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Summer 2018

# British Literature II: Romantic Era to the Twentieth Century and Beyond

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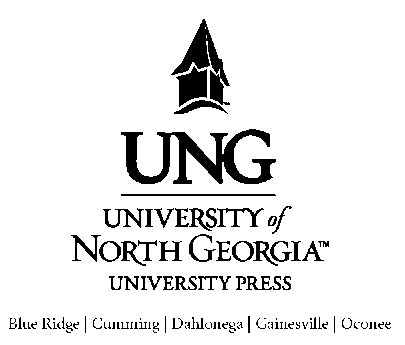
BRITISH

LITERATURE

Romantic Era to the Twentieth Century and Beyond

Edited by Bonnie J. Robinson, Ph.D.







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# 1 The Romantic Era

## 1.1 ROMANTICISM IN LITERATURE

Image 1.1 | Liberty Leading the People

Artist | Eugene Delacroix Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



As a literary movement in England, Romanticism could be said to have fired its first salvo in 1801 with William Wordsworth's (1770-1850) "Preface" to the Lyrical Ballads. Lyrical Ballads is a collection of poetry that Wordsworth co-published with Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). The term "Romanticism," describing this movement, came after the fact. Romanticism lasted until the mid-1820s, with

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the deaths of the poets Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) and George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824).

In his preface to Hernani (1830), Victor Hugo wrote that "Romanticism was nothing more than liberalism in literature." Romanticism can be considered a rebellion against the conservative thought and literature of the eighteenth-century Age of Reason, a period that looked to ancient Rome and classical forms for models of perfection. The eighteenth-century Age of Reason was politically conservative and monarchic; other features, especially in terms of literature, include decorum, conventionality/ models, harmony, artificiality, logic, and objectivity. Romanticism is neither romance nor the desire for prettiness or sentimentality; instead, it is closer to being anti-eighteenth century, or a repudiation of what went before. The idea of liberalism, to which Hugo referred, is expressed in the Romantic desire for an egalitarian (as opposed to monarchic) government, and for the freedom of the individual.

Image 1.2 | The Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog

Artist | Caspar David Friedrich Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



This revolutionary spirit was inspired by actual revolutions, including the American Revolution (1775-1783) and the French Revolution (1789-1790s). These revolutions occurred within a wealth of intellectual thought and new ideas on what were human rights and what role government and society played in securing these rights. Some influential works were Jean-Jacques Rousseau's The Social Contract (1762), which questioned the efficacy of existing political systems; Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790), which considered the consequences of revolution to the status quo; and Thomas Paine's The Rights of Man (1791-92), which suggested that all humans possessed inherent rights, rights that governments could potentially or actually threaten. Universal human rights existed independently of people's social position, or class. They considered the qualities that all humans shared, regardless of family, history, or income. The Romantics thought that all humans shared emotions and imagination. For the Romantics, these qualities served to validate human equality.

Romanticism regarded as values subjectivity and individuality—indeed, individual subjectivity. It shifted the eighteenth century's focus on outward action to a new focus on inward action, that is, to action in the mind. Romantic literature scrutinized feelings and the relation of feeling to the outer world. Sincerity,

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openness, transparency, and spontaneity allowed that relationship to be more apparent, and the lyric, or song-like expression of an individual's emotions, became a characteristic Romantic genre. The imaginative individual created from the external impressions of natural beauty and human civilization an ideal of perfection within themselves, the embodiment of which they then sought to find in the external world. The Romantic image—of the skylark, nightingale, midnight frost—epitomizes their quest for a union of the organic and the imaginative (through imaginative perception). The "closet drama," or dramas not intended to be (or even able to be) performed, and the historical novel, in which time and place could be conflated, were genres well-suited to Romantic expression. Related qualities of the unformulated, or innocent; the unconscious; and the mysterious (and even "exotic") actuated Romantic focus on, or interest in, children, and the child-like; nature, and those perceived as being close to nature, like agricultural workers; and the imaginative, or the poet.

The imaginative individual's response to nature, even to the possibility of animism in nature, reflected the importance of emotion over logic and order, for uncultivated nature. And nature in its most awe-inspiring "inhuman" forms inspired a range of emotions, from love to terror. In such moments of extreme emotion, the Romantic writer often felt connected with the sublime, with something beyond themselves, and so could see more deeply into the world than could "insensitive" individuals or those who accepted conformity or imitation. The ability to see things beyond the routine, to express thought and feeling combined, to be authentic individuals uncorrupted or made numb by society characterized the Romantic's attitudes towards and use of children and poets as touchstones. Because children— and Romantic writers—did not conform yet to societal pressures, their imaginations were truer, more active, and even prophetic in their power. Romanticism lauded and upheld the imagination as a form of individual power and freedom for all humans.

The different pressures placed upon the actual individual power and freedom of women, blacks, Roman Catholics, the rural poor, and the displaced, among others, also received nuanced attention and expression. William Blake's (17571827) ironies, Mary Shelley's (1797-1851) "monstrous" creativity, and Charlotte Smith's (1749-1806) anti-slavery activism, for example, demonstrated the fragility and tentativeness of any powers and any freedoms as well as the possible futility and danger of prophecy.

## 1.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Romantic era was characterized by revolutions, including the American, the French, and the Industrial. The American Revolution had an impact on all of Europe. Its causes included the desire for political freedom and economic stability that the colonialists saw King Georgia III as menacing. England saw the American colonies as a source of materials and goods not in England proper and as a market for goods produced by England. Much against which the colonists objected were

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British laws endeavoring to maintain this economic balance. When England forcefully repressed protests and rebellion, the colonies directed their ire against King George III in their Declaration of Independence. And in the Declaration, individual freedom and independence were added to economic freedom as social and moral claims.

In addition to the American Revolution, England experienced its own economic revolution—commercial, agricultural, in transportation with new roads and canals, in industrialization. The Industrial Revolution became visible to many people about the mid-1700s. It was a revolution in methods, organization, and economic principles. Before industrialization, England functioned by a Medieval code of minute regulations in business and trade and restrictions on mobility and labor.

Comparatively few people in England at that time had actual, independent rights, particularly of possession. People who had lived on the land for centuries were tenants, not owners. With progress in manufacture, particularly in textiles, came the Enclosure movement, that is, the enclosing of land which previously had been available to everyone. Landowners threw out their tenants and enclosed their land for raising sheep, because wool was a profitable commodity. Agriculture consequently declined and tenants moved to cities to work in new factories and mills.

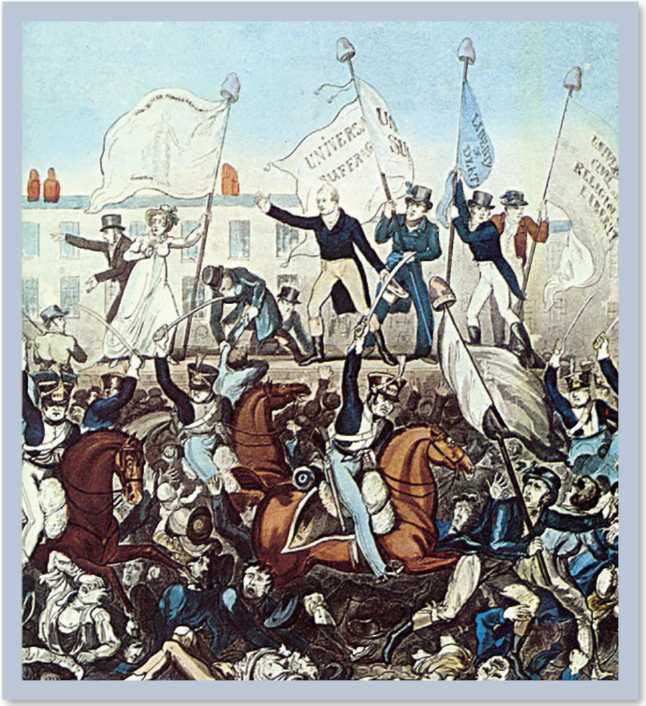
The shift in employment opportunities—or lack thereof—through increasing mechanization resulted in riots such as The Peterloo Massacre. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) responded with poems like "England in 1819" that supported the working class. While working men suffered, women also faced restrictions, as they

had almost no legal rights and few, if any, educational opportunities.

The French Revolution evoked the American Revolution and England's Glorious Revolution during which Charles I was beheaded. The French Revolution smashed institutions, destroyed the monarchy and aristocracy, and built a new (though not permanent) order. An ideal of the French Revolution was to let the individual freely develop, so it opposed the institutions that checked individual rights.

Image 1.3 | The Peterloo Massacre

Artist | Richard Carlile Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



Nations such as Austria and Prussia allied against the revolution and were defeated by the Revolutionary Army that spread over Italy and Germany. Under the impact of war, counter-revolutions

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sprung up, and the Committee of Public Safety (1793) was formed. Through its Reign of Terror (1793-94), the Committee suppressed revolt and counter-revolution. 20,000 heads were struck off by the guillotine. The bicameral legislative government, called the Directory (1795), came into power but fell to a coup d'etat (1799) run by its own general, Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821).

The early Romantic writers at first greatly sympathized with the French Revolution. They were convinced that a revolution for moral change would occur in England. It seemed to them that the new millennium had arrived. William Blake saw it as the creation of a new world and himself as its prophet. Coleridge and Wordsworth responded with peons of joy, declaring, "bliss was it in that dawn to be alive" (Wordsworth The Prelude). Both went to France and even fell in love with French women. They returned chastened by the Reign of Terror. Edmund Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution condemned the Revolution as an attempt to methodize anarchy. Reaction in England soon set in. English freedom became increasingly restricted through such acts as the Proclamation Against Seditious Writing. Parliament suspended habeus corpus, making possible imprisonment without trial, and passed the Treasonable and Seditious Practices Act (1795). Reaction against reform was stiffened by the ensuing Napoleonic Wars.

## 1.3 RECOMMENDED READING

M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition, 1953.

Marilyn Butler, Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries: English Literature and Its Background, 1760-1830, 1982.

Paul A. Cantor, Creature and Creator: Myth-Making and English Romanticism, 1984.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination, 1979.

Geoffrey Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787-1814, 1964.

Martin K. Nurmi, William Blake, 1976.

Jerome McGann, The Romantic Idealogy, 1983.

Carl Woodring, Politics in English Romantic Poetry, 1970.

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## 1.4 ANNA LAETITIA BARBAULD

(1743-1825)

Anna Laetitia Aikin Barbauld was born into a family of Presbyterian Dissenters. Her father, John Aikin, a schoolteacher and minister, took the unusual step of educating his daughter while she was still in her infancy. In addition to learning to read and write in English—not a given for women at this time—Barbauld learned French, Italian, Latin, and Greek. Joseph Priestley, poet, Dissenter theologian, and friend of the family, helped inspire Barbauld to write poetry. She privately circulated her poems. Like many women authors, she first published her poetry under the auspices of a male relative, in her case, in her brother John's Essays on Song-Writing (1771), which included several of her poems. William Enfield, who had published comments on Joseph Priestley's attacks on the Church of England, also included several of Barbauld's hymns in his Hymns for Public Worship (1772). In 1773, she published Poems under her own name, a radical act at that time, and met with remarkable success.

Image 1.4 | Portrait of Anna Laetitia Barbauld

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In 1774, she married Rochemont Barbauld, a Presbyterian Dissenter convert. They opened a boarding school in Suffolk and adopted children. She herself taught at Palgrave Academy in subjects that included geography and science. Her early work focused on educating children, and education remained a strong purpose throughout her writing career in both original and edited work, including Lessons for Children (1778-79) and Female Speaker (1811), an anthology of prose and poetry for young women. Her multivolume edition of The British Novelists (1810) curated the novel genre, canonizing and giving weight to the form for future generations. Its introduction evaluated constituent elements of the novel genre, particularly plot and narrative closure.

Her "evaluation" of society—particularly of its injustices; inequalities of class, race and gender; and atrocities—shaped much of her poetry and prose. In An Address to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts (1790), she condemned religious oppression in England in an emotionally-charged and cogent argument. She prophesied the corruption and decline of a nation that failed to abolish the abhorrent slave trade in her Epistle to William Wilberforce Esq On the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade (1791). And she vilified the English war against the French in Sins of Government, Sins of the Nation (1793).

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### 1.4.1 "Epistle to William Wilberforce Esq. On the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade"

Cease, Wilberforce, to urge thy generous aim!

Thy Country knows the sin, and stands the shame!

The Preacher, Poet, Senator in vain

Has rattled in her sight the Negro's chain;

With his deep groans assailed her startled ear,

And rent the veil that hid his constant tear;

Forced her averted eyes his stripes to scan,

Beneath the bloody scourge laid bare the man,

Claimed Pity's tear, urged Conscience' strong controul,

And flashed conviction on her shrinking soul.

The Muse too, soon awaked, with ready tongue

At Mercy's shrine applausive paans rung;

And Freedom's eager sons in vain foretold

A new Astrean reign, an age of gold:

She knows and she persists—Still Afric bleeds,

Unchecked, the human traffic still proceeds;

She stamps her infamy to future time,

And on her hardened forehead seals the crime.

In vain, to thy white standard gathering round,

Wit, Worth, and Parts and Eloquence are found:

In vain, to push to birth thy great design,

Contending chiefs, and hostile virtues join;

All, from conflicting ranks, of power possesst

To rouse, to melt, or to inform the breast.

Where seasoned tools of Avarice prevail,

A Nation's eloquence, combined, must fail:

Each flimsy sophistry by turns they try;

The plausive argument, the daring lie,

The artful gloss, that moral sense confounds,

The acknowledged thirst of gain that honour wounds:

Bane of ingenuous minds!—the unfeeling sneer,

Which sudden turns to stone the falling tear:

They search assiduous, with inverted skill,

For forms of wrong, and precedents of ill;

With impious mockery wrest the sacred page,

And glean up crimes from each remoter age:

Wrung Nature's tortures, shuddering, while you tell,

From scoffing fiends bursts forth the laugh of hell;

In Britain's senate, Misery's pangs give birth

To jests unseemly, and to horrid mirth—

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Forbear!—thy virtues but provoke our doom, And swell the account of vengeance yet to come; For, not unmarked in Heaven's impartial plan, Shall man, proud worm, contemn his fellow-man! And injured Afric, by herself redresst, Darts her own serpents at her tyrant's breast. Each vice, to minds depraved by bondage known, With sure contagion fastens on his own; In sickly languors melts his nerveless frame, And blows to rage impetuous Passion's flame: Fermenting swift, the fiery venom gains The milky innocence of infant veins; There swells the stubborn will, damps learning's fire, The whirlwind wakes of uncontrouled desire, Sears the young heart to images of woe, And blasts the buds of Virtue as they blow.

Lo! where reclined, pale Beauty courts the breeze, Diffused on sofas of voluptuous ease; With anxious awe her menial train around Catch her faint whispers of half-uttered sound; See her, in monstrous fellowship, unite At once the Scythian and the Sybarite! Blending repugnant vices, misallied, Which frugal nature purposed to divide; See her, with indolence to fierceness joined, Of body delicate, infirm of mind, With languid tones imperious mandates urge; With arm recumbent wield the household scourge; And with unruffled mien, and placid sounds, Contriving torture, and inflicting wounds.

Nor, in their palmy walks and spicy groves, The form benign of rural Pleasure roves; No milk-maid's song, or hum of village talk, Soothes the lone poet in his evening walk: No willing arm the flail unwearied plies, Where the mixed sounds of cheerful labour rise; No blooming maids and frolic swains are seen To pay gay homage to their harvest queen: No heart-expanding scenes their eyes must prove Of thriving industry and faithful love: But shrieks and yells disturb the balmy air,

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Dumb sullen looks of woe announce despair, And angry eyes through dusky features glare. Far from the sounding lash the Muses fly, And sensual riot drowns each finer joy.

