as did myself, and marched out of the room, the eldest and gravest going first, with myself closing up the rear, who thought I could not do better than follow the example of such grave and warrantable personages. We got in. The steps went up. The coach drove off. The murmurs of mine hostess, not very indistinctly or ambiguously pronounced, became after a time inaudible — and now my conscience, which the whimsical scene had for a while suspended, beginning to give some twitches, I waited, in the hope that some justification would be offered by these serious persons for the seeming injustice of their conduct. To my great surprise not a syllable was dropped on the subject. They sat as mute as at a meeting. At length the eldest of them broke silence, by inquiring of his next neighbor, “Hast thee heard how indigos go at the India House?” and the question operated as a soporific on my moral feeling as far as Exeter.

WITCHES AND OTHER NIGHT FEARS

We are too hasty when we set down our ancestors in the gross for fools, for the monstrous inconsistencies (as they seem to us) involved in their creed of witchcraft. In the relations of this visible world we find them to have been
as rational, and shrewd to detect an historic anomaly, as ourselves. But when once the invisible world was supposed to be opened, and the lawless agency of bad spirits assumed, what measures of probability, of decency, of fitness, or proportion — of that which distinguishes the likely from the palpable absurd — could they have to guide them in the rejection or admission of any particular testimony? — That maidens pined away, wasting inwardly as their waxen images consumed before a fire — that corn was lodged, and cattle lamed — that whirlwinds uptore in diabolic revelry the oaks of the forest — or that spits and kettles only danced a fearful-innocent vagary about some rustic’s kitchen when no wind was stirring — were all equally probable where no law of agency was understood. That the prince of the powers of darkness, passing by the flower and pomp of the earth, should lay preposterous siege to the weak fantasy of indigent eld — has neither likelihood nor unlikelihood à priori to us, who have no measure to guess at his policy, or standard to estimate what rate those anile souls may fetch in the devil’s market. Nor, when the wicked are expressly symbolized by a goat, was it to be wondered at so much, that he should come sometimes in that body, and assert his metaphor. — That the intercourse was opened at all between both worlds was perhaps the mistake — but that once assumed, I see no reason for disbelieving one attested story of this nature more than another on the score of absurdity. There is no law to judge of the lawless, or canon by which a dream may be criticised.

I have sometimes thought that I could not have existed in the days of received witchcraft; that I could not have slept in a village where one of those reputed hags dwelt. Our ancestors were bolder or more obtuse. Amidst the universal belief that these wretches were in league with the author of all evil, holding hell tributary to their muttering, no simple justice of the peace seems to have scrupled issuing, or silly headborough serving, a warrant upon them — as if they should subpoena Satan! — Prospero in his boat, with his books and wand about him, suffers himself to be
conveyed away at the mercy of his enemies to an unknown island. He might have raised a storm or two, we think, on the passage. His acquiescence is in exact analogy to the non-resistance of witches to the constituted powers. — What stops the Fiend in Spenser from tearing Guyon to pieces — or who had made it a condition of his prey that Guyon must take assay of the glorious bait — we have no guess. We do not know the laws of that country.

From my childhood I was extremely inquisitive about witches and witch-stories. My maid, and more legendary aunt, supplied me with good store. But I shall mention the accident which directed my curiosity originally into this channel. In my father's book-closet the History of the Bible by Stackhouse occupied a distinguished station. The pictures with which it abounds — one of the ark, in particular, and another of Solomon's temple, delineated with all the fidelity of ocular admeasurement, as if the artist had been upon the spot — attracted my childish attention. There was a picture, too, of the Witch raising up Samuel, which I wish that I had never seen. We shall come to that hereafter. Stackhouse is in two huge tomes; and there was a pleasure in removing folios of that magnitude, which, with infinite straining, was as much as I could manage, from the situation which they occupied upon an upper shelf. I have not met with the work from that time to this, but I remember it consisted of Old Testament stories, orderly set down, with the objection appended to each story, and the solution of the objection regularly tacked to that. The objection was a summary of whatever difficulties had been opposed to the credibility of the history by the shrewdness of ancient or modern infidelity, drawn up with an almost complimentary excess of candor. The solution was brief, modest, and satisfactory. The bane and antidote were both before you. To doubts so put, and so quashed, there seemed to be an end for ever. The dragon lay dead, for the foot of the veriest babe to trample on. But — like as was rather feared than realized from that slain monster in Spenser — from the womb of those crushed errors young dragonets would creep,
exceeding the prowess of so tender a Saint George as myself to vanquish. The habit of expecting objections to every passage set me upon starting more objections, for the glory of finding a solution of my own for them. I became staggered and perplexed, a sceptic in long-coats. The pretty Bible stories which I had read, or heard read in church, lost their purity and sincerity of impression, and were turned into so many historic or chronologic theses to be defended against whatever impugners. I was not to disbelieve them, but — the next thing to that — I was to be quite sure that some one or other would or had disbelieved them. Next to making a child an infidel, is the letting him know that there are infidels at all. Credulity is the man’s weakness, but the child’s strength. O, how ugly sound scriptural doubts from the mouth of a babe and a suckling! — I should have lost myself in these mazes, and have pined away, I think, with such unfit sustenance as these husks afforded, but for a fortunate piece of ill-fortune which about this time befell me. Turning over the picture of the ark with too much haste, I unhappily made a breach in its ingenious fabric — driving my inconsiderate fingers right through the two larger quadrupeds, the elephant and the camel, that stare (as well they might) out of the two last windows next the steerage in that unique piece of naval architecture. Stackhouse was henceforth locked up, and became an interdicted treasure. With the book, the objections and solutions gradually cleared out of my head, and have seldom returned since in any force to trouble me. But there was one impression which I had imbibed from Stackhouse, which no lock or bar could shut out, and which was destined to try my childish nerves rather more seriously. — That detestable picture!

I was dreadfully alive to nervous terrors. The night-time solitude, and the dark, were my hell. The sufferings I endured in this nature would justify the expression. I never laid my head on my pillow, I suppose, from the fourth to the seventh or eighth year of my life — so far as memory serves in things so long ago — without an assurance, which realized its own prophecy, of seeing some frightful spectre. Be old
Stackhouse then acquitted in part, if I say, that to his picture of the Witch raising up Samuel — (O that old man covered with a mantle!) — I owe — not my midnight terrors, the hell of my infancy — but the shape and manner of their visitation. It was he who dressed up for me a hag that nightly sate upon my pillow — a sure bedfellow, when my aunt or my maid was far from me. All day long, while the book was permitted me, I dreamed waking over his delineation, and at night (if I may use so bold an expression) awoke into sleep, and found the vision true. I durst not, even in the daylight, once enter the chamber where I slept, without my face turned to the window, aversely from the bed where my witch-ridden pillow was. Parents do not know what they do when they leave tender babes alone to go to sleep in the dark. The feeling about for a friendly arm — the hoping for a familiar voice — when they wake screaming — and find none to soothe them — what a terrible shaking it is to their poor nerves! The keeping them up till midnight, through candle-light and the unwholesome hours, as they are called, — would, I am satisfied, in a medical point of view, prove the better caution. — That detestable picture, as I have said, gave the fashion to my dreams — if dreams they were — for the scene of them was invariably the room in which I lay. Had I never met with the picture, the fears would have come self-pictured in some shape or other —

Headless bear, black man, or ape — ¹

but, as it was, my imaginations took that form. — It is not book, or picture, or the stories of foolish servants, which create these terrors in children. They can at most but give them a direction. Dear little T. H., who of all children has been brought up with the most scrupulous exclusion of every taint of superstition — who was never allowed to hear of goblin or apparition, or scarcely to be told of bad men, or to read or hear of any distressing story — finds all this world of fear, from which he has been so rigidly excluded ab extra, ²

¹ A remembrance from Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, "The Abstract of Melancholy."

² Externally.
In his own "thick-coming fancies;"¹ and from his little midnight pillow, this nurse-child of optimism will start at shapes, unborrowed of tradition, in sweats to which the reveries of the cell-damned murderer are tranquillity.

Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire — stories of Celæno and the Harpies — may reproduce themselves in the brain of superstition — but they were there before. They are transcripts, types — the archetypes are in us, and eternal. How else should the recital of that, which we know in a waking sense to be false, come to affect us at all? — or

— Names, whose sense we see not,
Fray us with things that be not?²

Is it that we naturally conceive terror from such objects, considered in their capacity of being able to inflict upon us bodily injury? — O, least of all! These terrors are of older standing. They date beyond body — or, without the body, they would have been the same. All the cruel, tormenting, defined devils in Dante — tearing, mangling, choking, stifling, scorching demons — are they one half so fearful to the spirit of a man, as the simple idea of a spirit unembodied following him —

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turn'd round, walks on
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.³

That the kind of fear here treated of is purely spiritual — that it is strong in proportion as it is objectless upon earth — that it predominates in the period of sinless infancy — are difficulties, the solution of which might afford some probable insight into our ante-mundane condition, and a peep at least into the shadowland of preëxistence.

My night fancies have long ceased to be afflictive. I confess an occasional nightmare; but I do not, as in early youth, keep a stud of them. Fiendish faces, with the ex-

¹ Macbeth, v. 3. 38. ² Spenser's Epithalamion, 343–344. ³ Mr. Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. [Lamb's note.]
tungished taper, will come and look at me; but I know them for mockeries, even while I cannot elude their presence, and I fight and grapple with them. For the credit of my imagina-
tion, I am almost ashamed to say how tame and prosaic my dreams are grown. They are never romantic, seldom even rural. They are of architecture and of buildings — cities abroad, which I have never seen and hardly have hope to see. I have traversed, for the seeming length of a natural
day, Rome, Amsterdam, Paris, Lisbon — their churches, palaces, squares, market-places, shops, suburbs, ruins, with
an inexpressible sense of delight — a map-like distinctness of trace, and a day-light vividness of vision, that was all but being awake. — I have formerly travelled among the Westmoreland fells — my highest Alps, — but they are objects too mighty for the grasp of my dreaming recognition;
and I have again and again awoke with ineffectual struggles of the inner eye, to make out a shape, in any way whatever, of Helvellyn. Methought I was in that country, but the mountains were gone. The poverty of my dreams mortifies me. There is Coleridge, at his will can conjure up icy domes, and pleasure-houses for Kubla Khan, and Abyssinian maids, and songs of Abara, and caverns,

Where Alph, the sacred river, runs,¹
to solace his night solitudes — when I cannot muster a fiddle. Barry Cornwall has his tritons and his nereids gamboling be-
fore him in nocturnal visions, and proclaiming sons born to Neptune — when my stretch of imaginative activity can hardly, in the night season, raise up the ghost of a fish-wife. To set my failures in somewhat a mortifying light — it was after reading the noble Dream of this poet, that my fancy ran strong upon these marine spectra; and the poor plastic power, such as it is, within me set to work to humor my folly in a sort of dream that very night. Methought I was upon the ocean billows at some sea nuptials, riding and mounted high, with the customary train sounding their conchs before me (I myself, you may be sure, the leading god), and jollily

¹ Coleridge's Kubla Khan.
we went careering over the main, till just where Ino Leucothea should have greeted me (I think it was Ino) with a white embrace, the billows gradually subsiding, fell from a sea roughness to a sea calm, and thence to a river motion, and that river (as happens in the familiarization of dreams) was no other than the gentle Thames, which landed me, in the wafture of a placid wave or two, alone, safe and inglorious, somewhere at the foot of Lambeth Palace.

The degree of the soul's creativeness in sleep might furnish no whimsical criterion of the quantum of poetical faculty resident in the same soul waking. An old gentleman, a friend of mine, and a humorist, used to carry this notion so far, that when he saw any stripling of his acquaintance ambitious of becoming a poet, his first question would be, — "Young man, what sort of dreams have you?" I have so much faith in my old friend's theory, that when I feel that idle vein returning upon me, I presently subside into my proper element of prose, remembering those eluding nereids, and that inauspicious inland landing.

VALENTINE'S DAY

Hail to thy returning festival, old Bishop Valentine! Great is thy name in the rubric, thou venerable Archflamen of Hymen! Immortal Go-between; who and what manner of person art thou? Art thou but a name, typifying the restless principle which impels poor humans to seek perfection in union? or wert thou indeed a mortal prelate, with thy tippet and thy rochet, thy apron on, and decent lawn sleeves? Mysterious personage! Like unto thee, assuredly, there is no other mitred father in the calendar; not Jerome, nor Ambrose, nor Cyril; nor the consigner of undipt infants to eternal torments, Austin, whom all mothers hate; nor he who hated all mothers, Origen; nor Bishop Bull, nor Archbishop Parker, nor Whitgift. Thou comest attended with thousands and ten thousands of little Loves, and the air is
Brush’d with the hiss of rustling wings.¹

Singing Cupids are thy choristers and thy precentors; and instead of the crosier, the mystical arrow is borne before thee. In other words, this is the day on which those charming little missives, ycleped Valentines, cross and intercross each other at every street and turning. The weary and all forspent twopenny postman sinks beneath a load of delicate embarrassments, not his own. It is scarcely credible to what an extent this ephemeral courtship is carried on in this loving town, to the great enrichment of porters, and detriment of knockers and bell-wires. In these little visual interpretations, no emblem is so common as the heart,—that little three-cornered exponent of all our hopes and fears,—the bestuck and bleeding heart; it is twisted and tortured into more allegories and affectations than an opera hat. What authority we have in history or mythology for placing the headquarters and metropolis of god Cupid in this anatomical seat rather than in any other, is not very clear; but we have got it, and it will serve as well as any other. Else we might easily imagine, upon some other system which might have prevailed for anything which our pathology knows to the contrary, a lover addressing his mistress, in perfect simplicity of feeling, “Madam, my liver and fortune are entirely at your disposal;” or putting a delicate question, “Amanda, have you a midriff to bestow?” But custom has settled these things, and awarded the seat of sentiment to the aforesaid triangle, while its less fortunate neighbors wait at animal and anatomical distance.

Not many sounds in life, and I include all urban and all rural sounds, exceed in interest a knock at the door. It “gives a very echo to the throne where hope is seated.”²

¹ *Paradise Lost*, i. 768.

² Cf. *Twelfth Night*, ii. 4. 20. This is one of Lamb’s free adaptations in a quotation. It is notable that the quotation is not isolated, but holds an integral part in the composition of the thought in the essay. A reading of the whole scene from *Twelfth Night* will show that the thought and the atmosphere of the essay are conceived in the spirit of the entire scene.
But its issues seldom answer to this oracle within. It is so seldom that just the person we want to see comes. But of all the clamorous visitations the welcomest in expectation is the sound that ushers in, or seems to usher in, a Valentine. As the raven himself was hoarse that announced the fatal entrance of Duncan,¹ so the knock of the postman on this day is light, airy, confident, and befitting one thatbringeth good tidings. It is less mechanical than on other days; you will say, "That is not the post, I am sure." Visions of Love, of Cupids, of Hymens!—delightful eternal commonplaces, which "having been will always be;"² which no school-boy nor school-man can write away; having your irreversible throne in the fancy and affections—who are your transports, when the happy maiden, opening with careful finger, careful not to break the emblematic seal, bursts upon the sight of some well-designed allegory, some type, some youthful fancy, not without verses—

Lovers all,  
A madrigal,³

or some such device, not over-abundant in sense—young Love disclaims it,—and not quite silly—something between wind and water, a chorus where the sheep might almost join the shepherd, as they did, or as I apprehend they did, in Arcadia.

All Valentines are not foolish; and I shall not easily forget thine, my kind friend (if I may have leave to call you so) E. B——. E. B. lived opposite a young maiden, whom he had often seen, unseen, from his parlor window in C——e Street. She was all joyousness and innocence, and just of an age to enjoy receiving a Valentine, and just of a temper

¹ Macbeth, i. 5. 39.
² Cf. Wordsworth's lines in the Ode, On Intimations of Immortality, x. 14–15:

"The primal sympathy which having been must ever be."

³ "But a' never lived to touch it—a' began all in a moment to sing 'Lovers all, a Madrigall': 'Twas the only song Master Abram ever learned out of book" (Davy to Shallow, describing Slender's death, Falstaff's Letters, by James White). [Note by Hallward and Hill.]
to bear the disappointment of missing one with good humor. E. B. is an artist of no common powers; in the fancy parts of designing, perhaps inferior to none; his name is known at the bottom of many a well-executed vignette in the way of his profession, but no further; for E. B. is modest, and the world meets nobody half way. E. B. meditated how he could repay this young maiden for many a favor which she had done him unknown; for when a kindly face greets us, though but passing by, and never knows us again, nor we it, we should feel it as an obligation: and E. B. did. This good artist set himself at work to please the damsel. It was just before Valentine’s day three years since. He wrought, unseen and unsuspected, a wondrous work. We need not say it was on the finest gilt paper with borders — full, not of common hearts and heartless allegory, but all the prettiest stories of love from Ovid, and older poets than Ovid (for E. B. is a scholar). There was Pyramus and Thisbe, and be sure Dido was not forgot, nor Hero and Leander, and swans more than sang in Cayster, with mottoes and fanciful devices, such as beseemed — a work, in short, of magic. Iris dipt the woof.¹ This on Valentine’s eve he commended to the all-swallowing indiscriminate orifice (O ignoble trust!) of the common post; but the humble medium did its duty, and from his watchful stand the next morning he saw the cheerful messenger knock, and by-and-by the precious charge delivered. He saw, unseen, the happy girl unfold the Valentine, dance about, clap her hands, as one after one the pretty emblems unfolded themselves. She danced about, not with light love or foolish expectations, for she had no lover; or, if she had, none she knew that could have created those bright images which delighted her. It was more like some fairy present; a God-send, as our familiarly pious ancestors termed a benefit received where the benefactor was unknown. It would do her no harm. It would do her good for ever after. It is good to love the unknown. I only give this as a specimen of E. B. and his modest way of doing a concealed kindness.

¹ “Iris had dipt the woof,” Paradise Lost, xi. 244.
Good morrow to my Valentine, sings poor Ophelia; and no better wish, but with better auspices, we wish to all faithful lovers, who are not too wise to despise old legends, but are content to rank themselves humble diocesans of old Bishop Valentine and his true church.

MY RELATIONS

I am arrived at that point of life at which a man may account it a blessing, as it is a singularity, if he have either of his parents surviving. I have not that felicity — and sometimes think feelingly of a passage in "Browne’s Christian Morals," where he speaks of a man that hath lived sixty or seventy years in the world. "In such a compass of time," he says, "a man may have a close apprehension what it is to be forgotten, when he hath lived to find none who could remember his father, or scarcely the friends of his youth, and may sensibly see with what a face in no long time Oblivion will look upon himself."

I had an aunt, a dear and good one. She was one whom single blessedness had soured to the world. She often used to say, that I was the only thing in it which she loved; and, when she thought I was quitting it, she grieved over me with mother's tears. A partiality quite so exclusive my reason cannot altogether approve. She was from morning till night poring over good books and devotional exercises. Her favorite volumes were "Thomas à Kempis," in Stanhope’s translation; and a Roman Catholic Prayer Book, with the

1 She loves Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, and through a series of unfortunate happenings becomes insane, finally drowning herself. In Hamlet, iv. 5, she sings:

"Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window
To be your Valentine."
my relations

matins and complines regularly set down — terms which I was at that time too young to understand. She persisted in reading them, although admonished daily concerning their Papistical tendency; and went to church every Sabbath, as a good Protestant should do. These were the only books she studied; though, I think, at one period of her life, she told me, she had read with great satisfaction the “Adventures of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman.” Finding the door of the chapel in Essex Street open one day — it was in the infancy of that heresy — she went in, liked the sermon, and the manner of worship, and frequented it at intervals for some time after. She came not for doctrinal points, and never missed them. With some little asperities in her constitution, which I have above hinted at, she was a steadfast, friendly being, and a fine old Christian. She was a woman of strong sense, and a shrewd mind — extraordinary at a repartee; one of the few occasions of her breaking silence — else she did not much value wit. The only secular employment I remember to have seen her engaged in, was the splitting of French beans, and dropping them into a china basin of fair water. The odor of those tender vegetables to this day comes back upon my sense, redolent of soothing recollections. Certainly it is the most delicate of culinary operations.

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

1 The morning service, and the last prayer at night.
mind; and when they shall be seventy-five, and seventy-three, years old (I cannot spare them sooner), persist in treating me in my grand climacteric precisely as a stripling, or younger brother!

James is an inexplicable cousin. Nature hath her unities, which not every critic can penetrate; or, if we feel, we cannot explain them. The pen of Yorick, and of none since his, could have drawn J. E. entire — those fine Shandean lights and shades, which make up his story. I must limp after in my poor antithetical manner, as the fates have given me grace and talent. J. E. then — to the eye of a common observer at least — seemeth made up of contradictory principles. The genuine child of impulse, the frigid philosopher of prudence — the phlegm of my cousin’s doctrine, is invariably at war with his temperament, which is high sanguine. With always some fire-new project in his brain, J. E. is the systematic opponent of innovation, and crier-down of everything that has not stood the test of age and experiment. With a hundred fine notions chasing one another hourly in his fancy, he is startled at the least approach to the romantic in others; and, determined by his own sense in everything, commends you to the guidance of common sense on all occasions. — With a touch of the eccentric in all which he does or says, he is only anxious that you should not commit yourself by doing anything absurd or singular. On my once letting slip at table, that I was not fond of a certain popular dish, he begged me at any rate not to say so — for the world would think me mad. He disguises a passionate fondness for works of high art (whereof he hath amassed a choice collection), under the pretext of buying only to sell again — that his enthusiasm may give no encouragement to yours. Yet, if it were so, why does that piece of tender, pastoral Domenichino hang still by his wall? — is the ball of his sight much more dear to him? — or what picture-dealer can talk like him?

Whereas mankind in general are observed to warp their speculative conclusions to the bent of their individual humors, his theories are sure to be in diametrical opposition to his constitution. He is courageous as Charles of Sweden,
upon instinct; chary of his person, upon principle, as a travelling Quaker. He has been preaching up to me, all my life, the doctrine of bowing to the great — the necessity of forms, and manner, to a man’s getting on in the world. He himself never aims at either, that I can discover, — and has a spirit that would stand upright in the presence of the Cham of Tartary. It is pleasant to hear him discourse of patience — extolling it as the truest wisdom — and to see him during the last seven minutes that his dinner is getting ready. Nature never ran up in her haste a more restless piece of workmanship than when she moulded this impetuous cousin — and Art never turned out a more elaborate orator than he can display himself to be, upon his favorite topic of the advantages of quiet and contentedness in the state, whatever it be, that we are placed in. He is triumphant on this theme, when he has you safe in one of those short stages that ply for the western road, in a very obstructing manner, at the foot of John Murray’s Street — where you get in when it is empty, and are expected to wait till the vehicle hath completed her just freight — a trying three quarters of an hour to some people. He wonders at your fidgetiness, — “Where could we be better than we are, thus sitting, thus consulting?” 1 — “prefers, for his part, a state of rest to locomotion,” — with an eye all the while upon the coachman, — till at length, waxing out of all patience, at your want of it, he breaks out into a pathetic remonstrance at the fellow for detaining us so long over the time which he had professed, and declares peremptorily, that “the gentleman in the coach is determined to get out, if he does not drive on that instant.”

Very quick at inventing an argument, or detecting a sophistry, he is incapable of attending you in any chain of arguing. Indeed, he makes wild work with logic; and seems to jump at most admirable conclusions by some process not at all akin to it. Consonantly enough to this, he hath been heard to deny, upon certain occasions, that there exists such a faculty at all in man as reason; and wondereth how man came first to have a conceit of it — enforcing his negation

1 Paradise Lost, ii. 164.
with all the might of reasoning he is master of. He has some speculative notions against laughter, and will maintain that laughing is not natural to him — when peradventure the next moment his lungs shall crow like chanticleer. He says some of the best things in the world — and declareth that wit is his aversion. It was he who said, upon seeing the Eton boys at play in their grounds — What a pity to think that these fine ingenuous lads in a few years will all be changed into frivolous Members of Parliament!

His youth was fiery, glowing, tempestuous — and in age he discovereth no symptom of cooling. This is that which I admire in him. I hate people who meet Time half way. I am for no compromise with that inevitable spoiler. While he lives, J. E. will take his swing. — It does me good, as I walk towards the street of my daily avocation, on some fine May morning, to meet him marching in a quite opposite direction, with a jolly handsome presence, and shining sanguine face, that indicates some purchase in his eye — a Claude — or a Hobbima — for much of his enviable leisure is consumed at Christie's and Phillips's — or where not, to pick up pictures, and such gauds. On these occasions he mostly stoppeth me, to read a short lecture on the advantage a person like me possesses above himself, in having his time occupied with business which he must do — assureth me that he often feels it hang heavy on his hands — wishes he had fewer holidays — and goes off — Westward Ho! — chanting a tune, to Pall Mall — perfectly convinced that he has convinced me — while I proceed in my opposite direction tuneless.

It is pleasant, again, to see this Professor of Indifference doing the honors of his new purchase, when he has fairly housed it. You must view it in every light, till he has found the best — placing it at this distance, and at that, but always suiting the focus of your sight to his own. You must spy at it through your fingers, to catch the aërial perspective — though you assure him that to you the landscape shows much more agreeable without that artifice. Woe be to the luckless wight who does not only not respond to his rapture, but who
should drop an unseasonable intimation of preferring one of
his anterior bargains to the present!—The last is always his
best hit—his "Cynthia of the minute." ¹—Alas! how many
a mild Madonna have I known to come in—a Raphael!—
keep its ascendancy for a few brief moons—then, after
certain intermedial degradations, from the front drawing-
room to the back gallery, thence to the dark parlor,—
adopted in turn by each of the Carracci, under successive
lowering ascriptions of filiation, mildly breaking its fall—
consigned to the oblivious lumber-room, go out at last a Lucca
Giordano, or plain Carlo Maratti!—which things when I
beheld—musing upon the chances and mutabilities of fate
below, hath made me to reflect upon the altered condition of
great personages, or that woeful Queen of Richard the
Second—

——— set forth in pomp,
   She came adorned hither like sweet May;
   Sent back like Hallowmass or shortest day.²

With great love for you, J. E. hath but a limited sympathy
with what you feel or do. He lives in a world of his own, and
makes slender guesses at what passes in your mind. He
never pierces the marrow of your habits. He will tell an old-
established playgoer, that Mr. Such-a-one, of So-and-so
(naming one of the theatres), is a very lively comedian—
as a piece of news! He advertised me but the other day of
some pleasant green lanes which he had found out for me,
knowing me to be a great walker, in my own immediate vicinity
—who have haunted the identical spot any time these twenty
years!—He has not much respect for that class of feelings
which goes by the name of sentimental. He applies the
definition of real evil to bodily sufferings exclusively—and
rejecteth all others as imaginary. He is affected by the

¹ Cynthia: the goddess of the moon. The quotation is a recol-
lection of Pope’s Epistle to Martha Blount, 17–20:—

"Choose a firm cloud before it fall, and in it
   Catch, e’er she change, the Cynthia of this minute."

² Richard II, v. 1. 80.
sight, or the bare supposition, of a creature in pain, to a
degree which I have never witnessed out of womankind.
A constitutional acuteness to this class of sufferings may in
part account for this. The animal tribe in particular he tak-
eth under his especial protection. A broken-winded or
spur-galled horse is sure to find an advocate in him. An
over-loaded ass is his client for ever. He is the apostle to the
brute kind — the never-failing friend of those who have none
to care for them. The contemplation of a lobster boiled, or
eels skinned alive, will wring him so, that “all for pity he
could die.” It will take the savor from his palate, and
the rest from his pillow, for days and nights. With the in-
tense feeling of Thomas Clarkson, he wanted only the stead-
iness of pursuit, and unity of purpose, of that “true yoke-
fellow with Time,” to have effected as much for the Animal
as he hath done for the Negro Creation. But my uncon-
trollable cousin is but imperfectly formed for purposes which
demand coöperation. He cannot wait. His amelioration-
plans must be ripened in a day. For this reason he has cut
but an equivocal figure in benevolent societies, and combi-
nations for the alleviation of human sufferings. His zeal
constantly makes him to outrun, and put out, his coadjutors.
He thinks of relieving, — while they think of debating.
He was black-balled out of a society for the Relief of . . .
because the fervor of his humanity toiled beyond the formal
apprehension and creeping processes of his associates. I
shall always consider this distinction as a patent of nobility in
the Elia family!

Do I mention these seeming inconsistencies to smile at, or
upbraid, my unique cousin? Marry, heaven, and all good
manners, and the understanding that should be between
kinsfolk, forbid! — With all the strangenesses of this strang-
est of the Elia — I would not have him in one jot or tittle
other than he is; neither would I barter or exchange my wild

1 Spenser's Faerie Queene, i. 3. 1.
2 Wordsworth's Sonnet on Clarkson.
3 According to Lamb the fifteen asterisks in the original edition
of the essay stood for "Distrest Sailors."
kinsman for the most exact, regular, and every way consistent kinsman breathing.

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

Through the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.

MACKERY END, IN HERTFORDSHIRE

BRIDGET ELIA has been my housekeeper for many a long year. I have obligations to Bridget, extending beyond the period of memory. We house together, old bachelor and maid, in a sort of double singleness; with such tolerable comfort, upon the whole, that I, for one, find in myself no sort of disposition to go out upon the mountains, with the rash king's offspring, to bewail my celibacy. We agree pretty well in our tastes and habits — yet so, as "with a difference." We are generally in harmony, with occasional bickerings — as it should be among near relations. Our sympathies are rather understood than expressed; and once, upon my dissembling a tone in my voice more kind than ordinary, my cousin burst into tears, and complained that I was altered. We are both great readers in different directions. While I am hanging over (for the thousandth time) some passage in old Burton, or one of his strange contemporaries, she is abstracted in some modern tale or adventure, whereof our

1 A line in one of Lamb's early sonnets. Mr. Lucas thinks it is a recollection of a line from a poem by William Vallons:—

"The fruitful fields of pleasant Hertfordshire."

2 A rather far-fetched allusion to the daughter of Jephthah, Judge of Israel, who vowed to sacrifice the first thing he should meet coming out of his house on his return from battle, if he were successful. His daughter was the first to greet him. Judges xi. 30-40.
common reading-table is daily fed with assiduously fresh supplies. Narrative teases me. I have little concern in the progress of events. She must have a story — well, ill, or indifferently told — so there be life stirring in it, and plenty of good or evil accidents. The fluctuations of fortune in fiction — and almost in real life — have ceased to interest, or operate but dully upon me. Out-of-the-way humors and opinions — heads with some diverting twist in them — the oddities of authorship, please me most. My cousin has a native disrelish of anything that sounds odd or bizarre. Nothing goes down with her that is quaint, irregular, or out of the road of common sympathy. She "holds Nature more clever." ¹ I can pardon her blindness to the beautiful obliquities of the Religio Medici; but she must apologize to me for certain disrespectful insinuations, which she has been pleased to throw out latterly, touching the intellectuals of a dear favorite of mine, of the last century but one — the thrice noble, chaste, and virtuous, but again somewhat fantastical and original brained, generous Margaret Newcastle.

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

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

I must touch upon the foibles of my kinswoman with a

¹ Gray's Epitaph of By-Words.
gentle hand, for Bridget does not like to be told of her faults. She hath an awkward trick (to say no worse of it) of reading in company: at which times she will answer yes or no to a question, without fully understanding its purport — which is provoking, and derogatory in the highest degree to the dignity of the putter of the said question. Her presence of mind is equal to the most pressing trials of life, but will sometimes desert her upon trifling occasions. When the purpose requires it, and is a thing of moment, she can speak to it greatly; but in matters which are not stuff of the conscience, she hath been known sometimes to let slip a word less seasonably.

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

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

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

The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End, or Mackarel End, as it is spelt, perhaps more properly, in some old maps of Hertfordshire; a farm-house, — delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead. I can just remember having been there, on a visit to a great-aunt,
when I was a child, under the care of Bridget; who, as I have said, is older than myself by some ten years. I wish that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences, that we might share them in equal division. But that is impossible. The house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman, who had married my grandmother’s sister. His name was Gladman. My grandmother was a Bruton, married to a Field. The Gladmans and the Brutons are still flourishing in that part of the county, but the Fields are almost extinct. More than forty years had elapsed since the visit I speak of; and, for the greater portion of that period, we had lost sight of the other two branches also. Who or what sort of persons inherited Mackery End—kindred or strange folk—we were afraid almost to conjecture, but determined some day to explore.

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

Still the air breathed balmily about it; the season was in the “heart of June,”¹ and I could say with the poet,

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation!²

Bridget’s was more a waking bliss than mine, for she easily remembered her old acquaintance again—some

¹ Ben Jonson’s Epithalamium for Mrs. John Weston.
² Wordsworth’s Yarrow Visited.
altered features, of course, a little grudged at. At first, indeed, she was ready to disbelieve for joy; but the scene soon re-confirmed itself in her affections — and she traversed every outpost of the old mansion, to the wood-house, the orchard, the place where the pigeon-house had stood (house and birds were alike flown) — with a breathless impatience of recognition, which was more pardonable perhaps than decorous at the age of fifty odd. But Bridget in some things is behind her years.

The only thing left was to get into the house — and that was a difficulty which to me singly would have been insurmountable; for I am terribly shy in making myself known to strangers and out-of-date kinsfolk. Love, stronger than scruple, winged my cousin in without me; but she soon returned with a creature that might have sat to a sculptor for the image of Welcome. It was the youngest of the Gladmans; who, by marriage with a Bruton, had become mistress of the old mansion. A comely brood are the Brutons. Six of them, females, were noted as the handsomest young women in the county. But this adopted Bruton, in my mind, was better than they all — more comely. She was born too late to have remembered me. She just recollected in early life to have had her cousin Bridget once pointed out to her, climbing a stile. But the name of kindred and of cousinship was enough. Those slender ties, that prove slight as gossamer in the rending atmosphere of a metropolis, bind faster, as we found it, in hearty, homely, loving Hertfordshire. In five minutes we were as thoroughly acquainted as if we had been born and bred up together; were familiar, even to the calling each other by our Christian names. So Christians should call one another. To have seen Bridget and her—it was like the meeting of the two scriptural cousins!\(^1\) There was a grace and dignity, an amplitude of form and stature, answering to her mind, in this farmer’s wife, which would have shined in a palace — or so we thought it. We were made

\(^1\) The Virgin Mary and Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist.
THE ESSAYS OF ELIA

welcome by husband and wife equally — we, and our friend that was with us. — I had almost forgotten him — but B. F. will not so soon forget that meeting, if peradventure he shall read this on the far distant shores where the kangaroo haunts. The fatted calf was made ready, or rather was already so, as if in anticipation of our coming; and, after an appropriate glass of native wine, never let me forget with what honest pride this hospitable cousin made us proceed to Wheathampstead, to introduce us (as some new-found rarity) to her mother and sister Gladmans, who did indeed know something more of us, at a time when she almost knew nothing. — With what corresponding kindness we were received by them also — how Bridget’s memory, exalted by the occasion, warmed into a thousand half-obliterated recollections of things and persons, to my utter astonishment, and her own — and to the astoundment of B. F. who sat by, almost the only thing that was not a cousin there, — old effaced images of more than half-forgotten names and circumstances still crowding back upon her, as words written in lemon come out upon exposure to a friendly warmth, — when I forget all this, then may my country cousins forget me; and Bridget no more remember, that in the days of weakling infancy I was her tender charge — as I have been her care in foolish manhood since — in those pretty pastoral walks, long ago, about Mackery End, in Hertfordshire.

THE OLD BENCHERS OF THE INNER TEMPLE

I was born, and passed the first seven years of my life, in the Temple. Its church, its halls, its gardens, its fountain, its river, I had almost said — for in those young years, what was this king of rivers to me but a stream that watered our pleasant places? — these are of my oldest recollections. I repeat, to this day, no verses to myself more
frequently, or with kindlier emotion, than those of Spenser where he speaks of this spot:—

There when they came, whereas those bricky towers,
The which on Themmes brode aged back doth ride,
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,
There whylome wont the Templer knights to bide,
Till they decayed through pride.¹

Indeed, it is the most elegant spot in the metropolis. What a transition for a countryman visiting London for the first time — the passing from the crowded Strand or Fleet Street, by unexpected avenues, into its magnificent ample squares, its classic green recesses! What a cheerful, liberal look hath that portion of it, which, from three sides, overlooks the greater garden; that goodly pile

Of building strong, albeit of Paper hight,²
confronting, with massy contrast, the lighter, older, more fantastically-shrouded one, named of Harcourt, with the cheerful Crown-Office-Row (place of my kindly engendure), right opposite the stately stream, which washes the garden-foot with her yet scarcely trade-polluted waters, and seems but just weaned from her Twickenham Naïades! a man would give something to have been born in such places. What a collegiate aspect has that fine Elizabethan hall, where the fountain plays, which I have made to rise and fall, how many times! to the astoundment of the young urchins, my contemporaries, who, not being able to guess at its recondite machinery, were almost tempted to hail the wondrous work as magic! What an antique air had the now almost effaced sun-dials, with their moral inscriptions, seeming coevals with that Time which they measured, and to take their revelations of its flight immediately from heaven, holding correspondence with the fountain of light! How would the dark line steal imperceptibly on, watched by the eye of childhood, eager to detect its movement,

¹ Spenser’s Prothalamion, 8.
never caught, nice as an evanescent cloud, or the first arrests of sleep!

Ah! yet doth beauty like a dial hand
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived!¹

What a dead thing is a clock, with its ponderous embowelments of lead and brass, its pert or solemn dulness of communication, compared with the simple altar-like structure and silent heart-language of the old dial! It stood as the garden god of Christian gardens. Why is it almost everywhere vanished? If its business-use be superseded by more elaborate inventions, its moral uses, its beauty, might have pleaded for its continuance. It spoke of moderate labors, of pleasures not protracted after sunset, of temperance, and good hours. It was the primitive clock, the horologe of the first world. Adam could scarce have missed it in Paradise. It was the measure appropriate for sweet plants and flowers to spring by, for the birds to apportion their silver warblings by, for flocks to pasture and be led to fold by. The shepherd "carved it out quaintly in the sun;"² and, turning philosopher by the very occupation, provided it with mottoes more touching than tombstones. It was a pretty device of the gardener, recorded by Marvell, who, in the days of artificial gardening, made a dial out of herbs and flowers. I must quote his verses a little higher up, for they are full, as all his serious poetry was, of a witty delicacy. They will not come in awkwardly, I hope, in a talk of fountains and sun-dials. He is speaking of sweet garden scenes:

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head.
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine.
The nectarine, and curious peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach.
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Insnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

¹ Shakespeare’s Sonnets, civ.
² An adaptation from 3 Henry VI, ii. 5. 21–24.
Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less
Withdraws into its happiness.
The mind, that ocean, where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds and other seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.
Here at the fountain's sliding foot
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide;
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and claps its silver wings,
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.
How well the skilful gardener drew,
Of flowers and herbs, this dial new!
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run:
And, as it works, the industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned, but with herbs and flowers? ¹

The artificial fountains of the metropolis are, in like manner, fast vanishing. Most of them are dried up or bricked over. Yet, where one is left, as in that little green nook behind the South-Sea House, what a freshness it gives to the dreary pile! Four little winged marble boys used to play their virgin fancies, spouting out ever fresh streams from their innocent-wanton lips, in the square of Lincoln's Inn, when I was no bigger than they were figured. They are gone, and the spring choked up. The fashion, they tell me, is gone by, and these things are esteemed childish. Why not, then, gratify children, by letting them stand? Lawyers, I suppose, were children once. They are awakening images to them at least. Why must everything smack of man, and mannish? Is the world all grown up? Is childhood dead? Or is there not in the bosoms of the wisest and the best some of the

¹ From a copy of verses entitled "The Garden." [Lamb's note.]
child's heart left, to respond to its earliest enchantments? The figures were grotesque. Are the stiff-wigged living figures, that still flitter and chatter about that area, less Gothic in appearance? or is the splutter of their hot rhetoric one half so refreshing and innocent as the little cool playful streams those exploded cherubs uttered?

They have lately gothicized the entrance to the Inner Temple-hall, and the library front; to assimilate them, I suppose, to the body of the hall, which they do not at all resemble. What is become of the winged horse that stood over the former? a stately arms! and who has removed those frescoes of the Virtues, which Italianized the end of the Paper-buildings?—my first hint of allegory! They must account to me for these things, which I miss so greatly.

The terrace is, indeed, left, which we used to call the parade; but the traces are passed away of the footsteps which made its pavement awful! It is become common and profane. The old benchers had it almost sacred to themselves, in the forepart of the day at least. They might not be sided or jostled. Their air and dress asserted the parade. You left wide spaces betwixt you, when you passed them. We walk on even terms with their successors. The roguish eye of J—ll, ever ready to be delivered of a jest, almost invites a stranger to vie a repartee with it. But what insolent familiar durst have mated Thomas Coventry?—whose person was a quadrate, his step massy and elephantine, his face square as the lion's, his gait peremptory and path-keeping, indvertible from his way as a moving column, the scarecrow of his inferiors, the browbeater of equals and superiors, who made a solitude of children wherever he came, for they fled his insufferable presence, as they would have shunned an Elisha bear.1 His growl was as thunder in their ears, whether he spake to them in mirth or in rebuke; his invitatory notes being, indeed, of all, the most repulsive and horrid. Clouds of snuff, aggravating the natural terrors of his speech, broke from each majestic

1 Cf. 2 Kings ii. 23 ff.
nostril, darkening the air. He took it, not by pinches, but a palmful at once,—diving for it under the mighty flaps of his old-fashioned waistcoat pocket; his waistcoat red and angry, his coat dark rappee, tinctured by dye original, and by adjuncts, with buttons of obsolete gold. And so he paced the terrace.

By his side a milder form was sometimes to be seen; the pensive gentility of Samuel Salt. They were coevals, and had nothing but that and their benchership in common. In politics Salt was a whig, and Coventry a staunch Tory. Many a sarcastic growl did the latter cast out—for Coventry had a rough spinous humor—at the political confederates of his associate, which rebounded from the gentle bosom of the latter like cannon-balls from wool. You could not ruffle Samuel Salt.

S. had the reputation of being a very clever man, and of excellent discernment in the chamber practice of the law. I suspect his knowledge did not amount to much. When a case of difficult disposition of money, testamentary or otherwise, came before him, he ordinarily handed it over, with a few instructions, to his man Lovel, who was a quick little fellow, and would despatch it out of hand by the light of natural understanding, of which he had an uncommon share. It was incredible what repute for talents S. enjoyed by the mere trick of gravity. He was a shy man; a child might pose him in a minute—indolent and procrastinating to the last degree. Yet men would give him credit for vast application, in spite of himself. He was not to be trusted with himself with impunity. He never dressed for a dinner-party but he forgot his sword—they wore swords then—or some other necessary part of his equipage. Lovel had his eye upon him on all these occasions, and ordinarily gave him his cue. If there was anything which he could speak unseasonably, he was sure to do it.—He was to dine at a relative's of the unfortunate Miss Blandy on the day of her execution;—and L., who had a wary foresight of his probable hallucinations, before he set out, schooled him, with great anxiety, not in any possible manner to allude to her story.
that day. S. promised faithfully to observe the injunction. He had not been seated in the parlor, where the company was expecting the dinner summons, four minutes, when, a pause in the conversation ensuing, he got up, looked out of window, and pulling down his ruffles—an ordinary motion with him—observed, "it was a gloomy day," and added, "Miss Blandy must be hanged by this time, I suppose." Instances of this sort were perpetual. Yet S. was thought by some of the greatest men of his time a fit person to be consulted, not alone in matters pertaining to the law, but in the ordinary niceties and embarrassments of conduct—from force of manner entirely. He never laughed. He had the same good fortune among the female world,—was a known toast with the ladies, and one or two are said to have died for love of him—I suppose, because he never trifled or talked gallantry with them, or paid them, indeed, hardly common attentions. He had a fine face and person, but wanted, methought, the spirit that should have shown them off with advantage to the women. His eye lacked lustre.—Not so, thought Susan P—; who, at the advanced age of sixty, was seen, in the cold evening time, unaccompanied, wetting the pavement of B—d Row with tears that fell in drops which might be heard, because her friend had died that day—he, whom she had pursued with a hopeless passion for the last forty years—a passion which years could not extinguish or abate; nor the long-resolved, yet gently-enforced, puttings off of unrelenting bachelorhood, dissuade from its cherished purpose. Mild Susan P—, thou hast now thy friend in heaven!

Thomas Coventry was a cadet of the noble family of that name. He passed his youth in contracted circumstances, which gave him early those parsimonious habits which in after life never forsook him; so that, with one windfall or another, about the time I knew him he was master of four or five hundred thousand pounds; nor did he look, or walk, worth a moidore less. He lived in a gloomy house opposite the pump in Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street. J., the counsel, is doing self-imposed penance in it, for what reason I divine not,
at this day. C. had an agreeable seat at North Cray, where he seldom spent above a day or two at a time in the summer; but preferred, during the hot months, standing at his window in this damp, close, well-like mansion, to watch, as he said, "the maids drawing water all day long." I suspect he had his within-door reasons for the preference. *Hic currus et arma fuère.* He might think his treasures more safe. His house had the aspect of a strong box. C. was a close hunks — a hoarder rather than a miser — or, if a miser, none of the mad Elwes breed, who have brought discredit upon a character which cannot exist without certain admirable points of steadiness and unity of purpose. One may hate a true miser, but cannot, I suspect, so easily despise him. By taking care of the pence, he is often enabled to part with the pounds, upon a scale that leaves us careless generous fellows halting at an immeasurable distance behind. C. gave away 30,000 l. at once in his lifetime to a blind charity. His house-keeping was severely looked after, but he kept the table of a gentleman. He would know who came in and who went out of his house, but his kitchen chimney was never suffered to freeze.

Salt was his opposite in this, as in all — never knew what he was worth in the world; and having but a competency for his rank, which his indolent habits were little calculated to improve, might have suffered severely if he had not had honest people about him. Lovel took care of everything. He was at once his clerk, his good servant, his dressier, his friend, his "flapper," his guide, stop-watch, auditor, treasurer. He did nothing without consulting Lovel, or failed in anything without expecting and fearing his admonishing. He put himself almost too much in his hands, had they not been the purest in the world. He resigned his title almost to respect as a master, if L. could ever have forgotten for a moment that he was a servant.

I knew this Lovel. He was a man of an incorrigible and

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1 A free adaptation from Vergil's *Æneid*, i. 16. *Hic illius arma, Hic currus fuit*, "Here she kept her arms and here her chariots"; said of Juno's especial care and protection of Carthage.
losing honesty. A good fellow withal, and "would strike." ¹
In the cause of the oppressed he never considered inequalities, or calculated the number of his opponents. He once wrested a sword out of the hand of a man of quality that had drawn upon him, and pommelled him severely with the hilt of it. The swordsman had offered insult to a female — an occasion upon which no odds against him could have prevented the interference of Lovel. He would stand next day bareheaded to the same person, modestly to excuse his interference — for L. never forgot rank, where something better was not concerned. L. was the liveliest little fellow breathing, had a face as gay as Garrick's, whom he was said greatly to resemble (I have a portrait of him which confirms it), possessed a fine turn for humorous poetry — next to Swift and Prior — moulded heads in clay or plaster of Paris to admiration, by the dint of natural genius merely; turned cribbage boards, and such small cabinet toys, to perfection; took a hand at quadrille or bowls with equal facility; made punch better than any man of his degree in England; had the merriest quips and conceits; and was altogether as brimful of rogueries and inventions as you could desire. He was a brother of the angle, moreover, and just such a free, hearty, honest companion as Mr. Izaak Walton would have chosen to go a-fishing with. I saw him in his old age and the decay of his faculties, palsy-smitten, in the last sad stage of human weakness — "a remnant most forlorn of what he was," — yet even then his eye would light up upon the mention of his favorite Garrick. He was greatest, he would say, in Bayes — "was upon the stage nearly throughout the whole performance, and as busy as a bee." At intervals, too, he would speak of his former life, and how he came up a little boy from Lincoln, to go to service, and how his mother cried at parting with him, and how he returned, after some few years' absence, in his smart new livery, to see her, and she blest herself at

¹ Cf. King Lear, v. 3. 284: —

"He's a good fellow, I can tell you that
He'll strike and quickly, too."
the change, and could hardly be brought to believe that it was "her own bairn." And then, the excitement subsiding, he would weep, till I have wished that sad second-childhood might have a mother still to lay its head upon her lap. But the common mother of us all in no long time after received him gently into hers.

With Coventry and with Salt, in their walks upon the terrace, most commonly Peter Pierson would join, to make up a third. They did not walk linked arm-in-arm in those days — "as now our stout triumvirs sweep the streets," — but generally with both hands folded behind them for state, or with one at least behind, the other carrying a cane. P. was a benevolent, but not a prepossessing man. He had that in his face which you could not term unhappiness; it rather implied an incapacity of being happy. His cheeks were colorless, even to whiteness. His look was uninviting, resembling (but without his sourness) that of our great philanthropist.¹ I know that he did good acts, but I could never make out what he was. Contemporary with these, but subordinate, was Daines Barrington — another oddity — he walked burly and square — in imitation, I think, of Coventry — howbeit he attained not to the dignity of his prototype. Nevertheless, he did pretty well, upon the strength of being a tolerable antiquarian, and having a brother a bishop. When the account of his year’s treasurership came to be audited, the following singular charge was unanimously disallowed by the bench: "Item, disbursed Mr. Allen, the gardener, twenty shillings for stuff to poison the sparrows, by my orders." Next to him was old Barton — a jolly negation, who took upon him the ordering of the bills of fare for the parliament chamber, where the benchers dine — answering to the combination rooms at College — much to the easement of his less epicurean brethren. I know nothing more of him. — Then Read, and Twopenny — Read, good-humored and personable — Twopenny, good-humored, but thin, and

¹ Conjectured to be either John Howard, the prison reformer, or Thomas Clarkson, the abolitionist.
felicitous in jests upon his own figure. If T. was thin, Wharry was attenuated and fleeting. Many must remember him (for he was rather of later date) and his singular gait, which was performed by three steps and a jump regularly succeeding. The steps were little efforts, like that of a child beginning to walk; the jump comparatively vigorous, as a foot to an inch. Where he learned this figure, or what occasioned it, I could never discover. It was neither graceful in itself, nor seemed to answer the purpose any better than common walking. The extreme tenuity of his frame, I suspect, set him upon it. It was a trial of poising. Twopenny would often rally him upon his leanness, and hail him as Brother Lusty; but W. had no relish of a joke. His features were spiteful. I have heard that he would pinch his cat's ears extremely when anything had offended him. Jackson— the omniscient Jackson, he was called — was of this period. He had the reputation of possessing more multifarious knowledge than any man of his time. He was the Friar Bacon of the less literate portion of the Temple. I remember a pleasant passage of the cook applying to him, with much formality of apology, for instructions how to write down edge bone of beef in his bill of commons. He was supposed to know, if any man in the world did. He decided the orthography to be—as I have given it—fortifying his authority with such anatomical reasons as dismissed the manciple (for the time) learned and happy. Some do spell it yet, perversely, aitch bone, from a fanciful resemblance between its shape and that of the aspirate so denominated. I had almost forgotten Mingay with the iron hand—but he was somewhat later. He had lost his right hand by some accident, and supplied it with a grappling-hook, which he wielded with a tolerable adroitness. I detected the substitute before I was old enough to reason whether it were artificial or not. I remember the astonishment it raised in me. He was a blustering, loud-talking person; and I reconciled the phenomenon to my ideas as an emblem of power—somewhat like the horns in the forehead of Michael Angelo's Moses. Baron Maseres, who walks
(or did till very lately) in the costume of the reign of George the Second, closes my imperfect recollections of the old benchers of the Inner Temple.

Fantastic forms, whither are ye fled? Or, if the like of you exist, why exist they no more for me? Ye inexplicable, half-understood appearances, why comes in reason to tear away the preternatural mist, bright or gloomy, that enshrouded you? Why make ye so sorry a figure in my relation, who made up to me — to my childish eyes — the mythology of the Temple? In those days I saw Gods, as "old men covered with a mantle,"¹ walking upon the earth. Let the dreams of classic idolatry perish, — extinct be the fairies and fairy trumpery of legendary fabling, — in the heart of childhood there will, for ever, spring up a well of innocent or wholesome superstition — the seeds of exaggeration will be busy there, and vital — from every-day forms educing the unknown and the uncommon. In that little Goshen there will be light, when the grown world flounders about in the darkness of sense and materiality. While childhood, and while dreams, reducing childhood, shall be left, imagination shall not have spread her holy wings totally to fly the earth.

P.S. — I have done injustice to the soft shade of Samuel Salt. See what it is to trust to imperfect memory, and the erring notices of childhood! Yet I protest I always thought that he had been a bachelor! This gentleman, R. N. informs me, married young, and losing his lady in childbed, within the first year of their union, fell into a deep melancholy, from the effects of which, probably, he never thoroughly recovered. In what a new light does this place his rejection (O call it by a gentler name!) of mild Susan P——, unravelling into beauty certain peculiarities of this very shy and retiring character! Henceforth let no one receive the narratives of Elia for true records! They are, in truth, but shadows of fact — verisimilitudes, not verities — or sitting but upon the remote edges and outskirts of

¹ 1 Samuel xxviii. 14.
history. He is no such honest chronicler as R. N., and would have done better perhaps to have consulted that gentleman before he sent these indecndite reminiscences to press. But the worthy sub-treasurer—who respects his old and his new masters—would but have been puzzled at the indecorous liberties of Elia. The good man wots not, peradventure, of the licence which Magazines have arrived at in this plain-speaking age, or hardly dreams of their existence beyond the Gentleman's—his furthest monthly excursions in this nature having been long confined to the holy ground of honest Urban's obituary. May it be long before his own name shall help to swell those columns of unenvied flattery!—Meantime, O ye New Benchers of the Inner Temple, cherish him kindly, for he is himself the kindliest of human creatures. Should infirmities overtake him—he is yet in green and vigorous senility—make allowances for them, remembering that "ye yourselves are old." ¹ So may the Winged Horse, your ancient badge and cognizance, still flourish! so may future Hookers and Seldens illustrate your church and chambers! so may the sparrows, in default of more melodious quiristers, unpoisoned hop about your walks! so may the fresh-colored and cleanly nursery-maid, who, by leave, airs her playful charge in your stately gardens, drop her prettiest blushing courtesy as ye pass, reductive of juvenescent emotion! so may the younkers of this generation eye you, pacing your stately terrace, with the same superstitious veneration with which the child Elia gazed on the Old Worthies that solemnized the parade before ye!

GRACE BEFORE MEAT

The custom of saying grace at meals had, probably, its origin in the early times of the world, and the hunter-state of man, when dinners were precarious things, and a full

¹ An adaptation from King Lear, ii. 4. 193–195.
meal was something more than a common blessing! when a belly-full was a windfall, and looked like a special providence. In the shouts and triumphal songs with which, after a season of sharp abstinence, a lucky booty of deer's or goat's flesh would naturally be ushered home, existed, perhaps, the germ of the modern grace. It is not otherwise easy to be understood, why the blessing of food — the act of eating — should have had a particular expression of thanksgiving annexed to it, distinct from that implied and silent gratitude with which we are expected to enter upon the enjoyment of the many other various gifts and good things of existence.

I own that I am disposed to say grace upon twenty other occasions in the course of the day besides my dinner. I want a form for setting out upon a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, or a solved problem. Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts — a grace before Milton — a grace before Shakespeare — a devotional exercise proper to be said before reading the Fairy Queen? — but, the received ritual having prescribed these forms to the solitary ceremony of manduction, I shall confine my observations to the experience which I have had of the grace, properly so called; commending my new scheme for extension to a niche in the grand philosophical, poetical, and perchance in part heretical, liturgy, now compiling by my friend Homo Humanus,\(^1\) for the use of a certain snug congregation of Utopian Rabelæsian Christians, no matter where assembled.

The form, then, of the benediction before eating has its beauty at a poor man's table, or at the simple and unprovocative repast of children. It is here that the grace becomes exceedingly graceful. The indigent man, who hardly knows whether he shall have a meal the next day or not, sits down to his fare with a present sense of the blessing,

\(^1\) "Human man," is a literal translation, but it means mankind in general. Mr. Lucas suggests that the expression is a "glance at the abbey of Thelème founded by Gargantua for persons of sweet reasonableness." See Rabelais in the Index.
which can be but feebly acted by the rich, into whose minds the conception of wanting a dinner could never, but by some extreme theory, have entered. The proper end of food—the animal sustenance—is barely contemplated by them. The poor man's bread is his daily bread, literally his bread for the day. Their courses are perennial.

Again, the plainest diet seems the fittest to be preceded by the grace. That which is least stimulative to appetite, leaves the mind most free for foreign considerations. A man may feel thankful, heartily thankful, over a dish of plain mutton with turnips, and have leisure to reflect upon the ordinance and institution of eating; when he shall confess a perturbation of mind, inconsistent with the purposes of the grace, at the presence of venison or turtle. When I have sate (a rarus hospes) at rich men's tables, with the savory soup and messes steaming up the nostrils, and moistening the lips of the guests with desire and a distracted choice, I have felt the introduction of that ceremony to be unseasonable. With the ravenous orgasm upon you, it seems impertinent to interpose a religious sentiment. It is a confusion of purpose to mutter out praises from a mouth that waters. The heats of epicurism put out the gentle flame of devotion. The incense which rises round is pagan, and the belly-god intercepts it for his own. The very excess of the provision beyond the needs, takes away all sense of proportion between the end and means. The giver is veiled by his gifts. You are startled at the injustice of returning thanks—for what?—for having too much, while so many starve. It is to praise the Gods amiss.

I have observed this awkwardness felt, scarce consciously perhaps, by the good man who says the grace. I have seen it in clergymen and others—a sort of shame—a sense of the co-presence of circumstances which unhallow the blessing. After a devotional tone put on for a few seconds, how rapidly the speaker will fall into his common voice, helping himself or his neighbor, as if to get rid of some

1 An uncommon guest.
uneasy sensation of hypocrisy. Not that the good man was a hypocrite, or was not most conscientious in the discharge of the duty; but he felt in his inmost mind the incom-patibility of the scene and the viands before him with the exercise of a calm and rational gratitude.

I hear somebody exclaim, — Would you have Christians sit down at table, like hogs to their troughs, without re-membering the Giver? — no — I would have them sit down as Christians, remembering the Giver, and less like hogs. Or, if their appetites must run riot, and they must pamper themselves with delicacies for which east and west are ran-sacked, I would have them postpone their benediction to a fitter season, when appetite is laid; when the still small voice can be heard, and the reason of the grace returns — with temperate diet and restricted dishes. Gluttony and surfeiting are no proper occasions for thanksgiving. When Jeshurun waxed fat,¹ we read that he kicked. Virgil knew the harpy-nature better, when he put into the mouth of Celæno anything but a blessing. We may be gratefully sensible of the deliciousness of some kinds of food beyond others, though that is a meaner and inferior gratitude: but the proper object of the grace is sustenance, not relishes; daily bread, not delicacies; the means of life, and not the means of pampering the carcass. With what frame or composure, I wonder, can a city chaplain pronounce his benediction at some great Hall feast, when he knows that his last concluding pious word — and that, in all probability, the sacred name which he preaches — is but the signal for so many impatient harpies to commence their foul orgies, with as little sense of true thankfulness (which is temperance) as those Vergilian fowl! It is well if the good man himself does not feel his devotions a little clouded, those foggy sensu-ous steams mingling with and polluting the pure altar sacrifice.

The severest satire upon full tables and surfeits is the

¹ Jeshurun, the righteous, was the symbolical name of Israel. Deuteronomy xxxii. 15.
banquet which Satan, in the "Paradise Regained," provides for a temptation in the wilderness:—

A table richly spread in regal mode,
With dishes piled, and meats of noblest sort
And savor; beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,
Gris-amber-steamed; all fish from sea or shore,
Freshet or purling brook, for which was drained
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.¹

The Tempter, I warrant you, thought these cates would go down without the recommendatory preface of a benediction. They are like to be short graces where the devil plays the host. I am afraid the poet wants his usual decorum in this place. Was he thinking of the old Roman luxury, or of a gaudy day at Cambridge? This was a temptation fitter for a Heliogabalus. The whole banquet is too civic and culinary, and the accompaniments altogether a profanation of that deep, abstracted, holy scene. The mighty artillery of sauces, which the cook-fiend conjures up, is out of proportion to the simple wants and plain hunger of the guest. He that disturbed him in his dreams, from his dreams might have been taught better. To the temperate fantasies of the famished Son of God, what sort of feasts presented themselves? — He dreamed indeed,

—— As appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet.²

But what meats? —

Him thought he by the brook of Cherith stood,
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing even and morn;
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought.
He saw the prophet also how he fled
Into the desert, and how there he slept
Under a juniper; then how awaked
He found his supper on the coals prepared,
And by the angel was bid rise and eat,

¹ Paradise Regained, ii. 340–347. The passage describes the delicacies set before Christ by Satan.
² Paradise Regained, ii. 264–278.
And ate the second time after repose,  
The strength whereof sufficed him forty days:  
Sometimes, that with Elijah he partook,  
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.

Nothing in Milton is finelier fancied than these temperate dreams of the divine Hungerer. To which of these two visionary banquets, think you, would the introduction of what is called the grace have been the most fitting and pertinent?

Theoretically I am no enemy to graces; but practically I own that (before meat especially) they seem to involve something awkward and unseasonable. Our appetites, of one or another kind, are excellent spurs to our reason, which might otherwise but feebly set about the great ends of preserving and continuing the species. They are fit blessings to be contemplated at a distance with a becoming gratitude; but the moment of appetite (the judicious reader will apprehend me) is, perhaps, the least fit season for that exercise. The Quakers, who go about their business, of every description, with more calmness than we, have more title to the use of these benedictory prefences. I have always admired their silent grace, and the more because I have observed their applications to the meat and drink following to be less passionate and sensual than ours. They are neither gluttons nor wine-bibbers as a people. They eat, as a horse bolts his chopped hay, with indifference, calmness, and cleanly circumstances. They neither grease nor slop themselves. When I see a citizen in his bib and tucker, I cannot imagine it a surplice.

I am no Quaker at my food. I confess I am not indifferent to the kinds of it. Those unctuous morsels of deer's flesh were not made to be received with dispassionate services. I hate a man who swallows it, affecting not to know what he is eating. I suspect his taste in higher matters. I shrink instinctively from one who professes to like minced veal. There is a physiognomical character in the tastes for food. C—— holds that a man cannot have a pure mind who refuses apple-dumplings. I am not certain but he is
right. With the decay of my first innocence, I confess a less and less relish daily for those innocuous cates. The whole vegetable tribe have lost their gust with me. Only I stick to asparagus, which still seems to inspire gentle thoughts. I am impatient and querulous under culinary disappointments, as to come home at the dinner hour, for instance, expecting some savory mess, and to find one quite tasteless and sapidless. Butter ill melted—that commonest of kitchen failures—puts me beside my tenor.—The author of the Rambler used to make inarticulate animal noises over a favorite food. Was this the music quite proper to be preceded by the grace? or would the pious man have done better to postpone his devotions to a season when the blessing might be contemplated with less perturbation? I quarrel with no man's tastes, nor would set my thin face against those excellent things, in their way, jollity and feasting. But as these exercises, however laudable, have little in them of grace or gracefulness, a man should be sure, before he ventures so to grace them, that while he is pretending his devotions otherwhere, he is not secretly kissing his hand to some great fish—his Dagon—with a special consecration of no ark but the fat tureen before him. Graces are the sweet preluding strains to the banquets of angels and children; to the roots and severer repasts of the Chartreuse; to the slender, but not slenderly acknowledged, refection of the poor and humble man: but at the heaped-up boards of the pampered and the luxurious they become of dissonant mood, less timed and tuned to the occasion, methinks, than the noise of those better befitting organs would be, which children hear tales of, at Hog's Norton. We sit too long at our meals, or are too curious in the study of them, or too disordered in our application to them, or engross too great a portion of those good things (which should be common) to our share, to be able with any grace to say grace. To be thankful for what we grasp exceeding our proportion, is to add hypocrisy to injustice. A lurking sense of this truth is what makes the performance of this duty so cold and spiritless a service at most tables. In houses where the grace is as indispensable
as the napkin, who has not seen that never-settled question arise, as to who shall say it; while the good man of the house and the visitor clergyman, or some other guest belike of next authority from years or gravity, shall be bandying about the office between them as a matter of compliment, each of them not unwilling to shift the awkward burthen of an equivocal duty from his own shoulders?

I once drank tea in company with two Methodist divines of different persuasions, whom it was my fortune to introduce to each other for the first time that evening. Before the first cup was handed round, one of these reverend gentlemen put it to the other, with all due solemnity, whether he chose to say anything. It seems it is the custom with some sectaries to put up a short prayer before this meal also. His reverend brother did not at first quite apprehend him, but upon an explanation, with little less importance he made answer that it was not a custom known in his church: in which courteous evasion the other acquiescing for good manners' sake, or in compliance with a weak brother, the supplementary or tea grace was waived altogether. With what spirit might not Lucian have painted two priests, of his religion, playing into each other's hands the compliment of performing or omitting a sacrifice,—the hungry God meantime, doubtful of his incense, with expectant nostrils hovering over the two flamens, and (as between two stools) going away in the end without his supper.

A short form upon these occasions is felt to want reverence; a long one, I am afraid, cannot escape the charge of impertinence. I do not quite approve of the epigrammatic conciseness with which that equivocal wag (but my pleasant school-fellow) C. V. L., when importuned for a grace, used to inquire, first slyly leering down the table, "Is there no clergyman here?"—significantly adding, "Thank G—." Nor do I think our old form at school quite pertinent, where we were used to preface our bald bread-and-cheese-suppers with a preamble, connecting with that humble blessing a recognition of benefits the most awful and overwhelming to the imagination which religion has to offer. Non tunc
illa erat locus.¹ I remember we were put to it to reconcile the phrase "good creatures," upon which the blessing rested, with the fare set before us, wilfully understanding that expression in a low and animal sense, — till some one recalled a legend, which told how, in the golden days of Christ's, the young Hospitallers were wont to have smoking joints of roast meat upon their nightly boards, till some pious benefactor, commiserating the decencies, rather than the palates, of the children, commuted our flesh for garments, and gave us — horresco referens² — trousers instead of mutton.

DREAM-CHILDREN: A REVERIE

Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when they were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene — so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country — of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Red-breasts; till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though

¹ An imperfect recollection from Horace's Ars Poetica, 19, Sed nunc non erat his locus: But that was not the occasion for such things.
² I shudder at the recollection. Vergil's Æneid, ii. 204.
she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighborhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer — here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted — the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm;" and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she — and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded
all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping
about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out — and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries — and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy — for he was a good bit older than me — many a mile when I could not walk for pain; — and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he, their poor uncle, must have been when the doctor took off his limb. — Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens — when suddenly turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her
eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name" — and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side — but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

DISTANT CORRESPONDENTS

IN A LETTER TO B. F., ESQ., AT SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES

My dear F. — When I think how welcome the sight of a letter from the world where you were born must be to you in that strange one to which you have been transplanted, I feel some compunctious visitings at my long silence. But, indeed, it is no easy effort to set about a correspondence at our distance. The weary world of waters between us oppresses the imagination. It is difficult to conceive how a scrawl of mine should ever stretch across it. It is a sort of presumption to expect that one's thoughts should live so far. It is like writing for posterity; and reminds me of one of Mrs. Rowe's superscriptions, "Alcander to Strephon, in the Shades." Cowley's Post-Angel\(^1\) is no more than would

\(^1\) Cowley's *Hymn to Light*:

"Let a post-angel start with thee
And thou the goal of earth shall reach as soon as he"
be expedient in such an intercourse. One drops a packet at Lombard Street, and in twenty-four hours a friend in Cumberland gets it as fresh as if it came in ice. It is only like whispering through a long trumpet. But suppose a tube let down from the moon, with yourself at one end and the man at the other; it would be some balk to the spirit of conversation, if you knew that the dialogue exchanged with that interesting theosophist would take two or three revolutions of a higher luminary in its passage. Yet, for aught I know, you may be some parasangs nigher that primitive idea — Plato’s man — than we in England here have the honor to reckon ourselves.

Epistolary matter usually compriseth three topics; news, sentiment, and puns. In the latter, I include all non-serious subjects; or subjects serious in themselves, but treated after my fashion, non-seriously. — And first, for news. In them the most desirable circumstance, I suppose, is that they shall be true. But what security can I have that what I now send you for truth shall not, before you get it, unaccountably turn into a lie? For instance, our mutual friend P. is at this present writing — my Now — in good health, and enjoys a fair share of worldly reputation. You are glad to hear it. This is natural and friendly. But at this present reading — your Now — he may possibly be in the Bench, or going to be hanged, which in reason ought to abate something of your transport (i.e., at hearing he was well, etc.), or at least considerably to modify it. I am going to the play this evening, to have a laugh with Munden. You have no theatre, I think you told me, in your land of d—d realities. You naturally lick your lips, and envy me my felicity. Think but a moment, and you will correct the hateful emotion. Why, it is Sunday morning with you, and 1823. This confusion of tenses, this grand solecism of two presents, is in a degree common to all postage. But if I sent you word to Bath or the Devises, that I was expecting the aforesaid treat this evening, though at the moment you received the intelligence my full feast of fun would be over, yet there would be for a day or two after, as you would well know, a smack, a
relish left upon my mental palate, which would give rational encouragement for you to foster a portion, at least, of the disagreeable passion, which it was in part my intention to produce. But ten months hence, your envy or your sympathy would be as useless as a passion spent upon the dead. Not only does truth, in these long intervals, un-essence herself, but (what is harder) one cannot venture a crude fiction, for the fear that it may ripen into a truth upon the voyage. What a wild improbable banter I put upon you, some three years since, —— of Will Weatherall having married a servant-maid! I remember gravely consulting you how we were to receive her — for Will’s wife was in no case to be rejected; and your no less serious replication in the matter; how tenderly you advised an abstemious introduction of literary topics before the lady, with a caution not to be too forward in bringing on the carpet matters more within the sphere of her intelligence; your deliberate judgment, or rather wise suspension of sentence, how far jacks, and spits, and mops, could with propriety be introduced as subjects; whether the conscious avoiding of all such matters in discourse would not have a worse look than the taking of them casually in our way; in what manner we should carry ourselves to our maid Becky, Mrs. William Weatherall being by; whether we should show more delicacy, and a truer sense of respect for Will’s wife, by treating Becky with our customary chiding before her, or by an unusual deferential civility paid to Becky, as to a person of great worth, but thrown by the caprice of fate into a humble station. There were difficulties, I remember, on both sides, which you did me the favor to state with the precision of a lawyer, united to the tenderness of a friend. I laughed in my sleeve at your solemn pleadings, when lo! while I was valuing myself upon this flam put upon you in New South Wales, the devil in England, jealous possibly of any lie-children not his own, or working after my copy, has actually instigated our friend (not three days since) to the commission of a matrimony, which I had only conjured up for your diversion. William Weatherall has married Mrs. Cotterel’s maid. But to take
it in its truest sense, you will see, my dear F., that news from me must become history to you; which I neither profess to write, nor indeed care much for reading. No person, under a diviner, can, with any prospect of veracity, conduct a correspondence at such an arm’s length. Two prophets, indeed, might thus interchange intelligence with effect; the epoch of the writer (Habakkuk) falling in with the true present time of the receiver (Daniel); but then we are no prophets.

Then as to sentiment. It fares little better with that. This kind of dish, above all, requires to be served up hot, or sent off in water-plates, that your friend may have it almost as warm as yourself.’ If it have time to cool, it is the most tasteless of all cold meats. I have often smiled at a conceit of the late Lord C. It seems that travelling somewhere about Geneva, he came to some pretty green spot, or nook, where a willow, or something, hung so fantastically and invitingly over a stream — was it? — or a rock? — no matter — but the stillness and the repose, after a weary journey, ’tis likely, in a languid moment of his Lordship’s hot, restless life, so took his fancy that he could imagine no place so proper, in the event of his death, to lay his bones in. This was all very natural and excusable as a sentiment, and shows his character in a very pleasing light. But when from a passing sentiment it came to be an act; and when, by a positive testamentary disposal, his remains were actually carried all that way from England; who was there, some desperate sentimentalists excepted, that did not ask the question, Why could not his Lordship have found a spot as solitary, a nook as romantic, a tree as green and pendent, with a stream as emblematic to his purpose, in Surrey, in Dorset, or in Devon? Conceive the sentiment boarded up, freighted, entered at the Custom House (startling the tide-waiters with the novelty), hoisted into a ship. Conceive it pawed about’ and handled between the rude jests of tarpaulin ruffians — a thing of its delicate texture — the salt bilge wetting it till it became as vapid as a damaged lustring. Suppose it in material danger (mariners have some superstition about sentiments) of being tossed
over in a fresh gale to some propitiatory shark (spirit of Saint Gothard, save us from a quietus so foreign to the devisor's purpose!) but it has happily evaded a fishy consumption. Trace it then to its lucky landing — at Lyons shall we say? — I have not the map before me — jostled upon four men's shoulders — baiting at this town — stopping to refresh at t'other village — waiting a passport here, a license there; the sanction of the magistracy in this district, the concurrence of the ecclesiastics in that canton; till at length it arrives at its destination, tired out and jaded, from a brisk sentiment, into a feature of silly pride or tawdry senseless affectation. How few sentiments, my dear F., I am afraid we can set down, in the sailor's phrase, as quite seaworthy.

Lastly, as to the agreeable levities, which, though contemptible in bulk, are the twinkling corpuscula which should irradiate a right friendly epistle — your puns and small jests are, I apprehend, extremely circumscribed in their sphere of action. They are so far from a capacity of being packed up and sent beyond sea, they will scarce endure to be transported by hand from this room to the next. Their vigor is as the instant of their birth. Their nutriment for their brief existence is the intellectual atmosphere of the bystanders: or this last is the fine slime of Nilus — the *melior lutus* ¹ — whose maternal recipiency is as necessary as the *sol pater* ² to their equivocal generation. A pun hath a hearty kind of present ear-kissing smack with it; you can no more transmit it in its pristine flavor than you can send a kiss. — Have you not tried in some instances to palm off a yesterday's pun upon a gentleman, and has it answered? Not but it was new to his hearing, but it did not seem to come new from you. It did not hitch in. It was like picking up at a village ale-house a two days' old newspaper. You have not seen it before, but you resent the stale thing

¹ Finer clay. From Juvenal, *Satire* xiv. 34.

² The Sun Father, Titan. The allusion in the sentence is to the old popular belief that animals were generated by the action of the sun on the mud left by the inundations of the Nile.
as an affront. This sort of merchandise above all requires a quick return. A pun, and its recognitory laugh, must be co-instantaneous. The one is the brisk lightning, the other the fierce thunder. A moment’s interval, and the link is snapped. A pun is reflected from a friend’s face as from a mirror. Who would consult his sweet visnomy, if the polished surface were two or three minutes (not to speak of twelve months, my dear F.) in giving back its copy?

I cannot image to myself whereabout you are. When I try to fix it, Peter Wilkins’s island comes across me. Sometimes you seem to be in the Hades of Thieves. I see Diogenes prying among you with his perpetual fruitless lantern. What must you be willing by this time to give for the sight of an honest man! You must almost have forgotten how we look. And tell me what your Sydneyites do? are they th...v...ng all day long? Merciful heaven! what property can stand against such a depredation! The kangaroos—your Aborigines—do they keep their primitive simplicity un-Europe-tainted, with those little short fore-puds, looking like a lesson framed by nature to the pickpocket! Marry, for diving into fobs they are rather lamely provided à priori; but if the hue and cry were once up, they would show as fair a pair of hind-shifters as the expertest loco-motor in the colony. We hear the most improbable tales at this distance. Pray, is it true that the young Spartans among you are born with six fingers, which spoils their scanning?—It must look very odd; but use reconciles. For their scansion, it is less to be regretted; for if they take it into their heads to be poets, it is odds but they turn out, the greater part of them, vile plagiarists. Is there much difference to see to between the son of a th...f and the grandson? or where does the taint stop? Do you bleach in three or in four generations? I have many questions to put, but ten Delphic voyages can be made in a shorter time than it will take to satisfy my scruples. Do you grow your own hemp?—What is your staple trade, —exclusive of the national profession, I mean? Your locksmiths, I take it, are some of your great capitalists.
I am insensibly chatting to you as familiarly as when we used to exchange good-morrows out of our old contiguous windows, in pump-famed Hare Court in the Temple. Why did you ever leave that quiet corner? — Why did I? — with its complement of four poor elms, from whose smoke-dyed barks, the theme of jesting ruralists, I picked my first ladybirds! My heart is as dry as that spring sometimes proves in a thirsty August, when I revert to the space that is between us; a length of passage enough to render obsolete the phrases of our English letters before they can reach you. But while I talk, I think you hear me,—thoughts dallying with vain surmise —

Aye me! while thee the seas and sounding shores
Hold far away.¹

Come back, before I am grown into a very old man, so as you shall hardly know me. Come, before Bridget walks on crutches. Girls whom you left children have become sage matrons while you are tarrying there. The blooming Miss W——r (you remember Sally W——r) called upon us yesterday, an aged crone. Folks whom you knew die off every year. Formerly, I thought that death was wearing out,—I stood ramparted about with so many healthy friends. The departure of J. W., two springs back, corrected my delusion. Since then the old divorcer has been busy. If you do not make haste to return, there will be little left to greet you, of me, or mine.

THE PRAISE OF CHIMNEY-SWEEPERS

I like to meet a sweep — understand me — not a grown sweeper — old chimney-sweepers are by no means attractive — but one of those tender novices, blooming through their first nigritude, the maternal washings not quite effaced from the cheek — such as come forth with the dawn, or

somewhat earlier, with their little professional notes sounding like the *peep-peep* of a young sparrow; or liker to the matin lark should I pronounce them, in their aerial ascents not seldom anticipating the sunrise?

I have a kindly yearning towards these dim specks—poor blots—innocent blacknesses—

I reverence these young Africans of our own growth—these almost clergy imps, who sport their cloth without assumption; and from their little pulpits (the tops of chimneys), in the nipping air of a December morning, preach a lesson of patience to mankind.

When a child, what a mysterious pleasure it was to witness their operation! to see a chit no bigger than one’s self enter, one knew not by what process, into what seemed the *fauces Avernī*¹—to pursue him in imagination, as he went sounding on through so many dark stifling caverns, horrid shades! to shudder with the idea that “now, surely, he must be lost for ever!”—to revive at hearing his feeble shout of discovered daylight—and then (O fulness of delight!) running out of doors, to come just in time to see the sable phenomenon emerge in safety, the brandished weapon of his art victorious like some flag waved over a conquered citadel! I seem to remember having been told, that a bad sweep was once left in a stack with his brush, to indicate which way the wind blew. It was an awful spectacle, certainly; not much unlike the old stage direction in Macbeth, where the “Apparition of child crowned, with a tree in his hand, rises.”²

Reader, if thou meetest one of these small gentry in thy early rambles, it is good to give him a penny,—it is better to give him two-pence. If it be starving weather, and to the proper troubles of his hard occupation, a pair of kibed heels (no unusual accompaniment) be superadded, the demand on thy humanity will surely rise to a tester.

There is a composition, the ground-work of which I have understood to be the sweet wood yclept sassafras. This

¹ The *jaws of hell*, *Aeneid*, vi. 201.  
² *Macbeth*, iv. 1.
wood boiled down to a kind of tea, and tempered with an infusion of milk and sugar, hath to some tastes a delicacy beyond the China luxury. I know not how thy palate may relish it; for myself, with every deference to the judicious Mr. Read, who hath time out of mind kept open a shop (the only one he avers in London) for the vending of this "wholesome and pleasant beverage," on the south side of Fleet Street, as thou approachest Bridge Street — the only Salopian house — I have never yet adventured to dip my own particular lip in a basin of his commended ingredients — a cautious premonition to the olfactories constantly whispering to me, that my stomach must infallibly, with all due courtesy, decline it. Yet I have seen palates, otherwise not uninstructed in dietetical elegancies, sup it up with avidity.

I know not by what particular conformation of the organ it happens, but I have always found that this composition is surprisingly gratifying to the palate of a young chimney-sweeper — whether the oily particles (sassafras is slightly oleaginous) do attenuate and soften the fuliginous concretions, which are sometimes found (in dissections) to adhere to the roof of the mouth in these unfledged practitioners; or whether Nature, sensible that she had mingled too much of bitter wood in the lot of these raw victims, caused to grow out of the earth her sassafras for a sweet lenitive — but so it is, that no possible taste or odor to the senses of a young chimney-sweeper can convey a delicate excitement comparable to this mixture. Being penniless, they will yet hang their black heads over the ascending steam, to gratify one sense if possible, seemingly no less pleased than those domestic animals — cats — when they purr over a new-found sprig of valerian. There is something more in these sympathies than philosophy can inculcate.

Now albeit Mr. Read boasteth, not without reason, that his is the only Salopian house; yet be it known to thee, Reader—if thou art one who keepest what are called good hours, thou art haply ignorant of the fact — he hath a race of industrious imitators, who from stalls, and under open
sky, dispense the same savory mess to humbler customers, at that dead time of the dawn, when (as extremes meet) the rake, reeling home from his midnight cups, and the hard-handed artizan leaving his bed to resume the premature labors of the day, jostle, not unfrequently to the manifest disconcerting of the former, for the honors of the pavement. It is the time when, in summer, between the expired and the not yet relumined kitchen-fires, the kennels of our fair metropolis give forth their least satisfactory odors. The rake, who wisheth to dissipate his o'ernight vapors in more grateful coffee, curses the ungenial fume, as he passeth; but the artizan stops to taste, and blesses the fragrant breakfast.

This is saloop — the precocious herb-woman's darling — the delight of the early gardener, who transports his smoking cabbages by break of day from Hammersmith to Covent Garden's famed piazzas — the delight, and oh! I fear, too often the envy, of the unpennied sweep. Him shouldst thou haply encounter, with his dim visage pendent over the grateful steam, regale him with a sumptuous basin (it will cost thee but three halfpennies) and a slice of delicate bread and butter (an added halfpenny) — so may thy culinary fires, eased of the o'ercharged secretions from thy worse-placed hospitalities, curl up a lighter volume to the welkin — so may the descending soot never taint thy costly well-ingrediented soups — nor the odious cry, quick-reaching from street to street, of the fired chimney, invite the rattling engines from ten adjacent parishes, to disturb for a casual scintillation thy peace and pocket!

I am by nature extremely susceptible of street affronts; the jeers and taunts of the populace; the low-bred triumph they display over the casual trip, or splashed stocking, of a gentleman. Yet can I endure the jocularity of a young sweep with something more than forgiveness. — In the last winter but one, pacing along Cheapside with my accustomed precipitation when I walk westward, a treacherous slide brought me upon my back in an instant. I scrambled up with pain and shame enough — yet outwardly trying to face it down, as if nothing had happened — when the roguish
grin of one of these young wits encountered me. There he stood, pointing me out with his dusky finger to the mob, and to a poor woman (I suppose his mother) in particular, till the tears for the exquisiteness of the fun (so he thought it) worked themselves out at the corners of his poor red eyes, red from many a previous weeping, and soot-inflamed, yet twinkling through all with such a joy, snatched out of desolation, that Hogarth—but Hogarth has got him already (how could he miss him?) in the March to Finchley, grinning at the pieman—there he stood, as he stands in the picture, irremovable, as if the jest was to last for ever—with such a maximum of glee, and minimum of mischief, in his mirth—for the grin of a genuine sweep hath absolutely no malice in it—that I could have been content, if the honor of a gentleman might endure it, to have remained his butt and his mockery till midnight.

I am by theory obdurate to the seductiveness of what are called a fine set of teeth. Every pair of rosy lips (the ladies must pardon me) is a casket presumably holding such jewels; but, methinks, they should take leave to "air" them as frugally as possible. The fine lady, or fine gentleman, who show me their teeth, show me bones. Yet must I confess, that from the mouth of a true sweep a display (even to ostentation) of those white and shiny ossifications, strikes me as an agreeable anomaly in manners, and an allowable piece of foppery. It is, as when

A sable cloud
Turns forth her silver lining on the night.\(^1\)

It is like some remnant of gentry not quite extinct; a badge of better days; a hint of nobility:—and, doubtless, under the obscuring darkness and double night of their forlorn disguise, oftentimes lurketh good blood, and gentle conditions, derived from lost ancestry, and a lapsed pedigree. The premature apprenticements of these tender victims give but too much encouragement, I fear, to clandestine and almost infantile abductions; the seeds of civility

\(^1\) Comus, i. 223.
and true courtesy, so often discernible in these young grafts (not otherwise to be accounted for) plainly hint at some forced adoptions; many noble Rachels mourning for their children, even in our days, countenance the fact; the tales of fairy spiriting may shadow a lamentable verity, and the recovery of the young Montagu be but a solitary instance of good fortune out of many irreparable and hopeless defiliations.

In one of the state-beds at Arundel Castle, a few years since — under a ducal canopy — (that seat of the Howards is an object of curiosity to visitors, chiefly for its beds, in which the late duke was especially a connoisseur) — encircled with curtains of delicatest crimson, with starry coronets inwoven — folded between a pair of sheets whiter and softer than the lap where Venus lulled Ascanius — was discovered by chance, after all methods of search had failed, at noon-day, fast asleep, a lost chimney-sweeper. The little creature, having somehow confounded his passage among the intricacies of those lordly chimneys, by some unknown aperture had alighted upon this magnificent chamber; and, tired with his tedious explorations, was unable to resist the delicious invitement to repose, which he there saw exhibited; so, creeping between the sheets very quietly, laid his black head upon the pillow, and slept like a young Howard.

Such is the account given to the visitors at the Castle. — But I cannot help seeming to perceive a confirmation of what I have just hinted at in this story. A high instinct was at work in the case, or I am mistaken. Is it probable that a poor child of that description, with whatever weariness he might be visited, would have ventured, under such a penalty as he would be taught to expect, to uncover the sheets of a duke's bed, and deliberately to lay himself down between them, when the rug, or the carpet, presented an obvious couch, still far above his pretensions — is this probable, I would ask, if the great power of nature, which I contend for, had not been manifested within him, prompting to the adventure? Doubtless this young nobleman (for such my mind misgives me that he must be) was allured by some
memory, not amounting to full consciousness, of his condition in infancy, when he was used to be lapped by his mother, or his nurse, in just such sheets as he there found, into which he was now but creeping back as into his proper *incunabula*, and resting-place. — By no other theory than by this sentiment of a pre-existent state (as I may call it), can I explain a deed so venturous, and, indeed, upon any other system, so indecorous, in this tender, but unseasonable, sleeper.

My pleasant friend Jem White was so impressed with a belief of metamorphoses like this frequently taking place, that in some sort to reverse the wrongs of fortune in these poor changelings, he instituted an annual feast of chimney-sweepers, at which it was his pleasure to officiate as host and waiter. It was a solemn supper held in Smithfield, upon the yearly return of the fair of St. Bartholomew. Cards were issued a week before to the master-sweeps in and about the metropolis, confining the invitation to their younger fry. Now and then an elderly stripling would get in among us, and be good-naturedly winked at; but our main body were infantry. One unfortunate wight, indeed, who, relying upon his dusky suit, had intruded himself into our party, but by tokens was providentially discovered in time to be no chimney-sweeper (all is not soot which looks so), was quoited out of the presence with universal indignation, as not having on the wedding garment; but in general the greatest harmony prevailed. The place chosen was a convenient spot among the pens, at the north side of the fair, not so far distant as to be impervious to the agreeable hubbub of that vanity, but remote enough not to be obvious to the interruption of every gaping spectator in it. The guests assembled about seven. In those little temporary parlors three tables were spread with napery, not so fine as substantial, and at every board a comely hostess presided with her pan of hissing sausages. The nostrils of the young rogues dilated at the savor. James White, as head waiter, had charge of the first table; and myself, with our trusty companion Bigod,

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1 Literally, a birthplace; here used in the sense of swaddling clothes.
ordinarily ministered to the other two. There was clambering and jostling, you may be sure, who should get at the first table, for Rochester in his maddest days could not have done the humors of the scene with more spirit than my friend. After some general expression of thanks for the honor the company had done him, his inaugural ceremony was to clasp the greasy waist of old dame Ursula (the fattest of the three), that stood frying and fretting, half-blessing, half-cursing "the gentleman," and imprint upon her chaste lips a tender salute, whereat the universal host would set up a shout that tore the concave, while hundreds of grinning teeth startled the night with their brightness. O it was a pleasure to see the sable younkers lick in the unctuous meat, with his more unctuous sayings — how he would fit the tit-bits to the puny mouths, reserving the lengthier links for the seniors — how he would intercept a morsel even in the jaws of some young desperado, declaring it "must to the pan again to be browned, for it was not fit for a gentleman's eating" — how he would recommend this slice of white bread, or that piece of kissing-crust, to a tender juvenile, advising them all to have a care of cracking their teeth, which were their best patrimony, — how genteelly he would deal about the small ale, as if it were wine, naming the brewer, and protesting, if it were not good, he should lose their custom; with a special recommendation to wipe the lip before drinking. Then we had our toasts — "the King," — "the Cloth," — which, whether they understood or not, was equally diverting and flattering; and for a crowning sentiment, which never failed, "May the Brush supersede the Laurel!" All these, and fifty other fancies, which were rather felt than comprehended by his guests, would he utter, standing upon tables, and prefacing every sentiment with a "Gentlemen, give me leave to propose so and so," which was a prodigious comfort to those young orphans; every now and then stuffing into his mouth (for it did not do to be squeamish on these occasions) indiscriminate pieces of those reeking sausages, which pleased them mightily, and was the savoriest part, you may believe, of the entertainment.
Golden lads and lasses must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust — ¹

James White is extinct, and with him these suppers have long ceased. He carried away with him half the fun of the world when he died — of my world at least. His old clients look for him among the pens; and, missing him, reproach the altered feast of St. Bartholomew, and the glory of Smithfield departed for ever.

A DISSENTATION UPON ROAST PIG

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

¹ Cymbeline, iv. 2. 262–263.
of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labor of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odor assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from? — not from the burnt cottage — he had smelt that smell before — indeed, this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted — crackling! Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hail-stones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.
"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you! but you must be eating fire, and I know not what — what have you got there, I say?"

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

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

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

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

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbors would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were
watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it; and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given, — to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present — without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision; and when the court was dismissed, went privily and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his lordship’s town-house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (burnt, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a grid-iron. Roasting by the string or spit came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious, arts make their way among mankind —

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

Of all the delicacies in the whole mundus edibilis,\(^1\) I will maintain it to be the most delicate — princeps obsoniorum.\(^1\)

I speak not of your grown porkers — things between pig and pork — those hobbledehoys — but a young and tender suckling — under a moon old — guiltless as yet of the sty — with no original speck of the amor immunditiae,\(^2\) the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest — his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble and a grumble — the mild forerunner or præludium\(^3\) of a grunt.

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

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

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

\(^1\) *Mundus edibilis* means a world of eatables; *princeps obsoniorum*, the chief of tidbits.

\(^2\) Love of dirt. "An allusion to the original sin in the porcine Adam and Eve." Lucas.

\(^3\) Prelude.
See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth! — wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal — wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation — from these sins he is happily snatched away —

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

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

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

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

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwisted, and not to be unravelled without hazard, he is — good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbors' fare.

I am one of those who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their

1 Coleridge's *Epitaph on an Infant.*
lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend’s pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. “Pres- ents,” I often say, “endear Absents.” Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens (those “tame villatic fowl”), capons, plovers, brawn; barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, “give every- thing.” I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an in-gratitude to the Giver of all good flavors, to extra-domicili- ate, or send out of the house, slightly (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what) a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate.—It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a grey-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt, at this time of day, that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, school-boy like, I made him a present of — the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but, before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how un-grateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I — I myself, and not another — would eat her nice cake — and what should I say to her the next time I saw her — how naughty I was to part with her pretty

1 Milton’s Samson Agonistes, 1695. 2 Aunt Hetty.
present! — and the odor of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last — and I blamed my impertinent spirit of alms-giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness; and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old grey impostor.

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

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, "Whether, supposing that the flavor of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (per flagellationem extremam\(^1\)) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?" I forget the decision.

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

\(^1\) By whipping to the extreme, i.e. to death.
THE INDIA HOUSE, LEADENHALL STREET, IN LAMB'S DAY

From Ackerman's Repository of Arts
The Last Essays of Elia

Preface to the Last Essays

by a Friend of the Late Elia

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

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

I am now at liberty to confess, that much which I have heard objected to my late friend's writings was well founded. Crude they are, I grant you—a sort of unlicked, incondite things—villainously pranked in an affected array of antique modes and phrases. They had not been his, if they had been other than such; and better it is, that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness, than to affect a naturalness (so called) that should be strange to him. Egotistical they have been pronounced by some who did not know that what he tells us, as of himself, was often true only (historically) of another; as in a former Essay (to save many instances)—where under the first person (his favorite figure) he shadows forth the forlorn estate of a country boy placed at a London school, far from his friends and connections—in direct opposition to his own early history. If it be egotism to imply and twine with his own identity the griefs and affections of another—making himself many, or reducing many unto himself—then is the skilful novelist, who all along brings in his hero or heroine, speaking of themselves,
the greatest egotist of all; who yet has never, therefore, been accused of that narrowness. And how shall the intenser dramatist escape being faulty, who, doubtless under cover of passion uttered by another, oftentimes gives blameless vent to his most inward feelings, and expresses his own story modestly?

My late friend was in many respects a singular character. Those who did not like him, hated him; and some, who once liked him, afterwards became his bitterest haters. The truth is, he gave himself too little concern what he uttered, and in whose presence. He observed neither time nor place, and would e'en out with what came uppermost. With the severe religionist he would pass for a free-thinker; while the other faction set him down for a bigot, or persuaded themselves that he belied his sentiments. Few understood him; and I am not certain that at all times he quite understood himself. He too much affected that dangerous figure — irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred. He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator; and he seemed determined that no one else should play that part when he was present. He was petit and ordinary in his person and appearance. I have seen him sometimes in what is called good company, but where he has been a stranger, sit silent, and be suspected for an odd fellow; till some unlucky occasion provoking it, he would stutter out some senseless pun (not altogether senseless, perhaps, if rightly taken), which has stamped his character for the evening. It was hit or miss with him; but nine times out of ten he contrived by this device to send away a whole company his enemies. His conceptions rose kindlier than his utterance, and his happiest impromptus had the appearance of effort. He has been accused of trying to be witty, when in truth he was but struggling to give his poor thoughts articulation.
He chose his companions for some individuality of character which they manifested. Hence, not many persons of science, and few professed literati,¹ were of his councils. They were, for the most part, persons of an uncertain fortune; and, as to such people commonly nothing is more obnoxious than a gentleman of settled (though moderate) income, he passed with most of them for a great miser. To my knowledge this was a mistake. His intimados,² to confess a truth, were in the world's eye a ragged regiment. He found them floating on the surface of society; and the color, or something else, in the weed pleased him. The burrs stuck to him—but they were good and loving burrs for all that. He never greatly cared for the society of what are called good people. If any of these were scandalized (and offences were sure to arise) he could not help it. When he has been remonstrated with for not making more concessions to the feelings of good people, he would retort by asking, what one point did these good people ever concede to him? He was temperate in his meals and diversions, but always kept a little on this side of abstemiousness. Only in the use of the Indian weed he might be thought a little excessive. He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech. Marry—as the friendly vapor ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it! the ligaments which tongue-tied him were loosened, and the stammerer proceeded a statist!

I do not know whether I ought to bemoan or rejoice that my old friend is departed. His jests were beginning to grow obsolete, and his stories to be found out. He felt the approaches of age; and while he pretended to cling to life, you saw how slender were the ties left to bind him. Discoursing with him latterly on this subject, he expressed himself with a pettishness, which I thought unworthy of him. In our walks about his suburban retreat (as he

¹ Men of letters. Few men of letters have had more friends among the literati than Lamb. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Hazlitt, and Barry Cornwall were his intimates.
² Intimate friends.
called it) at Shacklewell, some children belonging to a school of industry had met us, and bowed and curtseyed, as he thought, in an especial manner to him. "They take me for a visiting governor," he muttered earnestly. He had a horror, which he carried to a foible, of looking like anything important and parochial. He thought that he approached nearer to that stamp daily. He had a general aversion from being treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him. He herded always, while it was possible, with people younger than himself. He did not conform to the march of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the boy-man. The toga virilis¹ never sate gracefully on his shoulders. The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood. These were weaknesses; but such as they were, they are a key to explicate some of his writings.

BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

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

¹ The garment of manhood.
beauty of holiness? — go alone on some week-day, borrowing the keys of good Master Sexton, traverse the cool aisles of some country church: think of the piety that has kneeled there — the congregations, old and young, that have found consolation there — the meek pastor — the docile parishioner. With no disturbing emotions, no cross conflicting comparisons, drink in the tranquillity of the place, till thou thyself become as fixed and motionless as the marble effigies that kneel and weep around thee.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The solitude of childhood is not so much the mother of thought as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those years, that, though there lay—I shame to say how few roods distant from the mansion—half hid by trees, what I judged some romantic lake, such was the spell which bound me to the house, and such my carefulness not to pass its strict and proper precincts, that the idle waters lay unexplored for me; and not till late in life, curiosity prevailing over elder devotion, I found, to my astonishment, a pretty brawling brook had been the Lacus Incognitus\(^1\) of my infancy. Variegated views, extensive prospects—and those at no great distance from the house—I was told of such—what were they to me, being out of the boundaries of my Eden? So far

\(^1\) The unknown lake; the lake of fancy.
from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, methought, still
closer the fences of my chosen prison, and have been hemmed
in by a yet securer cincture of those excluding garden walls.
I could have exclaimed with that garden-loving poet —

Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines;
Curl me about, ye gadding vines;
And oh so close your circles lace,
That I may never leave this place;
But, lest your fetters prove too weak,
Ere I your silken bondage break,
Do you, O brambles, chain me too,
And, courteous briars, nail me through.¹

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

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

What, else, were the families of the great to us? what
pleasure should we take in their tedious genealogies, or
their capitulatory brass monuments? What to us the
uninterrupted current of their bloods, if our own did not
answer within us to a cognate and corresponding elevation?

Or wherefore, else, O tattered and diminished 'Scutcheon

¹ Marvell, on Appleton House, to the Lord Fairfax. [Lamb’s note.]
that hung upon the time-worn walls of thy princely stairs, **Blakesmoor**! have I in childhood so oft stood poring upon thy mystic characters — thy emblematic supporters, with their prophetic "Resurgam" ¹ till, every dreg of peasantry purging off, I received into myself Very Gentility? Thou wert first in my morning eyes; and of nights, hast detained my steps from bedward, till it was but a step from gazing at thee to dreaming on thee.

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

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

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

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

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

Mine was that gallery of good old family portraits, which as I have gone over, giving them in fancy my own family name, one — and then another — would seem to smile, reaching forward from the canvas, to recognize the new relationship; while the rest looked grave, as it seemed, at the vacancy in their dwelling, and thoughts of fled posterity.

That Beauty with the cool blue pastoral drapery, and a

¹ "I shall rise again." This was not, as Lamb says, the motto of the Plumer family.
lamb—that hung next the great bay window—with the bright yellow H—shire hair, and eye of watchet hue—so like my Alice!—I am persuaded she was a true Elia—Mildred Elia, I take it.

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

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

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

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

A Poor Relation — is the most irrelevant thing in nature, — a piece of impertinent correspondency, — an odious approximation, — a haunting conscience, — a preposterous shadow, lengthening in the noon-tide of our prosperity, — an unwelcome remembrancer, — a perpetually recurring mortification, — a drain on your purse, — a more intolerable dun upon your pride, — a drawback upon success, — a rebuke to your rising, — a stain in your blood, — a blot on your 'scutcheon, — a rent in your garment — a death's head at your banquet, — Agathocles' pot, — a Mordecai in your gate, — a Lazarus at your door, — a lion in your path, — a frog in your chamber, — a fly in your ointment, — a mote in your eye, — a triumph to your enemy, — an apology to your friends, — the one thing not needful, — the hail in harvest, — the ounce of sour in a pound of sweet.