Nor less from the gay East, on essenced wings, Breathing unnamed perfumes, Contagion springs; The soft luxurious plague alike pervades The marble palaces and rural shades; Hence thronged Augusta builds her rosy bowers, And decks in summer wreaths her smoky towers; And hence, in summer bowers, Art's costly hand Pours courtly splendours o'er the dazzled land: The manners melt;—one undistinguished blaze O'erwhelms the sober pomp of elder days; Corruption follows with gigantic stride, And scarce vouchsafes his shameless front to hide: The spreading leprosy taints every part, Infects each limb, and sickens at the heart. Simplicity, most dear of rural maids, Weeping resigns her violated shades: Stern Independence from his glebe retires, And anxious Freedom eyes her drooping fires; By foreign wealth are British morals changed, And Afric's sons, and India's, smile avenged.

For you, whose tempered ardour long has borne Untired the labour, and unmoved the scorn; In Virtue's fasti be inscribed your fame, And uttered yours with Howard's honoured name; Friends of the friendless—Hail, ye generous band! Whose efforts yet arrest Heaven's lifted hand, Around whose steady brows, in union bright, The civic wreath and Christian's palm unite: Your merit stands, no greater and no less, Without, or with the varnish of success: But seek no more to break a nation's fall, For ye have saved yourselves—and that is all. Succeeding times your struggles, and their fate, With mingled shame and triumph shall relate; While faithful History, in her various page, Marking the features of this motley age, To shed a glory, and to fix a stain, Tells how you strove, and that you strove in vain.

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### 1.4.2 "A Summer Evening's Meditation"

'TIS past! The sultry tyrant of the south

Has spent his short-liv'd rage; more grateful hours

Move silent on; the skies no more repel

The dazzled sight, but with mild maiden beams

Of temper'd light, invite the cherish'd eye

To wander o'er their sphere; where hung aloft

DIAN's bright crescent, like a silver bow

New strung in heaven, lifts high its beamy horns

Impatient for the night, and seems to push Her brother down the sky. Fair VENUS shines Even in the eye of day; with sweetest beam Propitious shines, and shakes a trembling flood Of soften'd radiance from her dewy locks. The shadows spread apace; while meeken'd Eve Her cheek yet warm with blushes, slow retires Thro' the Hesperian gardens of the west, And shuts the gates of day. 'Tis now the hour When Contemplation, from her sunless haunts, The cool damp grotto, or the lonely depth Of unpierc'd woods, where wrapt in solid shade She mused away the gaudy hours of noon, And fed on thoughts unripen'd by the sun, Moves forward; and with radiant finger points To yon blue concave swell'd by breath divine, Where, one by one, the living eyes of heaven Awake, quick kindling o'er the face of ether

One boundless blaze; ten thousand trembling fires,

And dancing lustres, where th' unsteady eye

Restless, and dazzled wanders unconfin'd

O'er all this field of glories: spacious field!

And worthy of the master: he, whose hand

With hieroglyphics older than the Nile,

Inscrib'd the mystic tablet; hung on high

To public gaze, and said, adore, O man!

The finger of thy GOD. From what pure wells

Of milky light, what soft o'erflowing urn,

Are all these lamps so fill'd? these friendly lamps,

For ever streaming o'er the azure deep

To point our path, and light us to our home.

How soft they slide along their lucid spheres!

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And silent as the foot of time, fulfil Their destin'd courses: Nature's self is hush'd, And, but a scatter'd leaf, which rustles thro' The thick-wove foliage, not a sound is heard

To break the midnight air; tho' the rais'd ear, Intensely listening, drinks in every breath. How deep the silence, yet how loud the praise! But are they silent all? or is there not A tongue in every star that talks with man, And wooes him to be wise; nor wooes in vain: This dead of midnight is the noon of thought, And wisdom mounts her zenith with the stars. At this still hour the self-collected soul Turns inward, and beholds a stranger there Of high descent, and more than mortal rank; An embryo GOD; a spark of fire divine, Which must burn on for ages, when the sun, (Fair transitory creature of a day!) Has clos'd his golden eye, and wrapt in shades Forgets his wonted journey thro' the east.

Ye citadels of light, and seats of GODS! Perhaps my future home, from whence the soul

Revolving periods past, may oft look back

With recollected tenderness, on all

The various busy scenes she left below,

Its deep laid projects and its strange events,

As on some fond and doating tale that sooth'd

Her infant hours; O be it lawful now

To tread the hallow'd circles of your courts,

And with mute wonder and delighted awe

Approach your burning confines. Seiz'd in thought

On fancy's wild and roving wing I sail,

From the green borders of the peopled earth,

And the pale moon, her duteous fair attendant;

From solitary Mars; from the vast orb

Of Jupiter, whose huge gigantic bulk

Dances in ether like the lightest leaf;

To the dim verge, the suburbs of the system,

Where chearless Saturn 'midst her watry moons

Girt with a lucid zone, majestic sits

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In gloomy grandeur; like an exil'd queen Amongst her weeping handmaids: fearless thence I launch into the trackless deeps of space, Where, burning round, ten thousand suns appear, Of elder beam; which ask no leave to shine Of our terrestrial star, nor borrow light From the proud regent of our scanty day; Sons of the morning, first born of creation, And only less than him who marks their track, And guides their fiery wheels. Here must I stop, Or is there aught beyond? What hand unseen Impels me onward thro' the glowing orbs Of inhabitable nature; far remote, To the dread confines of eternal night, To solitudes of vast unpeopled space, The desarts of creation, wide and wild; Where embryo systems and unkindled suns Sleep in the womb of chaos; fancy droops,

And thought astonish'd stops her bold career. But oh thou mighty mind! whose powerful word Said, thus let all things be, and thus they were, Where shall I seek thy presence? how unblam'd Invoke thy dread perfection? Have the broad eye-lids of the morn beheld thee? Or does the beamy shoulder of Orion Support thy throne? O look with pity down On erring guilty man; not in thy names Of terrour clad; not with those thunders arm'd That conscious Sinai felt, when fear appall'd The scatter'd tribes; thou hast a gentler voice, That whispers comfort to the swelling heart, Abash'd, yet longing to behold her Maker.

But now my soul unus'd to stretch her powers In flight so daring, drops her weary wing, And seeks again the known accustom'd spot,

Drest up with sun, and shade, and lawns, and streams, A mansion fair and spacious for its guest, And full replete with wonders. Let me here Content and grateful, wait th' appointed time And ripen for the skies: the hour will come

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When all these splendours bursting on my sight Shall stand unveil'd, and to my ravished sense Unlock the glories of the world unknown.

### 1.4.3 "The Rights of Women"

Yes, injured Woman! rise, assert thy right!

Woman! too long degraded, scorned, opprest;

O born to rule in partial Law's despite,

Resume thy native empire o'er the breast!

Go forth arrayed in panoply divine;

That angel pureness which admits no stain;

Go, bid proud Man his boasted rule resign,

And kiss the golden sceptre of thy reign.

Go, gird thyself with grace; collect thy store

Of bright artillery glancing from afar;

Soft melting tones thy thundering cannon's roar,

Blushes and fears thy magazine of war.

Thy rights are empire: urge no meaner claim,—

Felt, not defined, and if debated, lost;

Like sacred mysteries, which withheld from fame,

Shunning discussion, are revered the most.

Try all that wit and art suggest to bend

Of thy imperial foe the stubborn knee;

Make treacherous Man thy subject, not thy friend;

Thou mayst command, but never canst be free.

Awe the licentious, and restrain the rude;

Soften the sullen, clear the cloudy brow:

Be, more than princes' gifts, thy favours sued;—

She hazards all, who will the least allow.

But hope not, courted idol of mankind,

On this proud eminence secure to stay;

Subduing and subdued, thou soon shalt find

Thy coldness soften, and thy pride give way.

Then, then, abandon each ambitious thought,

Conquest or rule thy heart shall feebly move,

In Nature's school, by her soft maxims taught,

That separate rights are lost in mutual love.

### 1.4.4 Reading and Review Questions

1. In the Epistle to Wilberforce, what persuasive rhetorical devices does Barbauld use, and to what effect? Consider contrasts in the poem.

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2. In the Epistle to Wilberforce, how does Barbauld describe the effects of slaveholding on men, and on women? Do the effects differ? If so, why?

3. In A Summer Evening's Meditation, how do statements like stars wooing humans to be wise anticipate Wordsworth's adjuration to let nature be our teacher? What is remarkable about learning from nature?

4. In the Rights of Women, how does Barbauld characterize the domain or empire women are meant to rule? What's the effect of this characterization?

## 1.5 CHARLOTTE SMITH

(1749-1806)

Image 1.5 | Portrait of Charlotte Smith

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Charlotte Smith's father, Nicholas Turner, was a wealthy gentleman who nevertheless lived beyond his means. Her mother, Anna Towers, died when Smith was four years old. Smith was then left to the care of her father and aunt. She received the education her society deemed sufficient for women. At a school in Chichester, she learned dancing, drawing, and music. She further educated herself through avid reading.

In 1765, her father married Henrietta Meriton, a wealthy woman whose temperament convinced the aunt to remove Smith from her father's household. At the age of fourteen, Smith was married to Benjamin Smith, who came from a wealthy family with estates in the West Indies. They had twelve children, three of whom died early. Smith likened their marriage to legalized prostitution, a view that later women writers would repeat, protesting the limited opportunities for supporting themselves through work. The marriage was not a happy one.

Benjamin Smith squandered what money they had and did little, if anything, to acquire more. His father, Richard Smith, bought them a country estate which, through Benjamin's mismanagement, failed to accrue any income. Richard admired Smith's intellect and sought to use her skills, especially in writing, to further his own business interests. His holdings included plantations that relied on slave labor, an institution Smith would later protest against in her writing. Richard Smith tried to provide for Smith in his will but legal problems prevented her inheriting any money until the year she died. Her husband was imprisoned for debt for seven months, during which time Smith joined him, and later emigrated

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with his family to Normandy to escape creditors. Eventually, Smith obtained legal separation. She retained custody of their children.

While in debtor's prison with her husband, Smith wrote Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Essays. She had it published at her own expense in 1784. Its success encouraged her to write as a means of financial support, which she did until a few years before she died. Her astonishing literary productivity—of fiction, poetry, and drama—attests to her financial need and her business acumen and knowledge of the literary marketplace. It also attests to her literary ambition. She felt driven by market demands to write fiction. Yet her long fiction displays increasing experimentation with the developing novel genre, with its hybridity, with its tension between actuality and concrete particulars and fantasy, with its place for self-representation that proved truer than fiction. Her long fiction actively engages with her era's revolutionary politics, propounding liberal views, maintaining critical conversations with radical thinkers like Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), and exposing the subject position of women. They often reflect personal concerns—with sexuality, vulnerability, poverty—that reflect upon social issues, particularly regarding women's place in society and lack of legal rights.

Smith preferred writing poetry, then a more respected genre than fiction, and identified herself as a poet. Her use, indeed revival, of the sonnet form countered the eighteenth-century heroic couplet. She infused her sonnets with emotion and personal sensibility, particularly with her sincere affection for nature. They directly influenced Wordsworth and Coleridge, modeling for these writers a responsiveness to nature.

### 1.5.1 from Elegiac Sonnets

Written at the Close of Spring

The garlands fade that Spring so lately wove, Each simple flow'r, which she had nursed in dew, Anemonies that spangled every grove, The primrose wan, and harebell, mildly blue. No more shall violets linger in the dell, Or purple orchis variegate the plain, Till Spring again shall call forth every bell, And dress with humid hands her wreaths again.-Ah, poor Humanity! so frail, so fair, Are the fond visions of thy early day, Till Tyrant Passion, and corrosive Care, Bid all thy fairy colours fade away! Another May new buds and flow'rs shall bring; Ah! Why has Happiness—no second Spring?

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### 1.5.2 "To a Nightingale"

Poor melancholy bird—that all night long Tell'st to the Moon thy tale of tender woe; From what sad cause can such sweet sorrow flow, And whence this mournful melody of song?

Thy poet's musing fancy would translate

What mean the sounds that swell thy little breast,

When still at dewy eve thou leav'st thy nest,

Pale Sorrow's victims wert thou once among, Tho' now releas'd in woodlands wild to rove? Say—Hast thou felt from friends some cruel wrong, Or diedst thou—martyr of disastrous love? Ah, songstress sad! that such my lot might be, To sigh and sing, at liberty—like thee!

### 1.5.3 "To Sleep"

Come balmy Sleep! tir'd Nature's soft resort!

On these sad temples all thy poppies shed;

And bid gay dreams from Morpheus' airy court,

Float in light vision round my aching head!

Secure of all thy blessings, partial Power!

On his hard bed the peasant throws him down;

And the poor sea boy, in the rudest hour,

Enjoys thee more than he who wears a crown.

Clasp'd in her faithful shepherd's guardian arms,

Well may the village girl sweet slumbers prove;

And they, O gentle Sleep! still taste thy charms,

Who wake to labour, liberty and love.

But still thy opiate aid dost thou deny

To calm the anxious breast; to close the streaming eye.

### 1.5.4 Supposed to have been written in a Church Yard, over the Grave of a Young Woman of nineteen. From the Novel of Celestina (by Charlotte Smith)

Oh, thou! who sleep'st where hazle bands entwine

The vernal grass, with paler violets drest;

I would, sweet maid! thy humble bed were mine,

And mine thy calm and enviable rest.

For never more by human ills opprest,

Shall thy soft spirit fruitlessly repine:

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Thou canst not now, thy fondest hopes resign E'en in the hour that should have made thee blest. Light lies the turf upon thy virgin breast; And ling'ring here, to Love and Sorrow true, The Youth who once thy simple heart possest Shall mingle tears with April's early dew; While still for him shall faithful Memory save Thy form and virtues from the silent grave.

### 1.5.5 "The Captive escaped in the Wilds of America" Addressed to the Honourable Mrs. O'Neill

If by his torturing, savage foes untrac'd,

The breathless Captive gain some trackless glad,

Yet hears the warwhoop howl along the waste,

And dreads the reptile monsters of the shade;

The giant reeds that murmur round the flood,

Seem to conceal some hideous form beneath;

And every hollow blast that shakes the wood,

Speaks to his trembling heart, of woe and death.

With horror fraught, and desolate dismay,

On such a wanderer falls the starless night;

But if, far streaming, a propitious ray

Leads to some amicable fort his sight,

He hails the beam benign that guides his way,

As I, my Harriet, bless thy friendship's cheering light.

### 1.5.6 Reading and Review Questions

1. How, and why, does Smith transform Spring—usually associated with new life and growth—into a revelation of loss and sorrow?

2. What effect, if any, does the paradox "sweet sorrow" have on the tone of "To a Nightingale?" How does this poem compare to John Keats's later "Ode to a Nightingale" in terms of its emotional weight?

3. How, and why, does Smith gender nature in personal, rather than conventional, ways?

4. How, if at all, does Smith relate to rural, rude, and wretched figures, both male and female? Why?

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## 1.6 WILLIAM BLAKE

(1757-1827)

While comparatively unknown in his lifetime, William Blake shared Romantic ideals of independence, subjectivity, and imagination. He expressed these ideals in both his life and art. From his childhood on, William Blake was a visionary. He claimed to have seen God staring at him through a window. He saw a tree with branches spangled by angels. And he saw his brother's soul leave his body and ascend to heaven. While home-schooled and self-taught—in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Italian—Blake was apprenticed as an engraver for seven years and studied art briefly at the Royal Academy.

He married Catherine Boucher in 1782 and taught her to read and write—a highly unconventional act in an age when women of the lower and lower middle classes were not educated at all. Their partnership extended to his work in that he also taught her draftsmanship. While he made a living as an engraver and book illustrator, Blake's true vocation was his poetry which he illustrated through his unconventional art work.

Image 1.6 | Portrait of William Blake

Artist | Thomas Phillips Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



He synthesized text and image through his published poetry, in what he described as illuminated manuscripts. Much of his work functioned through synthesis, of good and evil, innocence and experience, thought and feeling, desire and restraint, imagination and reality. His radical thought was informed by such writers and philosophers as Thomas Paine; Mary Wollstonecraft, who advocated for educating women; and Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), a visionary who claimed to see heaven and hell. Blake's greatest source of knowledge and thought was the St. James Bible, which he "interpreted" with the freedom and power of a prophet.