He is known by his knock. Your heart telleth you "That is Mr. ——." A rap, between familiarity and respect; that demands, and at the same time seems to despair of, entertainment. He entereth smiling and — embarrassed. He holdeth out his hand to you to shake, and — draweth it back again. He casually looketh in about dinner-time — when the table is full. He offereth to go away, seeing you

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1 The piling of epithet on epithet in this paragraph reveals the wealth of Lamb's dictionary of quotations and his ease in making them touch the subject. Among the more difficult references and allusions are the following. (Those under proper names are explained in the Index.)

A death's head at your banquet. Among the Egyptians it was a custom, according to the Greek historian Herodotus, to have a skeleton carried through the banquet hall, so that the feasters should be reminded to "drink and be merry; for such you shall be, when you die."

A lion — a frog — a fly — a mote — the one thing. See 1 Kings xiii. 24; Exodus viii. 3, 6; Ecclesiastes x. 1; Matthew vii.; Luke x. 42.
have company — but is induced to stay. He filleth a chair, and your visitor's two children are accommodated at a side-table. He never cometh upon open days, when your wife says, with some complacency, "My dear, perhaps Mr. —— will drop in to-day." He remembereth birth-days — and professeth he is fortunate to have stumbled upon one. He declareth against fish, the turbot being small — yet suffereth himself to be importuned into a slice, against his first resolution. He sticketh by the port — yet will be prevailed upon to empty the remainder glass of claret, if a stranger press it upon him. He is a puzzle to the servants, who are fearful of being too obsequious, or not civil enough, to him. The guests think "they have seen him before." Every one speculateth upon his condition; and the most part take him to be a — tide-waiter. He calleth you by your Christian name, to imply that his other is the same with your own. He is too familiar by half, yet you wish he had less diffidence. With half the familiarity, he might pass for a casual dependant; with more boldness, he would be in no danger of being taken for what he is. He is too humble for a friend; yet taketh on him more state than befits a client. He is a worse guest than a country tenant, inasmuch as hebringeth up no rent — yet 'tis odds, from his garb and demeanor, that your guests take him for one. He is asked to make one at the whist table; refuseth on the score of poverty, and — resents being left out. When the company break up, he proffereth to go for a coach — and lets the servant go. He recollects your grandfather; and will thrust in some mean and quite unimportant anecdote of — the family. He knew it when it was not quite so flourishing as "he is blest in seeing it now." He reviveth past situations, to institute what he calleth — favorable comparisons. With a reflecting sort of congratulation, he will inquire the price of your furniture: and insults you with a special commendation of your window-curtains. He is of opinion that the urn is the more elegant shape; but, after all, there was something more comfortable about the old tea-kettle — which you must remember. He dare say you must find a great
convenience in having a carriage of your own, and appealeth
to your lady if it is not so. Inquireth if you have had your
arms done on vellum yet; and did not know, till lately, that
such-and-such had been the crest of the family. His memory
is unseasonable; his compliments perverse; his talk a trouble;
his stay pertinacious; and when he goeth away, you dismiss
his chair into a corner as precipitately as possible, and feel
fairly rid of two nuisances.

There is a worse evil under the sun, and that is — a female
Poor Relation. You may do something with the other;
you may pass him off tolerably well; but your indigent she-
relative is hopeless. "He is an old humorist," you may
say, "and affects to go threadbare. His circumstances are
better than folks would take them to be. You are fond of
having a Character at your table, and truly he is one." But
in the indications of female poverty there can be no disguise.
No woman dresses below herself from caprice. The truth
must out without shuffling. "She is plainly related to the
L——s; or what does she at their house?" She is, in all
probability, your wife's cousin. Nine times out of ten, at
least, this is the case. — Her garb is something between a
gentlewoman and a beggar, yet the former evidently pre-
dominates. She is most provocingly humble, and ostenta-
tiously sensible to her inferiority. He may require to be re-
pressed sometimes — aliquando sufflaminandum erat — but
there is no raising her. You send her soup at dinner, and
she begs to be helped — after the gentlemen. Mr. —
requests the honor of taking wine with her; she hesitates
between Port and Madeira, and chooses the former—
because he does. She calls the servant Sir; and insists
on not troubling him to hold her plate. The housekeeper
patronizes her. The children's governess takes upon her
to correct her, when she has mistaken the piano for a harp-
sichord.

Richard Amlet, Esq., in the play, is a notable instance of
the disadvantages to which this chimerical notion of affinity
constituting a claim to acquaintance, may subject the spirit

1 It was necessary sometimes to restrain him.
of a gentleman. A little foolish blood is all that is betwixt him and a lady with a great estate. His stars are perpetually crossed by the malignant maternity of an old woman, who persists in calling him "her son Dick." But she has where-withal in the end to recompense his indignities, and float him again upon the brilliant surface, under which it had been her seeming business and pleasure all along to sink him. All men, besides, are not of Dick's temperament. I knew an Amlet in real life, who, wanting Dick's buoyancy, sank indeed. Poor W— was of my own standing at Christ's, a fine classic, and a youth of promise. If he had a blemish, it was too much pride; but its quality was inoffensive; it was not of that sort which hardens the heart, and serves to keep inferiors at a distance; it only sought to ward off derogation from itself. It was the principle of self-respect carried as far as it could go, without infringing upon that respect, which he would have every one else equally maintain for himself. He would have you to think alike with him on this topic. Many a quarrel have I had with him, when we were rather older boys, and our tallness¹ made us more obnoxious to observation in the blue clothes, because I would not thread the alleys and blind ways of the town with him to elude notice, when we have been out together on a holiday in the streets of this sneering and prying metropolis. W— went, sore with these notions, to Oxford, where the dignity and sweetness of a scholar's life, meeting with the alloy of a humble introduction, wrought in him a passionate devotion to the place, with a profound aversion from the society. The servitor's gown (worse than his school array) clung to him with Nessian venom. He thought himself ridiculous in a garb, under which Latimer must have walked erect, and in which Hooker, in his young days, possibly flaunted in a vein of no discommendable vanity. In the depth of college shades, or in his lonely chamber, the poor student shrunk from observation. He found shelter among books, which insult not; and studies, that ask no questions of a youth's finances. He was lord of his library, and seldom cared for

¹ Lamb was, on the contrary, short of stature.
looking out beyond his domains. The healing influence of studious pursuits was upon him, to soothe and to abstract. He was almost a healthy man; when the waywardness of his fate broke out against him with a second and worse malignity. The father of W—— had hitherto exercised the humble profession of house-painter, at N——, near Oxford. A supposed interest with some of the heads of colleges had now induced him to take up his abode in that city, with the hope of being employed upon some public works which were talked of. From that moment I read in the countenance of the young man the determination which at length tore him from academical pursuits for ever. To a person unacquainted with our universities, the distance between the gownsmen and the townsmen, as they are called—the trading part of the latter especially—is carried to an excess that would appear harsh and incredible. The temperament of W——’s father was diametrically the reverse of his own. Old W—— was a little, busy, cringing tradesman, who, with his son upon his arm, would stand bowing and scraping, cap in hand, to anything that wore the semblance of a gown—insensible to the winks and opener remonstrances of the young man, to whose chamber-fellow, or equal in standing, perhaps, he was thus obsequiously and gratuitously ducking. Such a state of things could not last. W—— must change the air of Oxford, or be suffocated. He chose the former; and let the sturdy moralist, who strains the point of the filial duties as high as they can bear, censure the dereliction; he cannot estimate the struggle. I stood with W——, the last afternoon I ever saw him, under the eaves of his paternal dwelling. It was in the fine lane leading from the High Street to the back of . . . college, where W—— kept his rooms. He seemed thoughtful and more reconciled. I ventured to rally him—finding him in a better mood—upon a representation of the Artist Evangelist, which the old man, whose affairs were beginning to flourish, had caused to be set up in a splendid sort of frame over his really handsome shop, either as a token of prosperity or badge of gratitude to his saint. W—— looked up at the Luke, and, like
Satan, "knew his mounted sign — and fled." A letter on
his father's table, the next morning, announced that he had
accepted a commission in a regiment about to embark for
Portugal. He was among the first who perished before the
walls of St. Sebastian.

I do not know how, upon a subject which I began with
treating half seriously, I should have fallen upon a recital
so eminently painful; but this theme of poor relationship
is replete with so much matter for tragic as well as comic
associations, that it is difficult to keep the account dis-
tinct without blending. The earliest impressions which I
received on this matter are certainly not attended with
anything painful, or very humiliating, in the recalling.
At my father's table (no very splendid one) was to be found,
every Saturday, the mysterious figure of an aged gentle-
man, clothed in neat black, of a sad yet comely appearance.
His deportment was of the essence of gravity; his words few
or none; and I was not to make a noise in his presence. I
had little inclination to have done so — for my cue was to
admire in silence. A particular elbow-chair was appropriated
to him, which was in no case to be violated. A peculiar sort
of sweet pudding, which appeared on no other occasion, dis-
tinguished the days of his coming. I used to think him a
prodigiously rich man. All I could make out of him was, that
he and my father had been schoolfellows, a world ago, at
Lincoln, and that he came from the Mint. The Mint I
knew to be a place where all the money was coined — and
I thought he was the owner of all that money. Awful
ideas of the Tower twined themselves about his presence.
He seemed above human infirmities and passions. A
sort of melancholy grandeur invested him. From some
inexplicable doom I fancied him obliged to go about in
an eternal suit of mourning; a captive — a stately being,
let out of the Tower on Saturdays. Often have I wondered
at the temerity of my father, who, in spite of an habitual
general respect which we all in common manifested towards

1 Adapted from *Paradise Lost*, iv. 1013–1015.
him, would venture now and then to stand up against him in some argument touching their youthful days. The houses of the ancient city of Lincoln are divided (as most of my readers know) between the dwellers on the hill and in the valley. This marked distinction formed an obvious division between the boys who lived above (however brought together in a common school) and the boys whose paternal residence was on the plain; a sufficient cause of hostility in the code of these young Grotiuses. My father had been a leading Mountaineer; and would still maintain the general superiority, in skill and hardihood, of the Above Boys (his own faction) over the Below Boys (so were they called), of which party his contemporary had been a chieftain. Many and hot were the skirmishes on this topic — the only one upon which the old gentleman was ever brought out — and bad blood bred; even sometimes almost to the recommencement (so I expected) of actual hostilities. But my father, who scorned to insist upon advantages, generally contrived to turn the conversation upon some adroit by-commendation of the old Minster; in the general preference of which, before all other cathedrals in the island, the dweller on the hill, and the plain-born, could meet on a conciliating level, and lay down their less important differences. Once only I saw the old gentleman really ruffled, and I remember with anguish the thought that came over me: “Perhaps he will never come here again.” He had been pressed to take another plate of the viand, which I have already mentioned as the indispensable concomitant of his visits. He had refused with a resistance amounting to rigor, when my aunt, an old Lincolnian, but who had something of this, in common with my cousin Bridget, that she would sometimes press civility out of season — uttered the following memorable application — “Do take another slice, Mr. Billet, for you do not get pudding every day.” The old gentleman said nothing at the time — but he took occasion in the course of the evening, when some argument had intervened between them, to utter with an emphasis which chilled the company, and which chills me now as I write it — “Woman, you are superannuated!”
John Billet did not survive long, after the digesting of this affront; but he survived long enough to assure me that peace was actually restored! and, if I remember aright, another pudding was discreetly substituted in the place of that which had occasioned the offence. He died at the Mint (anno 1781) where he had long held, what he accounted, a comfortable independence; and with five pounds, fourteen shillings, and a penny, which were found in his escritoir after his decease, left the world, blessing God that he had enough to bury him, and that he had never been obliged to any man for a sixpence. This was — a Poor Relation.

STAGE ILLUSION

A play is said to be well or ill acted, in proportion to the scenical illusion produced. Whether such illusion can in any case be perfect, is not the question. The nearest approach to it, we are told, is when the actor appears wholly unconscious of the presence of spectators. In tragedy — in all which is to affect the feelings — this undivided attention to his stage business seems indispensable. Yet it is, in fact, dispensed with every day by our cleverest tragedians; and while these references to an audience, in the shape of rant or sentiment, are not too frequent or palpable, a sufficient quantity of illusion for the purposes of dramatic interest may be said to be produced in spite of them. But, tragedy apart, it may be inquired whether, in certain characters in comedy, especially those which are a little extravagant, or which involve some notion repugnant to the moral sense, it is not a proof of the highest skill in the comedian when, without absolutely appealing to an audience, he keeps up a tacit understanding with them; and makes them, unconsciously to themselves, a party in the scene. The utmost nicety is required in the mode of doing this; but we speak only of the great artists in the profession.

The most mortifying infirmity in human nature, to feel in ourselves, or to contemplate in another, is, perhaps,
cowardice. To see a coward done to the life upon a stage would produce anything but mirth. Yet we most of us remember Jack Bannister's cowards. Could anything be more agreeable, more pleasant? We loved the rogues. How was this effected but by the exquisite art of the actor in a perpetual sub-insinuation to us, the spectators, even in the extremity of the shaking fit, that he was not half such a coward as we took him for? We saw all the common symptoms of the malady upon him; the quivering lip, the cowering knees, the teeth chattering; and could have sworn "that man was frightened." ¹ But we forgot all the while — or kept it almost a secret to ourselves — that he never once lost his self-possession; that he let out, by a thousand droll looks and gestures — meant at us, and not at all supposed to be visible to his fellows in the scene, that his confidence in his own resources had never once deserted him. Was this a genuine picture of a coward? or not rather a likeness, which the clever artist contrived to palm upon us instead of an original; while we secretly connived at the delusion for the purpose of greater pleasure than a more genuine counterfeiting of the imbecility, helplessness, and utter self-desertion, which we know to be concomitants of cowardice in real life, could have given us?

Why are misers so hateful in the world, and so endurable on the stage, but because the skilful actor, by a sort of sub-reference, rather than direct appeal to us, disarms the character of a great deal of its odiousness, by seeming to engage our compassion for the insecure tenure by which he holds his money-bags and parchments? By this subtle vent half of the hatefulness of the character — the self-closeness with which in real life it coils itself up from the sympathies of men — evaporates. The miser becomes sympathetic; i.e., is no genuine miser. Here again a diverting likeness is substituted for a very disagreeable reality.

¹ Fielding's Tom Jones, xvi. Chapter 5. Partridge there thus criticises the acting of David Garrick in Hamlet: "If that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened in my life."
Spleen, irritability — the pitiable infirmities of old men, which produce only pain to behold in the realities, counterfeited upon a stage, divert not altogether for the comic appendages to them, but in part from an inner conviction that they are being acted before us; that a likeness only is going on, and not the thing itself. They please by being done under the life, or beside it; not to the life. When Gattie acts an old man, is he angry indeed? or only a pleasant counterfeit, just enough of a likeness to recognize, without pressing upon us the uneasy sense of a reality?

Comedians, paradoxical as it may seem, may be too natural. It was the case with a late actor. Nothing could be more earnest or true than the manner of Mr. Emery; this told excellently in his Tyke, and characters of a tragic cast. But when he carried the same rigid exclusiveness of attention to the stage business, and wilful blindness and oblivion of everything before the curtain into his comedy, it produced a harsh and dissonant effect. He was out of keeping with the rest of the Personæ Dramatis. There was as little link between him and them, as betwixt himself and the audience. He was a third estate — dry, repulsive, and unsocial to all. Individually considered, his execution was masterly. But comedy is not this unbending thing; for this reason, that the same degree of credibility is not required of it as to serious scenes. The degrees of credibility demanded to the two things may be illustrated by the different sort of truth which we expect when a man tells us a mournful or a merry story. If we suspect the former of falsehood in any one tittle, we reject it altogether. Our tears refuse to flow at a suspected imposition. But the teller of a mirthful tale has latitude allowed him. We are content with less than absolute truth. 'Tis the same with dramatic illusion. We confess we love in comedy to see an audience naturalized behind the scenes — taken into the interest of the drama, welcomed as bystanders, however. There is something ungracious in a comic actor holding himself aloof from all participation or concern with those who are come to be diverted by him. Macbeth

1 Macbeth, ii. 1.
must see the dagger, and no ear but his own be told of it; but an old fool in farce may think he sees something, and by conscious words and looks express it, as plainly as he can speak, to pit, box, and gallery. When an impertinent in tragedy, an Osric, for instance, breaks in upon the serious passions of the scene, we approve of the contempt with which he is treated. But when the pleasant impertinent of comedy, in a piece purely meant to give delight and raise mirth out of whimsical perplexities, worries the studious man with taking up his leisure or making his house his home, the same sort of contempt expressed (however natural) would destroy the balance of delight in the spectators. To make the intrusion comic, the actor who plays the annoyed man must a little desert nature; he must, in short, be thinking of the audience and express only so much dissatisfaction and peevishness as is consistent with the pleasure of comedy. In other words, his perplexity must seem half put on. If he repel the intruder with the sober set face of a man in earnest, and more especially if he deliver his expostulations in a tone which in the world must necessarily provoke a duel, his real-life manner will destroy the whimsical and purely dramatic existence of the other character (which to render it comic demands an antagonist comicality on the part of the character opposed to it), and convert what was meant for mirth, rather than belief, into a downright piece of impertinence indeed, which would raise no diversion in us, but rather stir pain, to see inflicted in earnest upon any worthy person. A very judicious actor (in most of his parts) seems to have fallen into an error of this sort in his playing with Mr. Wrench in the farce of Free and Easy.

Many instances would be tedious; these may suffice to show that comic acting at least does not always demand from the performer that strict abstraction from all reference to an audience which is exacted of it; but that in some cases a sort of compromise may take place, and all the purposes of dramatic delight be attained by a judicious understanding, not too openly announced, between the ladies and gentlemen — on both sides of the curtain.
DETACHED THOUGHTS ON BOOKS AND READING

To mind the inside of a book is to entertain one’s self with the forced product of another man’s brain. Now I think a man of quality and breeding may be much amused with the natural sprouts of his own. — Lord Foppington, in “The Relapse.”

An ingenious acquaintance of my own was so much struck with this bright sally of his Lordship, that he has left off reading altogether, to the great improvement of his originality. At the hazard of losing some credit on this head, I must confess that I dedicate no inconsiderable portion of my time to other people’s thoughts. I dream away my life in others’ speculations. I love to lose myself in other men’s minds. When I am not walking, I am reading; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me.

I have no repugnances. Shaftesbury is not too genteel for me, nor Jonathan Wild too low. I can read anything which I call a book. There are things in that shape which I cannot allow for such.

In this catalogue of books which are no books — biblia a-biblia¹ — I reckon Court Calendars, Directories, Pocket Books, Draught Boards bound and lettered on the back, Scientific Treatises, Almanacs, Statutes at Large: the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, Soame Jenyns, and, generally, all those volumes which “no gentleman’s library should be without:” the Histories of Flavius Josephus (that learned Jew), and Paley’s Moral Philosophy. With these exceptions, I can read almost anything. I bless my stars for a taste so catholic, so unexcluding.

I confess that it moves my spleen to see these things in books’ clothing perched upon shelves, like false saints, usurpers of true shrines, intruders into the sanctuary, thrust-

¹ Greek biblion, a book; a, not.
ing out the legitimate occupants. To reach down a well-bound semblance of a volume, and hope it some kind-hearted play-book, then, opening what "seem its leaves," to come bolt upon a withering Population Essay. To expect a Steele or a Farquhar, and find — Adam Smith. To view a well-arranged assortment of block-headed Encyclopaedias (Anglicanas or Metropolitanas) set out in an array of russia, or morocco, when a tithe of that good leather would comfortably re-clothe my shivering folios, would renovate Paracelsus himself, and enable old Raymund Lully to look like himself again in the world. I never see these impostors, but I long to strip them, to warm my ragged veterans in their spoils.

To be strong-backed and neat-bound is the desideratum of a volume. Magnificence comes after. This, when it can be afforded, is not to be lavished upon all kinds of books, indiscriminately. I would not dress a set of magazines, for instance, in full suit. The dishabille, or half-binding (with russia backs ever) is our costume. A Shakespeare or a Milton (unless the first editions), it were mere foppery to trick out in gay apparel. The possession of them confers no distinction. The exterior of them (the things themselves being so common), strange to say, raises no sweet emotions, no tickling sense of property in the owner. Thomson’s Seasons, again, looks best (I maintain it) a little torn and dog’s-eared. How beautiful to a genuine lover of reading are the sullied leaves, and worn-out appearance, nay, the very odor (beyond russia), if we would not forget kind feelings in fastidiousness, of an old “Circulating Library” Tom Jones, or Vicar of Wakefield! How they speak of the thousand thumbs that have turned over their pages with delight! — of the lone sempstress, whom they may have cheered (milliner, or harder-working mantua-maker) after her long day’s needle-toil, running far into midnight, when she has snatched an hour, ill spared from sleep, to steep her cares, as in some Lethean cup, in spelling out their enchanting contents! Who would have them a whit less soiled? What better condition could we desire to see them in?

In some respects the better a book is, the less it demands
from binding. Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and all that class of perpetually self-reproductive volumes — Great Nature's Stereotypes — we see them individually perish with less regret, because we know the copies of them to be "eterne."  
But where a book is at once both good and rare — where the individual is almost the species, and when *that* perishes,

We know not where is that Promethean torch
That can its light relumine, —

such a book, for instance, as the Life of the Duke of Newcastle, by his Duchess — no casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable, to honor and keep safe such a jewel.

Not only rare volumes of this description, which seem hopeless ever to be reprinted, but old editions of writers, such as Sir Philip Sydney, Bishop Taylor, Milton in his prose works, Fuller — of whom we *have* reprints, yet the books themselves, though they go about, and are talked of here and there, we know have not endenized themselves (nor possibly ever will) in the national heart, so as to become stock books — it is good to possess these in durable and costly covers. I do not care for a First Folio of Shakespeare. [You cannot make a pet book of an author whom everybody reads.] I rather prefer the common editions of Rowe and Tonson, without notes, and with *plates*, which, being so execrably bad, serve as maps or modest remembrancers, to the text; and, without pretending to any supposable emulation with it, are so much better than the Shakespeare gallery *engravings*, which *did*. I have a community of feeling with my countrymen about his Plays, and I like those editions of him best which have been oftenest tumbled about and handled. — On the contrary, I cannot read Beaumont and Fletcher but in Folio. The Octavo editions are painful to look at. I have no sympathy with them. If they were as much read as the current editions of the other poet, I should prefer them in that shape to the reprint of the older one. I do not know a more heartless sight than the reprint of the Anatomy of Melancholy. What need

1 *Macbeth*, iii. 2. 38.  
was there of unearthing the bones of that fantastic old great
man, to expose them in a winding-sheet of the newest fashion
to modern censure? what hapless stationer could dream of
Burton ever becoming popular? — The wretched Malone
could not do worse, when he bribed the sexton of Stratford
church to let him whitewash the painted effigy of old Shakes-
peare, which stood there, in rude but lively fashion depicted,
to the very color of the cheek, the eye, the eyebrow, hair, the
very dress he used to wear — the only authentic testimony
we had, however imperfect, of these curious parts and parcels
of him. They covered him over with a coat of white paint.
By ——, if I had been a justice of peace for Warwickshire, I
would have clapped both commentator and sexton fast in
the stocks, for a pair of meddling sacrilegious varlets.

I think I see them at their work — these sapient trouble-
tombs.

Shall I be thought fantastical if I confess that the names
of some of our poets sound sweeter, and have a finer relish
to the ear — to mine, at least — than that of Milton or of
Shakespeare? It may be that the latter are more staled and
rung upon in common discourse. The sweetest names, and
which carry a perfume in the mention, are, Kit Marlowe,
Drayton, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Cowley.

Much depends upon when and where you read a book.
In the five or six impatient minutes, before the dinner is quite
ready, who would think of taking up the Fairy Queen for a
stop-gap or a volume of Bishop Andrewes’ sermons?

Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be
played before you enter upon him. But he brings his music,
to which, who listens, had need bring docile thoughts, and
purged ears.

Winter evenings — the world shut out — with less of cere-
mony the gentle Shakespeare enters. At such a season the
Tempest, or his own Winter’s Tale —

These two poets you cannot avoid reading aloud — to
yourself, or (as it chances) to some single person listening.
More than one — and it degenerates into an audience.

Books of quick interest, that hurry on for incidents, are for
the eye to glide over only. It will not do to read them out. I could never listen to even the better kind of modern novels without extreme irksomeness.

A newspaper, read out, is intolerable. In some of the Bank offices it is the custom (to save so much individual time) for one of the clerks—who is the best scholar—to commence upon the Times or the Chronicle and recite its entire contents aloud, *pro bono publico.* With every advantage of lungs and elocution, the effect is singularly vapid. In barbers' shops and public-houses a fellow will get up and spell out a paragraph, which he communicates as some discovery. Another follows with *his* selection. So the entire journal transpires at length by piecemeal. Seldom-readers are slow readers, and, without this expedient, no one in the company would probably ever travel through the contents of a whole paper.

Newspapers always excite curiosity. No one ever lays one down without a feeling of disappointment.

What an eternal time that gentleman in black, at Nando's, keeps the paper! I am sick of hearing the waiter bawling out incessantly, "The Chronicle is in hand, Sir."

Coming into an inn at night—having ordered your supper—what can be more delightful than to find lying in the window-seat, left there time out of mind by the carelessness of some former guest—two or three numbers of the old Town and Country Magazine, with its amusing *tête-à-tête* pictures—"The Royal Lover and Lady G——;" "The Melting Platonic and the old Beau,"—and such-like antiquated scandal? Would you exchange it—at that time, and in that place—for a better book?

Poor Tobin, who latterly fell blind, did not regret it so much for the weightier kinds of reading—the Paradise Lost, or Comus, he could have *read* to him—but he missed the pleasure of skimming over with his own eye a magazine, or a light pamphlet.

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1 For the public good.
2 French. Literally, head to head. Here used in the sense of pictures of confidential interviews.
I should not care to be caught in the serious avenues of some cathedral alone, and reading *Candide*.

I do not remember a more whimsical surprise than having been once detected — by a familiar damsel — reclined at my ease upon the grass, on Primrose Hill (her Cythera) reading — *Pamela*. There was nothing in the book to make a man seriously ashamed at the exposure; but as she seated herself down by me, and seemed determined to read in company, I could have wished it had been — any other book. We read on very sociably for a few pages; and, not finding the author much to her taste, she got up, and — went away. Gentle casuist, I leave it to thee to conjecture, whether the blush (for there was one between us) was the property of the nymph or the swain in this dilemma. From me you shall never get the secret.

I am not much a friend to out-of-doors reading. I cannot settle my spirits to it. I knew a Unitarian minister, who was generally to be seen upon Snow Hill (as yet Skinner's Street *was not*), between the hours of ten and eleven in the morning, studying a volume of Lardner. I own this to have been a strain of abstraction beyond my reach. I used to admire how he sidled along, keeping clear of secular contacts. An illiterate encounter with a porter's knot, or a bread basket, would have quickly put to flight all the theology I am master of, and have left me worse than indifferent to the five points.

There is a class of street readers, whom I can never contemplate without affection — the poor gentry, who, not having wherewithal to buy or hire a book, filch a little learning at the open stalls — the owner, with his hard eye, casting envious looks at them all the while, and thinking when they will have done. Venturing tenderly, page after page, expecting every moment when he shall interpose his interdict, and yet unable to deny themselves the gratification, they "snatch a fearful joy."¹ Martin B——, in this way, by daily fragments, got through two volumes of Clarissa, when the stall-keeper damped his laudable ambition, by asking him (it was in his younger days) whether he meant to purchase

¹ Gray's Ode, *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College*. 
the work. M. declares, that under no circumstance in his life did he ever peruse a book with half the satisfaction which he took in those uneasy snatches. A quaint poetess of our day has moralized upon this subject in two very touching but homely stanzas:

I saw a boy with eager eye  
Open a book upon a stall,  
And read, as he'd devour it all;  
Which, when the stall-man did espy,  
Soon to the boy I heard him call,  
"You Sir, you never buy a book,  
Therefore in one you shall not look."

The boy pass'd slowly on, and with a sigh  
He wish'd he never had been taught to read,  
Then of the old churl's books he should have had no need.

Of sufferings the poor have many,  
Which never can the rich annoy.  
I soon perceived another boy—  
Who look'd as if he'd not had any  
Food, for that day at least—enjoy  
The sight of cold meat in a tavern larder.  
This boy's case, then thought I, is surely harder,  
Thus hungry, longing, thus without a penny,  
Beholding choice of dainty-dressed meat:  
No wonder if he wish he ne'er had learn'd to eat.

THE OLD MARGATE HOY

I am fond of passing my vacations (I believe I have said so before 2) at one or other of the Universities. Next to these my choice would fix me at some woody spot, such as the neighborhood of Henley affords in abundance, on the banks of my beloved Thames. But somehow or other my cousin contrives to wheedle me, once in three or four seasons, to a watering-place. Old attachments cling to her in spite of experience. We have been dull at Worthing one summer,

1 Mary Lamb. The stanzas quoted make the entire poem entitled "The Two Boys."  
2 In "Oxford in the Vacation."
duller at Brighton another, dullest at Eastbourn a third, and are at this moment doing dreary penance at — Hastings! — and all because we were happy many years ago for a brief week at Margate. That was our first sea-side experiment, and many circumstances combined to make it the most agreeable holiday of my life. We had neither of us seen the sea, and we had never been from home so long together in company.

Can I forget thee, thou old Margate Hoy, with thy weather-beaten, sun-burnt captain, and his rough accommodations — ill exchanged for the foppery and fresh-water niceness of the modern steam-packet? To the winds and waves thou committedst thy goodly freightage, and didst ask no aid of magic fumes, and spells, and boiling caldrons. With the gales of heaven thou wentest swimmingly; or, when it was their pleasure, stoodest still with sailor-like patience. Thy course was natural, not forced, as in a hotbed; nor didst thou go poisoning the breath of ocean with sulphureous smoke — a great sea chimera, chimneying and furnacing the deep; or liker to that fire-god \(^1\) parching up Scamander.

Can I forget thy honest, yet slender crew, with their coy reluctant responses (yet to the suppression of anything like contempt) to the raw questions, which we of the great city would be ever and anon putting to them, as to the uses of this or that strange naval implement? 'Specially can I forget thee, thou happy medium, thou shade of refuge between us and them, conciliating interpreter of their skill to our simplicity, comfortable ambassador between sea and land! — whose sailor-trousers did not more convincingly assure thee to be an adopted denizen of the former, than thy white cap, and whiter apron over them, with thy neat-fingered practice in thy culinary vocation, bespoke thee to have been of inland nurture heretofore — a master cook of Eastcheap? How busily didst thou ply thy multifarious occupation, cook, mariner, attendant, chamberlain; here, there, like another Ariel, flaming at once about all parts of the deck, yet with kindlier ministrations — not to assist the tempest, but, as if touched

\(^1\) See Scamander in the Index.
with a kindred sense of our infirmities, to soothe the qualms which that untried motion might haply raise in our crude land-fancies. And when the o'erwashing billows drove us below deck (for it was far gone in October, and we had stiff and blowing weather), how did thy officious ministerings, still catering for our comfort, with cards, and cordials, and thy more cordial conversation, alleviate the closeness and the confinement of thy else (truth to say) not very savory, nor very inviting, little cabin!

With these additaments to boot, we had on board a fellow-passenger, whose discourse in verity might have beguiled a longer voyage than we meditated, and have made mirth and wonder abound as far as the Azores. He was a dark, Spanish-complexioned young man, remarkably handsome, with an officer-like assurance, and an insuppressible volubility of assertion. He was, in fact, the greatest liar I had met with then, or since. He was none of your hesitating, half storytellers (a most painful description of mortals) who go on sounding your belief, and only giving you as much as they see you can swallow at a time — the nibbling pickpockets of your patience — but one who committed downright, daylight depredations upon his neighbor’s faith. He did not stand shivering upon the brink, but was a hearty, thorough-paced liar, and plunged at once into the depths of your credulity. I partly believe, he made pretty sure of his company. Not many rich, not many wise, or learned, composed at that time the common stowage of a Margate packet. We were, I am afraid, a set of as unseasoned Londoners (let our enemies give it a worse name) as Aldermanbury, or Watling Street, at that time of day could have supplied. There might be an exception or two among us, but I scorn to make any invidious distinctions among such a jolly, companionable ship’s company as those were whom I sailed with. Something too must be conceded to the Genius Loci. Had the confident fellow told us half the legends on land which he favored us

1 “Lamb refers to the attacks of Blackwood’s Magazine on the Cockneys [the London writers], among whom he himself had been included.” — Lucas.

2 The spirit of the place.
with on the other element, I flatter myself the good sense of most of us would have revolted. But we were in a new world, with everything unfamiliar about us, and the time and place disposed us to the reception of any prodigious marvel whatsoever. Time has obliterated from my memory much of his wild fablings; and the rest would appear but dull, as written, and to be read on shore. He had been Aide-de-camp (among other rare accidents and fortunes) to a Persian Prince, and at one blow had stricken off the head of the King of Carimania on horseback. He, of course, married the Prince's daughter. I forget what unlucky turn in the politics of that court, combining with the loss of his consort, was the reason of his quitting Persia; but, with the rapidity of a magician, he transported himself, along with his hearers, back to England, where we still found him in the confidence of great ladies. There was some story of a princess—Elizabeth, if I remember—having intrusted to his care an extraordinary casket of jewels, upon some extraordinary occasion—but, as I am not certain of the name or circumstance at this distance of time, I must leave it to the Royal daughters of England to settle the honor among themselves in private. I cannot call to mind half his pleasant wonders; but I perfectly remember that, in the course of his travels, he had seen a phoenix; and he obligingly undeceived us of the vulgar error, that there is but one of that species at a time, assuring us that they were not uncommon in some parts of Upper Egypt. Hitherto he had found the most implicit listeners. His dreaming fancies had transported us beyond the 'ignorant present.' But when (still hardyng more and more in his triumphs over our simplicity) he went on to affirm that he had actually sailed through the legs of the Colossus at Rhodes, it really became necessary to make a stand. And here I must do justice to the good sense and intrepidity of one of our party, a youth, that had hitherto been one of his most deferential auditors, who, from his recent reading, made bold to assure the gentleman, that there must be some mistake, as "the Colossus in question had been destroyed long since;"

1 *Macbeth*, i. 5. 58.
to whose opinion, delivered with all modesty, our hero was obliging enough to concede thus much, that "the figure was indeed a little damaged." This was the only opposition he met with, and it did not at all seem to stagger him, for he proceeded with his fables, which the same youth appeared to swallow with still more complacency than ever, — confirmed, as it were, by the extreme candor of that concession. With these prodigies he wheedled us on till we came in sight of the Reculvers, which one of our own company (having been the voyage before) immediately recognizing, and pointing out to us, was considered by us as no ordinary seaman.

All this time sat upon the edge of the deck quite a different character. It was a lad, apparently very poor, very infirm, and very patient. His eye was ever on the sea, with a smile; and, if he caught now and then some snatches of these wild legends, it was by accident, and they seemed not to concern him. The waves to him whispered more pleasant stories. He was as one being with us, but not of us. He heard the bell of dinner ring without stirring; and when some of us pulled out our private stores — our cold meat and our salads — he produced none, and seemed to want none. Only a solitary biscuit he had laid in; provision for the one or two days and nights, to which these vessels then were oftentimes obliged to prolong their voyage. Upon a nearer acquaintance with him, which he seemed neither to court nor decline, we learned that he was going to Margate, with the hope of being admitted into the Infirmary there for sea-bathing. His disease was a scrofula, which appeared to have eaten all over him. He expressed great hopes of a cure; and when we asked him whether he had any friends where he was going, he replied, "he had no friends."

These pleasant, and some mournful passages, with the first sight of the sea, coöperating with youth, and a sense of holidays, and out-of-door adventure, to me that had been pent up in populous cities for many months before, — have left upon my mind the fragrance as of summer days gone by, bequeathing nothing but their remembrance for cold and wintry hours to chew upon.
Will it be thought a digression (it may spare some unwelcome comparisons) if I endeavor to account for the dissatisfaction which I have heard so many persons confess to have felt (as I did myself feel in part on this occasion), at the sight of the sea for the first time? I think the reason usually given—referring to the incapacity of actual objects for satisfying our preconceptions of them—scarcely goes deep enough into the question. Let the same person see a lion, an elephant, a mountain, for the first time in his life, and he shall perhaps feel himself a little mortified. The things do not fill up that space which the idea of them seemed to take up in his mind. But they have still a correspondency to his first notion, and in time grow up to it, so as to produce a very similar impression: enlarging themselves (if I may say so) upon familiarity. But the sea remains a disappointment. Is it not, that in the latter we had expected to behold (absurdly, I grant, but, I am afraid, by the law of imagination unavoidably) not a definite object, as those wild beasts, or that mountain compassable by the eye, but all the sea at once, the commensurate antagonist of the earth? I do not say we tell ourselves so much, but the craving of the mind is to be satisfied with nothing less. I will suppose the case of a young person of fifteen (as I then was) knowing nothing of the sea, but from description. He comes to it for the first time—all that he has been reading of it all his life, and that the most enthusiastic part of life,—all he has gathered from narratives of wandering seamen,—what he has gained from true voyages, and what he cherishes as credulously from romance and poetry,—crowding their images, and exacting strange tributes from expectation.—He thinks of the great deep, and of those who go down unto it; of its thousand isles, and of the vast continents it washes; of its receiving the mighty Plata, or Orellana, into its bosom, without disturbance, or sense of augmentation; of Biscay swells, and the mariner

For many a day, and many a dreadful night,
Incessant laboring round the stormy Cape;¹

¹ Thomson's Seasons, "Summer," 1002.
of fatal rocks, and the "still-vexed Bermoothes;" ¹ of great whirlpools, and the water-spout; of sunken ships, and sunless treasures swallowed up in the unrestoring depths; of fishes and quaint monsters, to which all that is terrible on earth —

Be but as buggs to frighten babes withal,
Compared with the creatures in the sea's entral; ²

of naked savages, and Juan Fernandez; of pearls, and shells; of coral beds, and of enchanted isles; of mermaids' grots —

I do not assert that in sober earnest he expects to be shown all these wonders at once, but he is under the tyranny of a mighty faculty, which haunts him with confused hints and shadows of all these; and when the actual object opens first upon him, seen (in tame weather, too, most likely) from our unromantic coasts — a speck, a slip of sea-water, as it shows to him — what can it prove but a very unsatisfying and even diminutive entertainment? Or if he has come to it from the mouth of a river, was it much more than the river widening? and, even out of sight of land, what had he but a flat watery horizon about him, nothing comparable to the vast o'er-cur- taining sky, his familiar object, seen daily without dread or amazement? — Who, in similar circumstances, has not been tempted to exclaim with Charoba, in the poem of Gebir,

Is this the mighty ocean? is this all?

I love town or country; but this detestable Cinque Port is neither. I hate these scrubbed shoots, thrusting out their starved foliage from between the horrid fissures of dusty innutritious rocks; which the amateur calls "verdure to the edge of the sea." I require woods, and they show me stunted coppices. I cry out for the water-brooks, and pant for fresh streams, and inland murmurs. I cannot stand all day on the naked beach, watching the capricious hues of the sea, shifting

¹ Tempest, i. 2. 229. The passage refers to the ever disturbed Bermudas, where the rocks are ever washed by the sea, thus rendering access to them dangerous.
² Spenser's Faerie Queene, Bk. II. xii. 25. Buggs means bug-bears.
like the colors of a dying mullet. I am tired of looking out at the windows of this island-prison. I would fain retire into the interior of my cage. While I gaze upon the sea, I want to be on it, over it, across it. It binds me in with chains, as of iron. My thoughts are abroad. I should not so feel in Staffordshire. There is no home for me here. There is no sense of home at Hastings. It is a place of fugitive resort, an heterogeneous assemblage of sea-mews and stock-brokers, Amphitrites of the town, and misses that coquet with the Ocean. If it were what it was in its primitive shape, and what it ought to have remained, a fair, honest fishing-town, and no more, it were something — with a few straggling fishermen’s huts scattered about, artless as its cliffs, and with their materials filched from them, it were something. I could abide to dwell with Meshech; to assort with fisher-swains, and smugglers. There are, or I dream there are, many of this latter occupation here. Their faces become the place. I like a smuggler. He is the only honest thief. He robs nothing but the revenue — an abstraction I never greatly cared about. I could go out with them in their mackerel boats, or about their less ostensible business, with some satisfaction. I can even tolerate those poor victims to monotony, who from day to day pace along the beach, in endless progress and recurrence, to watch their illicit countrymen — townsfolk or brethren, perchance — whistling to the sheathing and unsheathing of their cutlasses (their only solace), who, under the mild name of preventive service, keep up a legitimated civil warfare in the deplorable absence of a foreign one, to show their detestation of run hollands, and zeal for Old England. But it is the visitants from town, that come here to say that they have been here, with no more relish of the sea than a pond-perch or a dace might be supposed to have, that are my aversion. I feel like a foolish dace in these regions, and have as little toleration for myself here as for them. What can they want here? If they had a true relish of the ocean, why have they brought all this land luggage with them? or why pitch their civilized tents in the desert? What mean these scanty bookrooms — marine libraries as they entitle
them — if the sea were, as they would have us believe, a book "to read strange matter in"? ¹ what are their foolish concert-rooms, if they come, as they would fain be thought to do, to listen to the music of the waves? All is false and hollow pretension. They come because it is the fashion, and to spoil the nature of the place. They are, mostly, as I have said, stock-brokers; but I have watched the better sort of them — now and then, an honest citizen (of the old stamp), in the simplicity of his heart, shall bring down his wife and daughters to taste the sea breezes. I always know the date of their arrival. It is easy to see it in their countenance. A day or two they go wandering on the shingles, picking up cockle-shells, and thinking them great things; but, in a poor week, imagination slackens: they begin to discover that cockles produce no pearls, and then — O then! — if I could interpret for the pretty creatures (I know they have not the courage to confess it themselves), how gladly would they exchange their seaside rambles for a Sunday walk on the green sward of their accustomed Twickenham meadows!

I would ask of one of these sea-charmed emigrants, who think they truly love the sea, with its wild usages, what would their feelings be if some of the unsophisticated aborigines of this place, encouraged by their courteous questionings here, should venture, on the faith of such assured sympathy between them, to return the visit, and come up to see — London. I must imagine them with their fishing-tackle on their back, as we carry our town necessaries. What a sensation would it cause in Lothbury! What vehement laughter would it not excite among

The daughters of Cheapside, and wives of Lombard Street!²

I am sure that no town-bred or inland-born subjects can feel their true and natural nourishment at these sea-places. Nature, where she does not mean us for mariners and vagabonds, bids us stay at home. The salt foam seems to nourish

¹ Macbeth, i. 5. 63.
² Thomas Randolph's Ode, To Master Anthony Stafford, "The beauties of the Cheap, and wives of Lombard Street."
a spleen. I am not half so good-natured as by the milder waters of my natural river. I would exchange these sea-gulls for swans, and scud a swallow for ever about the banks of Thamesis.

SANITY OF TRUE GENIUS

So far from the position holding true, that great wit (or genius, in our modern way of speaking) has a necessary alliance with insanity, the greatest wits, on the contrary, will ever be found to be the sanest writers. It is impossible for the mind to conceive of a mad Shakspeare. The greatness of wit, by which the poetic talent is here chiefly to be understood, manifests itself in the admirable balance of all the faculties. Madness is the disproportionate straining or excess of any one of them. "So strong a wit," ¹ says Cowley, speaking of a poetical friend,

"—— did Nature to him frame,
As all things but his judgment overcame;
His judgment like the heavenly moon did show,
Tempering that mighty sea below."

The ground of the mistake is, that men, finding in the raptures of the higher poetry a condition of exaltation, to which they have no parallel in their own experience, besides the spurious resemblance of it in dreams and fevers, impute a state of dreaminess and fever to the poet. But the true poet dreams being awake. He is not possessed by his subject, but has dominion over it. In the groves of Eden he walks familiar as in his native paths. He ascends the empyrean heaven, and is not intoxicated. He treads the burning marl ² without dismay; he wins his flight without self-loss through realms of chaos "and old night." ³ Or if, abandoning himself to that severer chaos of a "human mind untuned," ⁴ he is

¹ Cowley's Ode, On the Death of Mr. William Hervey.
² Paradise Lost, 1, 295–296. ³ Paradise Lost, i. 541–543. ⁴ King Lear, iv. 7. 16–17.
content awhile to be mad with Lear, or to hate mankind (a sort of madness) with Timon, neither is that madness, nor this misanthropy, so unchecked, but that—never letting the reins of reason wholly go, while most he seems to do so—he has his better genius still whispering at his ear, with the good servant Kent suggesting saner counsels, or with the honest steward Flavius recommending kindlier resolutions. Where he seems most to recede from humanity, he will be found the truest to it. From beyond the scope of Nature if he summon possible existences, he subjugates them to the law of her consistency. He is beautifully loyal to that sovereign directress, even when he appears most to betray and desert her. His ideal tribes submit to policy; his very monsters are tamed to his hand, even as that wild sea-brood, shepherded by Proteus. He tames, and he clothes them with attributes of flesh and blood, till they wonder at themselves, like Indian Islanders forced to submit to European vesture. Caliban, the Witches, are as true to the laws of their own nature (ours with a difference), as Othello, Hamlet, and Macbeth. Herein the great and the little wits are differed; that if the latter wander ever so little from nature or actual existence, they lose themselves and their readers. Their phantoms are lawless; their visions nightmares. They do not create, which implies shaping and consistency. Their imaginations are not active—for to be active is to call something into act and form—but passive, as men in sick dreams. For the super-natural, or something super-added to what we know of nature, they give you the plainly non-natural. And if this were all, and that these mental hallucinations were discoverable only in the treatment of subjects out of nature, or transcending it, the judgment might with some plea be pardoned if it ran riot, and a little wantonized: but even in the describing of real and every-day life, that which is before their eyes, one of these lesser wits shall more deviate from nature—show more of that inconsequence, which has a natural alliance with frenzy—than a great genius in his "maddest fits,"¹ as Wither somewhere calls them. We

¹ Wither's Shepherd's Hunting, Eclogue 4.
appeal to any one that is acquainted with the common run of Lane's novels,—as they existed some twenty or thirty years back,—those scanty intellectual viands of the whole female reading public, till a happier genius\(^1\) arose, and expelled for ever the innutritious phantoms,—whether he has not found his brain more "betossed," his memory more puzzled, his sense of when and where more confounded, among the improbable events, the incoherent incidents, the inconsistent characters, or no-characters, of some third-rate love-intrigue—where the persons shall be a Lord Glendamour and a Miss Rivers, and the scene only alternate between Bath and Bond Street—a more bewildering dreaminess induced upon him than he has felt wandering over all the fairy-grounds of Spenser. In the productions we refer to, nothing but names and places is familiar; the persons are neither of this world nor of any other conceivable one; an endless stream of activities without purpose, of purposes destitute of motive:—we meet phantoms in our known walks; fantasies only christened. In the poet we have names which announce fiction; and we have absolutely no place at all, for the things and persons of the Fairy Queen prate not of their "whereabout."\(^2\) But in their inner nature, and the law of their speech and actions, we are at home, and upon acquainted ground. The one turns life into a dream; the other to the wildest dreams gives the sobrieties of every-day occurrences. By what subtle art of tracing the mental processes it is effected, we are not philosophers enough to explain, but in that wonderful episode of the cave of Mammon, in which the Money God appears first in the lowest form of a miser, is then a worker of metals, and becomes the god of all the treasures of the world; and has a daughter, Ambition, before whom all the world kneels for favors— with the Hesperian fruit, the waters of Tantalus, with Pilate washing his hands vainly, but not impertinently, in the same stream,—that we should be at one moment in the cave of an old hoarder of treasures, at the next at the forge of the Cyclops, in a palace and yet in hell, all at once, with the shifting mutations of the

\(^1\) Sir Walter Scott?

\(^2\) Macbeth, ii. 1. 58.
most rambling dream, and our judgment yet all the time awake, and neither able nor willing to detect the fallacy, — is a proof of that hidden sanity which still guides the poet in the wildest seeming-aberrations.

It is not enough to say that the whole episode is a copy of the mind's conceptions in sleep; it is, in some sort — but what a copy! Let the most romantic of us, that has been entertained all night with the spectacle of some wild and magnificent vision, recombine it in the morning, and try it by his waking judgment. That which appeared so shifting, and yet so coherent, while that faculty was passive, when it comes under cool examination shall appear so reasonless and so unlinked, that we are ashamed to have been so deluded; and to have taken, though but in sleep, a monster for a god. But the transitions in this episode are every whit as violent as in the most extravagant dream, and yet the waking judgment ratifies them.

CAPTAIN JACKSON

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

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

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

You saw with your bodily eyes indeed what seemed a bare scrag — cold savings from the foregone meal — remnant hardly sufficient to send a mendicant from the door contented. But in the copious will — the revelling imagination of your host — the "mind, the mind, Master Shallow," 1 whole beeves were spread before you — hecatombs — no end appeared to the profusion.

It was the widow's cruse 2 — the loaves and fishes; 2 carving could not lessen, nor helping diminish it — the stamina were left — the elemental bone still flourished, divested of its accidents.

"Let us live while we can," methinks I hear the open-handed creature exclaim; "while we have, let us not want," "here is plenty left;" "want for nothing" — with many more such hospitable sayings, the spurs of appetite, and old concomitants of smoking boards and feast-oppressed chargers. Then sliding a slender ratio of Single Gloucester upon his wife's plate, or the daughters', he would convey the remnant rind into his own, with a merry quirk of "the nearer the bone," etc., and declaring that he universally preferred the outside. For we had our table distinctions, you are to know, and some of us in a manner sate above the salt. None but his guest or guests dreamed of tasting flesh luxuries at night, the fragments were verè hospitibus sacra. 3 But of one thing or another there was always enough, and leavings: only he would sometimes finish the remainder crust, to show that he wished no savings.

Wine we had none; nor, except on very rare occasions, spirits; but the sensation of wine was there. Some thin

1 A remembrance from 2 Henry IV. iii. 2. 278.
2 1 Kings xvii. 16, and Matthew xv. 32 ff.
3 Truly sacred to the guests.
kind of ale I remember — "British beverage," he would say! "Push about, my boys;" "Drink to your sweethearts, girls." At every meagre draught a toast must ensue, or a song. All the forms of good liquor were there, with none of the effects wanting. Shut your eyes, and you would swear a capacious bowl of punch was foaming in the centre, with beams of generous Port or Madeira radiating to it from each of the table corners. You got flustered, without knowing whence; tipsy upon words; and reeled under the potency of his unperforming Bacchanalian encouragements.

We had our songs — "Why, Soldiers, why," — and the "British Grenadiers"¹ — in which last we were all obliged to bear chorus. Both the daughters sang. Their proficiency was a nightly theme — the masters he had given them — the "no-expense" which he spared to accomplish them in a science "so necessary to young women." But then — they could not sing "without the instrument."

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

We were not without our literary talk either. It did not extend far, but as far as it went it was good. It was bottomed well; had good grounds to go upon. In the cottage was a room, which tradition authenticated to have been the

¹ "This popular song was composed at the end of the seventeenth century, not earlier than 1678, when the Grenadier Company was formed, nor later than the reign of Queen Anne, when grenadiers ceased to carry hand grenades. The poet Campbell's song, Upon the Plains of Flanders, also bears the same title, but is less known." — Hallward.
same in which Glover, in his occasional retirements, had penned the greater part of his Leonidas. This circumstance was nightly quoted, though none of the present inmates, that I could discover, appeared ever to have met with the poem in question. But that was no matter. Glover had written there, and the anecdote was pressed into the account of the family importance. It diffused a learned air through the apartment, the little side casement of which (the poet’s study window), opening upon a superb view as far as the pretty spire of Harrow, over domains and patrimonial acres, not a rood nor square yard whereof our host could call his own, yet gave occasion to an immoderate expansion of—vanity shall I call it?—in his bosom, as he showed them in a glowing summer evening. It was all his, he took it all in, and communicated rich portions of it to his guests. It was a part of his largess, his hospitality; it was going over his grounds; he was lord for the time of showing them, and you the implicit lookers-up to his magnificence.

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

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

It is long since, and my memory waxes dim on some subjects, or I should wish to convey some notion of the manner in which the pleasant creature described the circumstances of his own wedding-day. I faintly remember something of a chaise-and-four, in which he made his entry into Glasgow on that morning to fetch the bride home, or carry her thither, I forget which. It so completely made out the stanza of the old ballad 1 —

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

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

There is some merit in putting a handsome face upon indigent circumstances. To bully and swagger away the sense of them before strangers, may not be always discommodable. Tibbs, and Bobadil, even when detected, have more of our admiration than contempt. But for a man to put the cheat upon himself; to play the Bobadil at home; and

1 From the old popular ballad, “Waly, Waly.”
steeped in poverty up to the lips, to fancy himself all the while chin-deep in riches, is a strain of constitutional philosophy, and a mastery over fortune, which was reserved for my old friend Captain Jackson.

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

Sera tamen respexit
Libertas.¹

Vergil.

A Clerk I was in London gay. — O'Keefe.

If peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life — thy shining youth — in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six-and-thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing Lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant playtime, and the frequently-intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours’ a-day attendance at a counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content — doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers — the buzz and stirring murmur of the

¹ Adapted from Vergil’s Eclogue, i. 28, Libertas, quae sera tamen respexit inertem, Liberty, though late, at last looks in on the idler.
streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a weekday saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful — are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over — no busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by — the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances — or half-happy at best — of emancipated 'prentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant-maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and livelily expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays, I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thraldom.

Independently of the rigors of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged.
I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the fifth of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained laboring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner—the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life—when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock), I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlor. I thought now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L——, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me,—when to my utter astonishment B——, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!) and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little,
ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy.

Esto perpetua! ¹

For the first day or two I felt stunned—overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do not walk all day.

¹ "Be thou continual!" The dying words of Paolo Sarpi (1552-1623), spoken of his beloved Venice.
long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away; but I do not read in that violent measure, with which, having no Time my own but candlelight Time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in bygone winters. I walk, read, or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man

—— that's born, and has his years come to him,
In some green desert.¹

"Years!" you will say; "what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For that is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own — that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's Time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me threefold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was, that a vast tract of time had intervened since I quitted the Counting House. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hours in each day of the year, been closely associated — being suddenly removed from them — they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage, which may serve to illustrate this fancy, in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death:

—— 'Twas but just now he went away;
I have not since had time to shed a tear;

¹ Middleton's Mayor of Queensborough, i. 1. 101-103.
And yet the distance does the same appear
As if he had been a thousand years from me.
Time takes no measure in Eternity.¹

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to
go among them once or twice since; to visit my old deskmfellows — my co-brethren of the quill — that I had left
below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with
which they received me could quite restore to me that
pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among
them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought
they went off but faintly. My old desk; the peg where
I hung my hat, were appropriated to another. I knew it
must be, but I could not take it kindly. D——I take me,
if I did not feel some remorse — beast, if I had not — at
quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils
for six-and-thirty years, that smoothed for me with their
jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional
road. Had it been so rugged then, after all? or was I a
coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also
know that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the
mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had
violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not
courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite recon-
ciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for
long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall
have your leave. Farewell, Ch——, dry, sarcastic, and
friendly! Do——, mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl——, officious to do, and to volunteer, good services! —
and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a
Whittington of old, stately house of Merchants; with thy
labyrininthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices,
where candles for one-half the year supplied the place of
the sun’s light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern
fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in
the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my
“works!” There let them rest, as I do from my labors,

¹ The Vestal Virgin, or the Roman Ladies, v. 1.
piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural for me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at 11 o'clock in the day in Bond Street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a bookstall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish Street Hill? Where is Fenchurch Street? Stones of old Mincing Lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six-and-thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles. It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, etc. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sate as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What
is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself — that unfortunate failure of a holiday, as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it — is melted down into a week-day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday. I have Time for everything. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May-morning. It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round — and what is it all for? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down As low as to the fiends.1

I am no longer . . ., clerk to the Firm of, etc. I am Retired Leisure.2 I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about; not to and from. They tell me, a certain cum dignitate3 air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the opera. Opus operatum est.4 I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task-work, and have the rest of the day to myself.

1 Hamlet, ii. 2. 517-519. 2 Il Penseroso, 49-50. 3 Part of a popular Latin proverb, Otium cum dignitate, leisure with dignity. 4 My work is finished.
BARBARA S——

On the noon of the 14th of November, 1743 or 4, I forget which it was, just as the clock had struck one, Barbara S——, with her accustomed punctuality, ascended the long rambling staircase, with awkward interposed landing-places, which led to the office, or rather a sort of box with a desk in it, whereat sat the then treasurer of (what few of our readers may remember) the old Bath Theatre. All over the island it was the custom, and remains so I believe to this day, for the players to receive their weekly stipend on the Saturday. It was not much that Barbara had to claim.

The little maid had just entered her eleventh year; but her important station at the theatre, as it seemed to her, with the benefits which she felt to accrue from her pious application of her small earnings, had given an air of womanhood to her steps and to her behavior. You would have taken her to have been at least five years older.

Till latterly she had merely been employed in choruses, or where children were wanted to fill up the scene. But the manager, observing a diligence and adroitness in her above her age, had for some few months past intrusted to her the performance of whole parts. You may guess the self-consequence of the promoted Barbara. She had already drawn tears in young Arthur, had rallied Richard with infantine petulance in the Duke of York; and in her turn had rebuked that petulance when she was Prince of Wales. She would have done the elder child in Morton’s pathetic afterpiece to the life; but as yet the “Children in the Wood” was not.

Long after this little girl was grown an aged woman, I have seen some of these small parts, each making two or three pages at most, copied out in the rudest hand of the then prompter, who doubtless transcribed a little more

1 Her sympathetic interpretation of the part of Prince Arthur in King John drew tears from the spectators.
carefully and fairly for the grown-up tragedy ladies of the establishment. But such as they were, blotted and scrawled, as for a child's use, she kept them all; and in the zenith of her after-reputation it was a delightful sight to behold them bound up in costliest morocco, each single—each small part making a book—with fine clasps, gilt-splashed, etc. She had conscientiously kept them as they had been delivered to her; not a blot had been effaced or tampered with. They were precious to her for their affecting remembrancings. They were her principia, her rudiments; the elementary atoms; the little steps by which she pressed forward to perfection. "What," she would say, "could India-rubber, or a pumice-stone, have done for these darlings?"

I am in no hurry to begin my story—indeed, I have little or none to tell—so I will just mention an observation of hers connected with that interesting time.

Not long before she died I had been discoursing with her on the quantity of real present emotion which a great tragic performer experiences during acting. I ventured to think, that though in the first instance such players must have possessed the feelings which they so powerfully called up in others, yet by frequent repetition those feelings must become deadened in great measure, and the performer trust to the memory of past emotion, rather than express a present one. She indignantly repelled the notion, that with a truly great tragedian the operation, by which such effects were produced upon an audience, could ever degrade itself into what was purely mechanical. With much delicacy, avoiding to instance in her self-experience, she told me, that so long ago as when she used to play the part of the Little Son to Mrs. Porter's Isabella (I think it was), when that impressive actress has been bending over her in some heart-rending colloquy, she has felt real hot tears come trickling from her, which (to use her powerful expression) have perfectly scalded her back.

I am not quite so sure that it was Mrs. Porter; but it was some great actress of that day. The name is indifferent; but the fact of the scalding tears I most distinctly remember.
I was always fond of the society of players, and am not sure that an impediment in my speech (which certainly kept me out of the pulpit), even more than certain personal disqualifications, which are often got over in that profession, did not prevent me at one time of life from adopting it. I have had the honor (I must ever call it) once to have been admitted to the tea-table of Miss Kelly. I have played at serious whist with Mr. Liston. I have chatted with ever good-humored Mrs. Charles Kemble. I have conversed as friend to friend with her accomplished husband. I have been indulged with a classical conference with Macready; and with a sight of the Player-picture gallery, at Mr. Mathews’s, when the kind owner, to remunerate me for my love of the old actors (whom he loves so much), went over it with me, supplying to his capital collection, what alone the artist could not give them — voice; and their living motion. Old tones, half-faded, of Dodd, and Parsons, and Baddeley, have lived again for me at his bidding. Only Edwin he could not restore to me. I have supped with ——; but I am growing a coxcomb.

As I was about to say — at the desk of the then treasurer of the old Bath Theatre — not Diamond’s — presented herself the little Barbara S——.

The parents of Barbara had been in reputable circumstances. The father had practised, I believe, as an apothecary in the town. But his practice, from causes which I feel my own infirmity too sensibly that way to arraign — or perhaps from that pure infelicity which accompanies some people in their walk through life, and which it is impossible to lay at the door of imprudence — was now reduced to nothing. They were, in fact, in the very teeth of starvation, when the manager, who knew and respected them in better days, took the little Barbara into his company.

At the period I commenced with, her slender earnings were the sole support of the family, including two younger sisters. I must throw a veil over some mortifying circumstances. Enough to say, that her Saturday’s pittance was the only chance of a Sunday’s (generally their only) meal of meat.
One thing I will only mention, that in some child's part, where in her theatrical character she was to sup off a roast fowl ¹ (O joy to Barbara!), some comic actor, who was for the night caterer for this dainty — in the misguided humor of his part, threw over the dish such a quantity of salt (O grief and pain of heart to Barbara!) that when he crammed a portion of it into her mouth, she was obliged sputteringly to reject it; and what with shame of her ill-acted part, and pain of real appetite at missing such a dainty, her little heart sobbed almost to breaking, till a flood of tears, which the well-fed spectators were totally unable to comprehend, mercifully relieved her.

This was the little starved, meritorious maid, who stood before old Ravenscroft, the treasurer, for her Saturday's payment.

Ravenscroft was a man, I have heard many old theatrical people besides herself say, of all men least calculated for a treasurer. He had no head for accounts, paid away at random, kept scarce any books, and summing up at the week's end, if he found himself a pound or so deficient, blest himself that it was no worse.

Now Barbara's weekly stipend was a bare half-guinea. — By mistake he popped into her hand — a whole one. Barbara tripped away.

She was entirely unconscious at first of the mistake: God knows, Ravenscroft would never have discovered it. But when she had got down to the first of those uncouth landing-places, she became sensible of an unusual weight of metal pressing her little hand.

Now mark the dilemma.

She was by nature a good child. From her parents and those about her, she had imbibed no contrary influence. But then they had taught her nothing. Poor men's smoky

¹ "It was in the character of the elder child in The Children in the Wood that the incident of the roast fowl and the spilt salt occurred to Miss Kelly. The famished children, just rescued from the wood, are fed by the faithful Walter with a roast chicken, over which he has just before, in his agitation, upset the salt-box." — AINGER.
cabin are not always porticoes of moral philosophy. This little maid had no instinct to evil, but then she might be said to have no fixed principle. She had heard honesty commended, but never dreamed of its application to herself. She thought of it as something which concerned grown-up people, men and women. She had never known temptation, or thought of preparing resistance against it.

Her first impulse was to go back to the old treasurer, and explain to him his blunder. He was already so confused with age, besides a natural want of punctuality, that she would have had some difficulty in making him understand it. She saw that in an instant. And then it was such a bit of money! and then the image of a larger allowance of butcher’s meat on their table the next day came across her, till her little eyes glistened, and her mouth moistened. But then Mr. Ravenscroft had always been so good-natured, had stood her friend behind the scenes, and even recommended her promotion to some of her little parts. But again the old man was reputed to be worth a world of money. He was supposed to have fifty pounds a year clear of the theatre. And then came staring upon her the figures of her little stockingless and shoeless sisters. And when she looked at her own neat white cotton stockings, which her situation at the theatre had made it indispensable for her mother to provide for her, with hard straining and pinching from the family stock, and thought how glad she should be to cover their poor feet with the same — and how then they could accompany her to rehearsals, which they had hitherto been precluded from doing, by reason of their unfashionable attire, — in these thoughts she reached the second landing-place — the second, I mean, from the top — for there was still another left to traverse.

Now virtue support Barbara!

And that never-failing friend did step in — for at that moment a strength not her own, I have heard her say, was revealed to her — a reason above reasoning — and without her own agency, as it seemed (for she never felt her feet to move), she found herself transported back to the
individual desk she had just quitted, and her hand in the old hand of Ravenscroft, who in silence took back the refunded treasure, and who had been sitting (good man) insensible to the lapse of minutes, which to her were anxious ages, and from that moment a deep peace fell upon her heart, and she knew the quality of honesty.

A year or two's unrepining application to her profession brightened up the feet, and the prospects, of her little sisters, set the whole family upon their legs again, and released her from the difficulty of discussing moral dogmas upon a landing-place.

I have heard her say that it was a surprise, not much short of mortification to her, to see the coolness with which the old man pocketed the difference, which had caused her such mortal throes.

This anecdote of herself I had in the year 1800, from the mouth of the late Mrs. Crawford,¹ then sixty-seven years of age (she died soon after); and to her struggles upon this childish occasion I have sometimes ventured to think her indebted for that power of rending the heart in the representation of conflicting emotions, for which in after-years she was considered as little inferior (if at all so in the part of Lady Randolph) even to Mrs. Siddons.

REJOICINGS UPON THE NEW YEAR'S COMING OF AGE

The Old Year being dead, and the New Year coming of age, which he does, by Calendar Law, as soon as the breath is out of the old gentleman's body, nothing would serve the young spark but he must give a dinner upon the occasion, to which all the Days in the year were invited. The Festivals, whom he deputed as his stewards, were mightily taken with

¹ The maiden name of this lady was Street, which she changed, by successive marriages, for those of Dancer, Barry, and Crawford. She was Mrs. Crawford, a third time a widow, when I knew her. [Lamb's note.]
the notion. They had been engaged time out of mind, they said, in providing mirth and good cheer for mortals below; and it was time they should have a taste of their own bounty. It was stiffly debated among them whether the *Fastes* should be admitted. Some said the appearance of such lean, starved guests, with their mortified faces, would pervert the ends of the meeting. But the objection was overruled by *Christmas Day*, who had a design upon *Ash Wednesday* (as you shall hear), and a mighty desire to see how the old Domine would behave himself in his cups. Only the *Vigils* were requested to come with their lanterns, to light the gentlefolks home at night.

All the *Days* came to their day. Covers were provided for three hundred and sixty-five guests at the principal table; with an occasional knife and fork at the side-board for the *Twenty-Ninth of February*.

I should have told you that cards of invitation had been issued. The carriers were the *Hours*; twelve little, merry, whirligig foot-pages, as you should desire to see, that went all round, and found out the persons invited well enough, with the exception of *Easter Day*, *Shrove Tuesday*, and a few such *Moveables*, who had lately shifted their quarters.

Well, they all met at last — foul *Days*, fine *Days*, all sorts of *Days*, and a rare din they made of it. There was nothing but, Hail! fellow *Day*, well met — brother *Day* — sister *Day* — only *Lady Day* kept a little on the aloof, and seemed somewhat scornful. Yet some said *Twelfth Day* cut her out and out, for she came in a tiffany suit, white and gold, like a queen on a frost-cake, all royal, glittering, and *Epiphanoos*. The rest came, some in green, some in white — but old *Lent and his family* were not yet out of mourning. Rainy *Days* came in, dripping; and sunshiny *Days* helped them to change their stockings. *Wedding Day* was there in his marriage finery, a little the worse for wear. *Pay Day* came late, as he always does; and *Doomsday* sent word — he might be expected.

*April Fool* (as my young lord’s jester) took upon himself to marshal the guests, and wild work he made with it. It would have posed old Erra Pater to have found out
any given Day in the year to erect a scheme upon—good Days, bad Days, were so shuffled together, to the confounding of all sober horoscopy.

He had stuck the Twenty-First of June next to the Twenty-Second of December, and the former looked like a Maypole siding a marrow-bone. Ash Wednesday got wedged in (as was concerted) betwixt Christmas and Lord Mayor's Day. Lord! how he laid about him! Nothing but barons of beef and turkeys would go down with him—to the great greasing and detriment of his new sackcloth bib and tucker. And still Christmas Day was at his elbow, plying him with the wassail-bowl, till he roared, and hiccupp'd, and protested there was no faith in dried ling, but commended it to the devil for a sour, windy, acrimonious, censorious, hy-po-crit-crit-critical mess, and no dish for a gentleman. Then he dipt his fist into the middle of the great custard that stood before his left-hand neighbor, and daubed his hungry beard all over with it, till you would have taken him for the Last Day in December, it so hung in icicles.

At another part of the table, Shrove Tuesday was helping the Second of September to some cock broth,—which courtesy the latter returned with the delicate thigh of a hen pheasant—so that there was no love lost for that matter. The Last of Lent was spunging upon Shrove-tide's pancakes; which April Fool perceiving, told him that he did well, for pancakes were proper to a good fry-day.

In another part, a hubbub arose about the Thirtieth of January, who, it seems, being a sour, puritanic character, that thought nobody's meat good or sanctified enough for him, had smuggled into the room a calf's head, which he had had cooked at home for that purpose, thinking to feast thereon incontinently; but as it lay in the dish, March Manyweathers, who is a very fine lady, and subject to the meagrims, screamed out there was a "human head in the platter," and raved about Herodias' daughter to that degree, that the obnoxious viand was obliged to be removed; nor did she recover her stomach till she had gulped down a Restorative, confected of Oak Apple, which the merry Twenty-Ninth of May always carries about with him for that purpose.
The King's health¹ being called for after this, a notable dispute arose between the Twelfth of August (a zealous old Whig gentlewoman) and the Twenty-Third of April (a new-fangled lady of the Tory stamp), as to which of them should have the honor to propose it. August grew hot upon the matter, affirming time out of mind the prescriptive right to have lain with her, till her rival had basely supplanted her; whom she represented as little better than a kept mistress, who went about in fine clothes, while she (the legitimate Birthday) had scarcely a rag, etc.

April Fool, being made mediator, confirmed the right, in the strongest form of words, to the appellant, but decided for peace' sake that the exercise of it should remain with the present possessor. At the same time, he slyly rounded the first lady in the ear, that an action might lie against the Crown for bi-geny.

It beginning to grow a little duskish, Candlemas lustily bawled out for lights, which was opposed by all the Days, who protested against burning daylight. Then fair water was handed round in silver ewers, and the same lady was observed to take an unusual time in Washing herself.

May Day, with that sweetness which is peculiar to her, in a neat speech proposing the health of the founder, crowned her goblet (and by her example the rest of the company) with garlands. This being done, the lordly New Year, from the upper end of the table, in a cordial but somewhat lofty tone, returned thanks. He felt proud on an occasion of meeting so many of his worthy father's late tenants, promised to improve their farms, and at the same time to abate (if anything was found unreasonable) in their rents.

At the mention of this, the four Quarter Days involuntarily looked at each other, and smiled; April Fool whistled to an old tune of "New Brooms;"² and a surly old rebel at the farther end of the table (who was discovered to be no other than the Fifth of November) muttered out, distinctly enough to be heard by the whole company, words to this effect—

¹ King George IV. [Lamb's note.]
² The old proverb reads, "A new broom sweeps clean."
that "when the old one is gone, he is a fool that looks for a better." Which rudeness of his, the guests resenting, unanimously voted his expulsion; and the malcontent was thrust out neck and heels into the cellar, as the properest place for such a *boutejeu*¹ and firebrand as he had shown himself to be.

Order being restored — the young lord (who, to say truth, had been a little ruffled, and put beside his oratory) in as few and yet as obliging words as possible, assured them of entire welcome; and, with a graceful turn, singling out poor *Twenty-Ninth of February*, that had sate all this while mum-chance at the side-board, begged to couple his health with that of the good company before him — which he drank accordingly; observing that he had not seen his honest face any time these four years — with a number of endearing expressions besides. At the same time removing the solitary *Day* from the forlorn seat which had been assigned him, he stationed him at his own board, somewhere between the *Greek Calends* and *Latter Lammas*.

*Ash Wednesday*, being now called upon for a song, with his eyes fast stuck in his head, and as well as the Canary he had swallowed would give him leave, struck up a Carol, which *Christmas Day* had taught him for the nonce; and was followed by the latter, who gave "Miserere" in fine style, hitting off the mumping notes and lengthened drawl of *Old Mortification* with infinite humor. *April Fool* swore they had exchanged conditions; but *Good Friday* was observed to look extremely grave; and *Sunday* held her fan before her face that she might not be seen to smile.

*Shrove-tide, Lord Mayor's Day*, and *April Fool*, next joined in a glee —

Which is the properest day to drink? ²

in which all the *Days* chiming in, made a merry burden.

¹ Incendiary.
² From the old song,

"Which is the properest day to drink?  
Saturday?  Sunday?  Monday?  
Every day in the week I think,  
Why should I name but one day!"
They next fell to quibbles and conundrums. The question being proposed, who had the greatest number of followers — the Quarter Days said, there could be no question as to that; for they had all the creditors in the world dogging their heels. But April Fool gave it in favor of the Forty Days before Easter; because the debtors in all cases outnumbered the creditors, and they kept Lent all the year.

All this while Valentine’s Day kept courting pretty May, who sate next him, slipping amorous billets-doux under the table, till the Dog Days (who are naturally of a warm constitution) began to be jealous, and to bark and rage exceedingly. April Fool, who likes a bit of sport above measure, and had some pretensions to the lady besides, as being but a cousin once removed, — clapped and hallow’d them on; and as fast as their indignation cooled, those mad wags, the Ember Days, were at it with their bellows, to blow it into a flame; and all was in a ferment, till old Madam Septuagesima (who boasts herself the Mother of the Days) wisely diverted the conversation with a tedious tale of the lovers which she could reckon when she was young, and of one Master Rogation Day in particular, who was for ever putting the question to her; but she kept him at a distance, as the chronicle would tell — by which I apprehend she meant the Almanack. Then she rambled on to the Days that were gone, the good old Days, and so to the Days before the Flood — which plainly showed her old head to be little better than crazed and doited.

Day being ended, the Days called for their cloaks and greatcoats, and took their leave. Lord Mayor’s Day went off in a Mist, as usual; Shortest Day in a deep black Fog, that wrapt the little gentleman all round like a hedge-hog. Two Vigils — so watchmen are called in heaven — saw Christmas Day safe home — they had been used to the business before. Another Vigil — a stout, sturdy patrole, called the Eve of St. Christopher — seeing Ash Wednesday in a condition little better than he should be — e’en whipt him over his shoulders, pick-a-back fashion, and Old Mortification went floating home singing —

On the bat’s back I do fly,
and a number of old snatches besides, between drunk and sober; but very few Aves or Penitentiaries (you may believe me) were among them. _Longest Day_ set off westward in beautiful crimson and gold — the rest, some in one fashion, some in another; but _Valentine_ and pretty _May_ took their departure together in one of the prettiest silvery twilights a Lover’s Day could wish to set in.

**OLD CHINA**

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

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

I like to see my old friends — whom distance cannot diminish — figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on _terra firma_¹ still — for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, had made to spring up beneath their sandals.

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

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a lady from a salver — two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another

¹ The earth.
— for likeness is identity on tea-cups—is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

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

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

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson (which we are old-fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon), some of these *speciosa miracula* ¹ upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking, how favorable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to overshadé the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

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

"Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so threadbare—and all because of that folio

¹ Beautiful wonders.
Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent Garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late — and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures — and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome — and when you presented it to me — and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (collating, you called it) — and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till day-break — was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical — give you half the honest vanity with which you flaunted it about in that overworn suit — your old corbeau¹ — for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen — or sixteen shillings was it? — a great affair we thought it then — which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

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

"Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter's Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holiday — holidays and all other fun are gone, now we are rich — and

¹ French for raven; hence, "your old black coat."
the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savory cold lamb and salad — and how you would pry about at noon-tide for some decent house, where we might go in and produce our store — only paying for the ale that you must call for — and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a tablecloth — and wish for such another honest hostess as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a-fishing — and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us — but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now — when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom, moreover, we ride part of the way, and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense — which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

"You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the Battle of Hexham, and the Surrender of Calais, and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the Children in the Wood — when we squeezed out our shillings apiece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery — where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me — and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me — and the pleasure was the better for a little shame — and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria? You used to say that the Gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially — that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going — that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage — because a word lost would have been
a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then—and I appeal to you whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in, indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough—but there was still a law of civility to woman recognized to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages—and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then—but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

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

“I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet,—and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much—or that it was impossible we should spend so much
next year — and still we found our slender capital decreasing — but then, — betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future — and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now), we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with 'lusty brimmers' (as you used to quote it out of hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton, as you called him), we used to welcome in the 'coming guest.' Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year — no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us."

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

1 Charles Cotton's "The New Year,"
"Then let us welcome the new guest
With lusty brimmers of the best."
old one-shilling gallery days return — they are dreams, my cousin, now — but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fireside, sitting on this luxurious sofa — be once more struggling up those inconvenient staircases, pushed about, and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers — could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours — and the delicious Thank God, we are safe, which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us — I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Croesus had, or the great Jew R—— is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half Madonna-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house."

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

The severest exaction surely ever invented upon the self-denial of poor human nature! This is to expect a gentleman to give a treat without partaking of it; to sit esurient at his own table, and commend the flavor of his venison upon the absurd strength of his never touching it himself. On the contrary, we love to see a wag taste his own joke to his party; to watch a quirk or a merry conceit flickering upon the lips some seconds before the tongue is delivered of it. If it be good, fresh, and racy — begotten of the occasion; if he that utters it never thought it before, he is naturally the first to be tickled with it, and any suppression of such complacence we hold to be churlish and insulting.
What does it seem to imply but that your company is weak or foolish enough to be moved by an image or a fancy, that shall stir you not at all, or but faintly? This is exactly the humor of the fine gentleman in Mandeville, who, while he dazzles his guests with the display of some costly toy, affects himself to “see nothing considerable in it.”

V. — THAT THE POOR COPY THE VICES OF THE RICH

A smooth text to the latter; and, preached from the pulpit, is sure of a docile audience from the pews lined with satin. It is twice sitting upon velvet to a foolish squire to be told that he — and not perverse nature, as the homilies would make us imagine, is the true cause of all the irregularities in his parish. This is striking at the root of free-will indeed, and denying the originality of sin in any sense. But men are not such implicit sheep as this comes to. If the abstinence from evil on the part of the upper classes is to derive itself from no higher principle than the apprehension of setting ill patterns to the lower, we beg leave to discharge them from all squeamishness on that score: they may even take their fill of pleasures, where they can find them. The Genius of Poverty, hampered and straitened as it is, is not so barren of invention but it can trade upon the staple of its own vice, without drawing upon their capital. The poor are not quite such servile imitators as they take them for. Some of them are very clever artists in their way. Here and there, we find an original. Who taught the poor to steal — to pilfer? They did not go to the great for schoolmasters in these faculties, surely. It is well if in some vices they allow us to be — no copyists. In no other sense is it true that the poor copy them, than as servants may be said to take after their masters and mistresses, when they succeed to their reversionary cold meats. If the master, from indis-
position, or some other cause, neglect his food, the servant
dines notwithstanding.

"O, but (some will say) the force of example is great." We knew a lady who was so scrupulous on this head, that she would put up with the calls of the most impertinent visitor, rather than let her servant say she was not at home, for fear of teaching her maid to tell an untruth; and this in the very face of the fact, which she knew well enough, that the wench was one of the greatest liars upon the earth without teaching; so much so, that her mistress possibly never heard two words of consecutive truth from her in her life. But nature must go for nothing; example must be everything. This liar in grain, who never opened her mouth without a lie, must be guarded against a remote inference, which she (pretty casuist!) might possibly draw from a form of words — literally false, but essentially deceiving no one — that under some circumstances a fib might not be so exceedingly sinful — a fiction, too, not at all in her own way, or one that she could be suspected of adopting, for few servant-wenches care to be denied to visitors.

This word example reminds us of another fine word which is in use upon these occasions — encouragement. "People in our sphere must not be thought to give encouragement to such proceedings." To such a frantic height is this principle capable of being carried, that we have known individuals who have thought it within the scope of their influence to sanction despair, and give éclat to — suicide. A domestic in the family of a county member lately deceased, from love, or some unknown cause, cut his throat, but not successfully. The poor fellow was otherwise much loved and respected; and great interest was used in his behalf, upon his recovery, that he might be permitted to retain his place; his word being first pledged, not without some substantial sponsors to promise for him, that the like should never happen again. His master was inclined to keep him, but his mistress thought otherwise; and John in the end was dismissed, her ladyship declaring that she "could not think of encouraging any such doings in the county."
VI. — THAT ENOUGH IS AS GOOD AS A FEAST

Not a man, woman, or child, in ten miles round Guildhall, who really believes this saying. The inventor of it did not believe it himself. It was made in revenge by somebody, who was disappointed of a regale. It is a vile cold-scrag-of-mutton sophism; a lie palmed upon the palate, which knows better things. If nothing else could be said for a feast, this is sufficient — that from the superflux there is usually something left for the next day. Morally interpreted, it belongs to a class of proverbs which have a tendency to make us undervalue money. Of this cast are those notable observations, that money is not health; riches cannot purchase everything: the metaphor which makes gold to be mere muck, with the morality which traces fine clothing to the sheep's back, and denounces pearl as the unhandsome excretion of an oyster. Hence, too, the phrase which imputes dirt to acres — a sophistry so barefaced that even the literal sense of it is true only in a wet season. This, and abundance of similar sage saws assuming to inculcate content, we verily believe to have been the invention of some cunning borrower, who had designs upon the purse of his wealthier neighbor, which he could only hope to carry by force of these verbal juggling. Translate any one of these sayings out of the artful metonymy which envelopes it, and the trick is apparent. Goodly legs and shoulders of mutton, exhilarating cordials, books, pictures, the opportunities of seeing foreign countries, independence, heart's ease, a man's own time to himself, are not muck — however we may be pleased to scandalize with that appellation the faithful metal that provides them for us.

IX. — THAT THE WORST PUNS ARE THE BEST

If by worst be only meant the most far-fetched and startling, we agree to it. A pun is not bound by the laws which limit nicer wit. It is a pistol let off at the ear; not a feather
to tickle the intellect. It is an antic which does not stand upon manners, but comes bounding into the presence, and does not show the less comic for being dragged in sometimes by the head and shoulders. What though it limp a little, or prove defective in one leg? — all the better. A pun may easily be too curious and artificial. Who has not at one time or other been at a party of professors (himself perhaps an old offender in that line), where, after ringing a round of the most ingenious conceits, every man contributing his shot, and some there the most expert shooters of the day; after making a poor *word* run the gauntlet till it is ready to drop; after hunting and winding it through all the possible ambages of similar sounds; after squeezing, and hauling, and tugging at it, till the very milk of it will not yield a drop further, — suddenly some obscure, unthought-of fellow in a corner, who was never 'prentice to the trade, whom the company for very pity passed over, as we do by a known poor man when a money-subscription is going round, no one calling upon him for his quota — has all at once come out with something so whimsical, yet so pertinent; so brazen in its pretensions, yet so impossible to be denied; so exquisitely good, and so deplorably bad, at the same time, — that it has proved a Robin Hood’s shot; anything ulterior to that is despaired of; and the party breaks up, unanimously voting it to be the very worst (that is, best) pun of the evening. This species of wit is the better for not being perfect in all its parts. What it gains in completeness, it loses in naturalness. The more exactly it satisfies the critical, the less hold it has upon some other faculties. The puns which are most entertaining are those which will least bear an analysis. Of this kind is the following, recorded, with a sort of stigma, in one of Swift’s Miscellanies.

An Oxford scholar, meeting a porter who was carrying a hare through the streets, accosts him with this extraordinary question: “Prithee, friend, is that thy own hare or a wig?”

There is no excusing this, and no resisting it. A man might blur ten sides of paper in attempting a defence of
it against a critic who should be laughter-proof. The quibble in itself is not considerable. It is only a new turn given, by a little false pronunciation, to a very common though not very courteous inquiry. Put by one gentleman to another at a dinner-party, it would have been vapid; to the mistress of the house, it would have shown much less wit than rudeness. We must take in the totality of time, place, and person; the pert look of the inquiring scholar, the desponding looks of the puzzled porter: the one stopping at leisure, the other hurrying on with his burden; the innocent though rather abrupt tendency of the first member of the question, with the utter and inextricable irrelevancy of the second; the place—a public street, not favorable to frivolous investigations; the affrontive quality of the primitive inquiry (the common question) invidiously transferred to the derivative (the new turn given to it) in the implied satire; namely, that few of that tribe are expected to eat of the good things which they carry, they being in most countries considered rather as the temporary trustees than owners of such dainties,—which the fellow was beginning to understand; but then the wig again comes in, and he can make nothing of it; all put together constitute a picture: Hogarth could have made it intelligible on canvas.

Yet nine out of ten critics will pronounce this a very bad pun, because of the defectiveness in the concluding member, which is its very beauty, and constitutes the surprise. The same persons shall cry up for admirable the cold quibble from Vergil about the broken Cremona, because it is made out in all its parts, and leaves nothing to the imagination. We venture to call it cold; because, of thousands who have admired it, it would be difficult to find one who has heartily chuckled at it. As appealing to the judgment merely (setting the risible faculty aside), we must pronounce it a monument of curious felicity. But as some stories are said to be too good to be true, it may with equal truth be asserted of this bi-verbal allusion, that it is too good to be natural. One cannot help suspecting that the incident was invented to fit the line. It would have been better had it been less
perfect. Like some Vergilian hemistichs, it has suffered by filling up. The nimium Vicina¹ was enough in conscience; the Cremonæ² afterwards loads it. It is, in fact, a double pun; and we have always observed that a superfetation in this sort of wit is dangerous. When a man has said a good thing, it is seldom politic to follow it up. We do not care to be cheated a second time; or, perhaps, the mind of man (with reverence be it spoken) is not capacious enough to lodge two puns at a time. The impression, to be forcible, must be simultaneous and undivided.

XI. — THAT WE MUST NOT LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH

Nor a lady’s age in the parish register. We hope we have more delicacy than to do either; but some faces spare us the trouble of these dental inquiries. And what if the beast, which my friend would force upon my acceptance, prove, upon the face of it, a sorry Rosinante, a lean, ill-favored jade, whom no gentleman could think of setting up in his stables? Must I, rather than not be obliged to my friend, make her a companion to Eclipse or Lightfoot? A horse-giver, no more than a horse-seller, has a right to palm his spavined article upon us for good ware. An equivalent is expected in either case; and, with my own good-will, I would no more be cheated out of my thanks than out of my money. Some people have a knack of putting upon you gifts of no real value, to engage you to substantial gratitude. We thank them for nothing. Our friend Mitis carries this

¹ Too near a neighbor.
² Swift on seeing a lady’s mantua (a mantle and also the name of Vergil’s birthplace) knock over a Cremona violin (Cremona was the home of several violin makers), quoted a line from Vergil’s Eclogues, ix. 28.

_Mantua vē miserā nimium vicina Cremonā._
(Mantua, alas! too near unhappy Cremona.)
humor of never refusing a present to the very point of absurdity — if it were possible to couple the ridiculous with so much mistaken delicacy and real good-nature. Not an apartment in his fine house (and he has a true taste in household decorations), but is stuffed up with some preposterous print or mirror — the worst adapted to his panels that may be — the presents of his friends that know his weakness; while his noble Vandykes are displaced to make room for a set of daubs, the work of some wretched artist of his acquaintance, who, having had them returned upon his hands for bad likenesses, finds his account in bestowing them here gratis. The good creature has not the heart to mortify the painter at the expense of an honest refusal. It is pleasant (if it did not vex one at the same time) to see him sitting in his dining parlor, surrounded with obscure aunts and cousins to God knows whom, while the true Lady Marys and Lady Bettys of his own honorable family, in favor to these adopted frights, are consigned to the staircase and the lumber-room. In like manner, his goodly shelves are one by one stripped of his favorite old authors, to give place to a collection of presentation copies — the flour and bran of modern poetry. A presentation copy, Reader — if haply you are yet innocent of such favors — is a copy of a book which does not sell, sent you by the author, with his foolish autograph at the beginning of it; for which, if a stranger, he only demands your friendship; if a brother author, he expects from you a book of yours, which does sell, in return. We can speak to experience, having by us a tolerable assortment of these gift-horses. Not to ride a metaphor to death — we are willing to acknowledge that in some gifts there is sense. A duplicate out of a friend's library (where he has more than one copy of a rare author) is intelligible. There are favors, short of the pecuniary — a thing not fit to be hinted at among gentlemen — which confer as much grace upon the acceptor as the offerer; the kind, we confess, which is most to our palate, is of those little conciliatory missives, which for their vehicle generally choose a hamper — little odd presents of game, fruit, perhaps wine — though it is
essential to the delicacy of the latter, that it be home-made. We love to have our friend in the country sitting thus at our table by proxy; to apprehend his presence (though a hundred miles may be between us) by a turkey, whose goodly aspect reflects to us his "plump corpusculum;" to taste him in grouse or woodcock; to feel him gliding down in the toast peculiar to the latter; to concorporate him in a slice of Canterbury brawn. This is indeed to have him within ourselves; to know him intimately: such participation is methinks unitive, as the old theologians phrase it. For these considerations we should be sorry if certain restrictive regulations, which are thought to bear hard upon the peasantry of this country, were entirely done away with. A hare, as the law now stands, makes many friends. Caius conciliates Titius (knowing his goût ¹) with a leash of partridges. Titius (suspecting his partiality for them) passes them to Lucius; who, in his turn, preferring his friend's relish to his own, makes them over to Marcius; till in their ever-widening progress, and round of unconscious circummigration, they distribute the seeds of harmony over half a parish. We are well-disposed to this kind of sensible remembrances; and are the less apt to be taken by those little airy tokens—impalpable to the palate— which, under the names of rings, lockets, keepsakes, amuse some people's fancy mightily. We could never away with these indigestible trifles. They are the very kickshaws and foppery of friendship.

XII. — THAT HOME IS HOME THOUGH IT IS NEVER SO HOMELY

Homes there are, we are sure, that are no homes; the home of the very poor man, and another which we shall speak to presently. Crowded places of cheap entertainment, and the benches of alehouses, if they could speak, might bear mournful testimony to the first. To them the very poor man

¹ Taste.
resorts for an image of the home which he cannot find at home. For a starved grate, and a scanty firing, that is not enough to keep alive the natural heat in the fingers of so many shivering children with their mother, he finds in the depths of winter always a blazing hearth, and a hob to warm his pittance of beer by. Instead of the clamors of a wife, made gaunt by famishing, he meets with a cheerful attendance beyond the merits of the trifle which he can afford to spend. He has companions which his home denies him, for the very poor man has no visitors. He can look into the goings on of the world, and speak a little to politics. At home there are no politics stirring, but the domestic. All interest, real or imaginary, all topics that should expand the mind of man, and connect him to a sympathy with general existence, are crushed in the absorbing consideration of food to be obtained for the family. Beyond the price of bread, news is senseless and impertinent. At home there is no larder. Here there is at least a show of plenty; and while he cooks his lean scrap of butcher's meat before the common bars, or munches his humbler cold viands, his relishing bread and cheese with an onion, in a corner, where no one reflects upon his poverty, he has a sight of the substantial joint providing for the landlord and his family. He takes an interest in the dressing of it; and while he assists in removing the trivet from the fire, he feels that there is such a thing as beef and cabbage, which he was beginning to forget at home. All this while he deserts his wife and children. But what wife, and what children! Prosperous men, who object to this desertion, image to themselves some clean contented family like that which they go home to. But look at the countenance of the poor wives who follow and persecute their good-man to the door of the public-house, which he is about to enter, when something like shame would restrain him, if stronger misery did not induce him to pass the threshold. That face, ground by want, in which every cheerful, every conversable lineament has been long effaced by misery, — is that a face to stay at home with? is it more a woman, or a wild cat? alas! it is the face of the
wife of his youth, that once smiled upon him. It can smile no longer. What comforts can it share? what burdens can it lighten? Oh, 'tis a fine thing to talk of the humble meal shared together! But what if there be no bread in the cupboard? The innocent prattle of his children takes out the sting of a man's poverty. But the children of the very poor do not prattle. It is none of the least frightful features in that condition, that there is no childishness in its dwellings. Poor people, said a sensible old nurse to us once, do not bring up their children; they drag them up.

The little careless darling of the wealthier nursery, in their hovel is transformed betimes into a premature reflecting person. No one has time to dandle it, no one thinks it worth while to coax it, to soothe it, to toss it up and down, to humor it. There is none to kiss away its tears. If it cries, it can only be beaten. It has been prettily said that "a babe is fed with milk and praise." But the aliment of this poor babe was thin, un滋养ing; the return to its little baby tricks, and efforts to engage attention, bitter ceaseless objurgation. It never had a toy, or knew what a coral meant. It grew up without the lullaby of nurses, it was a stranger to the patient fondle, the hushing caress, the attracting novelty, the costlier plaything, or the cheaper off-hand contrivance to divert the child; the prattled nonsense (best sense to it), the wise impertinences, the wholesome lies, the apt story interposed, that puts a stop to present sufferings, and awakens the passion of young wonder. It was never sung to — no one ever told to it a tale of the nursery. It was dragged up, to live or to die as it happened. It had no young dreams. It broke at once into the iron realities of life. A child exists not for the very poor as any object of dalliance; it is only another mouth to be fed, a pair of little hands to be betimes inured to labor. It is the rival, till it can be the co-operator, for food with the parent. It is never his mirth, his diversion, his solace: it never makes him young again, with recalling his young times. The children of the very poor have no young times. It makes the very heart to bleed to over-
hear the casual street-talk between a poor woman and her little girl, a woman of the better sort of poor, in a condition rather above the squalid beings which we have been contemplating. It is not of toys, of nursery books, of summer holidays (fitting that age); of the promised sight, or play; of praised sufficiency at school. It is of mangeling and clear-starching, of the price of coals, or of potatoes. The questions of the child, that should be the very outpourings of curiosity in idleness, are marked with forecast and melancholy providence. It has come to be a woman,—before it was a child. It has learned to go to market; it chaffers, it haggles, it envies, it murmurs; it is knowing, acute, sharpened; it never prattles. Had we not reason to say that the home of the very poor is no home?

There is yet another home, which we are constrained to deny to be one. It has a larder, which the home of the poor man wants; its fireside conveniences, of which the poor dream not. But with all this, it is no home. It is,—the house of the man that is infested with many visitors. May we be branded for the veriest churl, if we deny our heart to the many noble-hearted friends that at times exchange their dwelling for our poor roof! It is not of guests that we complain, but of endless, purposeless visitants; droppers-in, as they are called. We sometimes wonder from what sky they fall. It is the very error of the position of our lodging; its horoscopy was ill calculated, being just situate in a medium—a plaguy suburban mid-space—fitted to catch idlers from town or country. We are older than we were, and age is easily put out of its way. We have fewer sands in our glass to reckon upon, and we cannot brook to see them drop in endlessly succeeding impertinences. At our time of life, to be alone sometimes is as needful as sleep. It is the refreshing sleep of the day. The growing infirmities of age manifest themselves in nothing more strongly than in an inveterate dislike of interruption. The thing which we are doing, we wish to be permitted to do. We have neither much knowledge nor devices; but there are fewer in the place to which we hasten. We are not
willingly put out of our way, even at a game of nine-pins. While youth was, we had vast reversions in time future; we are reduced to a present pittance, and obliged to economize in that article. We bleed away our moments now as hardly as our ducats. We cannot bear to have our thin wardrobe eaten and fretted into by moths. We are willing to barter our good time with a friend, who gives us in exchange his own. Herein is the distinction between the genuine guest and the visitant. This latter takes your good time, and gives you his bad in exchange. The guest is domestic to you as your good cat, or household bird; the visitant is your fly, that flaps in at your window and out again, leaving nothing but a sense of disturbance, and victuals spoiled. The inferior functions of life begin to move heavily. We cannot concoct our food with interruptions. Our chief meal, to be nutritive, must be solitary. With difficulty we can eat before a guest; and never understood what the relish of public feasting meant. Meats have no sapor, nor digestion fair play, in a crowd. The unexpected coming in of a visitant stops the machine. There is a punctual generation who time their calls to the precise commencement of your dining-hour—not to eat—but to see you eat. Our knife and fork drop instinctively, and we feel that we have swallowed our latest morsel. Others again show their genius, as we have said, in knocking the moment you have just sat down to a book. They have a peculiar compassionate sneer, with which they “hope that they do not interrupt your studies.” Though they flutter off the next moment, to carry their impertinences to the nearest student that they can call their friend, the tone of the book is spoiled; we shut the leaves, and, with Dante’s lovers, read no more that day. It were well if the effect of intrusion were simply coextensive with its presence, but it mars all the good hours afterwards. These scratches in appearance leave an orifice that closes not hastily. “It is a prostitution of the bravery of friendship,” says worthy Bishop Taylor, “to spend it upon impertinent people, who are, it may be, loads to their families, but can never ease my
loads." This is the secret of their gaddings, their visits, and morning calls. They too have homes, which are—no homes.

XIV. — THAT WE SHOULD RISE WITH THE LARK

At what precise minute that little airy musician doffs his night-gear, and prepares to tune up his unseasonable matins, we are not naturalist enough to determine. But for a mere human gentleman—that has no orchestra business to call him from his warm bed to such preposterous exercises—we take ten, or half after ten (eleven, of course, during this Christmas solstice), to be the very earliest hour at which he can begin to think of abandoning his pillow. To think of it, we say; for to do it in earnest requires another half hour's good consideration. Not but there are pretty sun-risings, as we are told, and such like gawds, abroad in the world, in summer-time especially, some hours before what we have assigned; which a gentleman may see, as they say, only for getting up. But having been tempted once or twice, in earlier life, to assist at those ceremonies, we confess our curiosity abated. We are no longer ambitious of being the sun's courtiers, to attend at his morning levees. We hold the good hours of the dawn too sacred to waste them upon such observances; which have in them, besides, something Pagan and Persic. To say truth, we never anticipated our usual hour, or got up with the sun (as 'tis called), to go a journey, or upon a foolish whole day's pleasuring, but we suffered for it all the long hours after in listlessness and headaches; Nature herself sufficiently declaring her sense of our presumption in aspiring to regulate our frail waking courses by the measures of that celestial and sleepless traveller. We deny not that there is something sprightly and vigorous, at the outset especially, in these break-of-day excursions. It is flattering to get the start of a lazy world; to conquer Death by proxy in his image.
But the seeds of sleep and mortality are in us; and we pay usually, in strange qualms before night falls, the penalty of the unnatural inversion. Therefore, while the busy part of mankind are fast huddling on their clothes, are already up and about their occupations, content to have swallowed their sleep by wholesale; we choose to linger a-bed and digest our dreams. It is the very time to re-combine the wandering images, which night in a confused mass presented; to snatch them from forgetfulness; to shape, and mould them. Some people have no good of their dreams. Like fast feeders, they gulp them too grossly, to taste them curiously. We love to chew the cud of a foregone vision; to collect the scattered rays of a brighter phantasm, or act over again, with firmer nerves, the sadder nocturnal tragedies; to drag into daylight a struggling and half-vanishing nightmare; to handle and examine the terrors, or the airy solaces. We have too much respect for these spiritual communications, to let them go so lightly. We are not so stupid, or so careless as that Imperial forgetter of his dreams, that we should need a seer to remind us of the form of them. They seem to us to have as much significance as our waking concerns; or rather to import us more nearly, as more nearly we approach by years to the shadowy world, whither we are hastening. We have shaken hands with the world's business; we have done with it; we have discharged ourselves of it. Why should we get up? we have neither suit to solicit, nor affairs to manage. The drama has shut in upon us at the fourth act. We have nothing here to expect, but in a short time a sick-bed, and a dismissal. We delight to anticipate death by such shadows as night affords. We are already half acquainted with ghosts. We were never much in the world. Disappointment early struck a dark veil between us and its dazzling illusions. Our spirits showed gray before our hairs. The mighty changes of the world already appear as but the vain stuff out of which dramas are composed. We have asked no more of life than what the mimic images in play-houses present us with. Even those types have waxed fainter. Our clock appears to have struck. We are
SUPERANNUATED. In this dearth of mudane satisfaction, we contract politic alliances with shadows. It is good to have friends at court. The abstracted media of dreams seem no ill introduction to that spiritual presence, upon which, in no long time, we expect to be thrown. We are trying to know a little of the usages of that colony; to learn the language and the faces we shall meet with there, that we may be the less awkward at our first coming among them. We willingly call a phantom our fellow, as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world; and think we know already how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes which, while we clung to flesh and blood, affrighted us, have become familiar. We feel attenuated into their meagre essences, and have given the hand of half-way approach to incorporeal being. We once thought life to be something; but it has unaccountably fallen from us before its time. Therefore we choose to dally with visions. The sun has no purposes of ours to light us to. Why should we get up?