While influenced by others, Blake determined to map his own course, to avoid being "enslaved to another man's system" (Jerusalem). He developed his own artistic and poetic system, with his own verbal and visual vocabulary, through which he declared that so-called evil often challenges the status quo, that so-called deities reside in the human breast, that innocence (as opposed to ignorance) can be sustained along with experience, that the imagination is the God in man that is the immortal.

He expounded these views in such works as The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (1790), America, a Prophecy (1793), and Visions of the Daughters of Albion (1793). The selection of poems here include those from his Songs of Innocence and

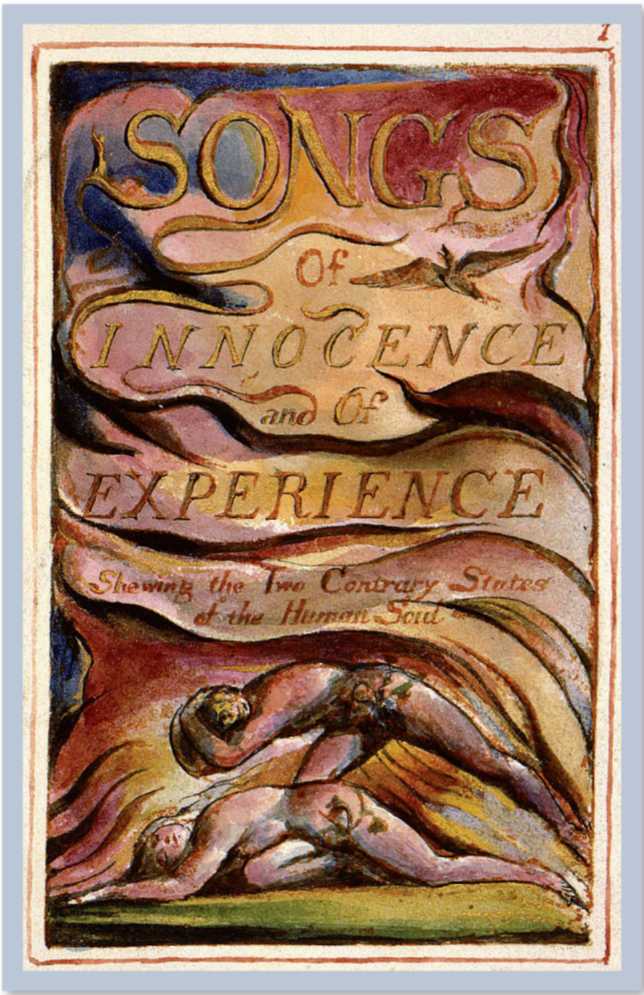
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of Experience (1794). Songs of Innocence was published first alone in 1789. Songs of Experience was published in 1794 and from there on after, the two works were always combined in a single work.

Innocence and Experience are states through which humans pass. Neither is an end-state on its own; both are necessary and exist in cyclic relation to each other. Innocence does not end with childhood, nor does experience dominate adulthood. They co-exist as dynamic contraries. This co-existence is highlighted by matching poems in both books, that is, poems with the same or similar titles. Blake engraved each poem of Songs of Innocence onto a copper plate. On the reverse side of the copper plate, he later engraved the matching poem for Songs of Experience. Each comments upon and completes the other.

### 1.6.1 Selections from Songs of Innocence and of Experience

Image 1.7 | Title Page for "Songs of Innocence and of Experience" Artist | William Blake Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



1.6.1.1"Introduction"

Piping down the valleys wild Piping songs of pleasant glee On a cloud I saw a child. And he laughing said to me.

Pipe a song about a Lamb; So I piped with merry chear, Piper pipe that song again— So I piped, he wept to hear.

Drop thy pipe thy happy pipe Sing thy songs of happy chear, So I sung the same again While he wept with joy to hear

Piper sit thee down and write In a book that all may read— So he vanish'd from my sight. And I pluck'd a hollow reed.

And I made a rural pen, And I stain'd the water clear, And I wrote my happy songs Every child may joy to hear

1.6.1.2 "The Lamb"

Little Lamb who made thee

Dost thou know who made thee

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Gave thee life & bid thee feed. By the stream & o'er the mead; Gave thee clothing of delight, Softest clothing wooly bright; Gave thee such a tender voice, Making all the vales rejoice!

Little Lamb who made thee

Dost thou know who made thee

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,

Little Lamb I'll tell thee! He is called by thy name, For he calls himself a Lamb: He is meek & he is mild, He became a little child: I a child & thou a lamb, We are called by his name.

Little Lamb God bless thee.

Little Lamb God bless thee.

1.6.1.3 "The Chimney Sweeper"

When my mother died I was very young, And my father sold me while yet my tongue Could scarcely cry "'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!" So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved, so I said, "Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare, You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet, & that very night, As Tom was a-sleeping he had such a sight! That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack, Were all of them locked up in coffins of black;

And by came an Angel who had a bright key, And he opened the coffins & set them all free; Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run, And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind, They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.

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And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy, He'd have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark And got with our bags & our brushes to work. Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm; So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

1.6.1.4 "The Little Black Boy"

My mother bore me in the southern wild, And I am black, but O! my soul is white; White as an angel is the English child: But I am black as if bereav'd of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree And sitting down before the heat of day, She took me on her lap and kissed me, And pointing to the east began to say.

Look on the rising sun: there God does live And gives his light, and gives his heat away. And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive Comfort in morning joy in the noonday.

And we are put on earth a little space, That we may learn to bear the beams of love, And these black bodies and this sun-burnt face Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear The cloud will vanish we shall hear his voice. Saying: come out from the grove my love & care, And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.

Thus did my mother say and kissed me,

And thus I say to little English boy.

When I from black and he from white cloud free,

And round the tent of God like lambs we joy:

Ill shade him from the heat till he can bear, To lean in joy upon our fathers knee. And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair, And be like him and he will then love me.

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1.6.1.5 "Holy Thursday"

Twas on a Holy Thursday their innocent faces clean The children walking two & two in red & blue & green Grey-headed beadles walkd before with wands as white as snow, Till into the high dome of Pauls they like Thames waters flow

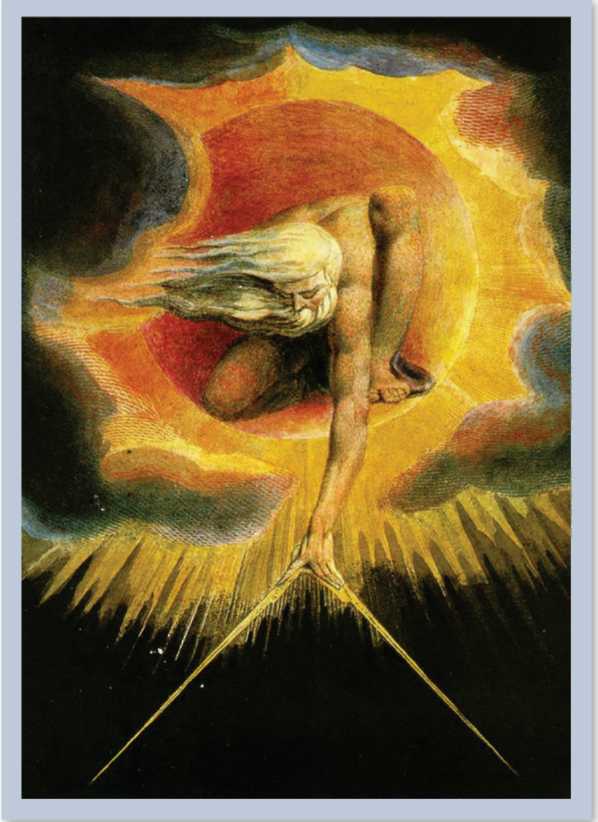
O what a multitude they seemd these flowers of London town Seated in companies they sit with radiance all their own The hum of multitudes was there but multitudes of lambs Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent hands

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of Heaven among Beneath them sit the aged men wise guardians of the poor Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door

Image 1.8 | Ancient of Days

Artist | William Blake

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### 1.6.2 From Songs of Experience

1.6.2.1 "Introduction"

Hear the voice of the Bard! Who Present, Past, & Future sees Whose ears have heard, The Holy Word,

That walk'd among the ancient trees

Calling the lapsed Soul

And weeping in the evening dew:

That might controll,

The starry pole;

And fallen fallen light renew!

O Earth O Earth return! Arise from out the dewy grass; Night is worn, And the morn

Rises from the slumberous mass.

Turn away no more: Why wilt thou turn away The starry floor The watry shore

Is giv'n thee till the break of day.

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1.6.2.2 "Earth's Answer"

Earth rais'd up her head, From the darkness dread & drear. Her light fled: Stony dread!

And her locks cover'd with grey despair.

Prison'd on watry shore Starry Jealousy does keep my den Cold and hoar Weeping o'er

I hear the Father of the ancient men

Selfish father of men Cruel, jealous, selfish fear Can delight Chain'd in night

The virgins of youth and morning bear.

Does spring hide its joy When buds and blossoms grow? Does the sower? Sow by night?

Or the plowman in darkness plow?

Break this heavy chain,

That does freeze my bones around

Selfish! vain!

Eternal bane!

That free Love with bondage bound.

1.6.2.3 "Holy Thursday"

Is this a holy thing to see,

In a rich and fruitful land,

Babes reducd to misery,

Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song? Can it be a song of joy? And so many children poor? It is a land of poverty!

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And their sun does never shine. And their fields are bleak & bare. And their ways are fill'd with thorns. It is eternal winter there.

For where-e'er the sun does shine, And where-e'er the rain does fall: Babe can never hunger there, Nor poverty the mind appall.

1.6.2.4 "The Chimney Sweeper"

A little black thing among the snow, Crying "weep! 'weep!" in notes of woe! "Where are thy father and mother? say?" "They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath, And smil'd among the winter's snow, They clothed me in the clothes of death, And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy and dance and sing, They think they have done me no injury, And are gone to praise God and his Priest and King, Who make up a heaven of our misery."

1.6.2.5 "The Tyger"

Tyger Tyger, burning bright, In the forests of the night; What immortal hand or eye, Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies. Burnt the fire of thine eyes? On what wings dare he aspire? What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art, Could twist the sinews of thy heart? And when thy heart began to beat, What dread hand? & what dread feet?

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What the hammer? what the chain, In what furnace was thy brain? What the anvil? what dread grasp, Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears And water'd heaven with their tears: Did he smile his work to see? Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright, In the forests of the night: What immortal hand or eye, Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Image 1.9 | The Tyger

Artist | William Blake

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1.6.2.6 "London"

I wander thro' each charter'd street, Near where the charter'd Thames does flow. And mark in every face I meet Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man, In every Infants cry of fear, In every voice: in every ban, The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry Every blackning Church appalls, And the hapless Soldiers sigh Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' midnight streets I hear

How the youthful Harlots curse

Blasts the new-born Infants tear

And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

1.6.2.7 "The Human Abstract"

Pity would be no more If we did not make somebody Poor; And Mercy no more could be If all were as happy as we.

And mutual fear brings peace, Till the selfish loves increase: Then Cruelty knits a snare, And spreads his baits with care.

He sits down with holy fears, And waters the grounds with tears; Then Humility takes its root Underneath his foot.

Soon spreads the dismal shade Of Mystery over his head; And the Catterpiller and Fly Feed on the Mystery.

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And it bears the fruit of Deceit, Ruddy and sweet to eat; And the Raven his nest has made In its thickest shade.

The Gods of the earth and sea Sought thro' Nature to find this Tree; But their search was all in vain: There grows one in the Human Brain.

### 1.6.3 The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

The Argument

Rintrah roars & shakes his fires in the burden'd air; Hungry clouds swag on the deep.

Once meek, and in a perilous path, The just man kept his course along The vale of death.

Roses are planted where thorns grow, And on the barren heath Sing the honey bees.

Then the perilous path was planted: And a river and a spring On every cliff and tomb: And on the bleached bones Red clay brought forth.

Till the villain left the paths of ease, To walk in perilous paths, and drive The just man into barren climes.

Now the sneaking serpent walks In mild humility,

And the just man rages in the wilds Where lions roam.

Rintrah roars & shakes his fires in the burden'd air; Hungry clouds swag on the deep.

As a new heaven is begun, and it is now thirty-three years since its advent: the Eternal Hell revives. And lo! Swedenborg is the Angel sitting at the tomb: his

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writings are the linen clothes folded up. Now is the dominion of Edom, & the return of Adam into Paradise: see Isaiah XXXIV & XXXV Chap:

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy.

Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell

The Voice of the Devil

All Bibles or sacred codes, have been the causes of the following Errors.

1. That Man has two real existing principles Viz: a Body & a Soul.

2. That Energy, call'd Evil, is alone from the Body, & that Reason, call'd Good, is alone from the Soul.

3. That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies.

But the following Contraries to these are True.

1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age.

2. Energy is the only life and is from the Body and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.

3. Energy is Eternal Delight.

Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer of reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling.

And being restrain'd it by degrees becomes passive till it is only the shadow of desire.

The history of this written in Paradise Lost, & the Governor of Reason is call'd Messiah.

And the original Archangel or possessor of the command of the heavenly host, is call'd the Devil or Satan and his children are call'd Sin & Death. But in the Book of Job Miltons Messiah is call'd Satan. For this history has been adopted by both parties.

It indeed appear'd to Reason as if Desire was cast out, but the Devils account is that the Messiah fell, & formed a heaven of what he stole from the Abyss.

This is shewn in the Gospel, where he prays to the Father to send the comforter or Desire that Reason may have Ideas to build on, the Jehovah of the Bible being no other than he who dwells in flaming fire.

Know that after Christs death, he became Jehovah.

But in Milton' the Father is Destiny, the Son, a Raio of the five senses, & the Holy-ghost, Vacuum!

Note. The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it.

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A Memorable Fancy

As I was walking among the fires of hell, delighted with the enjoyments of Genius; which to Angels look like torment and insanity, I collected some of their Proverbs; thinking that as the sayings used in a nation, mark its character, so the Proverbs of Hell, shew the nature in Infernal wisdom better than any description of buildings or garments,

When I came home: on the abyss of the five senses, where a flat sided steep frowns over the present world, I saw a mighty Devil folded in black clouds, hovering on the sides of the rock, with corroding fires he wrote the following sentence now percieved by the minds of men, & read by them on earth.

How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way, Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five?

Proverbs of Hell

In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.

Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead.

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity.

He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence.

The cut worm forgives the plow.

Dip him in the river who loves water.

A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.

He whose face gives no light, shall never become a star.

Eternity is in love with the productions of time.

The busy bee has no time for sorrow.

The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock, but of wisdom: no clock can measure.

All wholsom food is caught without a net or a trap.

Bring out number weight & measure in a year of dearth.

No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings.

A dead body, revenges not injuries.

The most sublime act is to set another before you.

If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise.

Folly is the cloke of knavery.

Shame is Prides cloke.

Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion.

The pride of the peacock is the glory of God.

The lust of the goat is the bounty of God.

The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God.

The nakedness of woman is the work of God.

Excess of sorrow laughs. Excess of joy weeps.

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The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the

destructive sword, are portions of eternity too great for the eye of man. The fox condemns the trap, not himself. Joys impregnate. Sorrows bring forth.

Let man wear the fell of the lion, woman the fleece of the sheep. The bird a nest, the spider a web, man friendship.

The selfish smiling fool, & the sullen frowning fool, shall be both thought wise,

that they may be a rod. What is now proved was once, only imagin'd.

The rat, the mouse, the fox, the rabbit: watch the roots; the lion, the tyger, the

horse, the elephant, watch the fruits. The cistern contains; the fountain overflows. One thought, fills immensity.

Always be ready to speak your mind, and a base man will avoid you. Every thing possible to be believ'd is an image of truth.

The eagle never lost so much time, as when he submitted to learn of the crow.

The fox provides for himself, but God provides for the lion.

Think in the morning. Act in the noon. Eat in the evening. Sleep in the night.

He who has suffer'd you to impose on him knows you.

As the plow follows words, so God rewards prayers.

The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.

Expect poison from the standing water.

You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough. Listen to the fools reproach! it is a kingly title!