XV. — THAT WE SHOULD LIE DOWN WITH THE LAMB

We could never quite understand the philosophy of this arrangement, or the wisdom of our ancestors in sending us for instruction to these woolly bedfellows. A sheep, when it is dark, has nothing to do but to shut his silly eyes, and sleep if he can. Man found out long sixes. — Hail, candle-light! without disparagement to sun or moon, the kindliest luminary of the three — if we may not rather style thee their radiant deputy, mild viceroy of the moon! — We love to read, talk, sit silent, eat, drink, sleep, by candle-light. They are everybody's sun and moon. This is our peculiar and household planet. Wanting it, what savage unsocial nights must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unillumined fastnesses! They must have lain about and grumbled at one another in the dark. What repartees could have passed, when you must
have felt about for a smile, and handled a neighbor’s cheek
to be sure that he understood it? This accounts for the
seriousness of the elder poetry. It has a sombre cast (try
Hesiod or Ossian), derived from the tradition of those un-
lantern’d nights. Jokes came in with candles. We wonder
how they saw to pick up a pin, if they had any. How
did they sup? what a mélange of chance carving they must
have made of it? — here one had got a leg of a goat when
he wanted a horse’s shoulder — there another had dipped
his scooped palm in a kid-skin of wild honey, when he med-
titated right mare’s milk. There is neither good eating
nor drinking in fresco. Who, even in these civilized times,
has never experienced this, when at some economic table
he has commenced dining after dusk, and waited for the
flavor till the lights came? The senses absolutely give
and take reciprocally. Can you tell pork from veal in the
dark? or distinguish Sherris from pure Malaga? Take
away the candle from the smoking man; by the glimmering
of the left ashes, he knows that he is still smoking, but he
knows it only by an inference; till the restored light, coming
in aid of the olfactories, reveals to both senses the full aroma.
Then how he redoubles his puffs! how he burnishes! — There
is absolutely no such thing as reading but by a candle. We
have tried the affectation of a book at noon-day in gardens,
and in sultry arbors; but it was labor thrown away.
Those gay motes in the beam come about you, hovering
and teasing, like so many coquettes, that will have you
all to their self and are jealous of your abstractions. By
the midnight taper, the writer digests his meditations.
By the same light we must approach to their perusal, if
we would catch the flame, the odor. It is a mockery,
all that is reported of the influential Phoebus. No true
poem ever owed its birth to the sun’s light. They are
abstracted works —

Things that were born, when none but the still night,
And his dumb candle, saw his pinching throes.¹

¹ Ben Jonson’s Poetaster.
Marry, daylight — daylight might furnish the images, the crude material; but for the fine shapings, the true turning and filing (as mine author hath it ¹), they must be content to hold their inspiration of the candle. The mild internal light, that reveals them, like fires on the domestic hearth, goes out in the sunshine. Night and silence call out the starry fancies. Milton's Morning Hymn in Paradise, ² we would hold a good wager, was penned at midnight; and Taylor's rich description of a sunrise ³ smells decidedly of the taper. Even ourself, in these our humbler lucubrations, tune our best-measured cadences (Prose has her cadences) not unfrequently to the charm of the drowsier watchman, "blessing the doors"; or the wild sweep of winds at midnight. Even now a loftier speculation than we have yet attempted, courts our endeavors. We would indite something about the Solar System. — Betty, bring the candles.

¹ Ben Jonson's To the Memory of Shakespeare,

"Look how the father's face
Lives in his issue; even so the race
Of Shakspeare's mind and manners brightly shines
In his well-turned and true filed lines."

² Paradise Lost, v. 153.

³ This description is in Taylor's Holy Dying, Chapter 1, sec. 3. The passage was a favorite with Lamb.

"... the life of a man comes upon him slowly and insensibly. But as when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns, like those which decked the brow of Moses when he was forced to wear a veil because himself had seen the face of God; and still while a man tells the story, the sun gets up higher, till he shows a fair face and a full light, and then he shines a whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly; so is a man's reason and his life."
CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTES


(Pages 1–9.)

The original title of this essay was "Recollections of the South-Sea House." After leaving Christ’s Hospital in 1789, Lamb obtained through Samuel Salt, his father’s employer, a clerkship in the South-Sea House, September, 1791, and there he remained until February 8, 1792. In April, 1792, he became a clerk in the East India House, where he was to remain for thirty-three years.

2. In a way typical of many of his mystifications, Lamb misstates the date—Such it was forty years ago, when I knew it. In a letter to Taylor, the publisher of the *London Magazine*, however, he notes that it was thirty, not forty, years ago. See Elia, in the Explanatory Index.

The thirty years’ recollection marks the most remarkable feature of the essay. Lamb here records, accurately and sympathetically, his youthful impressions, remembered in his forty-fourth year. His accuracy, however, is possibly explained by the fact that his brother John remained at the South-Sea House until his death in 1825, and Charles probably visited his brother there, thus keeping his impressions fresh.

3. Living accounts and accountants puzzle me. As Lamb was living among figures at the India House, this statement may be looked upon as a perversion of the truth. Elsewhere he speaks of his "remarkably neat hand" and "his expertness in bookkeeping." Yet there is evidence that Lamb tells the painful truth in the statement quoted. One of Lamb’s fellow-accountants is reported to have said that Lamb was "neither a neat nor an accurate accountant, and that he made frequent errors which he wiped out with his little finger." Stronger than all other evidences presented is Lamb’s letter of March 11, 1823, to Bernard Barton, his Quaker friend, in which he says: "I think I lose £100 a year at the India House owing solely to my want of neatness in making up accounts. How I puzzle ’em out at last is the wonder. I have to do with millions!!" We may readily surmise that Lamb’s sympathies were elsewhere than with the dry accounts in the South-Sea House.

The distinctive literary feature of this essay is the deliberate description, with many details, of many persons, without forgetting the look of the whole and the general atmosphere. You will find a similar descriptive essay in Hawthorne’s Introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*, where Hawthorne describes the custom-house officers.

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Canon Ainger makes the following note on this essay:

"Lamb was fond of spending his annual holiday in one or other of the great University towns, more often in Cambridge... On its first appearance in the London, the paper was dated 'August 5, 1820. From my rooms facing the Bodleian.' A sonnet written a year before at Cambridge tells of the charm that University associations had for one who had been debarred through infirmity of health and poverty from a University education:

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

There is some evidence, however, as Mr. Lucas points out, that Lamb wrote this essay under the influence of Cambridge and not of Oxford. "He spent," says Mr. Lucas, "some weeks in the summer of 1820 at Cambridge and transferred the scene to Oxford by way of mystification."

Moreover, Lamb had not been at Oxford for some years, and it was at Cambridge that he met Dyer and that he saw the Milton Mss.

11. To such a one as myself. Lamb was prevented from attending either Oxford or Cambridge, both by his poverty and by an impediment in his speech. Even as the youngest member of the family, Charles had to begin to contribute his mite toward the purchase of the daily bread, and consequently he began his career of drudgery at the "desk's dead wood." Had he not had an infirmity of speech, he would doubtless, through his aptitude for studies, have proceeded to be a "Grecian" at Christ's Hospital, and thence would have gone to one of the universities to prepare for holy orders—a profession for which his stuttering unfitted him. That he never was a member of the goodly fellowship of a university was a cause for constant regret on his part. But he had the spirit of the academic bower. William Hazlitt, describing a visit of Lamb's to Oxford in 1810, says: "He and the old
colleges were hail-fellow well-met; and in the quadrangles, he 'walked
gowned.'"

12. I go about in black. Throughout his life Lamb affected, accord-
ing to Leigh Hunt, "a Quaker-like plainness." Talfourd, Procter, Hood, Patmore, and others have described Lamb in the habit as he lived, and all agree on one point—his "clerk-like black." Patmore, in 1835, writes: "Lamb had laid aside his snuff-colored suit before I knew him; and during the last ten years of his life, he was never seen in anything but a suit of uniform black. Though his dress was 'black' in name and nature, he always contrived that it should exist only in a state of rusty brown."

13. Unsettle my faith. In the London Magazine the following foot-
ote occurs:—

"There is something to me repugnant at any time in written hand. The text never seems determinate. Print settles it. I had thought of the Lycidas as of a full-grown beauty—as springing up with all its parts absolute—till, in an evil hour, I was shown the original copy of it, together with the other minor poems of its author, in the library of Trinity, kept like some treasure, to be proud of. I wish they had thrown them in the Cam, or sent them after the latter cantos of Speuser, into the Irish Channel. How it staggered me to see the fine things in their ore! interlined, corrected! as if their words were mortal, alterable, displaceable at pleasure! as if they might have been otherwise, just as good! as if inspiration were made up of parts, and these fluctuating, successive, indifferent! I will never go into the workshop of any great artist again, nor desire a sight of his picture till it is fairly off the easel; no, not if Raphael were to be alive again, and painting another Galatea."

14. Injustice to him. As published in the London Magazine, the essay contained the following footnote:—

"Violence or injustice certainly none, Mr. Elia. But you will acknowledge that the charming unsuspectingness of our friend has sometimes laid him open to attacks, which though savoring (we hope) more of waggery than malice—such is our unfeigned respect for G. D. may, we think, much better have been omitted. Such was that silly joke of L[amb], who, at the time the question of the Scotch Novels was first agitated, gravely assured our friend—who as gravely went about repeating it in all companies—that Lord Castlereagh had acknowledged himself to be the author of Waverley! Note—not by Elia." But the note was almost certainly by Elia.

15. The passage set in brackets, beginning "D. commenced life," called forth a protest from both Dyer and his friends, and Lamb, when he collected Elia in 1823, omitted the passage. Lamb affirmed that "it was his ambition to make more familiar to the public, a character, which, for integrity and single-heartedness, he has long been accustomed to rank among the best patterns of his species." But Lamb's
roguish propensities would not allow him to let Dyer rest in peace. In 1823 he published "Amicus Redivivus," an exaggerated and fantastic account of Dyer's peculiarities. And again, in a letter, he humbly apologized to Dyer. Lamb's meekness and humor, coupled with Dyer's simpleness and unworldliness, kept them friends until Lamb's death.


(Pages 17-31.)

In this essay we again find Lamb's fondness for mystification. From the beginning of the essay to the paragraph beginning, "I was a hypo-chondric lad," Lamb assumes the personality of Coleridge; from the paragraph indicated to the close of the essay, he drops the mask. Both Lamb and Coleridge entered the Blue-Coat School on the same date, July 17, 1782; Lamb being a little over seven and a half years old, and Coleridge nearly ten. Coleridge did not leave the school until 1791; Lamb left in 1789. See Christ's Hospital in the Index.

17. Mr. Lamb's "Works." "The Works of Charles Lamb: in Two Volumes. London. Printed for C. and J. Ollier, Vere Street, Bond Street, 1818." Such was the title of Lamb's first "Works." In the volumes was an essay, first printed in the Gentleman's Magazine, June, 1813, entitled "Recollections of Christ's Hospital," which was written in an enthusiastic and laudatory vein, and which stood for the dignity of the school. In the essay written in 1820, Lamb sees the reverse—the hardships and the utter loneliness of unhappy schoolboys. Coleridge, in his Biographia Literaria, Chapter I, and Leigh Hunt in his Autobiography, Chapters III and IV, write on the same theme.

17. The worthy sub-treasurer to the Inner Temple. Randal Norris.

18. The good old relative. Sara Lamb, Aunt Hetty, who died in 1797. In a letter written to Coleridge, January 5, 1797, Lamb writes of this aunt, then on her deathbed, "My poor old aunt, whom you have seen, the kindest, goodest creature to me when I was at school; who used to toddle there to bring me good things, when I, schoolboy-like, only despised her for it, and used to be ashamed to see her come and sit herself down on the old coal-hole steps as you went into the grammar school, and open her apron, and bring out her bason, with some nice thing she had caused to be saved for me." And again in his poem "Lines Written on the Day of My Aunt's Funeral" he writes:

"I have not forgot
How thou didst love thy Charles, when he was yet
A prating schoolboy: I have not forgot
The busy joy on that important day,
When, childlike, the poor wanderer was content
To leave the bosom of paternal love,
His childhood's play-place, and his early home,
For the rude fosterings of a stranger's hand,
Hard uncouth tasks, and schoolboy's scanty fare.
How did thine eye peruse him round and round
And hardly knew him in his yellow coats,
Red leathern belt, and gown of russet blue.”

18. I was a poor friendless boy. This was particularly true of Cole-
ridge. He came from Ottery St. Mary (not “Sweet Calne in Wilt-
shire”), in Devonshire, where he was born,
and he had no friends in London. In his Bio-
graphia Literaria he says: “In my friendless
wanderings on our leave days (for I was
an orphan, and had scarce any connections in Lon-
don), highly was I delighted if any passenger,
especially if he were dressed in black, would
enter into conversation with me.”

18. Whole-day leaves. Though the boys at
Christ's Hospital did not fare sumptuously at
the table, they were not stinted in the matter
of holidays. In addition to every alternate
Wednesday for a whole day, eleven days at
Easter, four weeks in the summer, and fifteen
days at Christmas, they enjoyed vacation days
on church festival days and national holidays
to the extent of at least thirty days every year.
It is pleasant to know that Lamb, fired with
the tales “of the Abyssinian Pilgrim's expan-
atory rambling after the cradle of the infant
Nilus,” went a-wandering in quest of the quaint
and the unknown of London town and its sub-
urbs.

play 'French and English.' A piece of paper
is covered with dots, and the players—one
French and one English—in turn close their
eyes and slash a pencil across it. The dots through which the line has
passed are counted after each stroke, and that nation wins whose pencil
annihilates most.” — Lucas.

31. Catalogue of Grecians. The catalogue, of course, is not com-
plete. Lamb was never a Grecian, but as a deputy-Grecian, from
whom the Grecians were selected, he held his honor high. In a letter
to Dyer, who was a Grecian, Lamb writes in 1831: “I don't know how
it is, but I keep my rank in fancy still since schooldays. I can never
forget I was a deputy-Grecian! Alas! what I am now? What is a
Leadenhall clerk, an India pensioner, to a deputy-Grecian? How art
thou fallen, O Lucifer!”
Our notes on this essay may fittingly close with the following story told by Mr. Lucas:—

"A blue-coat boy walking through a residential street in London, was astonished to hear himself hailed by a strange, bareheaded, elderly gentleman standing on a doorstep. 'Come here, boy,' he cried, 'come here'; and when the boy reached him, he pressed a five-shilling piece in his hand, with the words, 'In memory of Charles Lamb.'"

(Pages 31-37.)

The genesis of this essay is found in at least two of Lamb's letters. On April 9, 1816, he wrote to Wordsworth, who had just sent him two books of poems: "I have not bound the poems yet. I wait till people have done borrowing them. I think I shall get a chain, and chain them to my shelves, more Bodleiano [after the manner of the Bodleian library], and people may come and read them at chain's length. For of those who borrow, some read slow; some mean to read, but don't read; and some neither read nor meant to read, but borrow to leave you an opinion of their sagacity. I must do my money-borrowing friends the justice to say that there is nothing of this caprice or wantonness of alienation in them. When they borrow my money they never fail to make use of it." Again, in a letter to Coleridge, written in the autumn of 1820, Lamb touches more immediately on the borrowing habit. "Why will you make your visits, which should give pleasure, matter of regret to your friends? You never come but you take away some folio that is a part of my existence. [Here, in the letter, Lamb tells how his "maid Becky" had told Lamb that Coleridge had taken away "Luster's Tables," meaning Luther's Table Talk.] I was obliged to search personally among my shelves, and a huge fissure suddenly disclosed to me the nature of the damage I had sustained." The letter closes with: "my third shelf (northern compartment) from the top has two devilish gaps, where you have knocked out its two eye-teeth.

"Your wronged friend,
"Charles Lamb."

NEW YEAR'S EVE. London Magazine, January, 1821. (Pages 37-44.)

The "melancholy pessimism" of this essay did not go unchallenged. Lamb's friend Southey remonstrated, accusing Elia of wanting "a sounder religious feeling." "A Father" rebuked Lamb in the February number of the London Magazine, saying that if Lamb had possessed offspring of his own he would not have avowed that he had "almost ceased to hope." And in the August number of the same magazine Lamb was reminded by a writer signing himself "Olen"
“that the grave was not the end, was asked to consider the promises of the Christian faith, and finally was offered a glimpse of some of the friends he would meet in heaven—among them Ulysses, Shakespeare, and Alice W—n.” — Lucas.

Lamb, on receiving this poetical “Epistle to Elia,” replied: “Poor Elia . . . does not pretend to see very clear revelations of a future state of being as ‘Olen’ seems gifted with. He stumbles about dark mountains at best; but he knows at least how to be thankful for this life, and is too thankful, indeed, for certain relationships lent him here, not to tremble for a possible resumption of the gift. He is too apt to express himself lightly, and cannot be sorry for the present occasion, as has called forth a reproof so Christianlike.”

These harmless exaggerations form a contrast to the more sympathetic understanding of the essay published in the London for March, 1821. Horace Smith, the writer, says in part:

“How I could expatiate on the quaint lugubrious pleasantry, the social yet deep philosophy of your friend Elia, as particularly illustrated in his delighted paper upon New Year’s Eve! — but the bandying of praise among Correspondents has too Magazinish a look; — I have learnt his essay by heart. Is it possible, said I to myself, when I first devoured it, that such a man can really feel such horrors at the thought of death, which he describes with so much humorous solemnity? But when I came to his conclusion, wherein he talks of the fears, ‘just now expressed or affected,’ I had presently a clue to his design — Ha! I exclaimed, thou are the very Janus who hast always delighted in antithetical presentments; who lovest to exhibit thy tragic face in its most doleful gloom, that thou mayst incontinently turn upon us the sunshine of thy comic smile. Thou wouldst not paint the miseries endured by a friendless boy at Christ’s, without a companion piece, portraying the enjoyments of a more fortunate youngster.”

39. Small-pox at five. Whether this is fiction or fact, is not known.
39. From what have I not fallen, if the child I remember was indeed myself. Lamb, in 1795, wrote the following sonnet, which best explains the allusion: —

“We were two pretty babes; the youngest she,
The youngest, and the loveliest far I ween,
And Innocence her name: the time has been
We two did love each other’s company;
Time was, we two had wept to have been apart.
But when by show of seeming good beguiled,
I left the garb and manners of a child,
And my first love for man’s society,
Defiling with the world my virgin heart—
My loved companion dropt a tear, and fled,
And hid in deepest shades her awful head.
Beloved, who shall tell me, where thou art—
In what delicious Eden to be found—
That I may seek thee, the wide world around?"

"Lamb seems in this essay," says Canon Ainger, "to have written with the express purpose of presenting the reverse side of a passage in his favorite Religio Medici. Sir Thomas Browne had there written, 'I thank God I have not those strait ligaments, or narrow obligations to the world, as to dote on life, or be convulsed and tremble at the name of death.' . . . Lamb clung to the things he saw and loved — the friends, the books, the streets, and crowds around him, and he was not ashamed to confess that death meant for him the absence of all these, and that he could not look it steadfastly in the face."

Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist. London Magazine, February, 1821. (Pages 44-51.)

Canon Ainger and Mr. Lucas, who have the best information on the identity of Sarah Battle, furnish the following notes.

Canon Ainger says: "There is probably no evidence existing as to the original of Mrs. Battle. Several of Lamb's commentators have endeavored to prove her identity with Mary Field, Lamb's grandmother, so long resident with the Plumer family; the sole fact common to them being that Lamb represents Mrs. Battle (in the essay on 'Blakesmoor') as having died at Blakesware, where also Mrs. Field ended her days. But any one who will read, after the present essay, Lamb's indisputably genuine and serious verses on Mrs. Field's death ('The Grandame') will feel that to have transformed her into this 'gentle-woman born' with the fine 'last century countenance,' would have been little short of a mauvaise plaisanterie, of which Lamb was not likely to have been guilty."

Mr. Lucas, in part, says: "Mrs. Battle was probably, in real life, to a large extent, Sarah Burney, the wife of Rear-Admiral James Burney, Lamb's friend, and the center of the whist-playing set to which he belonged."

Leigh Hunt, in reprinting this essay in the London Journal, makes this happy introduction to it: "Here followeth, gentle reader, the immortal record of Mrs. Battle and her whist; a game which the author, as thou wilt see, wished he could play forever; and, accordingly, in the deathless pages of his wit, forever will play it." And, we may add, Lamb's Sarah Battle is more vital and lifelike than if he had transcribed the realities of Mrs. Mary Field or Mrs. Sarah Burney: through the medium of literary art he has created an immortal fictitious character.

50. As nurturing the bad passions. In the London Magazine the parenthesis "(dropping for a while the speaking mask of old Sarah Battle)," appeared.

Again we are indebted to Canon Ainger, Talfourd, and Mr. Lucas for some illuminating notes.

Ainger says: "Lamb's indifference to music is one of the best-known features of his personality." Compare the admirably humorous verses, "Free Thoughts on Several Eminent Composers," beginning —

"Some cry up Hayden, some Mozart,  
Just as the whim bites; for my part  
I do not care a farthing candle  
For either of them, or for Handel,—  
Cannot a man live free and easy  
Without admiring Pergolesi?  
Or through the world with comfort go  
That never heard of Dr. Blow?"

"Lamb was entirely destitute of what is called 'a taste for music.' A few old tunes ran in his head; now and then the expression of a sentiment, though never a song, touched him with rare and exquisite delight. . . . But usually music only confused him, and an opera—to which he once or twice tried to accompany Miss Isola—was to him a maze of sound in which he almost lost his wits." — Thomas N. Talfourd in *Letters of Lamb*.

Mr. Lucas is of the opinion that "Lamb was not so utterly without ear as he states. Crabb Robinson in his diary records more than once that Lamb hummed tunes, and Barron Field, in the memoir of Lamb contributed by him to the Annual Biography and Obituary for 1836, mentions his love for certain beautiful airs, among them Kent's 'O that I had wings like a dove' [mentioned in this essay], and Handel's 'From mighty kings.' Lamb says that it was Braham who awakened a love of music in him."

Many years before, in 1808, in a letter to Manning, Lamb writes: "Do you like Braham's singing? The little Jew has bewitched me. I followed like as the boys followed Tom the Piper. He cures me of melancholy as David cured Saul. . . . I was insensible to music till he gave me a new sense."

Another evidence that Lamb was not without the receptive sense for music, even though he lacked the expressive power, lies in his appreciation of the music of bells. His poem "Sabbath Bells," and the slight reference in the story "First going to Church" in *Mrs. Leicester's School*—"But I never can hear the sweet noise of bells, that I don't think of the angels singing"—prove that the "concord of sweet sounds" was not without fascination for Lamb.

52. *I was never . . . in the pillory.* Mr. Lucas points out some circumstantial evidence that Lamb did spend a brief time in the pillory at Barnet for brawling on a Sunday. If there is any truth in the asser-
tion, the incident was "nearly as much of a joke on the part of the authorities as on the part of Lamb." — Lucas's edition of Lamb, I, 473.

A Quakers' Meeting. London Magazine, April, 1821. (Pages 57-62.)

Lamb once told Barton, the Quaker poet, "In feelings, and matters not dogmatical, I hope I am half a Quaker." Leigh Hunt tells how Lamb, even as a boy, had impressed him by his Quaker-like behavior. We have already noted that Hood spoke of Lamb as a "Quaker in black." In a letter to Coleridge, February 13, 1797, Lamb says: "Tell Lloyd [the Lloyds of Birmingham, intimate friends of Lamb, were Quakers] I have had thoughts of turning Quaker, and have been reading, or am rather just beginning to read, a most capital book, good thoughts in good language, William Penn's 'No Cross, no Crown'; I like it immensely. Unluckily I went to one of his meetings, tell him, in St. John Street, yesterday, and saw a man under all the agitations and workings of a fanatic, who believed himself under the influence of some 'inevitable presence.' This cured me of Quakerism; I love it in the books of Penn and Woolman, but I detest the vanity of a man thinking he speaks by the spirit, when what he says an ordinary man might say without all that quaking and trembling." This letter, written twenty-four years before the essay, shows how tenaciously Lamb remembers incidents and how accurately he works the raw material of life into finished literary product. Lamb, as Mr. Lucas remarks, had the "gift of keeping together all his thoughts on every subject."

One of Lamb's poems (and it is one of the sweetest lyrics in the English language) is entitled "Hester." Hester Savory was a dark-eyed Quaker, of whom Lamb wrote in a letter to Manning in March, 1803, "I send you some verses I have made on the death of a young Quaker you may have heard me speak of as being in love with for some years while I lived at Pentonville, though I had never spoken to her in my life." In all probability the bright-eyed Hester never knew of Lamb's affection for her.

If possible, find the poem "Hester" and read it.

Imperfect Sympathies. London Magazine, August, 1821. (Pages 63-71.)

"Jews, Quakers, Scotchmen, and other Imperfect Sympathies" was the original cumbersome title of this essay.

We must take some of Lamb's assertions in this essay with a grain of salt. We know, for instance, that Lamb did not dislike all Scotchmen, that his circle of acquaintances among Scotchmen was small, and that he never visited Scotland. Moreover, he had an overflowing
admiration for Edward Irving; he called Allan Cunningham "the
great-hearted Scot" and signed a letter to him, "Yours, with perfect
sympathy"; and he loved the great humorist Thomas Hood. Among
the Jews he counted John Braham, the great tenor, one of his lights.
(Read the note on Braham in "A Chapter on Ears." ) As for the
Quakers, Lamb's sympathies were neither unlimited nor restricted.
He loved the "early Quakers," such as Penn and Woolman, but he
did not like the fanatical Quakers. Certainly a writer whose very
presence and personality gave an impression to observers of "a certain
Quakerlikeness" could scarcely deny an inward sympathy for the best
of the sect.

70. I was travelling. This incident did not happen to Lamb, but
was told to him by Sir Anthony Carlisle, the surgeon, "the best story-
teller I ever heard."

Witches and Other Night Fears. London Magazine,
October, 1821. (Pages 71-78.)

Thirteen years before the publication of this essay Lamb wrote on
a similar theme in Mrs. Leicester's School—Maria Howe's story of
"The Witch Aunt," which you should read.

One expression in the essay caused a boiling over of the literary
teatop. Lamb's sentence, "Dear Little T. H. [Thornton Hunt, the
son of Leigh Hunt], who of all children has been brought up with the
most scrupulous exclusion of every taint of superstition," etc., gave
Robert Southey an opportunity to make an indirect attack on Hunt
for his infidelity to the Christian belief. In the Quarterly Review,
July, 1823, Southey spoke of unbelievers as too dishonest to express
their real feelings and too cowardly to divest themselves of their fear,
adding, "There is a remarkable proof of this in Elia's Essays, a book
which only wants a sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is
original." Lamb resented this slur, wrote an open letter to Southey,
and defended both himself and Hunt. In a letter to his Quaker friend
Barton, he said, "He [Southey] might have spared an old friend such
a construction of a few careless flights, that meant no harm to reli-
gion." Southey, seeing his stupidity, repented his rashness, visited
Lamb, and receiving Lamb's apology, reéstablished their friendship.

Valentine's Day. (Pages 78-82.)

This essay originally appeared in Leigh Hunt's Examiner, February
14 and 15, 1819, and reappeared in Hunt's Indicator, February 14,
1821, signed with four stars—a not unusual custom of Lamb's. The
essay, as it was published in the Indicator, formed a part of a longer
article entitled "Donne's and Drayton's Lines on Valentine's Day,
with Remarks." The opening of the essay, "Hail to thy returning
festival, old Bishop Valentine!' is a remembrance of Donne's verses beginning "Hail, Bishop Valentine!"

In the American edition of Lamb, published in 1828, the editor inserted an essay having the same title as Lamb's essay, and originally published in the *London Magazine*. In all probability this spurious essay was by B. W. Procter, who, more than the other imitators of Lamb, caught the style and the quips of Lamb's thought. Lamb had other imitators, but none of them ever successfully turned their imitations to much account. To quote De Quincey, "the mercurialities of Lamb were infinite"—so infinite that they could not, cannot, be imitated.

**My Relations. London Magazine, June, 1821. (Pages 82–89.)**

Lamb's essays are so full of autobiographical references, often purposely disguised, that it makes an interesting literary chase to distinguish the true from the false. It was one of Lamb's specialties to make curious perversions, to disguise real incidents and real persons, to make deliberate mystifications and "to mingle romance with reality." But above all other essayists in the English language Lamb could take "homely and familiar things and make them fresh and beautiful."

You will note that the name of Lamb's mother never occurs in any of Lamb's essays. The omission is easily explained. Out of consideration for his sister, Mary Lamb, who in a fit of insanity had killed their mother, he never published any reference to the mother or to the awful event.

**82. At that point of life.** Lamb was forty-six years old at this time.

**82. I had an aunt.** Aunt Hetty, the sister of John Lamb, the father of Charles, who lived with the family. See note to "Christ's Hospital," "The good old relative," page 230.

**83. "Adventures of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman."** "The story tells how the unfortunate Mons. du F——, eldest son of the Baron du F——, married against his father's will, and suffered in consequence many privations including imprisonment in a convent, from which he escaped by a jump of fifty feet." — Lucas.

**83. The chapel in Essex Street.** The chief house of worship of the sect called Unitarian; Lamb for a time was a member of the sect, but ultimately left it. Concerning Lamb's religion, De Quincey writes:—"Was this man, so memorably good by lifelong sacrifice of himself, in any profound sense a Christian? The impression is that he was *not*. We, from private communications with him, can undertake to say that, according to his knowledge and opportunities for the study of Christianity, he *was*... We do not undertake to say that in his knowledge of Christianity he was everywhere profound or consistent;
but he was always earnest in his aspirations after its spiritualities, and had an apprehensive sense of its power."

83. Brother, or sister, I never had any—to know them. "Here Lamb writes as Elia, yet using actual facts to color his fiction—whether to amuse those who were in the secret or to perplex those who were not, it is impossible to say." (Ainger’s Charles Lamb.) Lamb had two sisters named Elizabeth, the elder of whom he never knew; the younger Elizabeth was seven years older than Charles. Only three of the Lamb children grew to full age: John, Mary, and Charles. In this essay John and Mary are described as cousins, named James and Bridget Elia. John Lamb, Charles’s brother, is fittingly portrayed by Canon Ainger:

"The mixture of the man of the world, dilettante, and sentimental-ist—not an infrequent combination—is here described with graphic power. All that we know of John Lamb, the ‘broad, burly, jovial,’ living his bachelor life in chambers at the old Sea-House, is supported and confirmed by this passage. Touching his extreme sensibility to the physical sufferings of animals, there is a letter of Charles to Crabb Robinson of the year 1810, which is worth noting. ‘My brother, whom you have met at my rooms (a plump, good-looking man of seven-and-forty), has written a book about humanity, which I transmit to you herewith. Wilson, the publisher, has put it into his head that you can get it reviewed for him. I dare say it is not in the scope of your reviews; but if you could put it into any likely train, he would rejoice. For, alas! our boasted humanity partakes of vanity. As it is, he teases me to death with choosing to suppose that I could get it into all the Reviews at a moment’s notice. I!!!—who have been set up as a mark for them to throw at, and would willingly consign them all to Megæra’s snaky locks. But here’s the book, and don’t show it to Mrs. Collier, for I remember she makes excellent eel soup, and the leading points of the book are directed against that very process.’"


89. Bridget Elia. Mary Lamb. The story of the brother and sister cannot be too often told; their lives were so bound together that to tell the life of one is to tell the life of the other. Of Mary Lamb we read much in her brother’s essays and letters, especially in “Mrs. Battle,” “My Relations,” “Old China,” and in the essay under consideration. Her contemporaries have also left pleasing pictures of her. “She will live forever in the memory of her friends,” says Crabb Robinson, “as one of the most amiable and admirable of women.” “She wore a neat cap,” writes Mr. Procter, “of the fashion of her youth; an old-fashioned dress. Her face was pale and somewhat
square, but very placid, with gray intelligent eyes. She was very mild in her manners to strangers; and to her brother, gentle and tender always. She had often an upward look of peculiar meaning when directed towards him as though to give him assurance that all was then well with her." Their lives were spent in mutual anticipation of each other's needs, and a more fitting companionship the world of letters does not show. In the words of Canon Ainger, "A common education, whether that of sweet garden scenes, or the choice fancies and meditations of poet and moralist—a sense of mutual need—a profound pity for each other's frailties—of these were forged the bond that held them, and years of suffering and self-denial had made it ever more strong." In 1805, during one of Mary Lamb's attacks, Lamb wrote to Dorothy Wordsworth, "All my strength is gone, and I am like a fool, bereft of her cooperation. I dare not think, lest I should think wrong; so used am I to look up to her in the least and the biggest perplexity. . . . She is older and better and wiser than I, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness." Mary Lamb died on the 20th of May, 1847, aged eighty-two years, having outlived her beloved brother nearly thirteen years.

90. Narrative teases me. "Lamb never possessed the faculty of constructing a plot either for drama or novel; and while he luxuriated in the humor of Smollett, the wit of Fielding, or the solemn pathos of Richardson, he was not amused, but perplexed, by the attempt to tread the windings of a story which conducts to their most exquisite passages through the mazes of adventures." —Talfourd. Mary Lamb on the other hand, according to Thomas Westwood, had a passion for novel-reading.

91. Good old English reading. In the library of Samuel Salt.

91. The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End. "Lamb's first visit there," says Mr. Lucas, "must have been when he was a very little boy—somewhere about 1780." Probably we may see recollections of it in Mary Lamb's story, Louisa Manners, or The Farm House, in which she describes the delights of a city child of four years on a farm. Read the story in Mrs. Leicester's School. The farmhouse described in the essay remains almost as it was in Lamb's days.

91. A great-aunt. "Mary Field, Lamb's grandmother, was Mary Bruton, whose sister married, as he says, a Gladman, and was the great-aunt mentioned." —Lucas. In a letter to Manning, May 28, 1819, Lamb writes: "How are my cousins, the Gladmans of Wheathampstead, and farmer Bruton? Mrs. Bruton is a glorious woman.

"Hail, Mackery End!

This is a fragment of a blank verse poem which I once meditated, but got no further.''

94. B. F. See Field, Barron, in the Index.

"The essay on 'The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple' is one of the most varied and beautiful pieces of prose that English literature can boast. Eminently, moreover, does it show us Lamb as the product of two different ages—the child of the Renaissance of the sixteenth century and that of the nineteenth. It is as if both Spenser and Wordsworth had laid hands of blessing upon his head."—Ainger.

"This, one of the most famous of all the essays, is rich in every kind of interest and every kind of literary charm. It is autobiography, history, legend, mythology almost: so greatly are some of the figures projected upon the imagination."—MacDonald.

The term "Bench" is a reduction from the voluminous title, "The Worshipful Masters of the Bench of the Honorable Society of the Inner Temple." This is the board which governs the Inner Temple. Read note on Temple in the Explanatory Index.

Lamb speaks of the Temple as one having a thorough knowledge of it, and indeed he knew the Temple as few men have known it. He was born at No. 2 Crown Office Row on February 10, 1775, and with the exception of some vacations he did not leave the Temple until he went to Christ's Hospital in 1782; there he spent his holidays until leaving the school in 1789; and again he lived there until the death of Samuel Salt, who owned the chambers where the Lambs dwelt, in 1792. After Salt's death the Lambs moved to various other quarters, but in 1801, Charles and Mary returned to the Temple to live at No. 16 Mitre Court Buildings, and, after another move away from the Temple, they lived at No. 4 Inner Temple Lane from 1809 to 1817.

95. That fine Elizabethan hall: the hall of the Middle Temple.

98. The winged horse. The badge of the Inner Temple. "This winged horse has a curious history; for, when the horse was originally chosen as an emblem, he had no wings, but was ridden by two men at once to indicate the self-chosen poverty of the brotherhood; in lapse of years the figures of the men became worn and abraded, and when restored were mistaken for wings."—Cook's Highways and Byways of London.

99. Lovel. John Lamb, the father of Charles. The touching tribute of his son in this essay is about all we need to know of John Lamb. With the care of seven children, it is no wonder that he came to be a "broken, querulous old man," after the death of his benefactor, Salt, in 1792, and the tragical death of his wife in 1796. He died in 1799. Lamb describes him in verse, 1798:

"One parent yet is left, a wretched thing,
A sad survivor of his buried wife,
A palsy-smitten, childish, old, old, man,
A semblance most forlorn of what he was—
A merry cheerful man."
(Pages 106-114.)

We have noted in the essay "New Year's Eve" that Southey had condemned Elia for wanting "a sounder religious feeling." Lamb, in replying to Southey, suggested that the present essay may also have been in Southey's mind when the laureate made his unwarranted attack. "Perhaps the paper on 'Saying Graces' was the obnoxious feature. I have endeavored there to rescue a voluntary duty—good in place, but never, as I remember, literally commanded—from the charge of an undecent formality. Rightly taken, sir, that paper was not against graces, but want of grace; not against the ceremony, but the carelessness and slovenliness so often observed in the performance of it."

Dorothy Wordsworth, too, after calling the essay on the Benchers "exquisite," and delighting in other essays by Elia, says, "indeed the only one I do not quite like is the Grace before Meat."

108. It is to praise the Gods amiss. *Comus*, 175-177. Although Lamb does not use quotation marks, he is doubtless thinking of the source of his remark, or he is unconsciously using the sentence as an unconscious remembrance, for his knowledge of Milton's poetry was thorough, and he "is never more happy than in quoting from or discoursing on Milton." This is one of those sentences so often found in Elia, in which "one feels rather than recognizes, that a phrase, particular, or idiom, term or expression, is an echo of something that one has heard or read before. This style becomes aromatic, like the perfume of faded rose leaves in a china jar."—Talfourd.

111. I am no Quaker at my food. The paragraph beginning with these words is highly suggestive of Lamb's egotism. Canon Ainger discusses this prominent feature in Lamb's style very thoroughly in Chapter VI of his Life. The whole chapter should be read.

113. C. V. L. Le Grice paid for the witticism, if it be his, in after life, when he became a clergyman and had to say many a grace in a different manner.

113. Our old format at school. Mr. Lucas gives the Christ's Hospital graces in Lamb's day as follows:

GRACE BEFORE MEAT.

"Give us thankful hearts, O Lord God, for the Table which thou hast spread for us. Bless thy good Creatures to our use, and us to thy service, for Jesus Christ, his sake. Amen."

GRACE AFTER MEAT.

"Blessed Lord, we yield thee hearty praise and thanksgiving for our Founders and Benefactors, by whose Charitable Benevolence thou hast refreshed our Bodies at this time. So season and refresh our
Souls with thy Heavenly Spirit, that we may live in thy Honor and Glory. Protect thy Church, the King, and all the Royal Family. And preserve us in peace and truth through Christ our Saviour.  

114. Some one recalled a legend. Leigh Hunt tells this story more fully in his *Autobiography*: “Our dress was of the coarsest and quaintest kind, but was respected out of doors, and is so. It consisted of a blue drugget gown, or body, with ample skirts to it; a yellow vest underneath in winter time; small clothes of Russia duck;worsted yellow stockings; a leather girdle; and a little black worsted cap, usually carried in the hand. I believe it was the ordinary dress of children in humble life during the reign of the Tudors. We used to flatter ourselves that it was taken from the monks; and there went a monstrous tradition, that at one period it consisted of blue velvet with silver buttons. It was said, also, that during the blissful era of the blue velvet we had roast mutton for supper; but that the small clothes not being then in existence, and the mutton suppers too luxurious, the eatables were given up for the ineffables.”

**Dream-Children: A Reverie. London Magazine, January, 1822.**

(Pages 114-118.)

This touching reverie is as nearly perfect a piece of prose as anything Charles Lamb ever wrote, and it is one of the finest prose compositions in English literature. Quaintness, tenderness, sympathy, graceful ease, unselfishness, and delicate fancy—all are so combined and interfused that the reader will agree with Pater that “Lamb knows the secret of fine, significant touches”; with another critic that he is “the most exquisite of essayists and the rarest of souls”; with Swinburne that “there is in his work a sweetness like no other fragrance, a magic like no second spell in all the world of letters”; with Coleridge that “his heart is as whole as his head”; and finally, to quote Coleridge again, that “Lamb every now and then irradiates, and the beam, though single and fine as a hair, is yet rich with colors, and I both see and feel it.”

It is necessary to understand the genesis of this essay in order to appreciate its significance. John Lamb, the brother of Charles, died October 26, 1821, leaving Charles all his property. Lamb was much grieved by the loss of his brother, the “broad, burly, jovial” John Lamb, and noted “a certain deadness to everything, which I think I may date from poor John’s loss.” “The death of this brother,” says Canon Ainger, “wholly unsympathetic as he was with Charles, served to bring home to him his loneliness. He was left in the world with but one near relation, and that one [Mary Lamb] too often removed from him for months at a time by the saddest of afflictions. No wonder if he became keenly aware of his solitude. No wonder if his thoughts turned to what might have been, and he looked back to
those boyish days when he wandered in the glades of Blakesware with Alice by his side. . . . For no reason that is apparent, while he retains his grandmother's real name, he places the house in Norfolk, but all the details that follow are drawn from Blakesware. . . . Inexpressibly touching, when we have once learned to penetrate the thin disguise in which he clothes them, are the hoarded memoirs, the tender regrets, which Lamb, writing by his 'lonely hearth,' thus ventures to commit to the uncertain sympathies of the great public. More touching still is the almost superhuman sweetness with which he deals with the character of his lately lost brother. . . . And there is something of the magic of genius, unless, indeed, it was a burst of uncontrollable anguish, in the revelation with which his dream ends."

114. **Their great-grandmother Field.** Mary Field, "for more than fifty years housekeeper at Blakesware, a dower-house of the Hertfordshire family of Plumers." In the poem "The Grandame" Lamb wrote of his grandmother:

"For she had studied patience in the school
Of Christ; much comfort she had thence derived,
And was a follower of the Nazarene."

The whole poem should be read.

117. **I was a lame-footed boy.** "Whether Charles was ever a lame-footed boy, through some temporary cause, we cannot say. We know that at the time of the mother's death John Lamb was suffering from an injury to his foot, and made it (after his custom) an excuse for not exerting himself unduly. See the letter of Lamb to Coleridge written at the time. 'My brother, little disposed (I speak not without tenderness for him) at any time to take care of old age and infirmities, had now, with his bad leg, an exemption from such duties.'" — Ainger.

**Distant Correspondents.** *London Magazine*, March, 1822. (Pages 118-124.)

This essay had its germ in a letter to Barron Field written nearly five years before, on August 31, 1817. The literary feat in the essay lies in Lamb's evolving a distinctly literary tone and method out of a rather commonplace letter. In the letter to Field, Lamb touches on the thievishness of Australia as follows:

"Well, and how does the land of thieves use you? And how do you pass your extra-judicial intervals? Going about the streets with a lantern, like Diogenes, looking for an honest man? You may look long enough, I fancy. Do give me some notion of the manners of the inhabitants where you are. They don't thieve all day long, do they? No human property could stand such continuous battery. And what do they do when they an't stealing."
Compare this with the part in the essay beginning, "I cannot imagine to myself whereabout you are." You will note at once the more elaborate pains Lamb took in perfecting his sentences in the essay.

Read the note on Field, Barron, in the Explanatory Index.

**The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers.** *London Magazine,* May, 1822. (Pages 124-132.)

In the magazine publication the essay had the sub-title, "A May-Day Effusion." This essay gives abundant proof of Lamb's tenderness and large-hearted sympathy with humanity. "He pitied," says Procter, "all objects which had been neglected or despised." Pater puts the matter exquisitely when he says that Lamb's "simple mother-pity to those who suffer by accident or by unkindness has something primitive in its largeness." "He reasoned with his heart," says another critic, "with his heart he loved; in his heart he lived, moved, and had his being."

To get the historical background and the significance of the essay, read McCarthy's *History of England in the Nineteenth Century,* I, 267-273.

The following note from Canon Ainger is interesting and instructive: "It is curious that in this essay Lamb does not even allude to the grave subject of the cruelties incident to the climbing boys' occupation—a question which for some years past had attracted the attention of philanthropic persons, in and out of Parliament. A year or two later, however, he made a characteristic offering to the cause. In 1824 James Montgomery of Sheffield edited a volume of prose and verse, *The Chimney-Sweeper's Friend, and Climbing-boy's Album,* to which many writers of the day contributed. Lamb, who had been applied to, sent Blake's poem, 'The Chimney-Sweeper.' It was headed, 'Communicated by Mr. Charles Lamb, from a very rare and curious little work'—doubtless a true description of the *Songs of Innocence* in 1824. It is noteworthy that, before sending it, this incorrigible joker could not refrain from quietly altering Blake's 'Little Tom Dacre' into 'Little Tom Toddy.'"

The opening lines of Blake's poem were:

"When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry, 'Weep! weep! weep! weep!'"

"The boy had to climb from the fireplace to the top of the chimney and to announce the accomplishment of his mission by crying out 'Sweep!' when his soot-covered head and face emerged from the chimney-top." — McCarthy's *History of England,* I, 269.
A Dissertation upon Roast Pig. London Magazine. September, 1822. (Pages 132-139.)

"The idea of the discovery of roasting pigs I borrowed from my friend Manning," so wrote Lamb to Bernard Barton. Where Manning got it is a matter of discussion. Lamb, with the characteristic mark of genius, made his borrowed story a masterpiece. Hence his reference to a Chinese manuscript is a figment of his fancy.

In an essay written more than ten years after the date of this essay, Lamb renounced his taste for roast pig. "Time was when Elia . . . preferred to all luxuries a roasted pig. But he disclaims all such green-sickness appetites in future, though he hath to acknowledge the receipt of many a delicacy in that kind from correspondents."

138. It was over London Bridge. Another example of Lamb's whimsical mystifications: Christ's Hospital was not over London Bridge.

Preface to the Last Essays of Elia. London Magazine, January, 1823. (Pages 141-144.)

In the London this preface to the Last Essays of Elia was entitled "A Character of the Late Elia," "By a Friend." It was signed Phil-Elia. It was not published until 1833, the date of the publication of the Last Essays, when Lamb omitted part of the original.

Much literary fooling followed this Preface and the announcement of the editor that, "Elia is dead! — at least so a Friend says; but if he be dead we have seen him in one of those hours when he is wont to walk; and his ghostship has promised us very material assistance in our future Numbers. . . . Indeed, the first paper in our present Number is one of its grave consolations." The paper referred to was the essay, "Rejoicings on the New Year's Coming of Age." In the March number of the same year came this announcement: "Elia is not dead! we thought as much," — written, of course, by Lamb.

Lamb in this Preface overstates the case against himself, yet the truth is everywhere evident. Probably the only person who ever made a hostile verdict against Lamb was Carlyle, and two such men as Lamb and Carlyle were doomed to misunderstand each other. Of the two men, however, Lamb was the one to understand the situation when they met and to see the humor of the contrast.

Read or reread the essays, "New Year's Eve" and "Imperfect Sympathies," and compare them with this essay to make an estimate of Lamb's view of himself. Mr. Lucas in his Life of Lamb very pointedly writes on this matter, "Amid the fun and mischief, the tenderness and humor, the eloquence and pathos of the Elia essays, one is continually conscious of a mind inflexibly true to itself and its ideals, a passionate friend of truth in all things."
In this essay, except for the change of Blakesware to Blakesmoor, the experience is related without disguise. Blakesware in Hertfordshire, the ancient seat of the Plumer family, was situated about five miles from Ware. Here it was that Lamb's maternal grandmother, Mrs. Field, was housekeeper for fifty years or more, and here Charles and Mary Lamb spent many holidays, gathering experiences and impressions which they were to work up into literary masterpieces in later years—Charles in this essay and Mary in her tale entitled "The Young Mahometon" printed in Mrs. Leicester's School. The Plumers had, very early in Lamb's life, moved to another house at Gilston ('a newer trifle') near Marlow, thus leaving the old-fashioned paternal hall to the genial grandmother and her talented grandchildren. Blakesware was demolished before the visit recorded by Lamb in this essay.

In a letter to Bernard Barton, August 10, 1827, Lamb says, "Nothing fills a child's mind like an old Mansion—better if un- or partially occupied; people with the spirits of deceased members of the County and Justices of the Quorum. Would I were buried in the peopled solitude of one, with my feelings at 7 years old."

146. Mrs. Battle. Another instance of Lamb's whimsical impulse. In "Dream Children" Lamb tells us that Mrs. Field occupied this room, and Mrs. Field and Mrs. Battle were not the same person.

147. Garden-loving poet. Andrew Marvell, author of "On Appleton House, to the Lord Fairfax."

148. The hills of Lincoln. Lamb's father came from Lincolnshire. In Lamb's sonnet entitled "The Family Name," he suggests that the name Lamb may have originated in "merry mocks and arch allusions" to some shepherd ancestor of the Lamb's,

"In manners guileless as his own sweet flocks."

148. Those old W—'-s. A disguise for the Plumers. The Plumers and the Wards were later related by marriage.

149. My Alice. See Alice W—'n in the Index.

Mr. MacDonald in a note on this essay makes an acute observation. He says, in part, "In the early part of this essay, especially the second paragraph, Lamb does something that is rather unusual with him—writes a little out of character; not personal character so much as social character. He seems, that is, to speak from the midst of a sort of menage with which one does not readily associate him: a well-equipped house (with a staff of servants); where visitors come in a
coach, or at least go off in one; where the furniture is worth talking
of, and where there are forms to stand on as well as Chippendale chairs
to sit upon; appearances to be kept up, and awkward moments when
they break down. . . . Perhaps this rise in social tone was due to the
influence of the preceding essay, and a lingering sense of gentility.
. . . We must lower the scale of the essay a little, if we wish to get at
the truth of the matter, the personal note: and for 'poor relations'
read sometimes 'poor familiar friends,' of whom Lamb had a goodly
following.'

Lamb did indeed have a "goodly following" of visitors and a plague
of friends. You may read of them in his Popular Fallacy on "Home,"
which is based on a capital letter to Mrs. Wordsworth written from the
East India House, February 18, 1818.