The eyes of fire, the nostrils of air, the mouth of water, the beard of earth. The weak in courage is strong in cunning.

The apple tree never asks the beech how he shall grow, nor the lion, the horse,

how he shall take his prey. The thankful reciever bears a plentiful harvest. If others had not been foolish, we should be so. The soul of sweet delight, can never be defil'd.

When thou seest an Eagle, thou seest a portion of Genius, lift up thy head!

As the catterpiller chooses the fairest leaves to lay her eggs on, so the priest lays

his curse on the fairest joys. To create a little flower is the labour of ages. Damn, braces: Bless relaxes.

The best wine is the oldest, the best water the newest. Prayers plow not! Praises reap not! Joys laugh not! Sorrows weep not!

The head Sublime, the heart Pathos, the genitals Beauty, the hands & feet Proportion.

As the air to a bird of the sea to a fish, so is contempt to the contemptible. The crow wish'd every thing was black, the owl, that every thing was white.

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Exuberance is Beauty.

If the lion was advised by the fox, he would be cunning.

Improvement makes strait roads, but the crooked roads without Improvement,

are roads of Genius. Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires. Where man is not nature is barren.

Truth can never be told so as to be understood, and not be believ'd. Enough! or Too much!

The ancient Poets animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses, calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged & numerous senses could percieve.

And particularly they studied the genius of each city & country, placing it under its mental deity.

Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of & enslav'd the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the mental deities from their objects; thus began Priesthood.

Choosing forms of worship from poetic tales.

And a length they pronounc'd that the Gods had order'd such things. Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast.

A Memorable Fancy

The Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel dined with me, and I asked them how they dared so roundly to assert, that God spoke to them; and whether they did not think at the time, that they would be misunderstood, & so be the cause of imposition.

Isaiah answer'd, I saw no God, nor heard any, in a finite organical perception; but my senses discover'd the infinite in every thing, and as I was then perswaded, & remain confirm'd; that the voice of honest indignation is the voice of God, I cared not for consequences but wrote.

Then I asked: does a firm perswasion that a thing is so, make it so?

He replied, All poets that it does, & in ages of imagination this firm perswasion removed mountains; but many are not capable of a firm perswasion of any thing.

Then Ezekiel said, The philosophy of the east taught the first principles of human perception: some nations held one principle for the origin & some another; we of Israel taught that the Poetic Genius (as you now call it) was the first principle and all other others merely derivative, which was the cause of our despising the priests & Philosophers of other countries, and prophecying that all Gods would at last be proved to originate in ours & to be the tributaries of the Poetic Genius; it was this that our great poet King David desired so fervently & invokes so patheticly, saying by this he conquers enemies & governs kingdoms; and we so loved our God, that we cursed in his name all deities of surrounding nations, and asserted that they had rebelled; from these opinions the vulgar came to think that all nations would at last be subject to the jews.

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This said he, like all firm perswasions, is come to pass, for all nations believe the jews code and worship the jews god, and what greater subjection can be?

I heard this with some wonder, & must confess my own conviction. After dinner I ask'd Isaiah to favour the world with his lost works, he said none of equal value was lost. Ezekiel said the same of his.

I also asked Isaiah what made him go naked and barefoot three years? he answer'd, the same that made our friend Diogenes the Grecian.

I then asked Ezekiel, why he eat dung, & lay so long on his right & left side? he answer'd, the desire of raising other men into a perception of the infinite; this the North American tribes practise, & is he honest who resists his genius or conscience only for the sake of present ease or gratification?

The ancient tradition that the world will be consumed in fire at the end of six thousand years is true, as I have heard from Hell.

For the cherub with his flaming sword is hereby commanded to leave his guard at tree of life, and when he does, the whole creation will be consumed, and appear infinite, and holy whereas it now appears finite & corrupt.

This will come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment.

But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged: this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid.

If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.

For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.

I was in a Printing house in Hell & saw the method in which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation.

In the first chamber was a Dragon-Man, clearing away the rubbish from a caves moth; within, a number of Dragons were hollowing the cave.

In the second chamber was a Viper folding round the rock & the cave, and others adorning it with gold, silver and precious stones.

In the third chamber was an Eagle with wings and feathers of air; he caused the inside of the cave to be infinite; around were numbers of Eagle like men, who built palaces in the immense cliffs.

In the fourth chamber were Lions of flaming fire raging around & melting the metals into living fluids.

In the fifth chamber were Unnam'd forms, which cast the metals into the expanse.

There they were reciev'd by Men who occupied the sixth chamber, and took the forms of books & were arranged in libraries.

The Giants who formed this world into its sensual existence and now seem to live in it in chains, are in truth, the causes of its life & the sources of all activity; but the chains are, the cunning of weak and tame minds, which have power to resist energy, according to the proverb, the weak in courage is strong in cunning.

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Thus one portion of being, is the Prolific, the other, the Devouring: to the devourer it seems as if the producer was in his chains, but it is not so; he only takes portions of existence and fancies that the whole.

But the Prolific would cease to be Prolific unless the Devourer as a sea recieved the excess of his delights.

Some will say, Is not God alone the Prolific? I answer, God only Acts & Is, in existing beings or Men.

These two classes of men are always upon earth, & they should be enemies; whoever tries to reconcile them seeks to destroy existence.

Religion is an endeavour to reconcile the two.

Note. Jesus Christ did not wish to unit but to seperate them, as in the Parable of sheep and goats! & he says I came not to send Peace but a Sword.

Messiah or Satan or Tempter was formerly thought to be one of the Antediluvians who are our Energies.

An Angel came to me and said O pitiable foolish young man! O horrible! O dreadful state! consider the hot burning dungeon thou art preparing for thyself to all eternity, to which thou art going in such career.

I said, perhaps you will be willing to shew me my eternal lot & we will contemplate together upon it and see whether your lot or mine is most desirable.

So he took me thro' a stable & thro' a church & down into the church vault at the end of which was a mill: thro' the mill we went, and came to a cave, down the winding cavern we groped our tedious way till a void boundless as a nether sky appear'd beneath us, & we held by the roots of trees and hung over this immensity, but I said, if you please we will commit ourselves to this void, and see whether providence is here also, if you will not, I will? but he answer'd, do not presume O young-man but as we here remain behold thy lot which will soon appear when the darkness passes away.

So I remain'd with him sitting in the twisted root of an oak; he was suspended in a fungus, which hung with the head downward into the deep.

By degrees we beheld the infinite Abyss, fiery as the smoke of a burning city; beneath us at an immense distance was the sun, black but shining; round it were fiery tracks on which revolv'd vast spiders, crawling after their prey; which flew or rather swum in the infinite deep, in the most terrific shapes of animals sprung from corruption, & the air was full of them, & seem'd composed of them; these are Devils, and arc called Powers of the air. I now asked my companion which was my eternal lot? he said, between the black & white spiders.

But now, from between the black & white spiders, a cloud and fire burst and rolled thro' the deep, blackning all beneath, so that the nether deep grew black as a sea & rolled with a terrible noise; beneath us was nothing now to be seen but a black tempest, till looking east between the clouds & the waves, we saw a cataract of blood mixed with fire, and not many stones throw from us appear'd and sunk again the scaly fold of a monstrous serpent; at last to the east, distant about three degrees appear'd a fiery crest above the waves; slowly it reared like a ridge of golden rocks till we discover'd two globes of crimson fire, from which the sea fled away in

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clouds of smoke, and now we saw, it was the head of Leviathan; his forehead was divided into streaks of green & purple like those on a tygers forehead: soon we saw his mouth & red gills hang just above the raging foam tinging the black deep with beams of blood, advancing toward us with all the fury of a spiritual existence.

My friend the Angel climb'd up from his station into the mill; I remain'd alone, & then this appearance was no more, but I found myself sitting on a pleasant bank beside a river by moonlight hearing a harper who sung to the harp, & his theme was, The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, & breeds reptiles of the mind.

But I arose, and sought for the mill & there I found my Angel, who surprised asked me how I escaped?

I answer'd, All that we saw was owing to your metaphysics; for when you ran away, I found myself on a bank by moonlight hearing a harper. But now we have seen my eternal lot, shall I shew you yours? he laugh'd at my proposal; but I by force suddenly caught him in my arms, & flew westerly thro' the night, till we were elevated above the earths shadow; then I flung myself with him directly into the body of the sun; here I clothed myself in white, & taking in my hand Swedenborgs volumes, sunk from the glorious clime, and passed all the planets till we came to saturn; here I staid to rest, & then leap'd into the void, between saturn & the fixed stars.

Here, said I! is your lot, in this space, if space it may be call'd. Soon we saw the stable and the church, & I took him to the altar and open'd the Bible, and lo! it was a deep pit, into which I descended driving the Angel before me; soon we saw seven houses of brick; one we enter'd; in it were a number of monkeys, baboons, & all of that species, chain'd by the middle, grinning and snatching at one another, but witheld by the shortness of their chains; however I saw that they sometimes grew numerous, and then the weak were caught by the strong, and with a grinning aspect, first coupled with & then devour'd, by plucking off first one limb and then another till the body was left a helpless trunk; this after grinning & kissing it with seeming fondness they devour'd too; and here & there I saw one savourily picking the flesh off of his own tail; as the stench terribly annoy'd us both we went into the mill, & I in my hand brought the skeleton of a body, which in the mill was Aristotles Analytics.

So the Angel said: thy phantasy has imposed upon me & thou oughtest to be ashamed.

I answer'd: we impose on one another, & it is but lost time to converse with you whose works are only Analytics.

Opposition is true Friendship.

I have always found that Angels have the vanity to speak of themselves as the only wise; this they do with a confident insolence sprouting from systematic reasoning:

Thus Swedenborg boasts that what he writes is new; tho' it is only the Contents or Index of already publish'd books.

A man carried a monkey about for a shew, & because he was a little wiser than the monkey, grew vain, and conciev'd himself as much wiser than seven men. It is

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so with Swedenborg; he shews the folly of churches & exposes hypocrites, till he imagines that all are religious, & himself the single one on earth that ever broke a net.

Now hear a plain fact: Swedenborg has not written one new truth:

Now hear another: he has written all the old falshoods.

And now hear the reason. He conversed with Angels who are all religious, & conversed not with Devils who all hate religion, for he was incapable thro' his conceited notions.

Thus Swedenborgs writings are a recapitulation of all superficial, opinions, and an analysis of the more sublime, but no further.

Have now another plain fact: Any man of mechanical talents may from the writings of Paracelsus or Jacob Behmen, produce ten thousand volumes of equal value with Swedenborgs, and from those of Dante or Shakespear, an infinite number.

But when he has done this, let him not say that he knows better than his master, for he only holds a candle in sunshine.

Once I saw a Devil in a flame of fire, who arose before an Angel that sat on a cloud, and the Devil utter'd these words.

The worship of God is, Honouring his gifts in other men each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best; those who envy or calumniate great men hate God, for there is no other God.

The Angel hearing this became almost blue, but mastering himself he grew yellow, & at last white pink & smiling, and then replied,

Thou Idolater, is not God One? & is not he visible in Jesus Christ? and has not Jesus Christ given his sanction to the law often commandments, and are not all other men fools, sinners, & nothings?

The Devil answer'd: bray a fool in a morter with wheat, yet shall not his folly be beaten out of him; if Jesus Christ is the greatest man, you ought to love him in the greatest degree; now hear how he has given his sanction to the law of ten commandments: did he not mock at the sabbath, and so mock the sabbaths God? murder those who were murder'd because of him? turn away the law from the woman taken in adultery? steal the labor of others to support him? bear false witness when he omitted making a defence before Pilate? covet when he pray'd for his disciples, and when he bid them shake off the dust of their feet against such as refused to lodge them? I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments; Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules.

When he had so spoken: I beheld the Angel who stretched out his arms embracing the flame of fire, & he was consumed and arose as Elijah.

Note. This Angel, who is now become a Devil, is my particular friend; we often read the Bible together in its infernal or diabolical sense which the world shall have if they behave well.

I have also: The Bible of Hell: which the world shall have whether they will or no. One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression.

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A Song of Liberty

1. The Eternal Female groan'd! it was heard over all the Earth:

2. Albions coast is sick silent; the American meadows faint!

3. Shadows of Prophecy shiver along by the lakes and the rivers and mutter across the ocean. France rend down thy dungeon;

4. Golden Spain burst the barriers of old Rome;

5. Cast thy keys O Rome into the deep down falling, even to eternity down falling,

6. And weep.

7. In her trembling hands she took the new born terror howling;

8. On those infinite mountains of light, now barr'd out by the atlantic sea, the new born fire stood before the starry king!

9. Flag'd with grey brow'd snows and thunderous visages the jealous wings wav'd over the deep.

10. The speary hand burned aloft, unbuckled was the shield, forth went the hand of jealousy among the flaming hair, and hurl'd the new born wonder thro' the starry night.

11. The fire, the fire, is falling!

12. Look up! look up! O citizen of London, enlarge thy countenance; O Jew, leave counting gold! return to thy oil and wine; O African! black African! (go, winged thought, widen his forehead.)

13. The fiery limbs, the flaming hair, shot like the sinking sun into the western sea.

14. Wak'd from his eternal sleep, the hoary element roaring fled away;

15. Down rush'd beating his wings in vain the jealous king; his grey brow'd councellors, thunderous warriors, curl'd veterans, among helms, and shields, and chariots, horses, elephants: banners, castles, slings, and rocks,

16. Falling, rushing, ruining! buried in the ruins, on Urthona's dens;

17. All night beneath the ruins, then their sullen flames faded emerge round the gloomy King.

18. With thunder and fire: leading his starry hosts thro' the waste wilderness, he promulgates his ten commands, glancing: his beamy eyelids over the deep in dark dismay,

19. Where the son of fire in his eastern cloud, while the morning plumes her Golden breast,

20. Spurning the clouds written with curses, stamps the stony law to dust, loosing: the eternal horses from the dens of night, crying,

Empire is no more! and now the lion & wolf shall cease

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Chorus

Let the Priests of the Raven of dawn, no longer in deadly black, with hoarse note curse the sons of joy. Nor his accepted brethren, whom tyrant, he calls free: lay the bound or build the roof. Nor pale religious letchery call that virginity, that wishes but acts not!

For every thing that lives is Holy.

### 1.6.4 Reading and Review Questions

1. Why does Blake title Songs as "of" innocence and experience rather than "about" innocence and experience? How does the juxtaposition of these two states expose the inadequacies of each and their dependence on the other?

2. What is the poem's attitude or relation to the reader in Songs of Innocence, and why? What is their attitude in Songs of Experience, and why? How do you know?

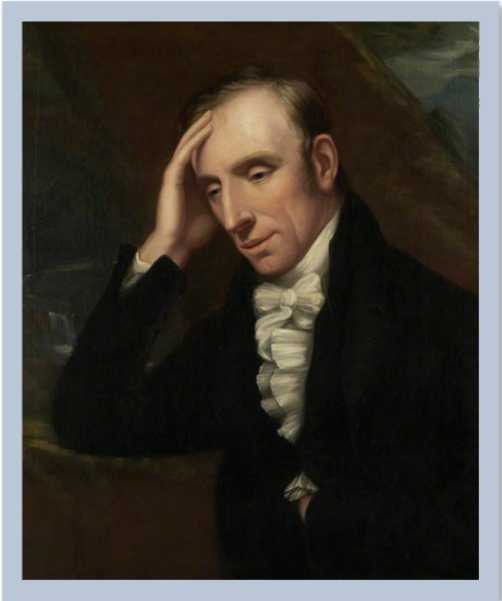
3. How does Blake make use of Biblical images? What preconceptions, or attitudes, does he assume, and why? What preconceptions does he subvert? How? Why?

4. What, if anything, is revolutionary about Blake's depiction of Heaven and Hell, and of Satan and devils? Why? How, if at all, do the images affect your understanding of the poem's meaning? Why?

## 1.7 WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Image 1.10 | Portrait of William Wordsworth

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(1770-1850)

Unlike Blake, William Wordsworth was born into the upper middle to upper class. When he was orphaned in 1778, he was cared for by his aunt and uncle. He studied at Hawkshead Grammar School, near Windermere in the Lake District. His formal education ended with a short term at St. John's College, Cambridge. But from his early childhood, Nature was his teacher; human nature was his subject.

In 1791, Wordsworth traveled to France to learn the French language, with an eye to making a living as a tutor in French. He became caught up in the French Revolution and had an affair with Annette Vallon, who bore him a daughter, Caroline, in 1792. His personal relationship with Annette Vallon turned just

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as the revolution did, in that Annette was a monarchist. Pro-revolutionary as he was, Wordsworth became afraid for his life, and as he could not make a living in France, he returned to England, effectively abandoning Annette Vallon and their daughter.

Image 1.11 | The Lake District (Crummock Water from Red Pike)

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The Reign of Terror made it impossible for him to return to them until 1802, at which time he reached an agreement with Annette Vallon before marrying Mary Hutchinson. An inheritance made him financially independent, and he set up house in his beloved Lake District with his wife, his sister Dorothy, and his growing family. This contentment was earned at great emotional price, though. After leaving France and Annette Vallon, Wordsworth suffered a sort of nervous or emotional breakdown. And the crisis of that time—and indeed for the rest of his life—was his desire to recover his original self, to let "the child be father to the man" ("My Heart Leaps Up").

In his poetry, Wordsworth tries to understand the human mind, especially during intense moments or states of excitement. All humans, regardless of class, experience emotions; and Wordsworth believed that in states of excitement, humans reach a level of dignity, power, and authenticity that is poetic. He described this revolutionary view not only of poetry but also of humanity in his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, a collection of poems co-authored with his friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

This Preface declared a revolt against the poetry that went before. Wordsworth's poetry would use the real language spoken by real men. He defines good poetry as the "spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions recollected in tranquility." Spontaneity secures sincerity, transparency, and naturalness. Overflow secures power and strength

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of emotion. Recollection in tranquility secures truth and authenticity. The subject of his poetry was incidents and situations from common life. The language of his poetry was that which was really used by men. Over both this language and these incidents, Wordsworth throws the coloring of the imagination which makes common things uncommon, makes natural things seem supernatural. He thereby highlights the power of the imagination—that all humans possess and share equally.

### 1.7.1 "We Are Seven"

A simple child, dear brother Jim, That lightly draws its breath, And feels its life in every limb, What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage girl, She was eight years old, she said; Her hair was thick with many a curl That cluster'd round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air, And she was wildly clad; Her eyes were fair, and very fair, —Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little maid, "How many may you be?" "How many? seven in all," she said, And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they, I pray you tell?" She answered, "Seven are we, "And two of us at Conway dwell, "And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the church-yard lie, "My sister and my brother, "And in the church-yard cottage, I "Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell, "And two are gone to sea, "Yet you are seven; I pray you tell "Sweet Maid, how this may be?"

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Then did the little Maid reply, "Seven boys and girls are we; "Two of us in the church-yard lie, "Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little maid, "Your limbs they are alive; "If two are in the church-yard laid, "Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen," The little Maid replied,

"Twelve steps or more from my mothers door, "And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit, "My 'kerchief there I hem; "And there upon the ground I sit— "I sit and sing to them.

"And often after sunset, Sir, "When it is light and fair, "I take my little porringer, "And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was little Jane; "In bed she moaning lay, "Till God released her of her pain, "And then she went away.

"So in the church-yard she was laid, "And all the summer dry, "Together round her grave we played, My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow, "And I could run and slide, "My brother John was forced to go, "And he lies by her side."

"How many are you then," said I, "If they two are in Heaven?" The little Maiden did reply, "O Master! we are seven."

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"But they are dead; those two are dead! "Their spirits are in heaven!" 'Twas throwing words away; for still The little Maid would have her will, And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

### 1.7.2 "Expostulation and Reply"

"Why, William, on that old grey stone, "Thus for the length of half a day, "Why, William, sit you thus alone, "And dream your time away?

"Where are your books? that light bequeath'd "To beings else forlorn and blind! "Up! Up! and drink the spirit breath'd "From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your mother earth, "As if she for no purpose bore you; "As if you were her first-born birth, "And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake, When life was sweet, I knew not why, To me my good friend Matthew spake, And thus I made reply.

"The eye it cannot chuse but see, "We cannot bid the ear be still; "Our bodies feel, where'er they be, "Against, or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are powers "Which of themselves our minds impress, "That we can feed this mind of ours "In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, mid all this mighty sum "Of things for ever speaking, "That nothing of itself will come, "But we must still be seeking?

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"—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone, "Conversing as I may, "I sit upon this old grey stone, "And dream my time away."

### 1.7.3 "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"

Five years have passed; five summers with the length

Of five long winters! and again I hear

These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs

With a soft inland murmur.—Once again

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,

That on a wild secluded scene impress

Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect

The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

The day is come when I again repose

Here, under this dark sycamore, and view

These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard tufts,

Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,

Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves

'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see

These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines

Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,

Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke

Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!

With some uncertain notice, as might seem

Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,

Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire

The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms, Through a long absence, have not been to me As is a landscape to a blind man's eye: But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din Of towns and cities, I have owed to them In hours of weariness, sensations sweet, Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart; And passing even into my purer mind, With tranquil restoration:—feelings too Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps, As have no slight or trivial influence On that best portion of a good man's life, His little, nameless, unremembered, acts Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,

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Image 1.12 | Tintern Abbey & the River Wye

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To them I may have owed another gift,

Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,

In which the burthen of the mystery,

In which the heavy and the weary weight

Of all this unintelligible world,

Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,

In which the affectations gently lead us on,—

Until, the breath of this corporeal frame

And even the motion of our human blood

Almost suspended, we are laid asleep

In body, and become a living soul:

While with an eye made quiet by the power

Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,

We see into the life of things.

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft— In darkness and amid the many shapes Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir Unprofitable, and the fever of the world, Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—

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How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,

O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,

How oft has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought, With many recognitions dim and faint, And somewhat of a sad perplexity, The picture of the mind revives again: While here I stand, not only with the sense Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts That in this moment there is life and food For future years. And so I dare to hope, Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first

I came among these hills; when like a roe

I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides

Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,

Wherever nature led: more like a man

Flying from something that he dreads, than one

Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then

(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,

And their glad animal movements all gone by)

To me was all in all.—I cannot paint

What then I was. The sounding cataract

Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,

The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,

Their colours and their forms, were then to me

An appetite; a feeling and a love,

That had no need of a remoter charm,

By thought supplied, nor any interest

Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,

And all its aching joys are now no more,

And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this

Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur, other gifts

Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,

Abundant recompense. For I have learned

To look on nature, not as in the hour

Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes

The still, sad music of humanity,

Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power

To chasten and subdue. And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,

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Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, And the round ocean and the living air, And the blue sky, and in the mind of man; A motion and a spirit, that impels All thinking things, all objects of all thought, And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still A lover of the meadows and the woods, And mountains; and of all that we behold From this green earth; of all the mighty world Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create, And what perceive; well pleased to recognise In nature and the language of the sense, The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse, The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance, If I were not thus taught, should I the more Suffer my genial spirits to decay: For thou art with me here upon the banks Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend, My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch The language of my former heart, and read My former pleasures in the shooting lights Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while May I behold in thee what I was once, My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make, Knowing that Nature never did betray The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege, Through all the years of this our life, to lead From joy to joy: for she can so inform The mind that is within us, so impress With quietness and beauty, and so feed With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues, Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men, Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all The dreary intercourse of daily life, Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon Shine on thee in thy solitary walk; And let the misty mountain-winds be free To blow against thee: and, in after years,

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When these wild ecstasies shall be matured

Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind

Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,

Thy memory be as a dwelling-place

For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,

If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,

Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,

And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—

If I should be where I no more can hear

Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams

Of past existence—wilt thou then forget

That on the banks of this delightful stream

We stood together; and that I, so long

A worshipper of Nature, hither came

Unwearied in that service: rather say

With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal

Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,

That after many wanderings, many years

Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,

And this green pastoral landscape, were to me

More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

### 1.7.4 Preface to Lyrical Ballads

The First Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published, as an experiment which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure: and on the other hand I was well aware that by those who should dislike them they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that I have pleased a greater number, than I ventured to hope I should please.

For the sake of variety and from a consciousness of my own weakness I was induced to request the assistance of a Friend, who furnished me with the Poems of

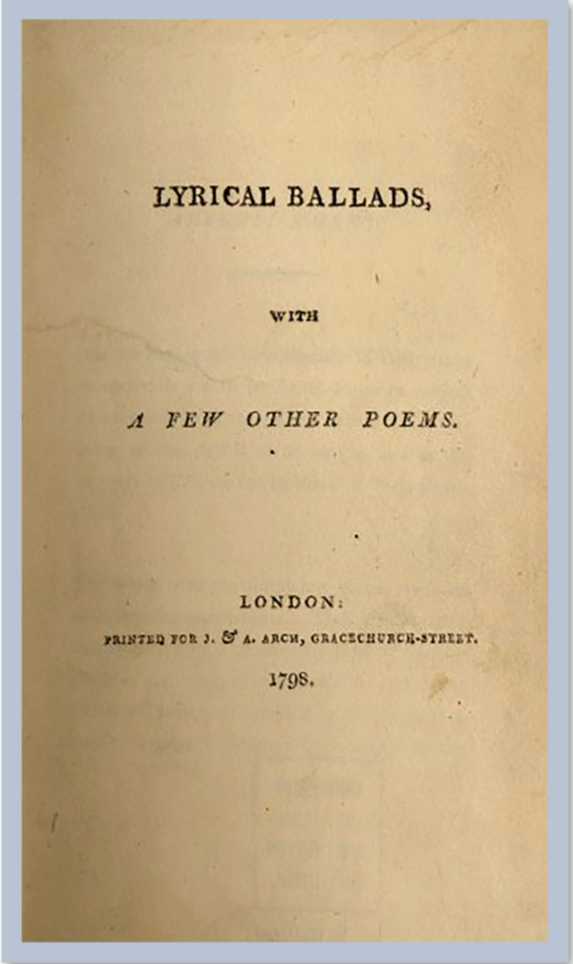
the ANCIENT MARINER, the FOSTER-MOTHER'S TALE, the NIGHTINGALE,

the DUNGEON, and the Poem entitled LOVE. I should not, however, have requested this assistance, had I not believed that the poems of my Friend would in a great measure have the same tendency as my own, and that, though there would be found a difference, there would be found no discordance in the colours of our style; as our opinions on the subject of poetry do almost entirely coincide.

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Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems from a belief, that if the views, with which they were composed, were indeed realized, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the multiplicity and in the quality of its moral relations: and on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory, upon which the poems were written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, because I knew that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of reasoning him into an approbation of these particular Poems: and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because adequately to display my opinions and fully to enforce my arguments would require a space wholly disproportionate to the nature of a preface. For to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence, of which I believe it susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which again could not be determined, without pointing out, in what manner language and the human mind act and react on each other, and without retracing the revolutions not of literature alone but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defence; yet I am sensible, that there would be some impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon the Public, without a few words of introduction, Poems so materially different from those, upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

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It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association, that he not only thus apprizes the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different aeras of literature have excited very different expectations: for example, in the age of Catullus Terence and Lucretius, and that of Statius or Claudian, and in our own country, in the age of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope.

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I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which by the act of writing in verse an Author in the present day makes to his Reader; but I am certain it will appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted. I hope therefore the Reader will not censure me, if I attempt to state what I have proposed to myself to perform, and also, (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any unpleasant feeling of disappointment, and that I myself may be protected from the most dishonorable accusation which can be brought against an Author, namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavouring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained prevents him from performing it.

The principal object then which I proposed to myself in these Poems was to make the incidents of common life interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Low and rustic life was generally chosen because in that situation the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that situation our elementary feelings exist in a state of greater simplicity and consequently may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and from the necessary character of rural occupations are more easily comprehended; and are more durable; and lastly, because in that situation the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language too of these men is adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the action of social vanity they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly such a language arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings is a more permanent and a far more philosophical language than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression in order to furnish food for fickle tastes and fickle appetites of their own creation.1

1 Original Note: It is worth while here to observe that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day.

I cannot be insensible of the present outcry against the triviality and meanness both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect where it exists, is more dishonorable to the Writer's own character than false

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refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy purpose Not that I mean to say, that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but I believe that my habits of meditation have so formed my feelings, as that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a purpose. If in this opinion I am mistaken I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; but though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached, were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so by the repetition and continuance of this act feelings connected with important subjects will be nourished, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much organic sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced that by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits we shall describe objects and utter sentiments of such a nature and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the being to whom we address ourselves, if he be in a healthful state of association, must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, his taste exalted, and his affections ameliorated.

I have said that each of these poems has a purpose. I have also informed my Reader what this purpose will be found principally to be: namely to illustrate the manner in which our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement. But speaking in less general language, it is to follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature. This object I have endeavoured in these short essays to attain by various means; by tracing the maternal passion through many of its more subtle windings, as in the poems of the IDIOT BOY and the MAD MOTHER; by accompanying the last struggles of a human being at the approach of death, cleaving in solitude to life and society, as in the Poem of the FORSAKEN INDIAN; by shewing, as in the Stanzas entitled WE ARE SEVEN, the perplexity and obscurity which in childhood attend our notion of death, or rather our utter inability to admit that notion; or by displaying the strength of fraternal, or to speak more philosophically, of moral attachment when early associated with the great and beautiful objects of nature, as in THE BROTHERS; or, as in the Incident of SIMON LEE, by placing my Reader in the way of receiving from ordinary moral sensations another and more salutary impression than we are accustomed to receive from them. It has also been part of my general purpose to attempt to sketch characters under the influence of less impassioned

feelings, as in the OLD MAN TRAVELLING, THE TWO THIEVES, &c. characters

of which the elements are simple, belonging rather to nature than to manners, such

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as exist now and will probably always exist, and which from their constitution may be distinctly and profitably contemplated. I will not abuse the indulgence of my Reader by dwelling longer upon this subject; but it is proper that I should mention one other circumstance which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation and not the action and situation to the feeling. My meaning will be rendered perfectly intelligible by referring my Reader to the Poems entitled POOR SUSAN and the CHILDLESS FATHER, particularly to the last Stanza of the latter Poem.

I will not suffer a sense of false modesty to prevent me from asserting, that I point my Reader's attention to this mark of distinction far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of excitement without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know that one being is elevated above another in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes unknown to former times are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the encreasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.—When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble effort with which I have endeavoured to counteract it; and reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonorable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it which are equally inherent and indestructible; and did I not further add to this impression a belief that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed by men of greater powers and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprize him of a few circumstances relating to their style, in order, among other reasons, that I may not be censured for not having performed what I never attempted. Except in a very few instances the Reader will find no personifications of abstract ideas in these volumes, not that I mean to censure such

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personifications: they may be well fitted for certain sorts of composition, but in these Poems I propose to myself to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men, and I do not find that such personifications make any regular or natural part of that language. I wish to keep my Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Not but that I believe that others who pursue a different track may interest him likewise: I do not interfere with their claim, I only wish to prefer a different claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; I have taken as much pains to avoid it as others ordinarily take to produce it; this I have done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men, and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. I do not know how without being culpably particular I can give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which I wished these poems to be written than by informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject, consequently I hope it will be found that there is in these Poems little falsehood of description, and that my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something I must have gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely good sense; but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad Poets till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a Poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. And it would be a most easy task to prove to him that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. I have not space for much quotation; but, to illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who by their reasonings have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

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In vain to me the smiling mornings shine, And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire: The birds in vain their amorous descant join, Or chearful fields resume their green attire: These ears alas! for other notes repine; A different object do these eyes require; My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine; And in my breast the imperfect joys expire; YetMorning smiles the busy race to cheer, And new-born pleasure brings to happier men; The fields to all their wonted tribute bear; To warm their little loves the birds complain. Ifruitless mourn to him that cannot hear And weep the more because I weep in vain.

It will easily be perceived that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics: it is equally obvious that except in the rhyme, and in the use of the single word "fruitless" for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

Is there then, it will be asked, no essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition? I answer that there neither is nor can be any essential difference. We are fond of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree; Poetry2 sheds no tears "such as Angels weep," but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial Ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

2 Original Note: I here use the word "Poetry" (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonomous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and Science. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre.