**Stage Illusion.** *London Magazine*, August, 1825. (Pages 157-160.)

The original title of this essay was "Imperfect Dramatic Illusion."
Mr. Lucas thinks that this essay was Lamb's last contribution to the
*London.*

"One of Lamb's subtlest pieces of criticism; its subject not alto-
gether identical with that question—as to whether the actor should
'lose himself in his part.' It depends on the kind of part, at least,
Lamb would say; and in certain kinds of representation the actor,
if he 'lose himself' at all, must lose himself in a part-and-a-half: the
keeping up of a perpetual aside, a good understanding with the audi-
ence, being a subservient yet essential histrionic and temperamental
achievement expected by the actor. . . ."—MacDonald.

**Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading.** *London Magazine.*
July, 1822. (Pages 161-167.)

"Mr. Lamb's taste in books is also fine, and it is peculiar. It is not
the worst for a little *idiosyncrasy*. He does not go deep into the Scotch
novels, but he is at home in Smollett and Fielding. He is little read
in Junius or Gibbon, but no man can give a better account of Bur-
ton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, or Sir Thomas Browne's *Urnb Burial,*
or Fuller's *Worthies,* or John Bunyan's *Holy War.* No one is more
unimpressible to a specious declamation; no one relishes a recondite
beauty more. His admiration for Shakespeare and Milton does not
make him despise Pope; and he can read Parnell with patience, and
Gray with delight."—William Hazlitt.

Mr. MacDonald makes a broad statement about the beginning of the
second paragraph: "Perhaps no single page contains so much of what
is characteristic of Lamb's mind as do the four lines which make the
second paragraph of this essay."
162. My shivering folios. Robinson, in his *Diary*, says: “I looked over Lamb’s library in part. He has the finest collection of shabby books I ever saw; such a number of first-rate works in very bad condition is, I think, nowhere to be found.”

**THE OLD MARGATE HOY. *London Magazine*, July, 1823. (Pages 167-176.)**

According to Canon Ainger, “Charles and Mary Lamb had actually, as here stated, passed a week’s holiday together at Margate when the former was quite a boy.” Other students of Lamb, notably Talfourd and Hazlitt, refer the visit to September, 1801. It may be possible to reconcile the conflict of opinions by agreeing that Lamb may have made two visits to Margate, one about 1790 or 1791, when Lamb was fifteen—the time referred to in this essay, and the other in 1801, when Lamb’s mature powers would intensify the earlier impressions.

Mr. MacDonald gives very high praise to this essay, saying that it “seems written, for all its lightness of touch, from a remarkably full mind, and shows Lamb’s powers in greater variety—in greater simultaneous ease and energy—than perhaps any one or two in either Series.” Such an assertion is cause for reflection and discussion.

**SANITY OF TRUE GENIUS. *New Monthly Magazine*, May, 1826. (Pages 176-179.)**

This essay was originally published as one of the “Popular Fallacies” under the title “That Great Wit is allied to Madness.” The subject of the essay has ever been a more or less popular theme of discussion among essayists and scientists. Dryden in *Absalom and Achitophel*, Part I, 163-164, wrote the well-known couplet:

“Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.”

His questionable assertion was made the thesis of a discussion by Leigh Hunt in the *Indicator* for November 24, 1819. In our own day the scientific study of genius, from the standpoint of cerebral pathology, has received much attention. Lombroso and Nordau are clearly of the opinion of Dryden, while Dr. William Hirsch, in his book *Genius and Degeneration*, inclines more to the view of Lamb. It is hardly necessary to say that Lamb approaches his discussion less from the scientific point of view than from the standpoint of literary criticism. Nevertheless, however unscientific he may be, he shows a wonderful grasp of his theme. “Nothing that Lamb has written,” says Canon Ainger, “proves more decisively how large a part the higher imagination plays in true criticism.”
CAPTAIN JACKSON.  London Magazine, November, 1824.
(Pages 179-184.)

This person, if there ever was such a person, has not been absolutely identified. The most plausible theory identifies him with Randall Norris of the Inner Temple, who was a constant friend of the Lambs, father and son. Lamb was deeply attached to him. But whether a real person, or an imaginary portrait, or a composite of reality and fiction, Captain Jackson, in Lamb’s quickening touch, is an overpowering portrait.

(Pages 184-191.)

Lamb was retired from the service of the India House on Tuesday, March 29, 1825. The story of the retirement is best told in his correspondence. To Wordsworth he wrote: ‘Here am I then, after thirty-three years’ slavery, sitting in my own room at eleven o’clock this finest of all April mornings, a freed man, with £441 a year for the remainder of my life, live I as long as John Dennis, who outlived his annuity and starved at ninety; £441, i.e. £450, with a deduction of £9 for a provision secured to my sister, she being survivor....’

“I came home For Ever, on Tuesday of last week. The incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelmed me. It was like passing from life to eternity.”

To Bernard Barton he wrote:—

“... I am free B. B. — free as air!
The little bird that wings the sky
Knows no such liberty.

I was set free on Tuesday in last week at four o’clock. I came home for ever!...

“Take it briefly, that for a few days I was painfully oppressed by so mighty a change, but it is becoming daily more natural to me. I went and sat among ’em all at my thirty-three years’ desk yester morning; and deuce take me, if I had not yearnings at leaving all my old pen-and-ink fellows, merry sociable lads, at leaving them in the lurch, fag, fag, fag! The comparison of my own superior felicity gave me anything but pleasure. B. B., I would not serve another seven years for seven hundred thousand pounds!”

At the new India Office in Whitehall, London, Lamb’s portrait, painted by Henry Meyer in 1826, hangs over the fireplace in the Revenue Committee room, bearing the simple inscription:—

Charles Lamb,
Clerk in the India House, 1792-1825.
Lamb's "retired leisure," however, did not please him so much as he had anticipated. His "Popular Fallacy," entitled "That We Should Rise with the Lark" (1826), shows that his leisure grew burdensome. From the time of his retirement until his death in 1834, Lamb's life is marked by dejection and sadness.

With the exception of the fictitious names of the directors, this essay recounts the actual facts of Lamb's release from the drudgery of the "desk's dead wood." He had not served the Company, however, for "thirty-six years," but for thirty-three years.

185. My native fields of Hertfordshire. Lamb was born and lived in London, but his mother and grandmother came from Hertfordshire, and, as you have read in "Mackery End," Lamb felt an intimate relationship with Hertfordshire.

186. I had grown to my desk. On September 11, 1822, Lamb wrote to Barton, his Quaker friend, a clerk in a bank, "I am, like you, a prisoner to the desk. I have been chained to that galley thirty years,—a long shot. I have almost grown to the wood." In a letter to Wordsworth he uses the telling expression, "my breast against this thorn of a Desk."

187. I could walk it away. Lamb was ever a stroller, and after his retirement took long walks. In a letter to Southey, August 19, 1825, he writes: "Mary walks her twelve miles a day some days, and I my twenty on others. 'Tis all holyday with me now, you know. The change works admirably." The following story by Mrs. Cowden Clarke of Lamb's walking ability is not uninteresting.

"He was so proud of his pedestrian feats and indefatigability that he once told the Cowden Clarkes the story of a dog possessed by a pertinacious determination to follow him day by day when he went forth to wander in the Enfield lanes and fields; until, unendurably teased by the pertinacity of this obtrusive animal, he determined to get rid of him by fairly tiring him out! So he took a circuit of many miles, including several of the loveliest spots round Enfield, coming at last to a by-road with an interminable vista of up-hill distance, where the dog turned tail, gave the matter up, and lay down beneath a hedge, panting, exhausted, thoroughly worn out and dead beat; while his defeater walked freshly home, smiling and triumphant."

BARBARA S——. London Magazine, April, 1825. (Pages 192-197.)

This story, for it is more of a story than an essay, shows Lamb at his best in invention, in whimsicality, in blending fact and fiction, and in making a tangle of mystifications. Canon Ainger's note enlightens us on the real facts of the story. "The note appended by Lamb to this essay, as to the heroine being named Street, and having three times changed her name by successive marriages, is one of the most
elaborate of his fictions. The real heroine of the story, as admitted by Lamb at the time, was the admirable comedian, Fanny Kelly, an attached friend of Charles and Mary Lamb. . . . In the year 1875 Miss Kelly furnished Mr. Charles Kent, who was editing the centenary edition of Lamb's works, with her own interesting version of the anecdote. It was in 1799, when Fanny Kelly was a child of nine, that the incident occurred, not at the old Bath Theatre, but at Drury Lane, where she had been admitted as a 'miniature chorister,' at a salary of a pound a week. After his manner, Lamb has changed every detail—the heroine, the site of the theatre, the amount of the salary, the name of the treasurer."

Miss Kelly, with the "divine plain face," was a special favorite of Lamb's. See his sonnets "To Miss Kelly," and "To a celebrated female performer in The Blind Boy."

Further interest is added to the story by the fact that Lamb once proposed marriage to Miss Kelly.


Rejoicings upon the New Year's Coming of Age. London Magazine, January, 1823. (Pages 197–203.)

This essay describing the procession of the "Merry Days" of all the year is not, as one might naturally think, a tour de force—a trial at an infinitely difficult theme; it is as native to the spirit of Lamb as any other of his essays. For Charles Lamb dearly loved a holiday. We have noted his pleasure in the holidays granted at Christ's Hospital, and if report is true, he lost no occasion in taking a vacation at the India House. One famous story tells how a superior official of the India House remarked, "I notice, Mr. Lamb, that you come very late every morning." "Yes," replied Lamb, "but see how early I go." Another story reveals a humorous excuse for taking a holiday. One day he "was observed to enter the office hastily and in an excited manner, assumed no doubt for the occasion, and to leave by an opposite door. He appeared no more that day. He stated the next morning, in explanation, that as he was passing through Leadenhall Market, on his way to the office he accidentally trod on a butcher's heel. 'I apologized,' said Lamb 'to the butcher, but the latter retorted: 'Yes, but your excuses won't cure my broken heel, and ——,'" said he, seizing his knife, "I'll have it out of you.'" The dread of pursuit did not permit him to stay in the office that day!" These stories, aside from their personal interest, show, to some extent at least, that the essay was conceived in the spirit of familiarity and written with that "effortless effervescent zest" so characteristic of Elia.

Canon Ainger's remark on this essay is almost sufficient: "This beautiful essay tells its own story — this time, we may be sure, without romance or exaggeration of any kind. It is a contribution of singular interest to our understanding of the happier days of Charles and Mary's united life."

Mr. MacDonald makes the following entertaining note: —

"One of the inmost of that *inner circle* of Lamb's works, those which bring us acquainted with the history of his own mind and circumstances of his home life at certain periods. The period of which he speaks here — the very straitened years of his and Mary's housekeeping — is one which we must always regard with peculiar interest, with a curiosity that is begotten altogether of respect, and that will hardly presume to call itself sympathy. The essay is one which, on all accounts — for its humanity, its grace and graciousness, its knowledge of human nature, beyond the merely personal reference, and its sweet and perfect art — is worthy of the deepest attention and a thirty-times perusal."

205. Islington. On September 2, 1823, Lamb wrote to Bernard Barton: "When you come Londonward you will find me no longer at Covent Garden; I have a cottage at Colebrook Row, Islington; a cottage, for it is detached; a white house with six good rooms; the New River (rather elderly by this time) runs (if a moderate walking pace can be so termed) close to the foot of the house; and behind is a spacious garden with vines (I assure you), pears, strawberries, parsnips, leeks, carrots, cabbages, to delight old Alcinous."

In September, 1827, the Lambs took a house at Enfield on Chase Side. To Tom Hood he wrote: "'Twas with some pain we were evuls'd from Colebrook. You may find some of our flesh sticking to the door-posts. To change habitations is to die to them; and in my time I have died seven deaths." To Henry Crabb Robinson: "I am settled for life I hope at Enfield. I have taken the prettiest, compactest house I ever saw."

But the Lambs were to move once more. In 1832 they went to Bay Cottage, Edmonton, where Charles died.

POPULAR FALLACIES. *New Monthly Magazine*, January to September, 1826. (Pages 209-226.)

"Lamb writes to Wordsworth in 1833, when the volume was newly out: 'I want you in the Popular Fallacies to like the "home that is no home," and "rising with the lark."' The first of these essays naturally interested Lamb deeply, for it contains a hardly-disguised account of his own struggles with the crowd of loungers and good-natured friends
who intruded in his leisure hours, and hindered his reading and writing.” — Ainger.

“They are a sort of rapid résumé and march-past of the qualities which have been at play throughout the two volumes of Elia, and have the same effect here at the close of the book as that mustering of all the characters upon the stage at the end of the drama, nobody having anything very important to say, but their totality of presence making for remembrance and for good-humor and good-night.” — MacDonald.

The original number of the “fallacies” was sixteen.

“That the Worst Puns are the Best.”

“Gary’s account of a punning contest after Lamb’s own heart makes the company vie with each other in puns on the names of herbs. After anise, mint, and other words had been ingeniously perverted, Lamb’s own turn, the last, was reached, and it seemed impossible that anything was left for him. He hesitated. ‘Now then, let us have it,’ cried the others, all expectant. ‘Patience,’ he replied; ‘it’s c-c-cumin.’” — Lucas.
Ægon. A shepherd in Vergil’s Eclogues and in Theocritus’ pastorals.

Agathocles. Ruler of Syracuse from 316 B.C. to 288 B.C. His father was a potter.

Agur’s wish. “Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.”—Proverbs xxx. 8.

Alcibiades (450-404 B.C.). An Athenian statesman and general. He was a pupil of Socrates, from whom he must have learned much of his wisdom, but from whom he certainly never learned his profligacy and willfulness.

Alexander (356-323 B.C.) “the Great.” King of Macedon; son of Philip of Macedon. He wept when he could find no new worlds to conquer.

Alice W—n. Alice Winterton, according to Lamb’s key, but annotated by Lamb as “feigned.” Her real name was Ann Simmons, a Hertfordshire girl who was Lamb’s boyhood sweetheart from about 1792 to 1796. He sang her praise in some of his sonnets and in his essays “New Year’s Eve,” “Blakesmoor,” and “Dréam-Children,” and, according to local tradition, he made her the heroine of his Rosamund Gray. Although Lamb says twice that he wooed her for seven years, it is not at all evident that his suit was as pronounced and determined as his fancy. Alice or Ann married Mr. Bartrum, a pawnbroker in Princes Street.

Althea’s horn. Jupiter, who was rescued from the fate of being swallowed by Cronus, was fed in concealment on the milk of the goat Almathea. Breaking off one of the horns of the goat, Jupiter gave it to his nurses, the daughters of Melisseus, a Cretan king, and endowed it with the power of giving forth whatever the possessor wished.


Amlet, Esq., Richard. A character in Sir John Vanbrugh’s comedy, The Confederacy, who is a “sad scapegrace.”

Amphitrites. Amphitrite was the wife of Neptune, the god of the sea.
Anatomy of Melancholy (1621). A book by Robert Burton (1576-1640), an English divine. The seventeenth century was preëminently an age of preaching. Theology and controversial literature held the fore rank. Burton, probably better than any other writer of the time, expresses the widespread national mood of melancholy, its causes, its manifestations, and its cure. His Anatomy is the result of his curious investigations of all "the out-of-the-way learning and the dreamy speculation of fifty years of recluse life at Brasenose College, Oxford. So curious a mixture of pedantry, imagination, and quiet, brooding humor, covering in a sense the whole life and thought of man, could hardly have been produced in any other era of English literature." Lamb, who called Burton a "fantastic great old man," was powerfully influenced by him.

Anderton's. A coffee-house in Fleet Street, London, now Anderton's Hotel. The portrait of which Lamb speaks is not now in evidence—if, indeed, it ever existed.

Andrewes, Bishop. Launcelot Andrews (1555-1626) a theological writer and a member of the commission appointed by King James to make the "Authorized" translation of the Bible, which appeared in 1611.

Anglicanas or Metropolitanas. Forerunners of the Encyclopædia Britannica.

Aquinas, Saint Thomas. See Holy Thomas.

Arcadia. The imaginary land of happy pastoral delights, and of ideal rustic peace, simplicity, and joy.

Ariel. In Shakespeare's Tempest, I. 2. 196:

"Now on the beak,

Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,

I flamed amazement."

Arion. A musician of Lesbos. The legend goes that Arion, who was on a voyage from Corinth to Lesbos, was threatened with robbery and death by the sailors. He begged to play one more melody; the sweetness of the song attracted a school of dolphins, and Arion jumped on the back of one which carried him to the shore.

Arthur. The young Arthur in Shakespeare's King John, IV. 2. "In Crabb Robinson's diary, Miss Kelly relates that when, as Constance in King John, Mrs. Siddons (not Mrs. Porter) wept over her, her collar was wet with Mrs. Siddons's tears. Miss Kelly, of course, was playing Arthur." — Lucas.

Artist Evangelist. St. Luke, the patron saint of painters and physicians.

Arundel Castle. The seat of the Dukes of Norfolk in Sussex. The family name is Howard.

A's ("my friend"). William Ayrton (1777-1858), a musical critic and a correspondent of Lamb's.
Ascapart. A giant, thirty feet high, who was conquered by Bevis of Southampton. His story is told in the old romance, Bevis of Hampton, and he is alluded to very often in literature. Cf. Drayton’s Polyolbion, Song II.

Ash Wednesday. The first day in Lent, when the sign of the cross was made on the forehead by priests, with ashes from consecrated palms.

Aubert, Peter. Probably the assistant-secretary of the East India Company, although the assistant-secretary of the company at the time Lamb wrote the “Christ’s Hospital” essay was named Auber. The name may be, thinks Mr. Lucas, a joke.

Austin. St. Augustine (d. 430), bishop of Hippo, in Africa, who contended that all unbaptized infants were utterly lost. Author of the City of God, and of the Confessions.

B—. Bosanquet, a fictitious name. In “The Superannuated Man.”

B—. Braham (born Abraham), John (1774-1856). A popular tenor and composer. Lamb in a letter to Manning says, “He was a rare composition of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel; yet all these elements mixed up so kindly in him, that you could not tell which preponderated.” Lamb in “Imperfect Sympathies” refers to his singing in Handel’s oratorio “Israel in Egypt.” Elsewhere Lamb speaks of him as “the brave little Jew.”

B—, Martin. Martin Charles Burney, the son of Admiral Burney, was an unsuccessful London lawyer. He died in 1852. He was a lifelong friend of the Lamb’s. In “Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading.”

Bach, Johann Sebastian (1685-1750). A German composer of sacred music.

Bacon, Friar. Roger Bacon (1214-1294) was a learned English philosopher. His greatest work is the Opus Magnus. His advanced ideas in science led many to look upon him as a wizard.

Baddeley, Robert (1733-1794). An English actor who made the initial appearance of Moses in Sheridan’s The School for Scandal.

Balclutha. In the “South-Sea House,” Lamb in a footnote misquotes the line referred to; it should read, “I have seen the walls of Balclutha, and they were desolate.” Couthon was one of the tales written by James Macpherson (1738-1796), a Highland schoolmaster, and ascribed by him to Ossian, a Gaelic poet and warrior of the third century.

Bannister, Jack (1760-1836). An English comedian, more justly celebrated in the parts of Bob Acres, Sir Anthony Absolute, and Tony Lumpkin, than in the parts depicting a coward.

Banyan days. Vegetarian days. The term is derived from the Banians, the Hindoos in Western India, whose rules of caste enjoin them to abstain from meat. The word was in common use among
sailors in the British navy, when originally there were two banyan days, and later only one.

**Barbara S**—. See Explanatory Notes to essay entitled "Barbara S—,", page 251.

**Barbican.** A street in London where Milton lived (1646-1647) while he was Latin-secretary under Cromwell, and where he wrote some of his sonnets.

**Barker's.** An old bookshop at 20 Great Russell Street, now Russell Street. Lucas says that Lamb, in 1817, went to live over this shop, but it was no longer a bookshop.

**Barons.** A baron of beef is two sirloins not cut asunder.

**Barrington, Daines** (1727-1800). A lawyer and naturalist. He is honored most to-day as the correspondent of Gilbert White, the author of *The Natural History of Selborne*. He was made a Welsh judge, but whether for his *Account of Some Fishes in Wales* or whether his treatise on Welsh fishes was due to his experiences as a Welsh judge, it is difficult to tell. He was a sound lawyer whose ample fortune permitted him to dabble in archaeology.

**Bartlemy** ("holy"). Bartholomew is the apostle called "Nathanael" by St. John the Evangelist. His day is August 24. According to tradition, he was flayed alive.

**Barton, Old.** Thomas Barton became a Bench in 1775, died in 1791.

**Bartrum.** See Alice W—n.

**Baskett Prayer-Book.** A small, illustrated prayer-book published in 1749 by T. Baskett, printer to King George II.

**Bastile.** The state prison in Paris, the storming of which, on July 14, 1789, was the beginning of the French Revolution.

**Bath Theatre.** MacDonald, in his notes on "Barbara S—,", says, that the incidents related in the essay did not happen at the Bath Theatre but at the Drury Lane; and that the treasurer's name was not Ravenscroft, but Peake.

**Bayes.** A character in Buckingham's comedy, *The Rehearsal*, 1671. A pompous coxcomb. "His character was intended as a caricature of Dryden."

**Beattie, James** (1735-1803). Professor of philosophy at Aberdeen, and author of *Elements of Moral Science*. He is probably best remembered by his poem "The Minstrel."

**Beaumont and Fletcher.** Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625) were literary friends and joint authors of many plays, among which are *Philaster, The Maid's Tragedy*, and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*.

**B—d Row.** Bedford Row in the Strand.

**Bedlam.** A contraction of Bethlehem. The hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem, founded in the thirteenth century, is now used as an asylum for the insane.

Bellarmine. Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine (1542-1621), an Italian divine, member of the Jesuit order; a theological controversialist.

Bencher. One of the senior members of an Inn of Court, who constitute the body charged with the management of its affairs.

Bi-geny. A pun on bigamy. It literally means, or suggests, two births.

Bigod, Ralph. This is John Fenwick, editor of the Albion. His life is a tale of misfortunes, dissipation, debt, and ruin. He was one of Lamb's "friendly harpies." Lamb borrowed the name Bigod from the old family name of the Earls of Norfolk.

Black Monday. Easter Monday, so called because "in the 34th (year) of Edward III (1360), the 14th of April, and the morrow after Easter-day, King Edward with his host lay before the city of Paris: which day was full of dark mist and hail, and so bitter cold that many men died on their horses' backs with the cold." — Stowe. Lamb, in "The Superannuated Man," means the beginning of another week's work at the office of the India House.

Bland, Mrs. A well-known actress in the early nineteenth century.

Blandy, Miss. "Miss Blandy, the daughter of an attorney at Henley, with good expectations from her father, attracted the attention of an adventurer, a certain Captain Cranstoun. The father disapproved of the intimacy, and the Captain intrusted Miss Blandy with a certain powder which she administered to her father with a fatal result. Her defense was that she believed the powder to be of the nature of a love-philter, which would have the effect of making her father well-affected towards her lover. The defense was not successful, and Miss Blandy was found guilty of murder, and executed at Oxford in April, 1752." — Ainger.

Bloomsbury. In London. Lamb never lived in Bloomsbury, although he writes in "The Two Races of Men" as if he had; at the time of his writing that essay he was living in rooms at 20 Great Russell Street, Covent Garden.

"Blue-coat Boy, The Fortunate." A rather foolish romance, telling how a blue-coat boy marries a rich lady of rank.

Blue-Coat boys. A Christ's Hospital boy wears, even to this day, a long blue coat girded at the loins with a leather belt, knee breeches of Russian duck, a yellow waistcoat, yellow worsted stockings, and a small black cap. This costume was originally the ordinary dress of the poorer boys in the school, but now it is worn by all.

Bobadil. A character in Ben Jonson's Every Man in his Humour, an ignorant, cowardly man, who poses as a hero.

Bodley, Sir Thomas (1545-1613). An English scholar and founder of the Bodleian Library of Oxford University. This library, one of the most famed in the world, contains thousands of valuable books, manuscripts, and coins.

Boldero. Like the names of Lacy, Bosanquet, and Merryweather in "The Superannuated Man," Boldero is a fictitious name.
Bond Street, Pall Mall, and Soho Square are in the "West End" of London, the fashionable shopping district.

Bowles, William Lisle (1762-1850). An English clergyman and minor poet. He published an edition of Pope in 1806, which had sufficient merit, or lack of merit, to arouse a controversy between Campbell and Moore. But his main power lay in his sonnets, published in 1798, which exerted some influence on the early poetry of Coleridge, and gained the approval of Lamb.

Boyer, Rev. James. "He became upper or head-master of Christ's in 1777. For the better side of Boyer's qualifications as a teacher, see Coleridge's 'Biographia Literaria,' the passage beginning, 'At school I enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a very sensible, though at the same time a very severe master.' Elsewhere Coleridge entirely confirms Lamb's and Leigh Hunt's accounts of Boyer's violent temper, and severe discipline. Lamb never reached the position of Grecian, but it is the tradition in Christ's Hospital that he was under Boyer's instructions some time before leaving school." — Ainger.


Bridget. Bridget Elia, i.e. Mary Lamb.

Brinsley. See Sheridan.

Browne. Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682) was the author of Hydrotaphia or Urn-Burial (1658), his most characteristic work. It is an essay "suggested by the finding of some ancient Roman funeral urns buried in the earth in the neighborhood of Norwich. The Urn-Burial is ostensibly an inquiry into the various historic methods of disposing of the dead, but by implication it is a descant upon the vanity of earthly ambition, especially in its attempt to hand on mortal memory to future ages."

Lamb constantly borrows from Browne, so much so, indeed, that it has been said, "no Browne, no Lamb" — a rather exaggerated truth.

Browne's Religio Medici, published in 1642, contains a confession of his own personal religious creed. In essence it is a mystical acceptance of Christianity. "Methinks," he says, "there be not impossibilities enough in religion for active faith. . . . I love to lose myself in a mystery; to pursue my reason to an O Altitudo!" This is Browne's habitual mental attitude; to lose himself in metaphysical speculation; to climb to an altitude of spiritual exaltation, and yet to be filled with peace, quietude, and humility. Again he says: "Methinks I begin to be weary of the sun. . . . The world to me is but a dream and mock-show, and we are all therein but pantaloons and antics, to my severer contemplations." His temper was not the temper of the Elizabethans — a delight in the stir
and bustle of humanity, a love of versatility, enthusiasm, and spontaneity; nor was it of the temper of the clangor and rigidity of the Puritans; it was the temper of sweet quietude and sweet reasonableness.

His Christian Morals was published in 1716, thirty-four years after his death.

Brunswick dynasty. This dynasty began with George I in 1714; George II came to the throne in 1727, and reigned until 1760.

Bull, Bishop. George Bull, bishop of St. David's (1634-1710). He is said to have had severe views on ecclesiastical matters.

Bull, William (1738-1814). Lord Mayor of London in 1773. He is remembered, also, as a friend of Cowper.

Buncle, John. The Life of John Buncle, Esq., by Thomas Amory (1691?-1788), an English humorist and moralist. The hero of the book is described as being “a prodigious hand at matrimony, divinity, a song, and a peck!” He married seven times, and he tells us that “when one of his wives died he remained four days ‘with his eyes shut’; on another similar occasion ‘two days.’” The book was a great favorite with Lamb and Hazlitt.

Burgoyne, John (c. 1722-1792). The commander of the British forces in the American Revolution who surrendered to General Gates at Saratoga in 1777.
Burns, Robert (1759–1796). The Scottish poet. Lamb once wrote to Coleridge, "Burns was the God of my idolatry." Barry Cornwall tells how sympathetically Lamb would repeat favorite lines from Burns's poetry, and how "Sometimes—in a way scarcely discernible—he would kiss the volume; as he would also a book by Chapman or Sir Philip Sidney, or any other which he particularly valued."

Burton, Richard. See Anatomy of Melancholy.

C—. Cambridge; so indicated in the essay "Oxford in the Vacation."

C. Lord. Thomas Pitt, second Baron Camelford (1775–1804). He was killed in 1804 in a duel with Mr. Best. His "conceit" was to be buried, according to his own directions, "on the borders of the lake of St. Lampierre, in the Canton of Berne (Switzerland), and three trees stand in the particular spot." But his request could not be carried out, so he was buried in the vaults of St. Anne's, Soho, London.

C., C—., S. T. C. All refer to Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

C. V. L. and C. V. Le G—. "Charles Valentine Le Grice and a younger brother of the name of Samuel were Grecians, and prominent members of the school in Lamb's day. They were from Cornwall. Charles became a clergyman, and held a living in his native country. Samuel went into the army, and died in the West Indies. It was he who was staying in London in the autumn of 1796, and showed himself a true friend to the Lambs at the season of the mother's death. Lamb writes to Coleridge, 'Sam Le Grice, who was then in town, was with me the three or four first days, and was as a brother to me; gave up every hour of his time to the very hurting of his health and spirits in constant attendance, and humoring my poor father; talked with him, read to him, played at cribbage with him.' He was a 'mad wag,' according to Leigh Hunt, who tells some pleasant anecdotes of him, but must have been a good-hearted fellow. 'Le Grice the elder was a wag,' adds Hunt, 'like his brother, but more staid. He went into the church as he ought to do, and married a rich widow.'"

Cæsars (the twelve). The Roman emperors from Julius Cæsar to Domitian.

Caledonian. A Scotchman. Caledonia was the ancient Roman name for Scotland.

Caliban. The half-human, half-monster son of the witch Sycorax, who serves Prospero, the magician, in Shakespeare's The Tempest.

Caligula's minion. Incitatus, the favorite horse of the Roman Emperor Caligula (ruled A.D. 37–41). The emperor made the horse a consul and high priest, housed him in a marble stable adorned with precious gems, and fed him gilded oats from a golden manger.
**EXPLANATORY INDEX**

**Calne in Wiltshire.** This is a mystification for Ottery St. Mary in Devonshire, the early home of Coleridge.

**Cam.** The river on which Cambridge is situated. Oxford is on the Isis.

**Cambro-Briton.** Welshman. The Latin name for Wales was Cambria: the Britons were the native dwellers in England.

"**Candide.**" The title of a philosophical novel by Voltaire (1694-1778), the French satirist, which scoffs at Christianity.

**Candlemas.** February 2, a feast day in honor of the purification of the Virgin Mary. In Scotland, Candlemas Day is one of the four quarter-days or term days, days when payment of rent or interest on account is due. Other quarter-days are Whitsunday, May 15; Lammas, August 1; Martinmas, November 11. The time of blessing candles. Contrary to Lamb's suggestion in "Rejoicings upon the New Year's Coming of Age," there are no ceremonies of washing at Candlemas. Lamb may have associated washing and purification.

**Canticles.** Solomon's *Canticle of Canticles*, Song of Songs, viii. 8.

**Carlo Marratti.** An Italian painter of Madonnas and other religious subjects; his works have small merit.

**Carmania.** Carmania in classical mythology lay in Asia along the northern shore of the Persian Gulf.

**Carrachi.** Three Italian painters of the Bolognese school: Annibale (1560-1609); Ludovico (1555-1619); and Agostine (1558-1602).

**Carthusian.** An order of monks, founded in 1086 by St. Bruno, of Cologne, who, with six companions, retired to the solitude of La Chartreuse, near Grenoble, in France. Among the many austere rules of this severe order is the imperative rule of continual silence. The London Charterhouse (a corruption of Chartreuse) was one of the houses of the order (1371).

**Cat-cradles.** A common amusement with children is the making of "cats' cradles" by interlacing a piece of string passed around the two hands and manipulated by the fingers. The hands with palms facing and slightly curved resemble the marks of parenthesis.

**Cathay.** A name for China, or more properly Chinese Tartary, in the Middle Ages.

**Cave, Edward** (1691-1754). The founder of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. It was Cave, not Plumer, who was summoned before the House of Commons, because he objected to granting a frank to the Duchess of Marlborough—a privilege given to her by Plumer. Cave was accused of opening letters to detect the user of the frank. Johnson defends Cave's action.

**Caxon.** A rough, uncombed wig. An obsolete word.

**Cayster.** A river in Ionia, famous for swans.

**Celæno.** One of the Harpies. The Harpies, daughters of Neptune and Terra, were represented as winged monsters with the bodies of vultures, the faces of maidens, and claw-like hands. Their names were Celæno (blackness), Ocypeta (rapid), and Aello (storm).
In Vergil's *Aeneid*, II, 247-257, Celæno utters prophetic denunciations at Aeneas and the Trojans who are gathered at a meal. The expression "those Virgilian fowl" in "Grace before Meat" refers to the Harpies.

**Celtic tribes.** Literally those who inhabit the woods and wild fastnesses; as the Gaels of Scotland and Ireland and the Kymry of Wales. They belong to the great parent stock of Western and Southern Europe. They are described as volatile, fanciful; lovers of beauty, romance, and humor; with a touch for sentiment, and a love of natural magic.

**Cerinthus.** A sectarian; a heretic who founded a sect which believed in a conglomeration of Judaism, Christianity, and Paganism.

**Ch—or John Chambers, died 1872.** An intimate friend of Lamb's.

**Cham of Tartary.** The hereditary ruler of Tartar countries; usually spelled Khan. In English literature the name is often used as synonymous with despot.

**Charles of Sweden.** Charles XII of Sweden, who reigned from 1697 to 1718. A soldier-king whom Johnson described in the *Vanity of Human Wishes*:

"He left the name at which the world grew pale,
To paint a moral or adorn a tale."

**Chartreuse.** The former chief monastery of the Carthusian monks, near Grenoble, France.

**Chatham, Earl of** (1708-1778). William Pitt. He was a friend of the American colonists, and used his influence to bring about conciliation between the colonies and England.

**Chaucer, Geoffrey** (1340-1400). The first great English poet; author of *The Canterbury Tales*. Lamb takes a liberty when he suggests that Chaucer may have studied at Oxford. There is no evidence whatever that Chaucer ever studied at either Oxford or Cambridge.

**Child of the Green-room.** Actor. The greenroom is the retiring-room in a theater.

**Children in the Wood.** The title of an ancient ballad, included in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. The three-year-old son of a Norfolk gentleman and a baby sister were left orphans in the care of an uncle. In order to secure their inheritance the uncle hired two ruffians to kill them. One of these fellows repented of his bargain sufficiently to murder his comrade, but he left the children alone in the wood. There they perished, and "Robin Redbreast" covered them with leaves. The cruel uncle met with various ill-fortunes and died in jail; and the ruffian later confessed to his share in the crime.

A comedy with the same title was written by Thomas Morton (1763-1838).

**Christie's and Phillip's.** Auctioneers of paintings and antiquarian
objects of art in Pall Mall, a famous street in London. The younger Christie was also an art critic and author of reputation. Thomas Phillips (1770–1845) was an English painter of note.

Christ’s. Christ’s Church College is “reverend” because it was originally a cathedral. It was founded by Cardinal Wolsey in 1525 and completed by Henry VIII. It is one of the most beautiful, most fashionable, and most important colleges in the world.

Christ’s Hospital. The Blue-Coat School, in London, was founded by Edward VI, in 1553, as a hospital for orphans and foundlings. For nearly three hundred and fifty years it was situated between Newgate Street, Giltspur Street, St. Bartholomew’s, and Little Britain; but in May, 1902, the school was removed to Horsham, in Sussex, and the old building was demolished.

Originally no child was admitted before he was eight or after he was ten years of age, and none could remain after he was fifteen, except “King’s Boys,” who attended the mathematical school founded by Charles II in 1672, and “Grecians” (the highest or honor class, of whom five are sent on scholarships to the universities). Some of these conditions are now changed. See Blue-coat boys.

The memory of Lamb and Coleridge is not forgotten at Christ’s. There is a Coleridge Memorial, a statuette representing Coleridge, Lamb, and Middleton, which is held by the Ward in the school winning the most prizes during the year. The statuette shows the boy Coleridge holding a book, which he is translating or explaining to Lamb and Middleton. This memorial grew out of the story which tells how Middleton one day finding the “young Mirandula” reading Vergil on the playground, asked him if it were a task. Coleridge replied that it was a pleasure. Middleton told the Master, Boyer, who at once took an active interest in Coleridge. The memorial of Lamb is a medal, which was first struck in 1875 on the centenary of Lamb’s birth, and which is awarded every year to the boy who writes the best English essay. It is a pleasure to know that two of the new schoolhouses at Horsham are called after Lamb.

Cinque Ports. The five port towns—Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover, and Sandwich—on the English Channel.

Clarkson, Thomas (1760–1846). An English abolitionist, and a friend of Lamb’s. The quotation, “true yoke-fellow with Time,” is from Wordsworth’s sonnet to Clarkson.

Claude. Claude Lorrain (1600–1682), a famous French painter of landscapes.

Clifford’s Inn. One of the London Inns of Court; the abode of lawyers. It was founded as a law school in the time of Edward III (1327–1377). It is now abolished.

Clinton, Sir Henry (1738–1795). The successor of Howe as commander-in-chief of the British forces in America in 1778.
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1772–1834). A poet, critic, and philosopher. He was the youngest child of a pedantic, lovable rector at Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire. Left an orphan, he was sent to the great charity school, Christ's Hospital, in his tenth year, and "began his long, unequal fight of life." He was a dreamer; he had a hopelessly erratic nature, and yet he had the marks of a titanic genius. As a boy in Devon he would wander over the fields slashing the tops off weeds, under the spell of imagination that he was one of the "Seven Champions of Christendom"; at Christ's Hospital he would watch the drifting clouds or read Vergil on the playground; and in the busy Strand in London he would, with flying arms, imagine himself Leander swimming the Hellespont. This boy, with his vivid imagination, made as enduring contributions to English literature as anything in the language. His Ancient Mariner, Christabel, Kubla Khan, his lectures on Shakespeare, fragments though they are, and his Table Talk, are among the glories of English literature.

Colnaghi. A collector and seller of engravings, prints, and autographs in Cockspur Street.

Colossus of Rhodes. A colossal statue of Apollo at Rhodes. It never straddled the harbor; consequently ships could not pass between its huge legs.

Comberbatch. Coleridge. Silas Titus Comberbatch was the name assumed by Coleridge when he enlisted in the 15th Light Dragoons in 1793. "Being at a loss when suddenly asked my name, I answered Comberback; and, verily, my habits were so little equestrian, that my horse, I doubt not, was of that opinion."

Commoner, Gentleman. A rich student who, by paying extra fees, was permitted to indulge in special liberties such as dining with the officials and wearing a special academic gown.

Complete Angler. A book by Izaak Walton (1593–1683). Walton was a London shopkeeper who spent his days roaming along the streams with a fishing-rod and basket, collecting odd bits of information about the unspoiled ways of nature. His Complete Angler, published in 1653, is one of the sweetest and most untroubled books ever written.

Lamb is ever praising this book. Writing to Coleridge, he says: "I have just been reading a book, which I may be too partial to, as it was the delight of my childhood; but I will recommend it to you—it is Izaak Walton's Complete Angler! . . . The dialogue is very simple, full of pastoral beauties, and will charm you."

Elsewhere he says: "It breathes the very spirit of innocence, purity, and simplicity of heart, . . . it would sweeten a man's temper at any time to read it; it would Christianize every discordant angry passion; pray make yourself acquainted with it."

Again, he calls this book "so old a darling of mine." And to
Wordsworth: “Izaak Walton hallows any page in which his revered name appears.”

Comus. A masque in verse by John Milton; it was performed at Ludlow Castle in Wales in 1634.

Comus. The evil spirit in Milton’s poem of that name, who, like his mother Circe, the enchantress, could transform human beings into swine.

Conduit in Cheap. A cistern of lead erected in 1285 for holding water brought underground from Paddington. In times of public festivity wine sometimes took the place of water.


Cornwall, Barry. The assumed name of Bryan Waller Procter (1790-1874). He was an intimate friend of Lamb’s and wrote, in his old age, a memoir of Lamb. As a poet of the sea he has had some fame. Lamb in “Witches and Other Night Fears” refers to Cornwall’s poem, “A Dream,” telling of a stormy sea-scene:

“Methought one told me that a child
Was that night unto great Neptune born;
And then old Triton blew his curled horn,
And the Leviathan lashed the foaming seas,
And the wanton Nereides
Came up like phantoms from their coral halls,
And laughed like tipsy Bacchanals,
Till all the fury of the ocean broke
Upon my ear. — I trembled and awoke.”


“Then let us welcome the new guest
With lusty brimmers of the best.”

Coventry, Thomas. He became a Bencher of the Inner Temple in 1766, was a sub-governor of the South-Sea House, and died in 1797, aged eighty-six. He had a country home at North Cray Place, Bexley, in Kent.

Cowley, Abraham (1618-1667). An English poet and essayist. The themes which in essay-writing interested Cowley are shown by some of his titles: “Of Greatness,” “Of Myself,” “Of Liberty,” “Of Solitude,” “The Garden.” He was a Cavalier poet, a follower of the Royal party as Milton was a follower of the Puritan party; but unlike some of the Royal poets, who are remarkable for ease and grace, Cowley as a poet is marked by heaviness and cumbersomeness.
Cribbage-board. Used in playing cribbage, a two-handed game at cards. There are one hundred and twenty holes, sixty holes on each side, into which small ivory pegs, one white and one red, are stuck and advanced as the game progresses. A "go" in cribbage is cried when by playing a card the player raises the score above thirty-one. The "nob" is scoring by playing the knave of trumps. If a knave happens to be the "turn-up," the dealer takes "two for his heels." A cribbage-board is often used in counting the points in whist.

Cræsus. The last and most renowned of the kings of Lydia. His gold mines and tributes from the Greek cities made him the richest monarch of his times, so we have the proverb "rich as Cræsus."

Crug. A slang word, still in use, applied by Christ's Hospital boys to bread.

Cyclops. "The three Cyclopes represented the terrors of rolling thunder, of the lightning flash, and of the thunderbolt." One fiery eye was deemed enough for each of them. They assisted Vulcan at his forge.

Cyril (d. 444). A father of the early Greek Church. It was he who "encouraged the tumult which led to the death of Hypatia."

Cythera. A Grecian island sacred to Venus, who emerged from the sea-foam there.

Dagon. The god, half man and half fish, worshiped by the Philistines. Cf. Judges xvi. 23 and 1 Samuel v.

Damascus ("waters of"). Naaman was commanded by Elisha to wash in the Jordan, that his leprosy might be cleansed away. Naaman, however, was wroth at the command, saying, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?"

Damætas. A shepherd in Vergil's Eclogues.

Dan Phæbus. Apollo. Dan, in Old English, was applied as a title of honor to men. Latterly it was applied in a jocular way.

Daniel. The Old Testament prophet, who as a boy was taken captive to Babylon about 606 B.C. Here he interpreted the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, and rose to fame. As a prophet he foretold a succession of great historical events.

Daniel, Samuel (1562–1619). A poet, dramatist, and prose writer; author of The Complaint of Rosamond, Hymen's Triumph, The Civil Wars between the Two Houses of York and Lancaster. Saintsbury says, "The poetical value of Daniel may almost be summed up in two words—sweetness and dignity. Nothing is more agreeable to him than to moralize; not indeed in any dull or crabbed manner, but in a mellifluous and at the same time weighty fashion, of which very few others have the secret." One can readily imagine Lamb's affection for such a writer. It was
Lamb’s copy of Daniel’s *Poetical Works*, two volumes, 1718, which Coleridge carried off, but returned enriched with marginal notes.

**Dante** (1265–1321). The greatest Italian poet. His great poem, *The Divine Comedy*, an epic poem in three parts—the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso*—treats of the penalties of sin, purification of sin, and the blessings of the redeemed in heaven. The disfigurations of Dante mentioned in the “Christ’s Hospital” essay refer to Dante’s *Inferno*, Cantos xxviii–xxx, in which several notorious sinners are described in extreme agony of punishment, having their bodies horribly mutilated: one carries his own dis-severed head, another is severed from head to foot, and others are equally gruesome to sight and sense.

**Dante’s lovers.** Paolo and Francesca in the fifth canto of the *Inferno*.

**Dead-letter days.** Days that are not marked by any special claim for observance; disregarded like an unclaimed letter.

**Debates.** The debates in Parliament as reported in the newspapers.

**De Clifford.** An ancient English family that traces its ancestry back to the twelfth century. Lamb, in his “South-Sea House” essay, alludes to the story of Jane Clifford under the name of “Fair Rosamond.”

**Defoe, Daniel** (1661–1731). Author of *Robinson Crusoe*. In his pamphlet, *The Shortest Way with Dissenters*, he ironically advised the severest punishment for those persons who did not conform to the form of worship established by the Church of England. For a time he was able to conceal his authorship, but finally his trick was discovered. He was placed in a pillory and then imprisoned. Pope was incorrect in saying that he stood “earless” in the pillory. That he stood “unabashed” is true, for he was a popular hero; the admiring crowd decorated the pillory with garlands of flowers.

**Delectable Mountains.** In Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. “These mountains are Immanuel’s Land, and they are within sight of his city” (*i.e.* the Celestial City). Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, and Sincere are the shepherds of the mountains.

**Delphic voyages.** Voyages to the oracle at Delphi, at the foot of Mount Parnassus.

**Derwentwater, House of.** The earls of Derwentwater were zealous supporters of Stuart rulers, and were unfortunate in that they had to suffer for their loyalty. James Radcliffe (1689–1716), the third earl, was beheaded in 1716 for his share in the rebellion of 1715. Another member of the house was summarily dealt with for complicity in the uprising of 1745.

**Desdemona.** The wife of the Moor, Othello, in Shakespeare’s *Othello*.

“... That I did love the Moor to live with him,  
My downright violence and storm of fortunes  
Devil's Litany. Some devilish form of prayer. A litany is a solemn form of supplication used in public worship. The clergyman reads the petition and the congregation responds.

Dewesbury, William. An associate and co-worker with George Fox.

Dido ("hall of"). The place where Æneas studied the pictures illustrating the Trojan War. The "hall" was the temple which Dido was erecting to Juno. Æneas "feeds his soul on the bodiless presentment" — Animum pictura pascit inani: Æneid, I. 464.

Dido. The queen of Carthage who killed herself for love of Æneas. The story is told in Vergil's Æneid, Books I and II.

Diogenes. A Greek cynic philosopher of the fourth century B.C., who searched Corinth with a lantern to find an honest man.

Dis. Pluto, the god of the under-world. Proserpine, while she was gathering flowers in the vale of Enna, in Sicily, and playing with the Loves, or Cupides, was carried off by Pluto to become his consort in Hades. The Loves fled at the appearance of grim-visaged Pluto.

Dives. The rich man who, when he died, looked up from hell to heaven, where he saw Lazarus, the beggar, in the bosom of Abraham. Cf. Luke xvi. 19-31.

Do—. Henry Dodwell, a clerk in the India House.

Dodd, James William (1740-1796). An English actor in minor parts.

Dodsley's dramas. Robert Dodsley (1703-1764) in 1744 published A Select Collection of Old Plays. Lamb was familiar with the Collection, as he used it in preparing his Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets.

Domenichino. An Italian painter (1581-1641).

Dorrell, William. One of the witnesses to the will of John Lamb, the father of Charles. Lamb, in his poem entitled "Epicadium (Going or Gone)" (which really means a funeral dirge), speaks of "wicked old Dorrell, 'gainst whom I have a quarrel," and in a suppressed stanza in the same poem he refers to Dorrell suffering "amid the dark Powers" where "will-forgers" are punished.

Drayton, Michael (1563-1631). Author of Polyolbion, a poem describing England and Wales. An epitaph, attributed to Ben Jonson, proclaims him as the possessor of "a name that cannot fade." His poem, The Battle of Agincourt, is one of the most stirring martial lyrics in the English language.

Drummond, William (1585-1649). Of Hawthornden, near Edinburgh; a poet and author of Notes on Ben Jonson's Conversations.

Duncan. King of Scotland in Shakespeare's Macbeth.

Dunning, John (1731-1783). Counsel for Wilkes at his trial for libel. See Wilkes. Dunning was subsequently created Earl of Ashburton.

Dyer, George (G. D.) (1755-1841). 'Educated at Christ's Hospital and Emmanuel College, Cambridge. A compiler and editor and general worker for the booksellers, shortsighted, absent-minded, and
simple, for whom Lamb had a lifelong affection. He compiled, among other books, a History of the University and Colleges of Cambridge, and contributed the original matter (preface excepted) to Valpy's edition of the Classics. The account of him given in Crabb Robinson's Diary well illustrates Lamb's frequent references to this singular character. 'He was one of the best creatures, morally, that ever breathed. He was the son of a watchman in Wapping, and was put to a charity school by some pious Dissenting ladies. . . . He was a scholar, but to the end of his days (and he lived to be eighty-five) was a bookseller's drudge. He led a life of literary labor in poverty. He made indexes, corrected the press, and occasionally gave lessons in Latin. . . . He wrote one good book, The Life of Robert Robinson, which I have heard Wordsworth mention as one of the best works of biography in the language. . . . Dyer had the kindest heart and simplest manners imaginable. It was literally the case with him that he would give away his last guinea. . . . Not many years before his death he married his laundress, by the advice of his friends—a very worthy woman. He said to me once, "Mrs. Dyer is a woman of excellent natural sense, but she is not literate." That is, she could neither read nor write. Dyer was blind for a few years before his death. I used occasionally to go on a Sunday morning to read to him. . . . After he came to London, Dyer lived always in some very humble chambers in Clifford's Inn, Fleet Street.'" — Ainger.

**E. B.** Edward Francis Burney (1760-1848). A portrait painter and book illustrator of much note in his day. He illustrated the Arabian Nights and the novels of Richardson and Smollett. He was a cousin of Madame D'Arblay (Frances Burney), who wrote one of the most delightful Diaries in the English language.

**Eastcheap.** Formerly the chief market-place in East London.

**Easter anthems.** Hymns composed for Easter, the time for celebrating the resurrection of Christ from the dead. "These were also sometimes written by the boys." — Lucas.

**Ebion.** A sectarian of the first century; a heretic who was the founder of the Ebionites, believers in a mixed creed: some following the belief of Christianity, and others denying Christ as a divinity.

**Elgin marbles.** Among the finest specimens of Greek sculpture. They formed originally part of the decorations of the Parthenon, but were brought to London by the Earl of Elgin, who subsequently sold them to the British government.

**Elia.** Lamb's pseudonym. Lamb first used this name as a signature for his essay "The South-Sea House" published in the London Magazine, August, 1820. How he procured the name is best told in his letter to John Taylor, July 30, 1821.

"Poor Elia, the real (for I am but a counterfeit), is dead. The
fact is, a person of that name, an Italian, was a fellow-clerk of mine at the South-Sea House, thirty (not forty) years ago, when the characters I described there existed, but had left it like myself many years; and I having a brother now there, and doubting how he might relish certain descriptions in it, I clapt down the name of Elia to it, which passed off pretty well, for Elia himself added the function of an author to that of a scrivener, like myself.

"I went the other day (not having seen him for a year) to laugh over with him at my usurpation of his name, and found him, alas! no more than a name, for he died of consumption eleven months ago, and I knew not of it. So the name has fairly devolved to me, I think; and 'tis all he has left me."

In the same letter Lamb says, "Poor Elia (call him Ell'ia)"—thus indicating the pronunciation, but as Canon Ainger says, "the world has taken more kindly to the broad e and single l."

Mr. Lucas notes that Mrs. Cowden Clarke in her copy of Procter's Memoir of Lamb records in a marginal note that Lamb once remarked that "Elia" formed an anagram of "a lie." Lamb once wrote himself down as a "matter-of-lie man."

**Elia, Bridget.** Mary Lamb, who is met in "Mrs. Battle," "My Relations," "Mackery End," and "Old China."

**Elia, James.** John Lamb, the elder brother of Charles.

**Elwes, John** (1714–1789). A noted English miser, member of a family of misers. He spent money freely on charities and gambling, but provided scantily for his personal necessities.

**Elysian exemptions.** The privileges of heaven. Elysium was the heaven, the place of happy spirits, in the mythology of the Greeks.

**Emmanuel.** A college at Cambridge; the stronghold of Puritanism.

**Ember Days.** "These are the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays after the first Sunday in Lent, the Feast of Pentecost, Holyrood Day (September 14), and St. Lucia's Day (December 15). They mark the return of the seasons, and have no connection with ashes."

**Emery, Mr.** "John Emery (1777–1822), the best impersonator of countrymen in his day."—Lucas.

**Enfield.** Ten miles north of London in Middlesex. Potter's Bar and Waltham, mentioned in "Old China," are fourteen and twelve miles respectively north of London.

"*Enraged Musician, The.*" A "picture drama" by Hogarth (q.v.), depicting a musician enraged and tormented by the pandemonium of street noises.

**Ephesian journeyman.** Demetrius, a silversmith of Ephesus, who raised a riot against Paul and the Christians because their belief interfered with the making of silver shrines for the worship of the goddess Artemis. Cf. Acts xix. 24–41.

**Epiphanous.** See Epiphany.
Epiphany. The word literally means “a striking appearance, a manifestation”; it has reference to the period when the star appeared to the wise men of the East. This feast falls on January 6, twelve days after Christmas, and was called Twelfth Day. The date, of course, falls on various days in various years and occasionally on Sunday, in which case there would be no holiday,—which constitutes these “periodical” misfortunes.

Erra Pater. An astrologer. Astrologers in former times were wise in affairs of the almanac.

Essex Street. There the aunt mentioned in “My Relations” attended the Unitarian service. Lamb for a time was a member of the sect, but finally dropped all ostensible religious connections.

Eton. A famous school founded in 1440 by King Henry the Sixth, at Eton, across the Thames River from Windsor Castle.

Evans, William. A clerk in the South-Sea House who became deputy-cashier in 1792.

Evelyn, John (1620–1706). A writer on many diverse themes, but chiefly remembered and read to-day for his Diary. Lamb in “Imperfect Sympathies” refers to Evelyn’s Acetaria: A Discourse of Sallets, a part of Evelyn’s book on gardening.

F—. Joseph Favell, afterward Captain, was killed at Salamanca in 1812, in the Peninsular campaign. In “Poor Relations” Lamb writes of Favell under the initial “W,” and says he was killed at San Sebastian. His epitaph in Great St. Andrew’s Church gives his first name as Samuel.

“Fairy Queen.” By Edmund Spenser (q.v.)

Falstaff, Sir John. A fat, witty, and dissolute old knight in Shakespear’s Merry Wives of Windsor and Henry IV.

Farquhar, George (1678–1707). A comic dramatist; author of The Beaux’ Stratagem and other rollicking plays.

Fasces. Rod of office, i.e. in school language, the birch-rod. The fasces, a bundle of rods with an ax in the middle, were carried before the magistrates of Rome as a symbol of their authority.

Fernandez, Juan. The island where Alexander Selkirk, the hero of Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe, was wrecked.

Field, Barron. Born October 23, 1786. “He was educated for the Bar and practiced for some years, going the Oxford Circuit. In 1816 he married, and went out to New South Wales as Judge of the Supreme Court at Sydney. In 1824 he returned to England, having resigned his judgeship; but two or three years afterwards he was appointed Chief-Justice of Gibraltar. He died at Torquay in 1846. His brother, Francis John Field, was a fellow-clerk of Charles Lamb’s at the India House, a circumstance which was perhaps the origin of the acquaintance. Barron Field edited a volume of papers (Geographical Memoirs) on New South Wales
for Murray, and the appendix contains some short poems, entitled 'First Fruits of Australian Poetry.' Some papers of his are to be found in Leigh Hunt's Reflectors, to which Lamb also contributed."—Ainger.

Field, Rev. Matthew. Master of the Lower Grammar School of Christ's Hospital. The following note from Leigh Hunt's Autobiography is interesting as revealing something of the man:

"A man of a more handsome incompetence for his situation perhaps did not exist. He came late of a morning; went away soon in the afternoon; and used to walk up and down, languidly bearing his cane, as if it were a lily, and hearing our eternal 'Dominuses' and 'As in præsentis' with an air of ineffable endurance. Often he did not hear at all. It was a joke with us when any of our friends came to the door, and we asked his permission to go to them, to address him with some preposterous question wide of the mark, to which he used to assent. We would say, for instance, 'Are you not a great fool, sir?' or 'Isn't your daughter a pretty girl?' to which he would reply, 'Yes, child.' When he condescended to hit us with the cane, he made a face as if he were taking a physic."


Fiend in Spenser. Faerie Queene, II. 7. 64. The Fiend is the evil spirit whom Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, meets in the cave of Mammon.

"Guyon finds Mamon in a delve
Sunning his treasure hore:
Is by him tempted and led downe
To see his secrete store."

Fifth of November. Guy Fawkes Day. On that day, 1605, Fawkes tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament, but failed. His failure caused such rejoicing that the date has ever since been commemorated.

First Folio of Shakespeare. Published in 1623 and so named to distinguish it from three other folio editions published in the same century.

Fisc. A royal treasury.

Five points. The five points of the Calvinistic theology were Original Sin, Predestination, Irresistible Grace, Particular Redemption, Final Perseverance.

Flamen. A Roman priest. An archflamen was a high priest.

Flappers. A monitor who reminds one of some duty or wakens one from a dreamy state. In Swift's Gulliver's Travels, Gulliver comes to Laputa, where the inhabitants are dreamers. They were so absent-minded that they had to be aroused by "flappers," who struck their masters with blown bladders.
Flower Pot, The. An inn in Bishopsgate Street, next to the South-Sea House, whence coaches continued on their way to the north of London.

Flushes. In card-playing, cards all of one color or one suit.


Fox, George (1624–1691). The founder of the Society of Friends, or Quakers (q.v.). His life depicts a varied career: apprentice to a grazier, to a shoemaker; a preacher; a friend of Cromwell; and the organizer of a strong religious sect.

Fr—. Frederick William Franklin, master of the Hartford branch of Christ's Hospital from 1801 to 1827.

Friar John. "A tall, lean, wide-mouthed, long-nosed friar of Seville . . . who swore lustily and fought like a Trojan with the staff of a cross."—Brewer. When he had crushed his adversary he condemned his soul "to all the devils in hell!" He is immortalized in the French writer Rabelais's Gargantua.

Fuller ("old"), Thomas (1608–1661). A worthy divine and writer; author of many works, among which The Worthies of England is the masterpiece. This book covers England by counties, contains a host of miscellaneous facts and diverting fancies, and is written in a quaint but lively style. Under the title "Warwickshire," Fuller describes the "wit-combats" between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson.

G. D. See Dyer, George.

Gallican land. France.

Garrick, David (1716–1779). Garrick was the foremost actor of his age, and one of the greatest of all English actors. With Johnson, whose friend and pupil he was, he came to London in 1737, for the purpose of studying law. Soon, however, he gave up his idea of becoming a barrister to follow his natural bent. His influence on the stage was ever good and purifying. For a generation he was the leader of the English stage, and he was, in a large measure, responsible for the Shakespearean revival of his day. For his memorial at Lichfield, Johnson wrote these words: "I am disappointed by that stroke of death which has eclipsed the gayety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure." John Lamb, the father of Charles, had some physical resemblances to Garrick.

Gascoigne, Old Bamber (1725–1791). Member of Parliament from Bifrons, in Essex.

Gatty, Henry (1774–1844). An English comedian who was noted for his old-man parts.
Gebir. A poem by Walter Savage Landor.

Gibbon, Edward (1737–1794). Author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

Gideon's Miracle. A fleece of wool exposed on the ground was wet with dew while all the earth around it was dry. Cf. Judges vi. 37, 38. The converse of this miracle is told in verses 39, 40: "For it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground." Cf. also Cowley's lines in "The Complaint," stanza 7:

"For ev'ry tree and ev'ry land around,
With pearly dew was crowned,
And upon all the quicken'd ground
The fruitful seed of Heaven did brooding lie,
And nothing but the Muse was dry."


Gog and Magog. Fabulous giants. In Revelation xx. 7–9, they personate all enemies of Christianity.

Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras. Monsters of Greek mythology. The Gorgons were three sisters, the most awful of whom was Medusa, whose hair was entwined with serpents. So hideous was she that whoever looked on her was turned to stone. The Hydras refer to the nine-headed monster of the Lernean marshes in Argolis, slain by Hercules. The Chimera was a monster with a goat's body, a lion's head, and a dragon's tail, slain by Bellerophon.

Goshen. The district allotted to the children of Israel for their residence in Egypt. While Pharaoh and the Egyptians suffered from the plagues, the dwellers in Goshen were exempt. Hence the word means a refuge, a place of safety. Exodus vii. 22, ix. 23–26, xi. 8.

Gothic tribes. An ancient nation living in the north of Europe, that took an important part in the overthrow of the Roman Empire. They are described as large, blue-eyed, great feeders, respecters of law and order, with a high regard for women and a veneration for life and death.

Grecian. "The Deputy Grecians were in Homer, Cicero, and Demosthenes; the Grecians in the Greek plays and mathematics. Those who became Grecians always went to the University, though not always into the Church; which was reckoned a departure from the contract." — Leigh Hunt, Autobiography.

Greek Calends and Latter Lammas. The Greeks had no calends—the first day of each month among the Romans. Lammas is August 1. Hence the phrases signify never.

Gresham, Thomas (1519?–1579). Founder of the Royal Exchange and Gresham College. He was a noted financier in Elizabeth's time.
Greville, Fulke, Lord Brook (1554–1623). Author of some poems, tragedies, and The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney, and of his own epitaph, which reads: "Fulke Greville, servant to Queen Elizabeth, councillor to King James, and friend to Sir Philip Sidney."

Grey Friars. A school established on the site of the old Grey Friars' Monastery. The Grey Friars were the Franciscan friars, and were so called because of their gray habit.

Grotiuses. Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), a Dutchman who was the founder of international law, wrote De Jure Belli et Pacis—"The Law of War and Peace."

Guildhall giants. The Guildhall was "the old council-hall of the city of London; founded 1411, and restored after the fire of 1666." The "giants," two colossal wooden images, called Gog and Magog, originally stood "guardant" at the door, but in 1708 they were removed and placed upon octagon stone columns under the west window of the Guildhall—"guardant of nothing."

H—. Hodges.

Habakkuk. The Old Testament prophet who lamented the iniquities of Israel in the midst of its ruins. He prophesied probably about the years 620–610 B.C.

Hades of Thieves. The penal colonies in Australia. Botany Bay, the most noted of these convict colonies, was settled in 1737. Hades, in classical mythology, was the place of torment.

Hagar's offspring. Ishmael, the son of Hagar, who was the bondwoman of Abraham, was cast out of the household at the bidding of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Hall-feast. An immense banquet given by one of the guilds of London in their guild hall. The banquet was inaugurated by a clergyman who asked a grace.

Hallowmas. All Hallows' or All Saints' Day, November 1.

Hare Court. "The Lambs lived at 4 Inner Temple Lane from 1809 to 1817. Writing to Coleridge in June, 1809, Lamb says:—

"'The rooms are delicious, and the best look backwards to Hare Court, where there is a pump always going. Hare Court trees come in at the window, so that it's like living in a garden.'"—Lucas.

Harrington, James (1611–1677). A political writer who devised a scheme of perfect government modeled on More's Utopia, which he published in his Commonwealth of Oceana.

Hathaway, Matthias. Steward at Christ's Hospital from 1790 to 1813. Leigh Hunt, in his Autobiography, III, 59, says:—

"The name of the steward, a thin stiff man of invincible formality of demeanor, admirably fitted to render encroachment impossible, was Hathaway. We of the grammar school used to call him 'the Yeoman,' on account of Shakespeare's having married the
daughter of a man of that name, designated as 'a substantial yeoman.'"


**Hays.** An old English country dance which was very popular until recent years.

**Helicon.** The Muses' Mount. It is a part of the Parnassus, a mountain range in Boeotia in Greece. It had two sacred springs, Aganippe and Hippocrene.

**Heliogabalus.** A Roman emperor (204–222) notorious for his licentious life and luxurious living.

**Helots.** The slave class of Laconia. Spartan parents sometimes made the Helots drunk so that they might stand as terrible examples to the severely trained young Spartans.

**Helvellyn.** A mountain on the borders of Cumberland and Westmoreland, in the Lake District. Helvellyn (3118 feet), the second highest mountain in the district, has no peak and hardly any crags on one side, but it has a huge mass, and an effect of size is enhanced by the broken edges of the steep side on which you stand. Lamb visited Coleridge for three weeks at Keswick in 1802.

**Henley.** A town, thirty-six miles from London, famous for its boat-races.

**Herculaneum.** This city, with Pompeii, was buried in ashes and lava by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius A.D. 79. Recent excavations on the sites of these Italian cities have revealed much concerning ancient manners of living.

**Heresiarch** ("grand"). Arch chief of heretics.

**Hero and Leander.** Two Greek lovers whose fateful ending appeals to all story readers. They lived on opposite sides of the Hellespont, and Leander was wont to swim across to meet Hero. One night, while attempting to cross in a storm, he perished. Hero, in grief, cast herself into the sea. Byron, Marlowe, and Keats tell the story in English verse.

**Herodias's daughter.** She demanded that the head of John the Baptist should be served to her on a platter. *Mark* vi.

**Hesperian fruit.** The golden apples of the tree that had sprung up to grace the wedding of Jove and Juno. The tree was guarded by Hesperis, her three daughters, and a dragon. It was one of Hercules' tasks to procure the apples.

**Hexam, Battle of, and Surrender of Calais.** Two comedies by George Colman the younger (1762–1836).

**Heywood, Thomas.** An English dramatist (dates unknown).

**Hobbima** (1638–1709). A Dutch landscape painter.

and "Industry and Idleness" are pictures which portray in grim and often ghastly style the shortcomings of unrighteous and weak-minded persons. Lamb knew Hogarth's prints by heart, admired the artist and his insight, and called him "one of the greatest ornaments of England." One of Lamb's best critical essays is entitled "On the Genius and Character of Hogarth." The scene of "Noon" is laid in a French Huguenot chapel in Hog Lane, where St. Mary's Church now stands in Charing Cross Road.

Hog Lane. Now Middlesex Street, Whitechapel. It was a place marked by disreputable scenes and evil-minded inhabitants.

Hog's Norton. Mr. Lucas furnishes the following complete note:—
"An old proverb runs: 'I think thou wast born at Hoggs-Norton, where piggs play upon the organs.' Hog's Norton is on the borders of Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. One account of the origin of the legend is the organ-playing of a villager named Pigg. In Witt's Recreation, there is this epigram on pigs' devouring a bed of pennyroyal, commonly called organs:—

'A good wife once, a bed of organs set,  
The pigs came in, and eat up every whit;  
The Goodman said, Wife, you your garden may  
Hog's Norton call, here pigs on organs play.'"

Holy Michael. September 29, a feast-day in honor of St. Michael the Archangel. In England this day, known as Michaelmas Day, is one of the four quarter-days of the year when all rents, interests, and general accounts are settled. The other English quarter-days are: Lady Day, March 25; Midsummer, June 24; and Christmas, December 25.


Holy Thomas. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), one of the most learned and pious theologians in the Romau Catholic Church; a member of the Dominican order. His chief work is the Summary of Theology.

Homer. A Greek poet, author of the Iliad, which tells the story of Troy, and of the Odyssey, which tells of the wanderings of Odysseus after the fall of Troy. The greatest poet of antiquity, and one of the greatest poets of all time.

Hooker, Richard (1553?–1600). Called the "judicious"; author of A Treatise on the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, probably the greatest theological work in the English language. He was a graduate of Oxford, where he was a servitor.

Hospitallers. Christ's Hospital boys.

House Beautiful. A house beyond the Wicket Gate in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. The "Interpreter" was the lord of the house who showed Christian (the Pilgrim) the man in the iron cage.
Howard, Sir Robert (1626–1698). The brother-in-law of John Dryden, and joint author with him of The Indian Queen. The lines quoted in "The Superannuated Man" are from Howard's The Vestal Virgin or The Roman Ladies, V. 1.


Hugh of Lincoln. A little Christian boy who was stolen by the Jews of Lincoln in 1255, and by them tortured to death. The story has often been told in English literature; first by Matthew Paris, a Benedictine monk, and by some old ballad singer whose story is recorded in Percy's Reliques, and also by Chaucer in his "Prioress's Tale."


Hymen. The god of marriage in Greek and Roman mythology.

Imperial forgetter: Nebuchadnezzar. And Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and his spirit was terrified with it and his dream went out of his mind. Daniel ii.

India House. The East India House is the London headquarters of the East India Company, a joint-stock trading company formed to carry on commerce with the East Indies. The original charter of the Company was granted in 1600. It became not only a great commercial, but also a great political and territorial power. For a long time, until 1858, it was practically the governing power in India. Lamb was in the employ of the East India Company from April, 1792, to March, 1825.

Ino Leucothea. The daughter of Cadmus and Harmonia and the wife of Athamas, king of Thebes. Athamas, inspired with frenzy by Juno, pursued his wife, who, to escape him, jumped into the sea and was made a goddess by Neptune. She was worshiped under the name of Leucothea, "the white goddess." Lamb tells her story completely in his juvenile book, The Adventures of Ulysses.

Iris. Goddess of the rainbow.

Iscariot. Judas Iscariot. Cf. John xii. 6, "Because he was a thief, and had the bag." His "defalcation" took a holiday from the calendar.

Islington. A parish two miles north of St. Paul's. Lamb lived there in 1823.

Italian Opera. Grand opera; the drama is sung, not spoken.

J. W. James White (1775–1820), a school-fellow of Lamb's at Christ's Hospital. Lamb, long after White's death, said of him, "There never was his like; we shall never see such days as those in which he flourished." Elsewhere Lamb calls him "My merry friend, Jim White."

J—II. Joseph Jekyll; became a Bencher in 1795, a Master in Chancery
in 1815, and died in 1837, aged eighty-five. He was enjoyed for his wit and pleasantry, but he was feeble in argument and empty of ideas.

**Jackson, Richard.** Became a Bencher in 1770, a member of Parliament and a minister of the crown in 1782, and died in 1787. His extensive learning and prodigious memory gained him the sobriquet of "Omniscent"—which Dr. Johnson translated as the "all-knowing."

**Jael.** The woman who treacherously murdered Sisera, the Captain of Jabin's army. "Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died."—Judges iv. 18-24.

**Jamblicus.** One of the Neo-Platonic (a refined revival of the doctrines of Plato) philosophers of the fourth century; author of a life of Pythagoras and works on philosophy.

**Janus.** The Roman god who was represented as having two faces, thus seeing the past and the future at the same time. Lamb, in speaking of "half-Januses," means a Janus of one face, *i.e.* a Janus "looking at the past only."


**Jericho.** The walls around the city of Jericho fell at the blast of the rams' horns blown by the priests. *Joshua* vi.

**Jerome** (340-420 A.D.). A father of the Latin Church, a translator of the Hebrew Scriptures into Latin—*the Vulgate version."

**Jewel, John** (1522-1571). Bishop of Salisbury; author of *Apologia pro Ecclesia Anglicana,* "An Apology for the Church of England." He has been characterized as "a learned, pious, and modest divine."

**Jocos Risus-que.** The spirits of jest and laughter.

**John Murray's Street.** Albemarle Street, Piccadilly, where John Murray (1778-1843) founded the great publishing firm of that name. Few publishers have had such long and intimate acquaintance with their authors as the Murrays.

**Johnson, Samuel** (1709-1784). Dr. Johnson, the literary dictator of his time, was famous as a lexicographer, essayist, critic, and conversationalist. On account of his great classical erudition, and his use of polysyllabic words and involved sentence structure, his works are little read, with the exception of his Oriental tale *Rasselas* and the *Lives of the Poets.* His fame rests largely on his striking personality, his innate goodness, and his saving common sense. No other man in English literature is so thoroughly known as Johnson, who has been presented to us in the greatest biography in any language—Boswell's *Life of Johnson."*
Joseph's vest. The "coat of many colors." Cf. Genesis xxxvii.

Josephus, Flavius (d. about 100 A.D.). Author of Jewish Antiquities and Wars of the Jews.

Jubal. "The father of all such as handle the harp and organ."—Genesis iv. 21.

Jude ("the better"). The Apostle, to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ.

K. ("Spiteful"). James Kenney (1780–1820), a dramatist; author of Raising the Wind. He married a French woman and lived for many years at Versailles, where the Lambs visited him in 1822.

Kemble, John Philip (1757–1823). The great actor of Shakespearean parts. He was a brother of Sarah Siddons and of Charles Kemble, who was the father of Fanny Kemble.

Kemble, Mrs. Charles. She was Miss De Camp, an actress, before her marriage to Charles Kemble (1775–1854), the brother of Sarah Siddons and John Kemble, noted actors.

Kempis, Thomas à (1380–1471). A German mystic who is reputed to have written De Imitatione Christi—"After the Manner of Christ." One of the translators of the book was George Stanhope, Dean of Canterbury.

Keppel, Augustus (1725–1786). An Admiral in the English navy. He made some stir in the world when he was accused of misconduct by a subordinate, but was acquitted after a trial.

Kubla Khan. In Coleridge's poem Kubla Khan is a description of a wonderful palace:

"It was a miracle of rare device,  
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!"

"A damsel with a dulcimer  
In a vision once I saw:  
It was an Abyssinian maid,  
And on a dulcimer she played  
Singing of Mount Abora."

This palace was built in Xanadu,

"Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea."

L—., John. John Lamb, the brother of Charles.

L—. Lacy, a name invented by Lamb.

L's governor. Samuel Salt (q.v.).

Lady Day. March 25, the feast of the Annunciation,—the time when the Virgin Mary was told that she was to be the Mother of Christ.

Lane's novels. "Better known as the novels of the Minerva Press, from which Lane, the publisher, issued innumerable works."

—Ainger.

Lar, Queen. The Lares and the Penates were the household gods of the Romans; the souls of ancestors who protected the hearth. Therefore, Mrs. Montagu was the spirit of the home, the angel of the hearth.


Latimer, Hugh (1485-1555). A famous prelate in the English Church. He wore the gown of a servitor at Cambridge. He was burned at Oxford.

"Laughing Audience" (Hogarth's). This picture is exceedingly well described by Professor Dowden in his Shakspere, His Mind and Art, Chapter VII. See Hogarth.

Lavinian shores. Laviniun in Italy. After the sack of Troy Æneas fled to the Lavinian shores. Æneid, I. 2.


Lear. King Lear, in Shakespeare's tragedy of that name. In Act III is a description of the King's madness, brought on by the ill-treatment of his disloyal daughters, Goneril and Regan. He spends the night in a storm with a fool and the faithful Kent. In Act II. 4. 253, Lear says to his daughter Regan, "I gave you all."

Lent. A period of fast, lasting forty days, from Ash-Wednesday to Easter.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519.) A famous Florentine painter. The print to which Lamb refers in "Imperfect Sympathies" was a reproduction of the Vierge aux Rochers, "The Virgin of the Rock."

Lethe. The river of oblivion in Hades. Whoever drank of this stream at once forgot his past existence. Lamb in "Dream-Children" suggests the idea of incarnation, that is, that after the lapse of ages these children of his imagination may become children in the flesh, a reality and not phantoms of a dream. Cf. Vergil's Æneid, VI. 748-751.


Lictor. Among the ancient Romans, the lictor was an attendant of the consuls; he carried an ax amid a bundle of rods as an ensign of his office.

Lincoln. Lincolnshire. Lamb's father came from Lincolnshire.

Lions in the Tower. The Royal Menagerie was formerly kept near the western gate of the Tower of London; later, in 1831, it was removed to the Zoological Gardens in Regent's Park.

Liston, John (1776-1846). An English comedian, popular in many parts in various London theaters.
Locke, John (1632-1704). An English philosopher and writer on educational topics. Like Rousseau, Locke was a believer in the modern theory of education that the natural disposition of the child should determine what kind of education should be given to him.

London Magazine. This magazine, founded in 1820, had for its first editor, John Scott (1783-1821). Lamb, who was probably introduced to the London by Hazlitt, made his first contribution to the magazine in August, 1820. Scott, a very able man and editor, had a quarrel with John Gibson Lockhart, the son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott, which finally ended in a duel with J. H. Christie, Lockhart’s friend. Scott was wounded, and died in February, 1821. After his death the London led a varied career, going from bad to worse until 1825 when it fell on evil days. Lamb was an almost continual contributor from 1820 to 1823, but from January to August, 1825, he wrote but little for the London. He next identified himself with the New Monthly Magazine. The London in its day had many famous contributors, among whom were Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Allan Cunningham, Thomas Hood, Keats, Thomas Carlyle, and Landor.

Lothbury. “The street which runs on the north side of the Bank of England; the region where business men and clerks most congregate.” — Hallward and Hill. Read Wordsworth’s “Reverie of Poor Susan.”

Louis the Fourteenth (King of France, 1643-1715). Henry IV of France, in the Edict of Nantes, promised the French Protestants tolerance and security. In 1685 Louis XIV, by his revocation of the Edict, drove thousands of the Huguenots, or French Protestants, from France and prostrated the country. Many of these French refugees took up their residence in London.

Lovel. John Lamb, the father of Charles.

“Lover, The Royal, and Lady G——” and “The Melting Platonic and the old Beau.” Waucope explains these references to “two cartoons on the dissolute Prince Regent, afterwards George IV (1762-1830).”


Lucian (c. 120-200). A Greek satirist whose treatment of even religious subjects was marked by keen wit. Sir Richard Jebb remarks that “Lucian has much in common with Swift, and more, perhaps, with Voltaire.”

Lucretian pleasure. A reference to Lucretius’s De Rerum Natura, II, 1-4. “Sweet it is, when the winds are troubling the waters on the wide sea, to contemplate from the shore the hardship of another, not because it is a delicious satisfaction to feel that any one should be miserable, but because it is consoling to discern from what evils we ourselves are free.”
Lully, Raymond (1235-1315). A medievæal philosopher and alchemist, author of Ars Magna and a system of logic.

Lutheran beer. Luther is said to have been fond of his beer.

M ("my friend"). Thomas Manning (1772-1840) and Charles Lamb first met in 1799, and from that time they became intimate friends and capital correspondents. Manning was a traveler, a linguist, and a mathematician. Lamb, writing to Coleridge in 1826, says: "I am glad you esteem Manning, though you see but his husk or shrine. He discloses not, save to select worshipers, and will leave the world without any one hardly but me knowing how stupendous a creature he is." Elsewhere, writing to Lloyd, he says of Manning, "A man of great power,—an enchanter almost,—only he is lazy and does not put forth all his strength." Few of Lamb's letters are more interesting than his letters to Manning.

M's ("at our friend"). Basil Montagu, Q.C. (1770-1851), a legal writer; a friend of Lamb, Wordsworth, and Coleridge; and editor of Bacon's works. Mrs. Montagu, Montagu's third wife, was a Mrs. Skepper. Carlyle corresponded with her, and Edward Irving called her "the noble lady." Her daughter, Anne Skepper, the "A. S." of "Oxford in the Vacation," became the wife of Bryan Waller Procter, the poet and man of letters, who wrote under the pseudonym of Barry Cornwall. Procter, who vouches for the George Dyer incident, was the schoolmate of Lord Byron and Sir Robert Peel at Harrow, the friend and companion of Keats, Lamb, Shelley, Coleridge, Landor, Hunt, Talfourd, and Rogers,—the man to whom Thackeray dedicated his Vanity Fair.

Maccaronies. This word, meaning fops or dandies, came into use in England some time between 1750 and 1775. Horace Walpole tells us about the Maccaroni Club, which was composed of "all the traveled young men who wear long curls and spying-glasses."

Machiavel, Niccolo (1469-1527). A Florentine statesman and author who was engaged in many diplomatic missions, and who was imprisoned for conspiring against the Medici, the rulers of Florence. His greatest work, The Prince, in which he discusses political ideals and manipulations, has been both commended and condemned for its policies. Certainly he was crafty and cunning. Lamb alludes to his Florentine History.

Macready, William Charles (1793-1873). An English actor who attained eminent distinction in the parts of Macbeth, Lear, Cassius, Iago, Richelieu, and Virginius. Macready met Lamb at Talfourd's, where Lamb said that he wished to draw his last breath through a pipe and exhale it in a pun. This meeting was in 1834, nine years after the time of the "Barbara S——" essay.

Malone, Edmund (1741-1812). An Irish critic and editor of Shakespeare's plays and poems. The incident Lamb pictures in "Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading" "happened in 1793 on the occasion of Malone's visit to Stratford to examine the municipal and other records of that town, for the purpose of his edition of Shakespeare." — Ainger.

Mammon. The story of Mammon, the Money God, is told by Spenser in the Faerie Queene, Book II, canto vii, The Legend of Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance. Mammon was the Chaldaic god of riches. Milton describes him in Paradise Lost, I. 678.

Man, Henry (1747-1799). The author of the now "forgotten volumes" entitled Miscellaneous Works in Verse and Prose of the late Henry Man, London, 1802. Among the subscribers to Man's volumes, the reader of Lamb's essay on the "South-Sea House" will readily recognize the names of John Evans, Richard Plumer, Thomas Tipp, and Thomas Maynard. Mr. Lucas asserts that Man became deputy-secretary of the South-Sea House in 1776; other editors, notably the Rev. Alfred Ainger, give the date as 1793. Many of Man's contributions were to the newspapers, chiefly to the Morning Chronicle, the London Gazette, and the Public Ledger.

Mandeville, Bernard (1670-1733). Author of a poem entitled The Grumbling Hive, which was reprinted in 1714 with the title The Fable of the Bees; or Private Vices, Public Benefits. The book was a favorite of Lamb's.

"March to Finchley." A "picture drama" by Hogarth (q.v.). The picture shows soldiers marching to Finchley in a merry mood, with a merry crowd of followers. The pie-man with his wares on his head is marching beside the chimney-sweep with his brush.

Marcion. A sectarian, heretic of the first century, who rejected the Old Testament and adhered to St. Paul as the true teacher.

Margate. On the Isle of Thanet in Kent. A hoy was a sloop-rigged vessel, with one deck and a single mast, used in coast trading and passenger traffic.

Marlowe, Kit. Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), Shakespeare's greatest predecessor, was the author of Dr. Faustus, Tamburlaine, The Jew of Malta, and Edward II.

Marsyas. The Phrygian flute player who challenged Apollo, the god of music, to a contest of skill. Being defeated by Apollo, he was flayed alive for his presumption. This story is the subject of a painting by the Spanish artist, Spagnoletti, "The Little Spaniard," whose real name was Jusepe Ribera. The picture, which was painted in the seventeenth century, now hangs in the Museum at Madrid.

Marvell, Andrew (1621-1678). An English poet who is remembered for two things: his association with Milton as assistant Latin-secre-
tary under Cromwell, and his charming nature poetry, written with romantic intensity and with matter-of-fact realism. The most beautiful of his poems are "The Garden" and "The Mower to the Glow-worms." He was one of Lamb's favorite poets.

Maseres, Baron. Francis Maseres (1731-1824) was for fifty years Cur- sitor Baron of the Exchequer ("whose business is to make out writs, summoning a defendant to appear, before a suit begins"). Throughout his life he wore the costume of the reign in which he was born.

Mathews, Charles. He made a famous collection of theatrical por- traits, now in the Garrick Club collection.

May Day. First of May.

Meshech. "Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech." — Psalms cxx. 5.

Michael, Holy. September 29 is his feast day; a quarter-day in Eng- land.

Michael Angelo's Moses. Michael Angelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), the famous Italian painter, sculptor, architect, and poet, made the colossal statue of Moses in the church of San Pietro in Vinculio at Rome. The hair on the head is arranged in such a peculiar way that it gives the effect of horns. "The horns arise from the Vul- gate mistranslation, quod cornuta esset facies ejus (that his face was horned), of Exodus xxxiv. 29, where the English version has 'Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone.' The Hebrew word queren, a horn, is from the root quaran, to shine."

— Hallward and Hill.

Midas. The ears of King Midas of Phrygia were changed into asses' ears for deciding, in a musical contest between Pan and Apollo, the god of music, that Pan was the better musician.

Middleton, Thomas Fanshaw (1769-1822). Consecrated bishop of Calcutta in 1814. He conducted the County Spectator, a magazine, in 1792-1793.

Milton, John (1608-1674). Author of Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus, Lycidas, and other poems. He is ranked next to Shakespeare as the greatest English poet. Lamb had a great admiration for Milton and for Milton's poems.

Mincing Lane. The South-Sea House was in Mincing Lane, which runs between Fenwick Street and Great Tower Street. The old East India House, where Lamb spent thirty-three of his thirty-six years of desk drudgery, stood at the corner of Leadenhall-Lime Street, not far away.

Minerva ("born in panoply"). The goddess of wisdom who sprang fully armed from the head of Jupiter.

Mingay, James. He became a Bencher in 1785; died in 1812. He was noted as a lawyer, an orator, and a wit. He was also an eminent King's Counsel, hence his iron hand.

Mirandula. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494); a young Ital-
ian nobleman of brilliant intellect, refined manners, and extraordinary attainments; the associate of Lorenzo de Medici and of Politian, famous scholars and men of affairs.

"Miserere." The Fifty-first Psalm.

Montagu, Edward Wortley (1713–1776). Son of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; a famous traveler who began his wanderings by running away from Westminster School and becoming, among other things, a chimney-sweep.

Mordecai. Haman, who was invited to Queen Esther's banquet, was disquieted because he saw Mordecai the Jew sitting at the gate. Esther iv. and v.

Mowbray. The name of an ancient English family that traces its ancestry to the thirteenth century.


Mulberry-Gardens. Mulberry Garden occupied the present site of Buckingham Palace and Garden. The mulberry trees were planted by James I (1603–1625), who wished to introduce silk culture into England. In the seventeenth century it was a noted pleasure resort.

Mumchance. A game of cards or dice, played in silence; hence the adjective use of the word in the sense of glum and silent.


Muses' Hill. Either Parnassus or Helicon, where the fountains Aganippe and Hippocrene rose. Lamb in "Oxford in the Vacation" refers to the Universities as the Muses' hill.

Nando's. A Fleet Street coffee-house.

Naylor, James (1617–1660). A fanatic Quaker who, imagining himself to be the reincarnation of Christ, entered Bristol in 1655, naked, on horseback, in imitation of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Parliament severely punished him for his audacity and blasphemous behavior. Lamb calls him "my favorite"—a term which may probably be explained in the essay "A Quakers' Meeting."

Neptune. The god of the sea. The tritons were sea-gods, and the nereids were sea-nymphs.

Nero. The sixth and last of the Julian line of Roman emperors. His reign (A.D. 54–68) was marked by crimes of almost incredible enormity, tyranny, and disgrace. Neronian persecution has become a synonym for any kind of inhuman treatment.

Nessian venom. When Nessus, the centaur, tried to carry off Dejanira, the wife of Hercules, the giant slew him. With his dying breath Nessus led Dejanira to believe that if she dipped the robe of Hercules in the flowing blood of the centaur, she could ever hold the love of her husband. Later when Hercules donned the cloak
the blood penetrated his limbs, and he tore away whole pieces of his body in wrenching the garment from him, and died in consequence.

Nevis. An island in the British West Indies.

Newcastle, Margaret. Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (1624–1673), wrote the life of her husband, "The Life of the Thrice Noble, High, and Puissant Prince William Cavendish, and Earl of Newcastle; by the Thrice Noble, Illustrious, and Excellent Princess, Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, his Wife." Horace Walpole describes her as a "fertile pendant, with an unbounded passion for scribbling."

Newton, Sir Isaac (1642–1727). English philosopher, scientist, mathematician, and discoverer of the law of gravitation.

Norris, Randall. "For many years Sub-Treasurer and Librarian of the Inner Temple. At the age of fourteen he was articled to Mr. Walls of Paper Buildings, and from that time, for more than half a century, resided in the Inner Temple. . . . His name appears early in Charles's correspondence. At the season of his mother's death he [Lamb] tells Coleridge that Mr. Norris had been more than a father to him, and Mrs. Norris more than a mother. Mr. Norris died in the Temple in January, 1827, at the age of seventy-six. . . . It was then that Charles Lamb wrote to Crabb Robinson, 'In him I have a loss the world cannot make up. He was my friend and my father's friend all the life I can remember. I seem to have made foolish friendships ever since. Those are the friendships which outlive a second generation. Old as I am waxing, in his eyes I was still the child he first knew me. To the last he called me Charley. I have none to call me Charley now.'" — Ainger.

Nov. Vincent Novello (1781–1861). A friend of all the Lamb group, and the father of Mary Victoria, better known to fame as Mrs. Cowden Clarke, who besides her Concordance to Shakespeare wrote interestingly about Lamb. Novello was himself a composer and musician of no mean power, as Lamb's essay "A Chapter on Ears" testifies.

O'Keefe, John (1747–1833). Author of many farces and comic operas. The quotation from O'Keefe at the head of "The Superannuated Man" is said, by Mr. Lucas, to be Colman's. Among O'Keefe's most popular plays were Tony Lumpkin, Wild Oats, and The Agreeable Surprise.

Ombre. A Spanish game of cards, so called from the Spanish phrase used by the player who declares trumps: Yo soy l'hombre, "I am the man." The usual number of players is three. It is a game requiring much ingenuity and skill. Pope, in canto iii of The Rape of the Lock, describes it very accurately. It is seldom played now. "Spadille" is the ace of spades, which is the second best card in the game.
Oratorio. A long musical composition connected with some subject from Scripture.

Oriel. A college at Oxford, founded by Adam de Brome and Edward II, in 1326. Oriel College had many rare books in its keeping.

Origen (d. 254). A father of the early Greek Church, whose piety led him to advocate extreme views on sanctity.

Orphean lyre. The lyre of Orpheus, the famous poet and musician of antiquity. Lamb's reference in "The South-Sea House" is taken from Milton's Paradise Lost, iii, 17. He means "my friend's music was very far from charming."

Osric. An affected character in Hamlet.

Ovid (43 B.C.-18 A.D.). In his Metamorphoses, Book iii, this Roman poet tells the story of how the hunter Actæon, who saw the goddess Diana bathing, was changed by the angry goddess to a stag with sprouting horns, and was hunted to death by his own dogs. In the same work, Book vi, Ovid tells how Marsyas, a mortal, finding the flute of the goddess Athene, challenged Apollo, the god of music. Although Apollo was judged victor in their contest, he flayed Marsyas alive. Ovid's Heroides tells "the stories of heroines who have perished for love."

Oxenford. An old name for Oxford; the original meaning being, doubtless, the ford of the oxen.

P. ("Our Mutual Friend"). Has not been identified.

P—, Susan. Susannah Pierson, sister of Peter Pierson (or Peirson), to whom Samuel Salt left a legacy of books, money, and a silver inkstand, "hoping that reading and reflection would make her more comfortable."


Pam. The knave of clubs, which is always the highest card in Lu, a popular game of cards in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Cf. Pope's Rape of the Lock, III, 61-62: —

"Mighty Pam, that kings and queens o'erthrew,
And mow'd down armies in the fights of Lu."

Pamela. A novel of manners, in epistolary form, by Samuel Richardson (1689-1761). His greatest novel is Clarissa Harlowe, also written in the form of letters.

Pan. The Greek god of the woods and the fields, who in later mythology became a symbol of all Nature. Sylvanus presided over forest glades and plowed fields.

Paracelsus. The assumed name of a celebrated German physician, Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenhum (1493-1541), who substituted for the abstract speculations of the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages the study of living nature.

Parker, Archbishop (1504-1575). Archbishop of Canterbury; he was, like Bishop Bull, a petty tyrant in ecclesiastical matters.

Parnassus. A mountain of Phocis in Greece, where dwelt Apollo, the god of music, and the nine Muses.

Patmos (“disappointing book in”). “And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand, and ate it up, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.” — Revelation x. 10.

Penn, William (1644-1718). The founder of Pennsylvania (Penn’s Woods) and Philadelphia (The City of Brotherly Love); an illustrious member of the Society of Friends or Quakers. Although a peaceable man, he would not endure unrighteous persecution. In his celebrated trial at the Old Bailey in 1670, he vindicated the right of a jury to render a verdict contrary to the dictation of a judge. Judge Jeffrey said: “It should be sufficient for the glory of William Penn that he stands upon record as the most humane, the most moderate, and the most pacific of all rulers.”

Pennant, Thomas (1726-1798). A Welsh antiquary, who published in 1790 Some Account of London. He holds a more enduring fame as a favorite correspondent to whom Gilbert White wrote many letters now embraced in that quaint writer’s Natural History of Selborne.

Perry, John. Steward at Christ’s Hospital from 1761-1785.

Peter (“in his uneasy posture”). Peter, the Apostle, according to tradition, was crucified, head downward. St. Peter’s Day is June 29.

Phædrus. A Macedonian slave who became a prominent Roman writer of fables in the first century A.D.

Phæbus’ sickly sister. The moon; the pallid sister of the refulgent sun-god, Phœbus Apollo.

Phænix. A fabulous Egyptian bird which lives for five hundred years. When about to die, it builds in Arabia a nest of spices, burns itself to ashes, and comes forth with renewed life to live another five hundred years.

Pierson (or Peirson), Peter. A Bencher in 1800, died in 1808. A friend of Samuel Salt.

Pilate. “When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but rather that a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.” — Matthew xxvii. 24.

Pimpernel, Henry, and John Naps. Imaginary personages named in the Introduction of Shakespeare’s Taming of the Shrew. Characters “which never were nor no man ever saw.”

Pindar. A Greek poet of the fifth century B.C. His Odes, the only complete examples of his work remaining to us, are marked by high imagination and great spirit.
Pique — repique — capot. French terms used in the game of cards called Piquet, a game similar to cribbage. A *pique* is the making of thirty points in hand and play before the adversary counts one. *Repique* is when one of the players counts thirty points in hand before the adversary has or can count one. *Capot* is when either person takes every trick.

**Piscator — Trout Hall.** At Trout Hall, Piscator, a character in Walton and Cotton’s *The Complete Angler*, meets Viator, another character in the book.

**Pl — W. D. Plumley,** a clerk in the India House.

**Plata — Orellana.** The Plata River and the Amazon River in South America.

**Plato.** The Greek philosopher. His philosophy is sublime in the sense that it deals with the higher order of thought; the contemplation of the immortal mind, for instance, and the subsequent career of souls after death. Read Milton’s *Il Penseroso*, 88 ff.

**Plato’s man.** Messrs. Hallward and Hill make the following illuminating explanation of this obscure reference: “In Milton’s Latin poem, *On the Platonic Idea, as it was understood by Aristotle*, the archetype of human kind — the original man — existed first in the mind of God.

“*Inform us who is He,*
That great original by nature chosen
To be the archetype of human kind
Unchangeable, immortal, with the poles
Themselves coeval, one, yet everywhere,
An image of the God who gave him being.

* * * * * * *

He dwells not in his father’s mind, but, though
Of common nature with ourselves, exists
Apart, and occupies a local home.
Whether, companion of the stars, he spend
Eternal ages, roaming at his will
From sphere to sphere the tenfold heavens; or dwell
*On the moon’s side that nearest neighbors earth.*’

— (Cowper’s translation, Globe Edition, p. 450.)

Thus Plato’s man is identified with the man in the moon. The configuration of the earth may make Australia a little nearer to the moon, and therefore to Plato’s man, than England is.”

**Plotinus.** A Greek philosopher who founded the Neo-Platonic school of philosophy — a system of refined Platonic doctrines combined with Oriental mysticism. He lived in the third century.

**Plumer, Richard.** He became deputy-secretary in the South-Sea House in 1800, after the death of Henry Man.

**Pope, Alexander** (1688-1744). The greatest poet of the classical school
of English poetry. He was a strict classicist, believing in the
dictates of correctness, common sense, conservatism, proportion,
principles derived from past work and experience, and deprecated
undue enthusiasm, sentimentality, impulse, and passion. His chief
works are: The Essay on Man, The Essay on Criticism, The
Dunciad, many odes, satires, epistles. The Rape of the Lock,
his greatest work, is the greatest mock-heroic poem in the English
language. Its subject is trivial, but its art is masterful.

Population Essay. Thomas Malthus (1766–1834) wrote The Principle
of Population, 1798, which evoked much discussion and called
forth many other essays on the theory of population.

Porson, Richard (1759–1808). A famous classical scholar, Professor of
Greek at Cambridge, and editor of many of the classics.

Potters, Paul. Paul Potter (1625–1654) was a Dutch painter, most
renowned for his animal paintings.

Pratt, Charles (1713–1794). As Chief Justice he ordered the liberation
of John Wilkes on the plea that general warrants were illegal. He
was afterward made Lord Chancellor and created Earl of Camden.

Priam’s refuse sons. Priam, King of Troy, had fifty sons, nine of
them living, among whom Hector was the best beloved. When
Hector was slain, Priam came to Achilles by night to beg the body
of his favorite son from his slayer. All his other sons, though
they “were the best men in wide Troy-land,” were as nothing
when compared with Hector. Read Homer’s Iliad, XXIV. 186.

Primrose Hill. North of Regent’s Park, London, commanding a fine
view of the city.

Prince of the powers of darkness. Satan. Ephesians ii. 2; vi. 12.

Prior, Matthew (1664–1721). An English poet whose verse is marked
by gayety and audacity, lightness and carelessness, and unaffected
grace. His epigrams are among the best in English literature.

Propontic. The Propontic Sea—the present Sea of Marmora, which
is not subject to tides. Cf. Shakespeare’s Othello, III. 3. 453:—

“Like to the Pontic Sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne’er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont.”

Proselyles of the gate. A stranger converted to Judaism, who was
not held to a strict observance of the laws of Judaism.

Prospero. The magician in Shakespeare’s The Tempest. Read Act I.
2. 144–148.

Proteus. An ocean deity, son of Neptune, who tended the monsters of
the sea. He possessed the prophetic gift and the power of chang-
ing his shape at will.

Psalmist, The. King David of Israel.

Pyramus and Thisbe. Two Babylonian lovers whose story is common
property in literature. Read the story in Gayley's *Classic Myths*, p. 78.

**Quadrille.** Mr. Lucas has an illuminating note on this game of cards. "Quadrille is ombre played by four. It is primarily all against all, but he who thinks he can make the best game may improve his chances by demanding a partner, which is done by 'calling a king,' namely the king of the suit he leads; the player who plays the king in it becomes thereby his partner for the hand, his 'friend.' Hence partners change with every hand. But if one's hand is very good, one can play sans prendre or sans appeler, i.e. without calling or taking a king and partner. The highest achievement in any case is to make a vole, i.e. a grand slam, i.e. to take all the tricks. A sans prendre vole is, therefore, a grand slam without a partner, when single-handed you take every card in the pack."

**Quakers.** A religious sect; first so called, according to the *Journal of George Fox*, the founder, by "Justice Bennet, of Derby, because he bade him quake and tremble at the word of the Lord." They called themselves Friends.

**Quarter Days.** In England they are: Lady Day, March 25; Midsummer, June 24; Michaelmas, September 29; and Christmas, December 25. The time for settlement of rent, interest, etc.

**R.** ("the great Jew"). Nathan Meyer Rothschild (1777–1836), the founder of the English branch of the great European banking firm of that name.

**R. N.** See Norris, Randall.

**Rabelais, François** (1495–1553). A French wit and satirist. His chief book, *Gargantua*, is a satire on the corruption in the church. As a writer, Rabelais was witty and satirical, but with a marked tendency toward coarseness.

**Rachels.** Refers to "Rachel weeping for her children, . . . because they were not."—*Jeremiah* xxxi. 15.

**Rambler.** A semi-weekly paper edited by Dr. Samuel Johnson from 1750 to 1752. Dr. Johnson, through the effect of early privations and sufferings, was a ravenous gourmand. Macaulay, in his *Life of Johnson*, says, "The sight of food affected him as it affects wild beasts and birds of prey." You must not, however, judge of Johnson from this unpleasant trait. If possible, read Macaulay's *Life of Johnson*.

**Raphael.** Raphael Sanzio (1483–1520), the most noted of Italian painters. His paintings, such as "The Sistine Madonna," "The Transfiguration," "Marriage of the Virgin," "St. George and the Dragon," "Apollo and Marsyas," — to name only a few, — are among the greatest paintings in the world.
Read, John. Became a Bencher in 1792; died, 1804.

Read, M. Thomas Read kept the Saloop Coffee-House at 102 Fleet Street, where he dispensed "Saloop," an aromatic drink compounded of sassafras bark, milk, and sugar.

Reculvers. "The western towers of the old parish church of Reculver, on the Kentish shore of the mouth of the Thames, bear this name among navigators." — Lucas.

Red-letter days. Holidays or vacation days granted by the directors of the India House. After 1820, there were only five such holidays in the Accountants' Office, where Lamb worked. They are red-letter days because in the church calendar the important feast-days are indicated by red-lettering.

Religio Medici. See Browne, Sir Thomas.