If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what I have been saying on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of prose, and paves the way for other distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer that the distinction of rhyme and metre is regular and uniform, and not, like that which is produced by what is usually called poetic diction, arbitrary and subject to infinite caprices upon which no calculation whatever can be made. In the one case the Reader is utterly at the mercy of the Poet respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion, whereas in the other the metre obeys certain laws, to which the Poet and Reader

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both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is made by them with the passion but such as the concurring testimony of ages has shewn to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it. It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, why, professing these opinions have I written in verse? To this in the first place I reply, because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing whether in prose or verse, the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature, from which I am at liberty to supply myself with endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, granting for a moment that whatever is interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why am I to be condemned if to such description I have endeavoured to superadd the charm which by the consent of all nations is acknowledged to exist in metrical language? To this it will be answered, that a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the metre, and that it is injudicious to write in metre unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which metre is usually accompanied, and that by such deviation more will be lost from the shock which will be thereby given to the Reader's associations than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who thus contend for the necessity of accompanying metre with certain appropriate colours of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly under-rate the power of metre in itself, it might perhaps be almost sufficient to observe that poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a more naked and simple style than what I have aimed at, which poems have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present day; and all that I am now attempting is to justify myself for having written under the impression of this belief.

But I might point out various causes why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who is sensible of the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in coexistence with an overbalance of pleasure. Now, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not in that state succeed each other in accustomed order. But if the words by which this excitement is produced are in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed when in an unexcited or a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling. This may be illustrated by appealing to the Reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes

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to the re-perusal of the distressful parts of Clarissa Harlowe, or the Gamester. While Shakespeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us as pathetic beyond the bounds of pleasure—an effect which is in a great degree to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement.—On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen) if the Poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, then, (unless the Poet's choice of his metre has been grossly injudicious) in the feelings of pleasure which the Reader has been accustomed to connect with metre in general, and in the feeling, whether chearful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of metre, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the Poet proposes to himself.

If I had undertaken a systematic defence of the theory upon which these poems are written, it would have been my duty to develope the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection; I mean the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it take their origin: It is the life of our ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings. It would not have been a useless employment to have applied this principle to the consideration of metre, and to have shewn that metre is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to have pointed out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, similar to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind and in whatever degree, from various causes is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will upon the whole be in a state of enjoyment. Now if Nature be thus cautious in preserving in a state of enjoyment a being thus employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson thus held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of

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pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling which will always be found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while in lighter compositions the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. I might perhaps include all which it is necessary to say upon this subject by affirming what few persons will deny, that of two descriptions either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once. We see that Pope by the power of verse alone, has contrived to render the plainest common sense interesting, and even frequently to invest it with the appearance of passion. In consequence of these convictions I related in metre the Tale of GOODY BLAKE and HARRY GILL, which is one of the rudest of this collection. I wished to draw attention to the truth that the power of the human imagination is sufficient to produce such changes even in our physical nature as might almost appear miraculous. The truth is an important one; the fact (for it is a fact) is a valuable illustration of it. And I have the satisfaction of knowing that it has been communicated to many hundreds of people who would never have heard of it, had it not been narrated as a Ballad, and in a more impressive metre than is usual in Ballads.

Having thus adverted to a few of the reasons why I have written in verse, and why I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to the real language of men, if I have been too minute in pleading my own cause, I have at the same time been treating a subject of general interest; and it is for this reason that I request the Reader's permission to add a few words with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some defects which will probably be found in them. I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, sometimes from diseased impulses I may have written upon unworthy subject; but I am less apprehensive on this account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular words, from which no man can altogether protect himself. Hence I have no doubt that in some instances feelings even of the ludicrous may be given to my Readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic. Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they were faulty at present, and that they must necessarily continue to be so, I would willingly take all reasonable pains to correct. But it is dangerous to make these alterations on the simple authority of a few individuals, or even of certain classes of men; for where the understanding of an Author is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this cannot be done without great injury to himself: for his own feelings are his stay and support, and if he sets them aside in one instance, he may be induced to repeat this act till his mind loses all

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confidence in itself and becomes utterly debilitated. To this it may be added, that the Reader ought never to forget that he is himself exposed to the same errors as the Poet, and perhaps in a much greater degree: for there can be no presumption in saying that it is not probable he will be so well acquainted with the various stages of meaning through which words have passed, or with the fickleness or stability of the relations of particular ideas to each other; and above all, since he is so much less interested in the subject, he may decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as I have detained my Reader, I hope he will permit me to caution him against a mode of false criticism which has been applied to Poetry in which the language closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed over in parodies of which Dr. Johnson's Stanza is a fair specimen.

"I put my hat upon my head, And walk'd into the Strand, And there I met another man Whose hat was in his hand."

Immediately under these lines I will place one of the most justly admired stanzas of the "Babes in the Wood."

"These pretty Babes with hand in hand Went wandering up and down; But never more they saw the Man Approaching from the Town."

In both of these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in no respect differ from the most unimpassioned conversation. There are words in both, for example, "the Strand," and "the Town," connected with none but the most familiar ideas; yet the one stanza we admit as admirable, and the other as a fair example of the superlatively contemptible. Whence arises this difference? Not from the metre, not from the language, not from the order of the words; but the matter expressed in Dr. Johnson's stanza is contemptible. The proper method of treating trivial and simple verses to which Dr. Johnson's stanza would be a fair parallelism is not to say this is a bad kind of poetry, or this is not poetry, but this wants sense; it is neither interesting in itself, nor can lead to any thing interesting; the images neither originate in that sane state of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the Reader. This is the only sensible manner of dealing with such verses: Why trouble yourself about the species till you have previously decided upon the genus? Why take pains to prove that an Ape is not a Newton when it is self-evident that he is not a man.

I have one request to make of my Reader, which is, that in judging these Poems he would decide by his own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection upon what will probably be the judgment of others. How common is it to hear a person say,

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"I myself do not object to this style of composition or this or that expression, but to such and such classes of people it will appear mean or ludicrous." This mode of criticism so destructive of all sound unadulterated judgment is almost universal: I have therefore to request that the Reader would abide independently by his own feelings, and that if he finds himself affected he would not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an Author by any single composition has impressed us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption, that, on other occasions where we have been displeased, he nevertheless may not have written ill or absurdly; and, further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it. This is not only an act of justice, but in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce in a high degree to the improvement of our own taste: for an accurate taste in Poetry and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an acquired talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced Reader from judging for himself, (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself;) but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest that if Poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous, and that in many cases it necessarily will be so.

I know that nothing would have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view as to have shewn of what kind the pleasure is, and how the pleasure is produced which is confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from what I have here endeavoured to recommend; for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition and what can I do more for him? The power of any art is limited and he will suspect that if I propose to furnish him with new friends it is only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the Reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry; and all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honorable bigotry for the objects which have long continued to please them: we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is a host of arguments in these feelings; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow, that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, I might have removed many obstacles, and assisted my Reader in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible that poetry may give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. But this part of my subject I have been obliged altogether to omit: as it has been less my present aim to prove that the

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interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, than to offer reasons for presuming, that, if the object which I have proposed to myself were adequately attained, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations. From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I have proposed to myself: he will determine how far I have attained this object; and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining; and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the public.

### 1.7.5 "Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known"

Strange fits of passion I have known, And I will dare to tell, But in the lover's ear alone, What once to me befel.

When she I lov'd, was strong and gay And like a rose in June, I to her cottage bent my way, Beneath the evening moon.

Upon the moon I fix'd my eye,

All over the wide lea;

My horse trudg'd on, and we drew nigh

Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reach'd the orchard plot, And, as we climb'd the hill, Towards the roof of Lucy's cot The moon descended still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept, Kind Nature's gentlest boon! And, all the while, my eyes I kept On the descending moon.

My horse mov'd on; hoof after hoof He rais'd and never stopp'd: When down behind the cottage roof At once the planet dropp'd.

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What fond and wayward thoughts will slide

Into a Lover's head—

"O mercy!" to myself I cried,

"If Lucy should be dead!"

### 1.7.6 "She Dwelt Among Untrodden Ways"

She dwelt among the untrodden ways Beside the springs of Dove, A Maid whom there were none to praise, And very few to love.

A Violet by a mossy stone Half-hidden from the eye! —Fair as a star, when only one Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know When Lucy ceased to be; But she is in her Grave, and, oh, The difference to me!

### 1.7.7 "Lucy Gray"

Oft had I heard of Lucy Gray, And when I cross'd the Wild, I chanc'd to see at break of day The solitary Child.

No Mate, no comrade Lucy knew; She dwelt on a wide Moor, The sweetest Thing that ever grew Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the Fawn at play, The Hare upon the Green; But the sweet face of Lucy Gray Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night, You to the Town must go, And take a lantern, Child, to light Your Mother thro' the snow."

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"That, Father! will I gladly do;

'Tis scarcely afternoon—

The Minster-clock has just struck two,

And yonder is the Moon."

At this the Father rais'd his hook And snapp'd a faggot-band; He plied his work, and Lucy took The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe, With many a wanton stroke Her feet disperse the powd'ry snow That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time, She wander'd up and down, And many a hill did Lucy climb But never reach'd the Town.

The wretched Parents all that night Went shouting far and wide; But there was neither sound nor sight To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood That overlook'd the Moor; And thence they saw the Bridge of Wood A furlong from their door.

And now they homeward turn'd, and cry'd "In Heaven we all shall meet! When in the snow the Mother spied The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downward from the steep hill's edge They track'd the footmarks small; And through the broken hawthorn-hedge, And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they cross'd, The marks were still the same; They track'd them on, nor ever lost, And to the Bridge they came.

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They follow'd from the snowy bank The footmarks, one by one, Into the middle of the plank, And further there were none.

Yet some maintain that to this day She is a living Child, That you may see sweet Lucy Gray Upon the lonesome Wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along, And never looks behind; And sings a solitary song That whistles in the wind.

### 1.7.8 "Solitary Reaper"

Behold her, single in the field, Yon solitary Highland Lass! Reaping and singing by herself; Stop here, or gently pass! Alone she cuts, and binds the grain, And sings a melancholy strain; O listen! for the Vale profound Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt

So sweetly to reposing bands

Of Travellers in some shady haunt,

Among Arabian Sands:

No sweeter voice was ever heard

In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,

Breaking the silence of the seas

Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings? Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow For old, unhappy, far-off things, And battles long ago: Or is it some more humble lay, Familiar matter of to-day? Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain, That has been, and may be again!

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Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang As if her song could have no ending; I saw her singing at her work, And o'er the sickle bending;— I listened till I had my fill; And, as I mounted up the hill, The music in my heart I bore, Long after it was heard no more.

### 1.7.9 "Resolution and Independence"

There was a roaring in the wind all night; The rain came heavily and fell in floods; But now the sun is rising calm and bright; The birds are singing in the distant woods; Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods; The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters; And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

All things that love the sun are out of doors;

The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;

The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on the moors

The Hare is running races in her mirth;

And with her feet she from the plashy earth

Raises a mist; which, glittering in the sun,

Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

I was a Traveller then upon the moor; I saw the Hare that raced about with joy; I heard the woods, and distant waters, roar; Or heard them not, as happy as a Boy: The pleasant season did my heart employ: My old remembrances went from me wholly; And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might

Of joy in minds that can no farther go,

As high as we have mounted in delight

In our dejection do we sink as low,

To me that morning did it happen so;

And fears, and fancies, thick upon me came;

Dim sadness, and blind thoughts I knew not nor could name.

I heard the Sky-lark singing in the sky; And I bethought me of the playful Hare:

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Even such a happy Child of earth am I; Even as these blissful Creatures do I fare; Far from the world I walk, and from all care; But there may come another day to me— Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,

As if life's business were a summer mood;

As if all needful things would come unsought

To genial faith, still rich in genial good;

But how can He expect that others should

Build for him, sow for him, and at his call

Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,

The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;

Of Him who walked in glory and in joy

Behind his plough, upon the mountain-side:

By our own spirits are we deified;

We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;

But thereof comes in the end despondency and madness.

Now whether it were by peculiar grace,

A leading from above, a something given,

Yet it befel, that, in this lonely place,

When up and down my fancy thus was driven,

And I with these untoward thoughts had striven,

I saw a Man before me unawares:

The oldest Man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

My course I stopped as soon as I espied The Old Man in that naked wilderness: Close by a Pond, upon the further side, He stood alone: a minute's space I guess I watched him, he continuing motionless: To the Pool's further margin then I drew; He being all the while before me full in view.

As a huge Stone is sometimes seen to lie Couched on the bald top of an eminence; Wonder to all who do the same espy By what means it could thither come, and whence; So that it seems a thing endued with sense:

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Like a Sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself.

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,

Nor all asleep; in his extreme old age:

His body was bent double, feet and head

Coming together in their pilgrimage;

As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage

Of sickness felt by him in times long past,

A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

Himself he propped, his body, limbs, and face, Upon a long grey Staff of shaven wood: And, still as I drew near with gentle pace, Beside the little pond or moorish flood Motionless as a Cloud the Old Man stood; That heareth not the loud winds when they call; And moveth altogether, if it move at all.

At length, himself unsettling, he the Pond

Stirred with his Staff, and fixedly did look

Upon the muddy water, which he conn'd,

As if he had been reading in a book:

And now such freedom as I could I took;

And, drawing to his side, to him did say,

"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

A gentle answer did the Old Man make,

In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:

And him with further words I thus bespake,

"What kind of work is that which you pursue?

This is a lonesome place for one like you."

He answered me with pleasure and surprise;

And there was, while he spake, a fire about his eyes.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,

Yet each in solemn order followed each,

With something of a lofty utterance drest;

Choice word, and measured phrase; above the reach

Of ordinary men; a stately speech;

Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,

Religious men, who give to God and Man their dues.

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He told me that he to this pond had come

To gather Leeches, being old and poor:

Employment hazardous and wearisome!

And he had many hardships to endure:

From Pond to Pond he roamed, from moor to moor;

Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance:

And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

The Old Man still stood talking by my side;

But now his voice to me was like a stream

Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;

And the whole Body of the man did seem

Like one whom I had met with in a dream;

Or like a Man from some far region sent,

To give me human strength, and strong admonishment.

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills;

And hope that is unwilling to be fed;

Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;

And mighty Poets in their misery dead.

But now, perplex'd by what the Old Man had said,

My question eagerly did I renew,

"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

He with a smile did then his words repeat; And said, that, gathering Leeches, far and wide He travelled; stirring thus about his feet The waters of the Ponds where they abide. "Once I could meet with them on every side; But they have dwindled long by slow decay; Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may."

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,

The Old Man's shape, and speech, all troubled me:

In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace

About the weary moors continually,

Wandering about alone and silently.

While I these thoughts within myself pursued,

He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

And soon with this he other matter blended, Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind, But stately in the main; and, when he ended,

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I could have laughed myself to scorn, to find

In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.

"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure;

I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor."

### 1.7.10 "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"

I wandered lonely as a cloud

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

When all at once I saw a crowd,

A host of golden daffodils:

Beside the lake, beneath the trees,

Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine And twinkle on the milky way, They stretched in never-ending line Along the margin of a bay: Ten thousand saw I at a glance, Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they

Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:—

A poet could not but be gay

In such a jocund company;

I gazed—and gazed—but little thought

What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie In vacant or in pensive mood, They flash upon that inward eye Which is the bliss of solitude; And then my heart with pleasure fills, And dances with the daffodils.

### 1.7.11 "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Immortality"

My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky:

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die!

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The Child is father of the Man; I could wish my days to be Bound each to each by natural piety. Wordsworth, "My Heart Leaps Up"

I

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,

The earth, and every common sight,

To me did seem

Apparelled in celestial light,

The glory and the freshness of a dream.

It is not now as it hath been of yore;—

Turn wheresoe'er I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,

And lovely is the Rose,

The Moon doth with delight

Look round her when the heavens are bare;

Waters on a starry night

Are beautiful and fair;

The sunshine is a glorious birth;

But yet I know, where'er I go,

That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,

And while the young lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound,

To me alone there came a thought of grief:

A timely utterance gave that thought relief,

And I again am strong:

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep; No more shall grief of mine the season wrong; I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng, The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep, And all the earth is gay; Land and sea

Give themselves up to jollity, And with the heart of May Doth every Beast keep holiday;—

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Thou Child of Joy,

Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call

Ye to each other make; I see

The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;

My heart is at your festival,

My head hath its coronal,

The fulness of your bliss, I feel— I feel it all.

Oh evil day! if I were sullen

While the Earth herself is adorning,

This sweet May-morning,

And the Children are culling

On every side,

In a thousand valleys far and wide,

Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,

And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—

I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!

— But there's a Tree, of many, one,

A single Field which I have looked upon,

Both of them speak of something that is gone:

The Pansy at my feet

Doth the same tale repeat:

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,

And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

Shades of the prison-house begin to close

Upon the growing Boy,

But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,

He sees it in his joy;

The Youth, who daily farther from the east

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Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,

And by the vision splendid

Is on his way attended;

At length the Man perceives it die away,

And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;

Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,

And, even with something of a Mother's mind,

And no unworthy aim,

The homely Nurse doth all she can

To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,

Forget the glories he hath known,

And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,

A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!

See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,

Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,

With light upon him from his father's eyes!

See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,

Some fragment from his dream of human life,

Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;

A wedding or a festival,

A mourning or a funeral;

And this hath now his heart,

And unto this he frames his song:

Then will he fit his tongue

To dialogues of business, love, or strife;

But it will not be long

Ere this be thrown aside,

And with new joy and pride

The little Actor cons another part;

Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"

With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,

That Life brings with her in her equipage;

As if his whole vocation

Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie Thy Soul's immensity;

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Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind, That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep, Haunted for ever by the eternal mind, — Mighty Prophet! Seer blest! On whom those truths do rest, Which we are toiling all our lives to find, In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave; Thou, over whom thy Immortality Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave, A Presence which is not to be put by; To whom the grave

Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight Of day or the warm light, A place of thought where we in waiting lie; Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height, Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke The years to bring the inevitable yoke, Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife? Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight, And custom lie upon thee with a weight, Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers Is something that doth live, That nature yet remembers What was so fugitive!

The thought of our past years in me doth breed

Perpetual benediction: not indeed

For that which is most worthy to be blest;

Delight and liberty, the simple creed

Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,

With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast: —

Not for these I raise

The song of thanks and praise;

But for those obstinate questionings

Of sense and outward things,

Fallings from us, vanishings;

Blank misgivings of a Creature

Moving about in worlds not realised,

High instincts before which our mortal Nature

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Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised: But for those first affections, Those shadowy recollections, Which, be they what they may, Are yet the fountain-light of all our day, Are yet a master-light of all our seeing; Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make Our noisy years seem moments in the being Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake, To perish never;

Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,

Nor Man nor Boy,

Nor all that is at enmity with joy,

Can utterly abolish or destroy!

Hence in a season of calm weather

Though inland far we be,

Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea

Which brought us hither,

Can in a moment travel thither,

And see the Children sport upon the shore,

And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!

And let the young Lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound!

We in thought will join your throng,

Ye that pipe and ye that play,

Ye that through your hearts today

Feel the gladness of the May!

What though the radiance which was once so bright

Be now for ever taken from my sight,

Though nothing can bring back the hour

Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;

We will grieve not, rather find

Strength in what remains behind;

In the primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be;

In the soothing thoughts that spring

Out of human suffering;

In the faith that looks through death,

In years that bring the philosophic mind.

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XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,

Forebode not any severing of our loves!

Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;

I only have relinquished one delight

To live beneath your more habitual sway.

I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,

Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;

The innocent brightness of a new-born Day

Is lovely yet;

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun Do take a sober colouring from an eye That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality; Another race hath been, and other palms are won. Thanks to the human heart by which we live, Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears, To me the meanest flower that blows can give Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

### 1.7.12 "Elegiac Stanzas"

I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile! Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee: I saw thee every day; and all the while Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air! So like, so very like, was day to day! Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there; It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep; No mood, which season takes away, or brings: I could have fancied that the mighty Deep Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand, To express what then I saw; and add the gleam, The light that never was, on sea or land, The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile Amid a world how different from this! Beside a sea that could not cease to smile; On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

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Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;— Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease, Elysian quiet, without toil or strife; No motion but the moving tide, a breeze, Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart, Such Picture would I at that time have made: And seen the soul of truth in every part, A stedfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more; I have submitted to a new control: A power is gone, which nothing can restore; A deep distress hath humanised my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold A smiling sea, and be what I have been: The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old; This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the Friend, If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore, This work of thine I blame not, but commend; This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 'tis a passionate Work!—yet wise and well, Well chosen is the spirit that is here;

That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell, This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,

I love to see the look with which it braves, Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,

The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone, Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind! Such happiness, wherever it be known, Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

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But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer, And frequent sights of what is to be borne! Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.— Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

### 1.7.13 Reading and Review Questions

1. Why does the speaker in We Are Seven become so frustrated with the "little cottage Girl?" What is at stake in his argument with her?

2. What, if anything, is significant about the site of Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey? Because of the Protestant Reformation in England, Abbeys there generally were ruins. How might the ruined Abbey frame the source(s) of consolation Wordsworth describes in this poem?

3. Why are children closer to heaven than are adults? What's the effect of that closeness? What causes the distancing from heaven that adults endure?

4. What does Wordsworth mean when he talks about, and writes with, the common language of man? What, if anything, makes the language he uses in his poetry poetic?

## 1.8 DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

Image 1.14 | Portrait of Dorothy Wordsworth

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(1771-1855)

Like many women in this era, Dorothy Wordsworth sublimated her intellectual and emotional energies to a male figure, in this case, Dorothy's brother William. Their bond was so great that some critics conjecture a more-than-filial love between them, while others suggest that Dorothy is the inspiration for the famous but unidentified and unidentifiable Lucy Gray of William's Lucy Gray poems. Like William, Dorothy felt deeply tied to nature as well as to the common, everyday occurrences in the world. She described these occurrences with vivid detail in her journals, her most famous works. She wrote them with the expectation that William would read and use them as he wished. Again, many women in this era found their only means for publication of any kind to be through their male relations. Whether or not Dorothy Wordsworth had any personal ambition, she certainly provided William with the means to "recollect in tranquility" the "overflow of emotions" he

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experienced by watching dancing daffodils, by meeting a leech-gatherer, by hearing the song of a solitary reaper.

Once Dorothy inherited a bequest, she set up house with William, Mary, and their children. She joined William on daily excursions, recording in particular the rural landscape and lifestyles now in flux with industrialization. This family accord was permanently marred by an illness that caused Dorothy to become bed-ridden and temperamentally changed. The love that both William and Mary, who had been a friend of Dorothy's since childhood, felt for Dorothy appeared in their devotedly caring for Dorothy until her death (William predeceased her by five years).

### 1.8.1 From The Alfoxden Journal

January 29, 1798. A very stormy day. William walked to the top of the hill to see the sea. Nothing distinguishable but a heavy blackness. An immense bough riven from one of the fir trees. William called me into the garden to observe a singular appearance about the moon. A perfect rainbow, within the bow one star, only of colours more vivid. The semi-circle soon became a complete circle, and in the course of three or four minutes the whole faded away. Walked to the blacksmith's and the baker's; an uninteresting evening.

January 31, 1798. Set forward to Stowey at half-past five. A violent storm in the wood; sheltered under the hollies. When we left home the moon immensely large, the sky scattered over with clouds. These soon closed in, contracting the dimensions of the moon without concealing her. The sound of the pattering shower, and the gusts of wind, very grand. Left the wood when nothing remained of the storm but the driving wind, and a few scattering drops of rain. Presently all clear, Venus first showing herself between the struggling clouds; afterwards Jupiter appeared. The hawthorn hedges, black and pointed, glittering with millions of diamond drops; the hollies shining with broader patches of light. The road to the village of Holford glittered like another stream. On our return, the wind high a violent storm of hail and rain at the Castle of Comfort. All the Heavens seemed in one perpetual motion when the rain ceased; the moon appearing, now half veiled, and now retired behind heavy clouds, the stars still moving, the roads very dirty.

February 3, 1798. A mild morning, the windows open at breakfast, the redbreasts singing in the garden. Walked with Coleridge over the hills. The sea at first obscured by vapour; that vapour afterwards slid in one mighty mass along the sea-shore; the islands and one point of land clear beyond it. The distant country (which was purple in the clear dull air), overhung by straggling clouds that sailed over it, appeared like the darker clouds, which are often seen at a great distance apparently, motionless, while the nearer ones pass quickly over them, driven by the lower winds. I never saw such a union of earth, sky, and sea. The clouds beneath our feet spread themselves to the water, and the clouds of the sky almost joined them. Gathered sticks in the wood; a perfect stillness. The redbreasts sang upon

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the leafless boughs. Of a great number of sheep in the field, only one standing. Returned to dinner at five o'clock. The moonlight still and warm as a summer's night at nine o'clock.

February 4, 1798. Walked a great part of the way to Stowey with Coleridge. The morning warm and sunny. The young lasses seen on the hill-tops, in the villages and roads, in their summer holiday clothes pink petticoats and blue. Mothers with their children in arms, and the little ones that could just walk, tottering by their side. Midges or small flies spinning in the sunshine; the songs of the lark and redbreast; daisies upon the turf; the hazels in blossom ; honeysuckles budding. I saw one solitary strawberry flower under a hedge. The furze gay with blossom. The moss rubbed from the pailings by the sheep, that leave locks of wool, and the red marks with which they are spotted, upon the wood.

February 5, 1798. Walked to Stowey with Coleridge, returned by Woodlands; a very warm day. In the continued singing of birds distinguished the notes of a blackbird or thrush. The sea overshadowed by a thick dark mist, the land in sunshine. The sheltered oaks and beeches still retaining their brown leaves. Observed some trees putting out red shoots. Query: What trees are they?

February 6, 1798. Walked to Stowey over the hills, returned to tea, a cold and clear evening, the roads in some parts frozen hard. The sea hid by mist all the day.

February 7, 1798. Turned towards Potsdam, but finding the way dirty, changed our course. Cottage gardens the object of our walk. Went up the smaller Coombe to Woodlands, to the blacksmith's, the baker's, and through the village of Holford. Still misty over the sea. The air very delightful. We saw nothing very new, or interesting.

February 8, 1798. Went up the Park, and over the tops of the hills, till we came to a new and very delicious pathway, which conducted us to the Coombe. Sat a considerable time upon the heath. Its surface restless and glittering with the motion of the scattered piles of withered grass, and the waving of the spiders' threads. On our return the mist still hanging over the sea, but the opposite coast clear, and the rocky cliffs distinguishable. In the deep Coombe, as we stood upon the sunless hill, we saw miles of grass, light and glittering, and the insects passing.

February 9, 1798. William gathered sticks. . . .

February 10, 1798. Walked to Woodlands, and to the waterfall. The alder's-tongue and the ferns green in the low damp dell. These plants now in perpetual motion from the current of the air; in summer only moved by the drippings of the rocks. A cloudy day.

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February 11, 1798. Walked with Coleridge near to Stowey. The day pleasant, but cloudy.

February 12, 1798. Walked alone to Stowey. Returned in the evening with Coleridge. A mild, pleasant, cloudy day. Walked with Coleridge through the wood.

### 1.8.2 From The Grasmere Journal

May 14, 1800. Wm. and John set off into Yorkshire after dinner at half-past two o'clock, cold pork in their pockets. I left them at the turning of the Low-wood bay under the trees. My heart was so full that I could hardly speak to W. when I gave him a farewell kiss. I sate a long time upon a stone at the margin of the lake, and after a flood of tears my heart was easier. The lake looked to me, I knew not why, dull and melancholy, and the weltering on the shores seemed a heavy sound. I walked as long as I could amongst the stones of the shore. The wood rich in flowers; a beautiful yellow (palish yellow) flower, that looked thick, round, and double the smell very sweet (I supposed it was a ranunculus), crowfoot, the grassy-leaved rabbit-looking white flower, strawberries, geraniums, scentless violets, anemones, two kinds of orchises, primroses, the heck-berry very beautiful, the crab coming out as a low shrub. Met an old man, driving a very large beautiful bull, and a cow. He walked with two sticks. Came home by Clappersgate. The valley very green; many sweet views up to Rydale, when I could juggle away the fine houses; but they disturbed me, even more than when I have been happier; one beautiful view of the bridge, without Sir Michael's. Sate down very often, though it was cold. I resolved to write a journal of the time, till W. and J. return, and I set about keeping my resolve, because I will not quarrel with myself, and because I shall give William pleasure by it when he comes home again. At Rydale, a woman of the village, stout and well dressed, begged a half-penny. She had never she said done it before, but these hard times! Arrived at home, set some slips of privet, the evening cold, had a fire, my face now flame-coloured. It is nine o'clock. I shall now go to bed. . . . Oh that I had a letter from William.

Friday Morning. Warm and mild, after a fine night of rain....The woods extremely

beautiful with all autumnal variety and softness. I carried a basket for mosses, and gathered some wild plants. Oh! that we had a book of botany. All flowers now are gay and deliciously sweet. The primrose still prominent; the later flowers and the shiny foxgloves very tall, with their heads budding. I went forward round the lake at the foot of Loughrigg Fell. I was much amused with the busyness of a pair of stone-chats; their restless voices as they skimmed along the water, following each other, their shadows under them, and their returning back to the stones on the shore, chirping with the same unwearied voice. Could not cross the water, so I went round

by the stepping-stones... Rydale was very beautiful, with spear-shaped streaks of

polished steel.... Grasmere very solemn in the last glimpse of twilight. It calls home

the heart to quietness. I had been very melancholy. In my walk back I had many of

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my saddest thoughts, and I could not keep the tears within me. But when I came to Grasmerc I felt that it did me good. I finished my letter to M. H. . . .

Image 1.15 | Rydal Mount Home of the Wordsworths Photographer | P.K. Niyogi Source | Wikimedia Commons License | CC BY-SA 3.0



Saturday. Incessant rain from morning till night. . . . Worked hard, and read Midsummer Night's Dream, and ballads. Sauntered a little in the garden. The blackbird sate quietly in its nest, rocked by the wind, and beaten by the rain.

October 1, 1800. A fine morning, a showery night. The lake still in the morning; in the forenoon flashing light from the beams of the sun, as it was ruffled by the wind. We corrected the last sheet.

October 2, 1800. A very rainy morning. We walked after dinner to observe the torrents. I followed Wm. to Rydale. We afterwards went to Butterlip How. The Black Quarter looked marshy, and the general prospect was cold, but the force was very grand. The lichens are now coming out afresh. I carried home a collection in the afternoon. We had a pleasant conversation about the manners of the rich; avarice, inordinate desires, and the effeminacy, unnaturalness, and unworthy objects of education. The moonlight lay upon the hills like snow.

October 3, 1800. Very rainy all the morning. Wm. walked to Ambleside after dinner. I went with him part of the way. He talked much about the object of his

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essay for the second volume of "L[yrical]. B[allads]." . . . Amos Cottle's death in the Morning Post. N.B. When William and I returned from accompanying Jones, we met an old man almost double. He had on a coat, thrown over his shoulders, above his waistcoat and coat. Under this he carried a bundle, and had an apron on and a night-cap. His face was interesting. He had dark eyes and a long nose. John, who afterwards met him at Wytheburn, took him for a Jew. He was of Scotch parents, but had been born in the army. He had had a wife, and "she was a good woman, and it pleased God to bless us with ten children." All these were dead but one, of whom he had not heard for many years, a sailor. His trade was to gather leeches, but now leeches were scarce, and he had not strength for it. He lived by begging, and was making his way to Carlisle, where he should buy a few godly books to sell. He said leeches were very scarce, partly owing to this dry season, but many years they have been scarce. He supposed it owing to their being much sought after, that they did not breed fast, and were of slow growth. Leeches were formerly 2s. 6d. per 100; they are now 30/. He had been hurt in driving a cart, his leg broken, his body driven over, his skull fractured. He felt no pain till he recovered from his first insensibility. It was then late in the evening, when the light was just going away.