Richards, George (1767–1837). Mr. Lucas makes this note on Richards: "His poem on 'Aboriginal Britons,' which won a prize given in 1791 by Earl Harcourt, is mentioned favorably in Byron's English Bards and Scotch Reviewers. Richards became vicar of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields and a governor of Christ's Hospital. He founded a gold medal for Latin hexameters."


Robertson, William (1721–1793). Author of a History of Scotland and other historical works.

Rochester. John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester (1647–1680), was a rake, an intriguer, a boon companion of the Merry Monarch, Charles II, and a poet.

Rockingham, Marquis of (1730–1782). Charles Wentworth, Prime Minister of England, 1765–1766. He is chiefly noted because he made Edmund Burke his private secretary, brought Burke into the House of Commons, and spoke his sentiments through the voice of Burke. Burke calls him "a very noble person."

Rogation Day. The Rogation Days are the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day.

Rosalind in Arden. The heroine in As You Like It, who is banished from the court and goes to the Forest of Arden.

Rosamond's Pond. Situated in the southwest corner of St. James's Park. It was filled up in 1770, probably on account of the many suicides of unhappy lovers who associated their disastrous loves with the story of Jane Clifford, the "Fair Rosamond." According to tradition, she was compelled by Queen Eleanor to poison herself (1176) because she had won the love of Henry II.

Rosinante. Don Quixote's raw-boned charger.

Rousseau, Jean Jacques (1712–1778). A French philosopher and
writer on educational theories. His theory of education was based on the combination of the practical with the theoretical, and on the natural disposition of the child.

**Rowe, Mrs.** Elizabeth Rowe (1674–1737). Author of *Friendship in Death in Twenty Letters from the Dead to the Living*. Her "superscriptions" of these letters were such as Lamb quotes and such as "From Cleander to his Brother, endeavoring to reclaim him from his extravagances," — which indicates the theme of the letters.

**Rowe, Nicholas** (1674–1718), and Jacob Tonson (1656 ?–1736). The editor and the publisher of the first critical edition of Shakespeare, 1709.

S—, Mrs. Mrs. Spinkes.

**St. Bartholomew.** The fair of St. Bartholomew was held at Smithfield, a popular market place, from 1133 to 1855. The occasion was marked by riotous boisterousness.

**St. Christopher.** St. Christopher, whose festival is celebrated on July 25, was invoked as a defense against pestilence, and as "a stout sturdy patrole" he was called upon to frighten away the spirits who guard hidden treasure. In art he is represented as carrying the Christ child (hence his name, meaning the Christ-bearer) on his shoulders and leaning heavily on his staff to support the great weight.

**St. George.** The patron saint of England. St. George in the person of the Red-Cross Knight, the knight who battles for Holiness, overcomes the monster dragon, Error, in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book I. 1.

**Saint Gothard.** Bishop of Hildesheim, "the patron saint of those at sea."

**St. Kitts.** Abbreviation for St. Christopher's; an island near the island of Nevis in the British West Indies.

**St. Omer's.** A Jesuit college at St. Omer, France, where British youth formerly attended. Lamb, of course, never went to school there.

**Salt, Samuel.** "Samuel Salt was the son of the Rev. John Salt, of Audley, in Staffordshire; and he married a daughter of Lord Coventry, thus being connected with Thomas Coventry by marriage. He was M.P. for Liskeard for some years, and a governor of the South-Sea House.

"Samuel Salt, who became a Bencher in 1782, rented at No. 2 Crown Office Row two sets of chambers, in one of which the Lamb family dwelt. John Lamb, Lamb's father, who is described as a scrivener in Charles's Christ's Hospital application form, was Salt's right-hand man, not only in business, but privately, while Mrs. Lamb acted as housekeeper and possibly as cook. Samuel Salt
played the part of tutelary genius to John Lamb's two sons. It was he who arranged for Charles to be nominated for Christ's Hospital (by Timothy Yeats); probably he was instrumental also in getting him in the East India House; and in all likelihood it was he who paved the way for the younger John Lamb's position in the South-Sea House. It was also Samuel Salt who gave Charles and Mary freedom of his Library [see the reference in the essay on "Mackery End"]: a privilege which, to ourselves, is the most important of all. Salt died in February, 1792, and is buried in the vault of the Temple Church. He left to John Lamb £500 in South-Sea stock and a small annual sum, and to Elizabeth Lamb £200 in money; but with his death the prosperity of the family ceased." — Lucas.

Samite. Pythagoras (582-500 B.c.), born in Samos, was a Greek philosopher who is remembered chiefly because he taught the transmigration of souls, the music of the heavenly bodies whirling in space, and who bound his students to silence until they had listened to his lectures for five years.

San Benito. The yellow robe worn by those who were to suffer at an auto da fé. On the garment were pictured figures of hideous devils. The name is derived from the garments worn by members of the order of St. Benedict.

Sardonic. Supposed to be derived from the *herba Sardonia*, a plant of Sardinia, which is said, when eaten, to produce convulsive motions of the cheeks and lips as in laughter; hence the meaning, a forced, heartless laugh.

Saturnine. Under the influence of the planet Saturn; dull, gloomy, phlegmatic.

Sawbridge, John (1732-1795). Lord Mayor of London in 1775.

Scamander. The fire-god Hephaistos, the Vulcan of the Romans, was sent by Jove to assist Achilles, the hero of the *Iliad*, who was threatened with destruction by the rising river.

"And the strong River burned, and spake and called to him by name, 'Hephaistos, there is no god can match with thee, nor will I fight thee thus ablaze with fire.'" — *Iliad*, Book XXI, Lang, Leaf, and Myers's translation.

Scapula. Author, philologist, and lexicographer of the sixteenth century. He was the compiler of a Greek lexicon. A "tall Scapula" refers to Scapula's lexicon with the leaves left untrimmed—a desideratum in the eyes of bibliophiles.

Second of September. "The cruel sports of cock-throwing (i.e. throwing sticks at a cock tied to a stake) and cock-fighting were particularly connected with Shrove Tuesday, so that cock-broth is a natural offering for Shrove Tuesday to make. Boiled hen, with bacon, is mentioned as a dish eaten on this day. The Second of September returns the courtesy by offering pheasant, shot the day
before. At the present day pheasant shooting does not begin till October 1, though dates have varied at different periods and in different counties. It is quite possible that Lamb, who was no sportsman, confused the dates of the commencement of partridge and pheasant shooting, respectively. The former begins September 1." — Note by Hallward.

Selden, John (1584-1654). A learned lawyer, theologian, and antiquarian. He was a member of Parliament from Oxford, and afterwards became Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He had quarters in the Inner Temple.

Septuagesima, Old Madame. The third Sunday before Lent; so called because it is seventy days before Easter.

Seraphic Doctor. The Italian divine, St. Bonaventura, bishop of Albano, in the thirteenth century, was called Doctor Seraphicus for his seraphic fervor and eloquence.

Seven Dials. This locality, like Hog Lane, was notorious for its poverty and crimes. It took its name from a column which formerly stood at the meeting of seven streets and which bore a sun-dial facing each of the seven streets.


Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713), was a moral philosopher and author of Characteristics of Men, Manner, Opinions, and Times. "It is an ordinary criticism that my Lord Shaftesbury and Sir William Temple are models of the genteel style in writing." — Lamb's essay "On the Genteel Style in Writing."

Shakespeare gallery engravings. The Shakespeare gallery of John Boydell, an engraver, publisher, and Lord Mayor of London. The gallery was a series of prints illustrative of Shakespeare, after pictures painted for Boydell by eminent English artists. Boydell exhibited the pictures in his own gallery in Pall Mall, and in 1802 published his edition of Shakespeare with the illustrations.

Shallow, Master. A character in Henry IV. His weak-minded quality is suggested in his name.

Sharpe, Granville. Author of Remarks on the Uses of the Definite Article "the" in the Greek Testament.

"She . . . Pope." Mrs. Novello. (In the essay, "A Chapter on Ears.")

Shelburne, Earl of (1737-1805). William Petty. As prime minister he recognized the independence of the American colonies.

Sheridan, Richard Brinsley (1751-1816). A brilliant wit; an excellent dramatist; a notable orator. His life was marked by intemperance, improvidence, and debt. He is remembered for his famous plays, The Rivals, The School for Scandal, and The Critic.

Shibboleth. A secret password. The story of the word is in Judges xii. 5-6. The Ephraimites betrayed themselves to their enemies
the Gileadites thus: "Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Shibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right."

**Shining Ones.** Bunyan's phrase, meaning the spirits of the blessed.

**Shrove Tuesday.** Confession-time; the day immediately preceding Ash Wednesday. It used to be a custom to throw sticks and stones at cocks on this day. Easter Day and Shrove Tuesday are "Movables," because they vary from year to year.

**Sizar.** A sizar was a student at Cambridge who originally was permitted to eat at the public table at the college without expense, but in return for the gift he was expected to do some menial service, principally that of waiting on the table and distributing the "sizes" (the daily rations, or "commons" as they are now called). A servitor performed a similar duty at Oxford.

**Size Ace.** "Six and one, a throw of the dice which is generally a lucky one at the game of backgammon. The old names for the points on the dice, taken from the French, were ace, deuce, trey, quatre or quater, cinque, and sice or size (meaning, respectively, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6)."

**Smith, Adam** (1723-1790). Founder of modern political science; author of *The Wealth of Nations*.

**Smollett, Tobias** (1721-1771). A novelist born in Dumbartonshire; the author of *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, and *Humphrey Clinker*. "Rory" was the nickname of Roderick Random. Smollett also continued the *History of England* by David Hume (1711-1776), another Scotchman.

**Snow Hill.** The old route from Holborn Bridge to Newgate, superseded by Skinner Street in 1802. Skinner Street, too, disappeared in 1867, when the Holborn Viaduct was built.

**Sosia.** From Plautus's *Amphitryon*. In the Latin play Mercury assumes the form of Sosia, the slave of Amphitryon, and Jupiter the form of Amphitryon. Out of this situation arises a complication of mistaken identity and a comedy of errors.

**South-Sea Bubble** ("that famous Bubble"). The story of the failure of the South-Sea Company in 1720 is one of the most interesting stories of bankruptcy in the history of finance. In the early part of the eighteenth century England went mad over stock companies which promised quick returns and great wealth to investors. Among these the South-Sea Company promised the most and did the least. Stock in the Company went as high as 1000 per cent. Very naturally the bubble burst. Some attempt was made to reimburse the sufferers,—many of whom were simple folks,—but it was a long time before England recovered from the blow.

**South-Sea House.** The South-Sea Company was incorporated in 1710. The House was the headquarters of the Company; now it is en-
tirely remodeled, and is "a nest of alien offices." It is situated on Threadneedle Street, near the Bank of England.

Spa. The name of a famous watering place in Belgium; now used as a generic term for many different watering places.

Spenser, Edmund (1552–1599). The greatest non-dramatic poet of the Elizabethan age, and one of the greatest English poets of all time; author of The Shepherd’s Calendar, Amoretti, and The Faerie Queene. The last poem tells of six knights who set out from the court of Gloriana, the Queen of England, to battle for the virtues, Holiness, Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy.


Steele, Sir Richard (1672–1729). An English essayist. With Addison he founded the Tatler and the Spectator. His life, however, did not agree at all points with his fine maxims, for he was a spendthrift, somewhat dissolute, and dependent for help on others, but he was kind and generous to a fault.

Sterne, Laurence (1713–1768). An English clergyman whose life and works are marked by ill-regulation and an exaltation of whim. His chief work, Tristram Shandy, is, by courtesy, called a novel, but it has no plan, no coherent story; it is without beginning, progress, or end. The book is famous because Sterne has the power of imparting genuine human quality to his characters, eccentric as they are. Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim are among the most vital creations in English literature. The Sentimental Journey, the result of a year spent in southern France, is Sterne’s other important work.

Stevens, Lancelot Pepys. Rightly spelled Stephens; he became Under Grammar Master at Christ’s Hospital.

Stonehenge. A circle of immense stones standing in Salisbury Plains, Wiltshire. These stones, seventeen in number, are, in their present state, partly connected by cross-slabs on their tops. The origin and purpose of the monument is not definitely known. Some scholars connect its origin with the Druids, who were the priests among the early Celtic tribes; others think it originated with the Anglo-Saxons.

Swan-like. Ending in sweet music. "This is an allusion to the superstition, encouraged by poets, that dying swans utter wildly beautiful music." Cf. The Merchant of Venice, III. 1. 44, "He makes a swan-like end, fading in music."

Sweet Breasts. Musical voices, i.e. sweet-voiced. Cf. Two Gentlemen of Verona, II. 3. 20, "The fool has an excellent breast."

Swift, Jonathan (1667–1745). The greatest prose satirist in English literature. He was celebrated in church, political, and literary affairs. "His great genius was employed chiefly in a battle against the hard conditions of this life, against the dishonesty and
selfishness of the society amid which he moved, and against the political opponents that he hated.” “With his social instincts ungratified, his ambitions thwarted, his affections starved, he lived in constantly failing health for years, until insanity clouded his brain, and a lethargy which had for two years held his body inactive finally culminated in death.”—A. P. Walker. His verse is “splendidly direct, vivid, and vigorous,” but often indelicate and malodorous.

Switzer-like. Gigantic, enormous. The Swiss Guards, famous as mercenary troops in French wars and as the bodyguard of the Pope, are of great stature.

Sydney (Sidney), Sir Philip (1554-1586). The courtier, scholar, soldier, and writer; author of Apologie for Poesie and Arcadia.

Sylvanus. See Pan.

T——, Marmaduke. Thompson.

T. E. The Reverend Arthur William Trollope, Master of the Upper Grammar School at Christ’s Hospital from 1799 to 1826.

T. H. Thornton Hunt, the eldest son of Leigh Hunt.

Tabor, Mount. A mountain east of Nazareth where, according to tradition, the transfiguration of Christ took place. Cf. Matt. xvii. 1, 2.

Tame, Thomas. A deputy-cashier in the South-Sea House in 1793.

Tantalus. Tantalus betrayed the secrets of the gods, who punished him severely.

“There was Tantalus, who stood in a pool, his chin level with the water, yet he was parched with thirst, and found nothing to assuage it; for when he bowed his hoary head, eager to quaff, the water fled away, leaving the ground at his feet all dry. Tall trees, laden with fruit, stooped their heads to him, pears, pomegranates, apples, and luscious figs; but when with a sudden grasp he tried to seize them, winds whirled them high above his reach.”—Gayley’s Classic Myths.

Tartarus. The Greek hell; the place of torture for the condemned.


Temple. Once the seat of the Knights Templars, a military and religious order, founded in the Middle Ages for the purpose of protecting pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land. The history of the Temple itself has been varied and interesting. From the Templars it passed into the hands of the crown; thence to the Knights Hospitallers of St. John, who leased it to the students of the common law; and now it is occupied by the Inns of Court, called the Inner and Middle Temples, occupied by lawyers. The Inner Temple was so termed because it was within the old city of London; the Middle Temple was between the Inner and the Outer; and the Outer Temple, which was not leased to the lawyers, was eventually converted
into Exeter Buildings, and lost its ancient name. Not least interesting in the history of the Temple buildings is the association of the place with noted names in English literature. Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith, Henry Hallam, Arthur Hallam, Tennyson, Ben Jonson, Dryden, Defoe, Spenser, Fielding, Thackeray, and Lamb—among others—have lived in the Temple buildings or have had close association with them. Lamb's own connection with the Temple was almost continuous until 1817.

A map of the Temple shows that it has many lanes such as Middle Temple Lane, Inner Temple Lane, Crown Office Row (where Lamb was born); many buildings such as Middle Temple Hall, Inner Temple Hall, Harcourt Buildings, Paper Buildings, and Lincoln's Inn; and many courts such as Pump Court, Hare Court, and Fountain Court, where the Elizabethan Hall is, and the fountain which Lamb mentions (but with "the old mysterious mechanism gone"), and the old sun-dials with their "moral inscriptions." Among the inscriptions still remaining are: *Pereunt et imputantur*, "The hours slip away and are reckoned against us"; in Middle Temple Lane; *Ex hoc momento pendent æternitas* "On this moment hangs eternity."


**Tester.** An Old French and an Old English coin, valued at about sixpence.

**Th.** The Right Hon. Sir Edward Thornton, third wrangler at Cambridge in 1789, envoy to Denmark, and minister to Portugal.

**Thirtieth of January.** Charles the First was beheaded on that date, 1649; and, very suggestively, his enemies used to eat calf's head on that day.

**Thomson, James** (1700–1748). The author of *The Seasons* and *The Castle of Indolence*. Although Thomson was born in Scotland, he did not write in the Scotch dialect. By his descriptions of natural scenery, he played an important part in the romantic return to nature in the middle eighteenth-century literature.

**Tibbs.** Ned Tibbs, or Bean Tibbs, in Goldsmith's *A Citizen of the World*. Waucope furnishes the following interesting note: "He imagined his garret to be the choicest spot in London, and all the people of fashion to be his familiar acquaintances."

**Tierce—quatorze.** "French card terms used at piquet, signifying a sequence of three or four cards of the same suit, as king, queen, knave, or 10, 9, 8, 7."—Hallward and Hill.

**Timon.** A typical hater of mankind, in Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*. Flavius is the honest, faithful servant of Timon.

**Tipp, John.** An accountant in the South-Sea House from about 1792. John Lamb, Charles's brother, succeeded Tipp as deputy-accountant about 1806.

**Tishbite.** The prophet Elijah, who was providentially fed by the
ravens. Cf. 1 Kings xvii. and Paradise Regained, II. 266-270.

Titan. The Titans were the earth-born giant children of Uranus (heaven) and Gæa (earth) who made warfare against the deities of Olympus.

Tobin, James Webbe (d. 1814). A lawyer; “one of a family of West Indian planters, who had an estate in the island of Nevis.”

Tobin, John (1770-1804). A dramatist. His Life was published in 1820. The “Poor Tobin” to whom Lamb refers in “Detached Thoughts” may have been James Tobin, John’s brother.

Tooke, John Horne (1726-1812). The assumed name of John Horne, an English politician, philosopher, and philologist. In his The Diversions of Purley, he maintained that all words came originally “from the objects of external perception.”

Tradrille. A game of cards for three persons.

Triple Tiara. Triple crown; the three crowns which surrounded the pointed, cylindrical head-dress of the Pope.

Tritons. Sea-gods; half men, half fishes.

Trophonius. An oracle in a cave in Boeotia, in Greece. Whoever went to consult the oracle was dragged into the cave feet foremost, and having heard the message of the oracle, always returned depressed in spirit and bearing. Hence arose the proverb, “He has visited the cave of Trophonius.”

Twelfth Day. The twelfth day after Christmas; the festival of the Epiphany or manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

Twelfth of August. The date which was kept as the birthday of King George IV while he was Prince of Wales. On the Prince’s accession to the throne, the date was changed to April 23, suggesting St. George and Shakespeare!

Twenty-ninth of May. Loyal followers of Charles II celebrated his birthday by wearing sprigs of oak in commemoration of the oak tree which Charles climbed at Boscobel, thus saving his life. The day is called Oak-Apple Day.

Twickenham. A pleasant place up the river Thames, where Pope had his home.

Twickenham Naiades. Twickenham, now a part of London, was formerly a suburb of the city. As it was in the country about twelve miles from London, it could be fancifully described as the abiding place of the naiades, classical nymphs who presided over the fountains and brooks.


Ululantes. The howling ones. “Hence [Tartarus] are clearly heard groanings and the sound of the cruel scourge.” — Vergil’s Aeneid, VI. 557.
Ulysses. The hero of Homer's *Odyssey*, the Greek form of the name being Odysseus. According to Homer, Ulysses stopped the ears of his sailors with wax and caused himself to be bound to a mast while the ship was passing the island of the Sirens, so that they should not be tempted to land and thus be led astray.

Urban's obituary. Sylvanus Urban was the pseudonym of the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

Ursula. The name of the pig woman in Jonson's play *Bartholomew Fair*. Lamb evidently saw a connection between the greasy dame and the expression "a Bartholomew pig," meaning a very fat person. At the fair "one of the chief attractions used to be a pig, roasted whole and served piping hot."

Usher, James (1580–1656). An archbishop in the Church of England in Ireland. He is principally remembered as the author of a work on biblical chronology.

Utopian Rabelæsian Christians. Utopian is derived from Sir Thomas More's imaginary commonwealth, Utopia, a word meaning "nowhere." Rabelæsian, derived from Rabelais (*q.v.*), the French satirist, means free, easy, satirical. Hence the expression is satirical; such Christians would be satirical about present conditions.

Valentine, Bishop. Valentine was not a bishop, but a Christian martyr of the time of the Roman emperor Claudius, about A.D. 270. He was put to death by Claudius, February 14, 270, for befriending the Christians, and ultimately was made a Saint. Lucas says, "When raised to the Calendar he was given the day preceding that formerly kept during the Lupercalia as the festival of Februta-Juno, goddess of fruitfulness, on which day, February 15, the Roman youths had the custom of drawing the names of girls. Hence his association with Love." There is, of course, no connection between the Saint and the sending of love missives.

Vandykes ("those clear Vandykes"). Sir Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641) was a Flemish portrait painter who became the Court painter of Charles I. His portraits "Baby Stuart" and "Charles I" are universally popular.

Vaux. Guido Vaux or Guy Fawkes, with other conspirators, plotted to blow up the Houses of Parliament on November 5, 1605.

"Venus lulled Ascanius." The story is told in the *Aeneid*, I, 643–722. Ascanius, the son of Venus and Aeneas, was kept by Venus, who sent Cupid in the disguise of Ascanius to entice Dido to fall in love with Aeneas.

Verdant carpet. The green baize cloth which covers professional card-tables.

Verrio. A sixteenth-century Italian artist. He painted a large picture, now hanging in the hall of Christ's Hospital, representing James II receiving the mathematical pupils of the school.

Vigils. The days preceding church festivals.

Viola. In Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, Viola is shipwrecked on the coast of Illyria.

Virgil. The Roman poet Publius Vergilius Maro was born October 15, B.C. 70, at Andes, near Mantua, Italy, and died September 21, B.C. 19. His tomb is pointed out to visitors at Naples. His chief works are the Eclogues, the Georgics, and the Æneid.

“Virgilian fowl.” See Celeno.

Vittoria Corombona (or The White Devil). A tragedy by John Webster, published in 1612. It is not known when Webster was born, when he died, or how he spent his life. The White Devil as a story is repellent; it arouses no tenderness of feeling; it is all a tissue of evil things, brilliantly, dazzlingly evil; but it deals strongly and effectively with situations.

Vivares, François (1709–1780). A French engraver and painter who settled in England in 1727, and became one of the leaders of landscape engraving. He worked for John Boydell, who published an exceptionally fine set of Shakespeare. Vivares's engravings of Claude’s landscapes are said to be particularly fine.

W— (“Poor”). This refers to Favel (See F——), according to Lamb's key, where he has written: “Favel left Cambridge, because he was ashamed of his father, who was a house-painter there.” Ainger notes that Favel was a Grecian in Christ's Hospital in Lamb's time, and that Favel obtained a commission in the army from the Duke of York.

W— (“squinting”). Has not been identified. Referred to in the essay “Christ's Hospital.”

W——r, Miss. Sally Winter is the name given in Lamb's key, and that is all we know about her.

W——s. In “Blakesmoor in H—shire” Lamb thus disguises the name of the Plumer family. “Robert Ward did not marry William Plumer's widow till four years after this essay was printed.”— Lucas.

Walton, Izaak. See Complete Angler.


Weatherall, Will. Not identifiable.

Wesley, John (1703–1791). The founder of the sect called Methodists.

Westminster. A part of London, chiefly renowned for the great Abbey, a church founded in 1269 and enlarged from time to time. It is the burial place of many of England's great men. In the south transept is the Poets' Corner, where are the tombs and memorials of eminent men of letters.

Westminster Hall. Formerly a part of the palace of Westminster, but now it serves as an entrance to the House of Parliament.
Westward Ho! A cry of the boatmen on the Thames in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the Thames River was a highway of travel, to indicate the direction the boat was going—i.e. to the West End of London, the quarter of the city where pleasure was chiefly to be found.

Wharey, John. Became a Bencher in 1801, died 1812.

Whist. A game of cards played by four persons. Good players of whist remember every card that has been played, when played, by whom, and what the "lead" or "pass" or "trump" indicates. "Sick" whist is piquet. Hence Mrs. Battle’s love for the "rigors of the game." Many complications may arise in this really difficult mental game.

Whitgift, John (1530?-1604). Archbishop of Canterbury. He, like Bishop Bull and Archbishop Parker, was given to severe overseeing, in the church.

Whitsun. Whitsunday, or Whitesunday, the seventh Sunday after Easter. Whitsunday, or Pentecost, is the time of the Yearly Meeting, as it is called, of the Quakers. In the early church times, the newly baptized wore white from Easter to Pentecost.

Whittington, Richard (Dick). He was a wealthy London merchant who became Lord Mayor of London; died 1423.

Wild, Jonathan. The famous bully and "thief-taker" in Henry Fielding’s novel, History of the Life of the Late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great.

Wilkes, John (1727-1797). An English politician and editor of the North Briton. In No. 45 of his journal he made a particularly outspoken and abusive attack on the King, George III, who urgently requested that Wilkes be tried for libel and sedition. Wilkes was tried and liberated and, notwithstanding his reckless, profligate life and scandalous writings, became a great popular hero.

Wilkins, Peter. The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins, by Robert Paltock, 1751. This not unpleasant and readable romance, written after the manner of Gulliver's Travels, tells how the hero is shipwrecked upon an island inhabited by flying men and women.

Witch ("raising up Samuel"). The witch of Endor, who, at the solicitation of Saul the King of Israel, raised up the spirit of Samuel. 1 Samuel xvii.

Wither, George (1588-1667). A pastoral poet. He continued the pastoral tradition as exemplified by Spenser; breathing into his conventional pastoral verse a sincere feeling for nature and a certain amount of gentle moralizing. Lamb wrote an essay entitled "On the Poetical Works of George Wither." Swinburne has a delightful essay on "Charles Lamb and George Wither."

Woolet, William (1735-1785). One of the earliest and best of the landscape engravers in England.

Woolman, John (1720-1772). An American Quaker, who, in order to
pursue his itinerant missions, became a tailor. While on a trip to England in 1772, he died at York. "He died leaving behind him a reputation for simple-hearted and single-minded piety and benevolence that can hardly be equaled and cannot be excelled in the annals of our race." — Trent. Lamb refers to Woolman's *A Journal of the Life, Gospel Labors, and Christian Experiences of that Faithful Minister of Jesus Christ — John Woolman, 1795*. Whittier, who edited the Journal, declared that the reader of Woolman becomes sensible "of a sweetness as of violets."

**Worthington, Brighton, Eastbourn, Hastings.** Seaside resorts on the English Channel.


**Xenophon.** A Greek writer. Author of the *Anabasis* and the *Memorabilia*.

**Yorick.** A character in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*—hence the adjective "Shandean," meaning the nice distinctions made of a character compounded in delicate proportions of good and evil. Yorick, in the novel, claims descent from Yorick, the jester in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

**Zimmerman, Johann Georg von** (1728–1795). A Swiss physician at the court of George III in Hanover, and later at the court of Frederick the Great. His book *On Solitude* (1755) was a very popular book throughout Europe for many years.
SUGGESTIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

The South-Sea House

How does the second paragraph create the atmosphere of the burst bubble? What attitude does Lamb assume toward the reader? What passages are marked by delicacy of imagination or conception, and by lightness of touch? Observe and explain Lamb's frequent use of the dash. What is gained by the use of direct address to the inanimate building? As you read the essays, note how often Lamb uses the device of direct address and in what kind of language it is couched. Summarize his humorous portrayal of Evans, Tipp, Tame, and Plumer. Are his characterizations merely personal and local? Have you ever known or heard of persons like them? Did Lamb have the "observing eye and the portraying hand" — the quality so marked in Shakespeare? Explain how the theme, the memory of some "half-forgotten humors of some old clerks defunct," was worth writing about. Why should these personal recollections have a general interest? Why does Lamb conceive this essay as a song? How has he "fooled the reader to the top of his bent"? Make a list of the unusual words found in this essay.

Oxford in the Vacation

Explain the use or the force of the dots ( . . . ) in the third paragraph. Explain the figure of speech at the close of the same paragraph. Does the essay create the atmosphere of university life, as you may imagine it to be? Has the essay a coherent structure? Study and discuss the following quotation from Ainger's Charles Lamb: "If an essay is headed Oxford in the Vacation, he must not complain that only half the paper touches on Oxford and that the rest is divided between the writer, Elia, and a certain absent-minded old scholar, George Dyer, on whose peculiarities Lamb was never weary of dwelling. What, then, is the compensating charm? What is there in these rambling and multifarious meditations that proves so stimulating and suggestive?" Why should Lamb "almost have wept the defalcation of Iscariot"? Discuss: "Lamb conferred the patent of immortality . . . on George Dyer." Why does Lamb rise to an apostrophe in the paragraph beginning "Antiquity"? Summarize the peculiarities of Dyer. Does Lamb's description of Dyer win your
sympathy for Dyer? If possible, you should read Hazlitt's essay "On the Look of a Gentleman." Why should Lamb wish Dyer not to keep his good resolutions "too rigorously"? Make a list of the unfamiliar and unusual words in the essay, and from a study of them determine whether more commonly used words would add force to the essay.

**Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago**

Have you ever read Dickens's *Oliver Twist*? If so, are any incidents in the book recalled in your reading of this essay? Explain how hunger is the "eldest, strongest of the passions." To what physical sense does Lamb appeal in the first part of the essay? In how many ways does he appeal to it? When and why does Lamb make use of *italics*? Is Lamb generally given to the use of *italics*? A disgruntled critic once affected to find every kind of bad taste in this essay. What passages probably so affected him? How would you answer his criticism? Ask some physician why "children are universally fat-haters." Does this essay appeal to you as founded on actual school-boy knowledge and experience? Is Lamb a suggestive writer? Does he appeal to your imagination? What was Lamb's idea of an education? Do the allusions, references, and proper names call up the school atmosphere? Why an apostrophe to Coleridge rather than to any other Grecian? Why does Lamb drop the Coleridgeian mask in the latter part of the essay?

**The Two Races of Men**

How does Lamb use biblical allusions, references, and classifications to heighten his humor? Is it or is it not in questionable taste to use the Bible in this way? Can you, from this essay, surmise who were some of Lamb's favorite authors? What is Lamb's attitude toward his characters? Is his humor such as would anger the subject of the sketch? If you have read *David Copperfield*, you may understand and appreciate the following: "Add Captain Jackson [the subject of a later essay] to Ralph Bigod (with a touch of Coleridge's grandiloquence) and you have Micawber complete."

**New Year's Eve**

How does this essay prove this statement: "For him [Lamb] the unknown might remain unknown; he rested on the security of fact"? What moods do you detect? What personal elements do you find? Is the essay dominated by fact or fiction? By imagination or reality? To whom will this essay appeal—to young persons or to old persons? Have you read Hawthorne's *The Sister Years* or Tennyson's poem "Ring out the old, ring in the new," *In Memoriam*, cv? Which note
or mood is the stronger: the love of the past or the fear of the future? Discuss: This essay has "superficial pessimism and agnosticism." How has this essay "wistful hesitancies"? Find sentences which appeal to you as striking a deep note of human sympathy and human wisdom. What things in life appealed to Lamb? Read Burns's "Lines to a Mouse" to see if there is any trait common to both Burns and Lamb. Lamb was a great lover of Burns and of Burns's poetry. How does Lamb keep the balance between hope and despair? Lamb himself has been called "the very Janus" in writing this essay: explain. Read Coleridge's "Ode to the Departing Year."

Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist

How does Lamb create the atmosphere of a contest in the second paragraph? Why should Pope be Mrs. Battle's favorite author? Leigh Hunt reports that Lamb, on being questioned about his liking Pope, said: "Not like Pope! My dear sir, you must be under a mistake—I can read him over and over forever." Read the explanations of "Ombre" and "Quadrille" in the Index, and tell why Mrs. Battle liked the games. Write a character sketch of Mrs. Battle. Why should she dislike chess? Explain: "Sarah Battle was a gentlewoman born."

A Chapter on Ears

Explain: "I ever think that sentimentally I am disposed to harmony. But organically I am incapable of a tune." Explain the sentence beginning "But a grace," etc. What comparisons, what metaphors, does Lamb use to heighten his exposition of his deficiency? Discuss the structure of the last paragraph. Explain the almost reckless relation of the clauses. Can you conjecture what kind of music Lamb would enjoy? ("Barron Field, in some biographical notes written in 1835, says that he loved certain beautiful airs, notably Kent's 'O that I had wings like a dove,' and Handel's 'From mighty kings.'"—Lucas.)

A Quakers' Meeting

Is Lamb's sympathy for the Quakers of a spiritual or of an intellectual nature? Why did Lamb care for Woolman's Journal? What traits of Lamb do you find in this essay that you have not discovered before? Is this essay as "bookish" as the essays you have read so far? Whence did Lamb derive the material for the essay? What qualities in the Quaker does Lamb admire? What literary devices has Lamb used to gain clearness? Force? Emphasis?
Imperfect Sympathies

Explain the purpose of the quotation at the head of the essay. Is there any similarity in the beginning of this essay and the general course of thought in “New Year’s Eve”? In what does the “fine observation,” of which Canon Ainger speaks, consist? Does Lamb’s criticism of the Scotch lack sympathy? What is Lamb’s particular antipathy against Scotchmen? Does Lamb draw up “an indictment against a whole people”? Do you get a definite, concrete image of Lamb’s Scotchman? Show how Lamb treats with delicacy his prejudices or imperfect sympathies. Is Lamb’s list—Scotchmen, Jews, and Quakers—a list that would find a ready echo in the hearts of Englishmen in general, or is it a mere personal list of Lamb’s prejudices? How does this essay reveal Lamb’s self-reflection? His unselfish egotism? Discuss: “If he was intolerant of anything, it was of intolerance.” As a final study of this essay, explain what Lamb meant by “imperfect sympathies.”

Witches and Other Night Fears

How does Lamb strike the note of sincerity? Does he arouse a sense of fear and weirdness in you? Why should the witches be a “night fear”? Does this essay impress you as being drawn from actual experience or from the imagination? Have you experienced or imagined similar fears? Would you call Lamb’s fears fantastic? Morbid? Natural? Is the cause for the fears adequately explained? How does this essay reveal Lamb’s tenacious memory? How does it reveal his susceptible spirit? Is there an element of pathos in the essay? Is there the usual amount of humor? Find examples of short, emphatic sentences. From what authors does he draw his quotations? Are his quotations apt or forced?

Valentine’s Day

What is the theme of this essay? What gives unity to the essay? Does the essay lack dignity? Which paragraph has the most humor? What gives the paragraph a humorous tone? How does Lamb draw on our general experience to heighten the effect in the third paragraph? How does the essay maintain an undertone of a semi-religious nature? Why? How does Lamb draw on his personal recollections? What is the literary effect of so many classical allusions? Explain: “Bishop Valentine and his true church.”

My Relations

You should read, at this time, Ainger’s *Charles Lamb*, Chapter II. Does the essay reveal resemblances or differences among the various
members of the family? What are the chief characteristics of the several members? Are the portraits vivid? Is the close of the first paragraph humorous? Explain the suggestiveness of the last sentence of the first paragraph. How does Lamb mingle fact and fiction in the second paragraph? What is Lamb's attitude toward James Elia? How was James Elia "a mixture of a man of the world, dilettante, and sentimentalist"? What personal qualities of Lamb are directly or indirectly shown in this essay? From this essay, and from other essays by Lamb, particularly "Oxford in the Vacation," what kind of persons, do you think, appealed to Lamb? Do you find any note of irony in the essay? Why should these descriptions of particular persons, relatives of Lamb, be of general interest?

Mackery End in Hertfordshire

How does the opening paragraph strike the keynote of the essay? In what is Lamb most interested in this essay? In what does the "almost unique beauty of this prose idyll" consist? Why call this essay a "prose idyll"? Wherein does Lamb show keen insight? Humor? How do you account for such a long preamble about Bridget Elia before the account of the excursion into Hertfordshire begins? How is unity secured in the essay? An English critic of this essay calls it "beautiful"; discuss the term. Does this essay substantiate Wordsworth's assertion that Lamb was a "scorner of the fields"? You should read the story of another brother and sister who were mutually loving and helpful—the story of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. Are there as many literary and classical allusions in this essay as usual in Lamb's essays?

The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple

Make a list of unusual words used in the essay, and comment on Lamb's vocabulary as revealed in this essay. Discuss, frankly and honestly, your opinion of this essay. It ranks high in the estimate of students of Lamb, but is one of those essays, to use De Quincey's term, that may appeal to the "select few." What is Lamb's point of view in describing each of the characters? Cite instances in other essays to show Lamb's special gifts for describing characters. How does Lamb make a suitable background for his character sketches? Is the background always apparent? Are the characters in contrast? Do they appeal to you as living beings or imaginary creations? Contrast or compare this essay with the essay on the "South-Sea House."

Grace before Meat

What is the more liberal, the more generous, idea of grace, which Lamb advocates? Do you find an element of pathos in this essay?
Where do you find acute observation or insight? Is Lamb in earnest, in a humorous mood, a semi-humorous mood, or playful, in the fourth paragraph? Does Lamb show a spirit of irreverence anywhere in the essay? What is the tone or mood of the first sentence in the essay? What can you say about the personal element, the egotistical element, in the essay? Find some terse or epigrammatic sentences. Does Lamb discuss the question of grace in a dispassionate manner? Would you call his view eccentric? Discuss the title. Summarize Lamb’s ideas on “grace before meat.” Is the last part of the closing paragraph pertinent to the subject?

**Dream-Children: A Reverie**

Is the tone or mood similar to the other essays you have read? What was the direct cause of Lamb’s writing this essay? What comparisons make one think of childhood and childhood’s joys and sorrows? Why did Lamb make this essay one long paragraph? What is Lamb’s opinion about tampering with the classics of childhood—such as the “Children in the Wood”? Take some modern version of a tale, such as “Little Red Riding-Hood,” and see if changes have been made by squeamish persons. How are unity, completeness, and harmony obtained in this essay? Is the sentence structure the same as in the other essays? Analyze some long sentences for unity of thought and structure. Note the use of and in the essay. The constant use of and is sometimes called a child’s fault; is it a fault in this essay? Dip anywhere into the King James version of the Bible, and observe the use of and. What is the imaginary situation in the essay? Could an artist make a picture of the scene? How would you conceive such a scene? What senses are appealed to in childhood? Is John Lamb’s character described the same as it was in “Mackery End”? How does Alice recall her mother? How many themes which are inseparable from life itself are introduced into this essay? Where else has Lamb spoken of quarreling with a relative? How do you interpret this spirit of quarreling? Is it a humorous touch? Explain the title and its auxiliary. Is Lamb’s method of description suggestive or delineative? What classic or biblical idea is suggested at the close?

**Distant Correspondents**

Do you think Lamb would have been a desirable correspondent? Why? Summarize Lamb’s opinion on news, sentiment, and puns. Is this essay in the deliberate Elian manner? How does the fifth paragraph show Lamb’s manner of relishing a joke? What use does he make of the interrogative sentence? What does the essay gain in force, interest, and emphasis by the use of such sentences? Write in the form of a letter an answer to this essay.
THE PRAISE OF CHIMNEY-SWEEPERS

Why should this essay be called "a peculiarly Elian essay"? How is humor marvelously combined with pathos in this essay? Where does Lamb show his sensitiveness to strong contrasts? Does Lamb make too little of the hardships of the "sweeps"? Where does Lamb allow fantastic imagination to play around the subject? To what physical senses does he appeal? How does Lamb, to use Pater's expression, show his "simple mother-pity"? What passage is heightened by the use of exalted language? Is such language in keeping with the topic? Where does Lamb's lively fancy lead him to wander from his theme? Does the essay appeal to the intellect or to the affections? Why call the essay a "study in black"? Note how many words, figures, and allusions Lamb devises to describe the soot-begrimed urchins. Does Lamb describe persons and scenes by general effect or by particulars and details?

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

Look up the word dissertation and apply the word in its strictest meaning to the essay. Does it apply to the opening sentences? To the essay as a whole? How is the beginning of the essay marked by a mock-historic tone? Why should this essay be the most widely known of all the essays by Lamb? Is the essay a good short story? Canon Ainger suggests that the salient feature of the essay is the origin of cooking. Why is the present title better than "The Origin of Cooking"? Where does Lamb mingle modern practices with ancient proceedings? Note the devices Lamb uses to appeal to the sense of taste. How does Lamb heighten the effect by an assumed ignorance of all the details? Compare the humor in this essay with the humor in other essays of Lamb.

BLAKESMOOR IN H—shire

Justify the unity of thought and structure in the first paragraph. Explain the force or purpose of the many short paragraphs. Explain the force of the interrogatory sentences. Are the sentiments overdrawn? To what emotions does Lamb appeal? Are the scenes of childhood likely to be more memorable than the scenes of later life? Is the essay rambling in structure? Does the style impair the vivid impressions? Cite other instances in other essays where Lamb draws on past or early experiences and impressions. Why does Lamb make so much of heraldic terms? Where does Lamb use parallel structure? What is the purpose of such structure? Note how the close of the essay rises into a semi-religious tone. Does it heighten the effect?
POOR RELATIONS

Study the opening paragraph as an introductory passage. What does it reveal of Lamb's versatility in language? In vocabulary? In allusion? Explain the force of the verbs ending in eth. What use does Lamb make of parallel structure in the second paragraph? How does he vary the sentence structure and the sentence length in the second paragraph? Does he overdo the matter in piling epithet on epithet? Do you think he exhausted himself of epithets of description in the second paragraph? Is his mood the same at all times in the essay? Are his types of poor relations all viewed from the same standpoint? Can you visualize the appearance of each character? How is force gained by the point of view adopted in describing the last character? Note how suspense, held to the very end, secures emphasis. Discuss the structure of the last paragraph in the essay. Comparing the closing sentence of the essay with the opening sentence, would you call the unity of the essay a mechanical unity—a unity more rhetorical than literary?

STAGE ILLUSION

What is Lamb's distinction between stage illusion in the actor and the scenical illusion? Apply his theory to some Shakespearean character—Shylock, Cassius, or Macbeth. Is Lamb's view the usual view? Interpret the sentence beginning "Macbeth must see the dagger." What distinctions does Lamb make between the acting of a comedy and of a tragedy? Why should this essay be called a subtle piece of criticism? What does the essay reveal about Lamb's insight and intellect? Apply Lamb's theory by taking one of Shakespeare's comedies and one of his tragedies and asking yourself with which characters you seem to be on more familiar terms.

DETACHED THOUGHTS ON BOOKS AND READING

Is the structure of the essay in accordance with the title—detached? Select sentences in the essays which you think would make good topics for discussion or debate. Check the names of authors or titles of books which show that Lamb's reading was out of the ordinary course of reading. Is Lamb reserved or positive in his opinion of books and authors? Discuss Lamb's opinion on newspapers. Would his opinion be applicable to the newspapers of to-day? What do Milton and Shakespeare gain by being read aloud?

THE OLD MARGATE HOY

Do you understand the title? Is it appropriate? Does it arouse your interest? Justify the exalted language of the second and third
paragraphs. Why are the comparisons to "that fire-god" and to "another Ariel" appropriate? The sketch of the lying traveler is inimitably done. Study the method of characterization of the traveler. What contrast is offered to bring him into relief? What do you know of Lamb's character which would make him so sympathetic with both the lying traveler and the sick lad? Do you agree with Lamb's argument about being disappointed "at the sight of the sea for the first time"? Does Lamb attempt to give a real or an imaginary picture of the sea? Why? Justify the parallel structure—the sentences beginning with "I" in the paragraph beginning "I love town or country..." Does Lamb write in a spirit of indignation anywhere in this same paragraph? What personal trait does it reveal in Lamb? Summarize Lamb's impressions in this essay.

**Sanity of True Genius**

What keen distinction does Lamb draw between sanity and madness? Find another subtle discrimination in the second paragraph. Find other similar indications of Lamb's acuteness at definition. In the second paragraph, in the first few sentences, Lamb has in mind the first three books of *Paradise Lost*. It may interest you to know that Lamb was a great admirer of Milton, and that he probably quotes from Milton's poetry almost as often as he does from Shakespeare's poetry. What distinction does Lamb draw between the greater wits, like Milton and Shakespeare, and the little wits—such as are found in the authors of "Lane's novels"? Trace the order of argument in the essay. Does Lamb offer proof from psychological processes or from literary examples? Explain "hidden sanity." Read the first speech of Theseus, Act V, scene 1, in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, to see if Shakespeare's lines agree with Lamb's discourse. Macaulay in his *Essay on Milton* discusses the same topic, and quotes Shakespeare to prove that, "Perhaps no person can be a poet, or can even enjoy poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind..."
of Cartersville, which will interest you, and which will make you more interested in Captain Jackson — because you will understand him better. How did the Captain put "a handsome face upon indigent circumstances"? Explain how the Captain had a "strain of constitutional philosophy."

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

Study the structure and the force of the periodic sentence used in the opening paragraph. What is the peculiar fitness of the simile at the close of the second paragraph? What digression is made in the third paragraph? Is the digression displeasing? Is the digression "in character" with what you know about Lamb — about his love of London? According to Lamb, what is necessary in order that a person may know how to enjoy a holiday? What strong figure of speech do you find in the fifth paragraph? Does Lamb hold to the facts of the case in telling of his retirement? Why should he mystify the reader by not telling of his actual retirement from the India House? Would a firm have more personality than a great corporation? Discuss the use of the pronoun I in the essay. What moods are prominent in the essay? What tense of the verb is used in the essay? Why? Outline the course of thought in the essay.

Barbara S ———

Apply Lamb's statement, "I am in no hurry to begin my story," to the introduction of the essay. Is he in a hurry? What is the purpose of the introduction? What is the value of the story of Mrs. Porter and the scalding tears? How does Lamb link the rambling parts of his essay — his story of little Barbara S ———? How often, and why, does he mention the fact of Barbara's coming for her Saturday's payment? What use does Lamb make of short sentences in this essay? What are the salient features of Barbara's character? How are they brought out? Does Lamb enter into the spirit of Barbara's agreement with herself about the over-payment? How does the footnote at the close of the essay heighten the effect of the story? What application does Lamb make of the story of Barbara's returning the money? Do you get a whole or a partial picture of Barbara?

REJOICINGS UPON THE NEW YEAR'S COMING OF AGE

Study the descriptive verbs and the adjectives in this essay. Explain: "Doomsday sent word — he might be expected." Why should April Fool marshal the guests? Why should March Manyweathers make such a hubbub? (Recall the old saying, "Mad as a March hare.") Why should the Quarter Days smile at the promise of New
Year? What pun is very prominent? If you have not read Hawthorne's *The Sister Years*, you will find it an interesting story for comparison with this essay and with "New Year's Eve."

**Old China**

This essay, together with the essay entitled "Mackery End, in Hertfordshire," gives a complete portrait of Mary Lamb. It is well, therefore, to re-read "Mackery End." Has the title anything to do with the subject? What is the passing incident that brings up all the old-time fancies? What part of the essay constitutes the introduction? How is the introduction connected with the essay proper? What concrete elements are introduced to show the pleasures of poverty? Does Lamb use any part of the introductory idea in the essay proper? What use of the introductory idea is made in the last paragraph? How does the form of the essay — the conversational form — heighten the effect? Does Lamb attempt to argue or preach? How is he naively egotistic? Discuss: "He seems to have no definite goal." Does Lamb reveal any new truth to you? Discuss: "No one has ever with more magic power kindled the quieter side of the sympathies of his readers."

**QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR REVIEW**

What kind of literature appealed to Lamb? Explain Lamb's humor. Why should Lamb be called the "gentle Elia"? Did Lamb, like Burns, have intellectual insight and penetration as well as warmth of feeling? Illustrate the last question by giving examples or quotations from the essays.

Discuss Lamb's vocabulary: is it wide, unique, accurate, simple, affected? How do you account for his use of uncommon words? Do these unusual words give a flavor to his essays? Whence does Lamb draw many of his quotations and allusions? Is Lamb always accurate in his quotations? When is Lamb apt to use the device of direct address? Of apostrophe?

Is Lamb a suggestive writer? Does he appeal to your imagination? Does he get into personal touch with his reader? Does Lamb deal with the big questions of life? In what way may Lamb be said to be a contributor to personal culture and the conduct of life? Does he appeal to one's individual experience or to one's knowledge derived from contact with mankind? Discuss: Lamb had a "thinking heart." Does he appeal to a limited or to a wide range of moods and experiences?

What essays contain portraits which show Lamb to be a master-hand at sketching character? Lamb once said that he preferred "the
QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR REVIEW

affections to the sciences”; prove the statement from passages in the essays. De Quincey called Lamb a “Diogenes with the heart of a St. John.” Explain.

Discuss Lamb’s habit of mystifying his readers and his friends. Verify De Quincey’s statement that Lamb had “a talent for saying keen, pointed things, sudden flashes, or revelations of hidden truths, in a short condensed form of words.” Apply to Lamb, George Eliot’s statement that “an essayist must be personal, or his hearers can feel no manner of interest in him.” Is Lamb too egotistical? Was Lamb’s range of subjects “a contracted one”?

It has been said that the skillful essayist “will be recognized as much by what he leaves in the inkstand as by what he says.” Is this true of Lamb? Does Lamb ordinarily make a definite progress in his essays or does he merely circle round his theme? Discuss Leigh Hunt’s statement: “A sensibility to strong contrasts was the foundation of his humor.”

Cite instances to show that Lamb “loves to mingle romance with reality.” Discuss: “Lamb has a certain natural incapacity for being accurate, an inveterate turn for the opposite.” Prove Lamb’s statement: “I gather myself up into the old things.” What does Pater mean when he says that Lamb “continually overawes one with touches of a strange utterance from afar”?

Discuss Talfourd’s criticism that of all modern writers Lamb’s writings “are most immediately directed to give us heart’s-ease and make us happy.” Can you cite passages or essays to substantiate Hood’s assertion that “Lamb, whilst he willingly lent a crutch to halting Humility, took delight in tripping up the stilts of Pretension”?

Apply the following adjectives to passages or essays: discursive, delicate, keen, quiet, reflective, witty, epigrammatic, amiable, easy, graceful, tender, sympathetic, quaint, intellectual, critical, picturesque, charming, magical, sarcastic, egotistical, fine, significant, subdued, serene, vigorous.
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