October 31, 1802 [November 1] . . . William and S. went to Keswick. Mary and I walked to the top of the hill and looked at Rydale. I was much affected when I stood upon the second bar of Sara's gate. The lake was perfectly still, the sun shone on hill and vale, the distant birch trees looked like large golden flowers. Nothing else In colour was distinct and separate, but all the beautiful colours seemed to be melted into one another, and joined together in one mass, so that there were no differences, though an endless variety, when one tried to find it out. The fields were of one sober yellow brown. . . .

November 2, 1802. William returned from Keswick.

Friday. I wrote to Montagu, . . . and sent off letters to Miss Lamb and Coleridge....

Sunday. Fine weather. Letters from Coleridge that he was gone to London. Sara at Penrith. I wrote to Mrs. Clarkson. William began to translate Ariosto.

Monday. A beautiful day. William got to work again at Ariosto, and so continued all the morning, though the day was so delightful that it made my very heart long to be out of doors, and see and feel the beauty of the autumn in freedom. The trees on the opposite side of the lake are of a yellow brown, but there are one or two trees opposite our windows (an ash tree, for instance) quite green, as in spring. The

fields are of their winter colour, but the island is as green as ever it was.... William

is writing out his stanzas from Ariosto. . . . The evening is quiet. Poor Coleridge! Sara is at Keswick, I hope. . . . I have read one canto of Ariosto to-day. . .

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December 24, 1802. Christmas Eve. William is now sitting by me, at half-past ten o'clock. I have been . . . repeating some of his sonnets to him, listening to his own repeating, reading some of Milton's, and the Allegro and Penseroso. It is a, quick, keen frost. . . Coleridge came this morning with Wedgwood. We all turned out . . . one by one, to meet him. He looked well. We had to tell him of the birth of his little girl, born yesterday morning at six o'clock. William went with them to Wytheburn in the chaise, and M. and I met W. on the Raise. It was not an unpleasant morning. . . . The sun shone now and then, and there was no wind, but all things looked cheerless and distinct; no meltings of sky into mountains, the mountains like stone work wrought up with huge hammers. Last Sunday was as mild a day as I

ever remember.... Mary and I went round the lakes. There were flowers of various

kinds the topmost bell of a foxglove, geraniums, daisies, a buttercup in the water (but this I saw two or three days before), small yellow flowers (I do not know their name) in the turf. A large bunch of strawberry blossoms. . . .

It is Christmas Day, Saturday, 25th December 1802. I am thirty-one years of age. It is a dull, frosty day.

### 1.8.3 Reading and Review Questions

1. Why do you think Dorothy Wordsworth did not seek to publish her journals?

2. Why do you think that Dorothy encouraged William to read her journals? How does William characterize Dorothy in his poetry, and why?

3. How would you describe Dorothy's voice, style, or vision? Do they resemble William's in any way? If so, how?

4. What's the effect of Dorothy's including in her journal items of everyday routine? What are the daily matters that make up Dorothy's days? How, if at all, do these matters differ from those with which William would deal?

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## 1.9 SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

(1772-1834)

Although brought up in a fairly conventional Anglican family—Coleridge's father was vicar of his parish and master of a grammar school—and expected to enter the clergy, Samuel Taylor Coleridge explored radical religious and social thought from his days at Jesus College, University of Cambridge onward. He sympathized with Unitarian beliefs and utopian democratic societies. He and his friend Robert Southey (1774-1843) conceived of a government based on pantisocracy, that is, equal government by all, and planned to set up a commune on the shores of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania. To forward this goal, Southey married Edith Fricker (1774-1837), and Coleridge married her sister Sara Fricker (1802-1852). Although he never realized his pantisocratic society, Coleridge's marriage to Sara endured, unhappily.

Image 1.16 | Portrait of Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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Another friendship that crucially shaped Coleridge's career was that with Wordsworth, whom he met in 1795. They collaborated on Lyrical Ballads, to which Coleridge contributed "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Coleridge traveled with Wordsworth to Germany where Coleridge learned the German language and read and translated important philosophical texts by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Friedrich von Schelling (1775-1854), Jakob Boehme (1575-1624), and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781). Their thought informed his subsequent prose and poetic works, and Coleridge is known for introducing the new German critical philosophy to England.

His most esteemed prose work is Biographia Literaria (1817), written as counterpoint to Wordsworth's Preface to The Lyrical Ballads. In it, he famously defined imagination as a unifying power, as the means by which finite individuals commune with the infinite. In Biographia Literaria, Coleridge also explained the approach he and Wordsworth took to their respective contributions. He and Wordsworth decided on two types of poems for Lyrical Ballads, both of which would effectively reveal the imagination in action. Wordsworth would take natural (or real) incidents and situations and make them seem supernatural (or unreal), while Coleridge would take supernatural incidents and situations and make them seem natural.

Wordsworth desired a reciprocal relationship with nature. Coleridge, on the other hand, desired what might be described as circularity. From Kant, Coleridge

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learned that objectivity is subjectivity, that is, based on relativity. Kant led to Sartre's Existentialism. Coleridge feared some sense of separation due to his own, possibly extreme, subjectivity/relativity, self-absorption, or what came to be termed solipsism. In most of his poetry, he seeks to recover unity, to unify what has been separated. For him, a break with unity leads to death-in-life.

His poems express radical views on the mutuality of humans and nature, of divinity, of imagination, and of poetry itself. In "The Eolian Harp," he makes what conservative contemporaries, including Coleridge's wife, would consider an irreligious claim that all animated beings in nature and the world have the ability to give voice to God. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner explores a psychological landscape of separation and solitude, sin and redemption in natural—rather than institutional—terms. In "Kubla Khan" the poetic vision synthesizes opposites of the sunny and the dark, the inner and the outer life (caves and dome) into a powerful, paradisiacal harmony.

This latter poem is famous, or infamous, for having apparently been written while Coleridge was under the influence of opium. Opium was then commonly-used as a pain-killer; it was prescribed to Coleridge to relieve his chronic back pain. He became addicted to the drug, an addiction from which he was never free, though later in his life it was controlled with the help of Dr. James Gilman. It's impossible to say to what extent, if any, Coleridge's addiction affected his productivity. Coleridge claims that "Kubla Khan" is an unfinished poem. Yet, it is remarkably complete, with its last stanza referring back to the first. Coleridge may have had a self-protective desire for his radical views not to be taken too seriously. His views are indeed radical; and he takes his readers to the threshold of a new world that seems to be meant for others, but not himself.

### 1.9.1 "The Eolian Harp"

Composed at Clevedon, Somersetshire

My pensive Sara! thy soft cheek reclined

Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is

To sit beside our cot, our cot o'ergrown

With white-flower'd Jasmin, and the broad-leav'd Myrtle,

(Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love!)

And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,

Slow saddening round, and mark the star of eve

Serenely brilliant (such should Wisdom be)

Shine opposite! How exquisite the scents

Snatch'd from yon bean-field! and the world so hushed!

The stilly murmur of the distant Sea

Tells us of silence.

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And that simplest Lute, Plac'd length-ways in the clasping casement, hark! How by the desultory breeze caressed, Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover, It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs Tempt to repeat the wrong! And now, its strings Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes Over delicious surges sink and rise, Such a soft floating witchery of sound As twilight Elfins make, when they at eve Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land, Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers, Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise, Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untamed wing! O the one Life within us and abroad, Which meets all motion and becomes its soul, A light in sound, a sound-like power in light, Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where— Methinks, it should have been impossible Not to love all things in a world so filled; Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air Is Music slumbering on her instrument.

And thus, my love! as on the midway slope Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon, Whilst through my half-closed eye-lids I behold The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main, And tranquil muse upon tranquillity; Full many a thought uncalled and undetained, And many idle flitting phantasies, Traverse my indolent and passive brain, As wild and various as the random gales That swell and flutter on this subject lute!

And what if all of animated nature Be but organic Harps diversely framed, That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze, At once the Soul of each, and God of all?

But thy more serious eye a mild reproof Darts, O beloved woman! nor such thoughts Dim and unhallowed dost thou not reject, And biddest me walk humbly with my God.

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Meek Daughter in the family of Christ!

Well hast thou said and holily dispraised

These shapings of the unregenerate mind;

Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break

On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.

For never guiltless may I speak of him,

The Incomprehensible! save when with awe

I praise him, and with Faith that inly feels;

Who with his saving mercies healed me,

A sinful and most miserable man,

Wildered and dark, and gave me to possess

Peace, and this cot, and thee, heart-honour'd Maid!

### 1.9.2 "Frost at Midnight"

The Frost performs its secret ministry, Unhelped by any wind. The owlet's cry Came loud-and hark, again! loud as before. The inmates of my cottage, all at rest, Have left me to that solitude, which suits Abstruser musings: save that at my side My cradled infant slumbers peacefully. 'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs And vexes meditation with its strange And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood, This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood, With all the numberless goings-on of life, Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not; Only that film, which fluttered on the grate, Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing. Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature Gives it dim sympathies with me who live, Making it a companionable form, Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit By its own moods interprets, every where Echo or mirror seeking of itself, And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,

How oft, at school, with most believing mind, Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars, To watch that fluttering stranger! and as oft With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt

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Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower, Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day, So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear Most like articulate sounds of things to come! So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt, Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams And so I brooded all the following morn, Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye Fixed with mock study on my swimming book: Save if the door half opened, and I snatched A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up, For still I hoped to see the stranger's face, Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved, My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side, Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm, Fill up the interspersed vacancies And momentary pauses of the thought! My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart With tender gladness, thus to look at thee, And think that thou shalt learn far other lore, And in far other scenes! For I was reared In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim, And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars. But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds, Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible Of that eternal language, which thy God Utters, who from eternity doth teach Himself in all, and all things in himself. Great universal Teacher! he shall mould Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee, Whether the summer clothe the general earth With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch

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Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch

Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall

Heard only in the trances of the blast,

Or if the secret ministry of frost

Shall hang them up in silent icicles,

Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

### 1.9.3 "Kubla Khan; or A Vision in a Dream"

A fragment.

In the summer of the year 1797, the Author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effect of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in "Purchas's Pilgrimage:"—"Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto: and thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall." The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone had been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter.

Then all the charm Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread, And each mis-shape the other. Stay awhile, Poor youth I who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes— The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon The visions will return! And lo! he stays, And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms Come trembling back, unite, and now once more The pool becomes a mirror.

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Yet from the still surviving recollections in his mind, the Author has frequently purposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, given to him. Αύριον άδιον άσω: but the to-morrow is yet to come.

1816.

IN Xanadu did Kubla Khan

A stately pleasure-dome decree:

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran

Through caverns measureless to man

Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground

With walls and towers were girdled round

And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills

Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;

And here were forests ancient as the hills,

Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted

Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!

A savage place! as holy and enchanted

As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted

By woman wailing for her demon-lover!

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,

As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,

A mighty fountain momently was forced;

Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst

Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,

Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:

And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever

It flung up momently the sacred river.

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion

Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,

Then reached the caverns measureless to man,

And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:

And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far

Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure

Floated midway on the waves;

Where was heard the mingled measure

From the fountain and the caves.

It was a miracle of rare device,

A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

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A damsel with a dulcimer

In a vision once I saw:

It was an Abyssinian maid,

And on her dulcimer she played,

Singing of Mount Abora.

Could I revive within me

Her symphony and song,

To such a deep delight 'twould win me

That with music loud and long,

I would build that dome in air,

That sunny dome! those caves of ice!

And all who heard should see them there,

And all should cry, Beware! Beware!

His flashing eyes, his floating hair!

Weave a circle round him thrice,

And close your eyes with holy dread,

For he on honey-dew hath fed,

And drunk the milk of Paradise.

### 1.9.4 "Dejection: An Ode"

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon, With the old Moon in her arms; And I fear, I fear, my Master dear! We shall have a deadly storm.

"Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence"

I

Well! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence, This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes, Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes Upon the strings of this ^Eolian lute, Which better far were mute. For lo! the New-moon winter-bright! And overspread with phantom light, (With swimming phantom light o'erspread But rimmed and circled by a silver thread) I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling

The coming-on of rain and squally blast. And oh ! that even now the gust were swelling, And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!

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Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,

And sent my soul abroad, Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give, Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!

II

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear, A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief, Which finds no natural outlet, no relief, In word, or sigh, or tear—

O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood, To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd,

All this long eve, so balmy and serene, Have I been gazing on the western sky,

And its peculiar tint of yellow green : And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye! And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars, That give away their motion to the stars; Those stars, that glide behind them or between, Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen: Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;

1 see them all so excellently fair,

I see, not feel how beautiful they are!

III

My genial spirits fail;

And what can these avail To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?

It were a vain endeavour,

Though I should gaze for ever On that green light that lingers in the west: I may not hope from outward forms to win The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

IV

O Lady! we receive but what we give,

And in our life alone does nature live:

Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!

And would we aught behold, of higher worth, Than that inanimate cold world allowed To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,

Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth,

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A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud

Enveloping the Earth— And from the soul itself must there be sent A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth, Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me What this strong music in the soul may be! What, and wherein it doth exist, This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist, This beautiful and beauty-making power.

Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given, Save to the pure, and in their purest hour, Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower, Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power, Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower

A new Earth and new Heaven, Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud— Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—

We in ourselves rejoice! And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,

All melodies the echoes of that voice, All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI

There was a time when, though my path was rough, This joy within me dallied with distress,

And all misfortunes were but as the stuff Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:

For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,

And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.

But now afflictions bow me down to earth:

Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth; But oh! each visitation

Suspends what nature gave me at my birth, My shaping spirit of Imagination.

For not to think of what I needs must feel, But to be still and patient, all I can;

And haply by abstruse research to steal From my own nature all the natural man— This was my sole resource, my only plan:

Till that which suits a part infects the whole,

And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

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VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,

Reality's dark dream! I turn from you, and listen to the wind,

Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream Of agony by torture lengthened out That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that rav'st without,

Bare crag, or mountain-tairn,1 or blasted tree, Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb, Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,

Methinks were fitter instruments for thee, Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers, Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers, Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song, The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.

Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds! Thou mighty Poet, e'en to frenzy bold! What tell'st thou now about? 'Tis of the rushing of a host in rout, With groans of trampled men, with smarting wounds— At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold! But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!

And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd, With groans, and tremulous shudderings—all is over— It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud! A tale of less affright, And tempered with delight, As Otway's self had framed the tender lay, 'Tis of a little child Upon a lonesome wild, Not far from home, but she hath lost her way: And now moans low in bitter grief and fear, And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

1 Original Note: Tairn is a small lake, generally if not always applied to the lakes up in the mountains, and which are the feeders of those in the valleys. This address to the Stormwind will not appear extravagant to those who have heard it at night, and in a mountainous country.

VIII

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep: Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep! Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,

And may this storm be but a mountain-birth, May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,

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Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth! With light heart may she rise, Gay fancy, cheerful eyes, Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice; To her may all things live, from the pole to pole, Their life the eddying of her living soul!

O simple spirit, guided from above, Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice, Thus may'st thou ever, evermore rejoice.

### 1.9.5 The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Part The First

It is an ancient Mariner,

And he stoppeth one of three.

"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,

Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

"The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide, And I am next of kin; The guests are met, the feast is set: Ma/st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand, "There was a ship," quoth he. "Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!" Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye— The Wedding-Guest stood still, And listens like a three years child: The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone: He cannot choose but hear; And thus spake on that ancient man, The bright-eyed Mariner.

The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,

Merrily did we drop

Below the kirk, below the hill,

Below the light-house top.

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The Sun came up upon the left, Out of the sea came he! And he shone bright, and on the right Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,

Till over the mast at noon—

The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,

For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall, Red as a rose is she; Nodding their heads before her goes The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast, Yet he cannot chuse but hear; And thus spake on that ancient man, The bright-eyed Mariner.

And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he Was tyrannous and strong: He struck with his o'ertaking wings, And chased south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,

As who pursued with yell and blow

Still treads the shadow of his foe

And forward bends his head,

The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,

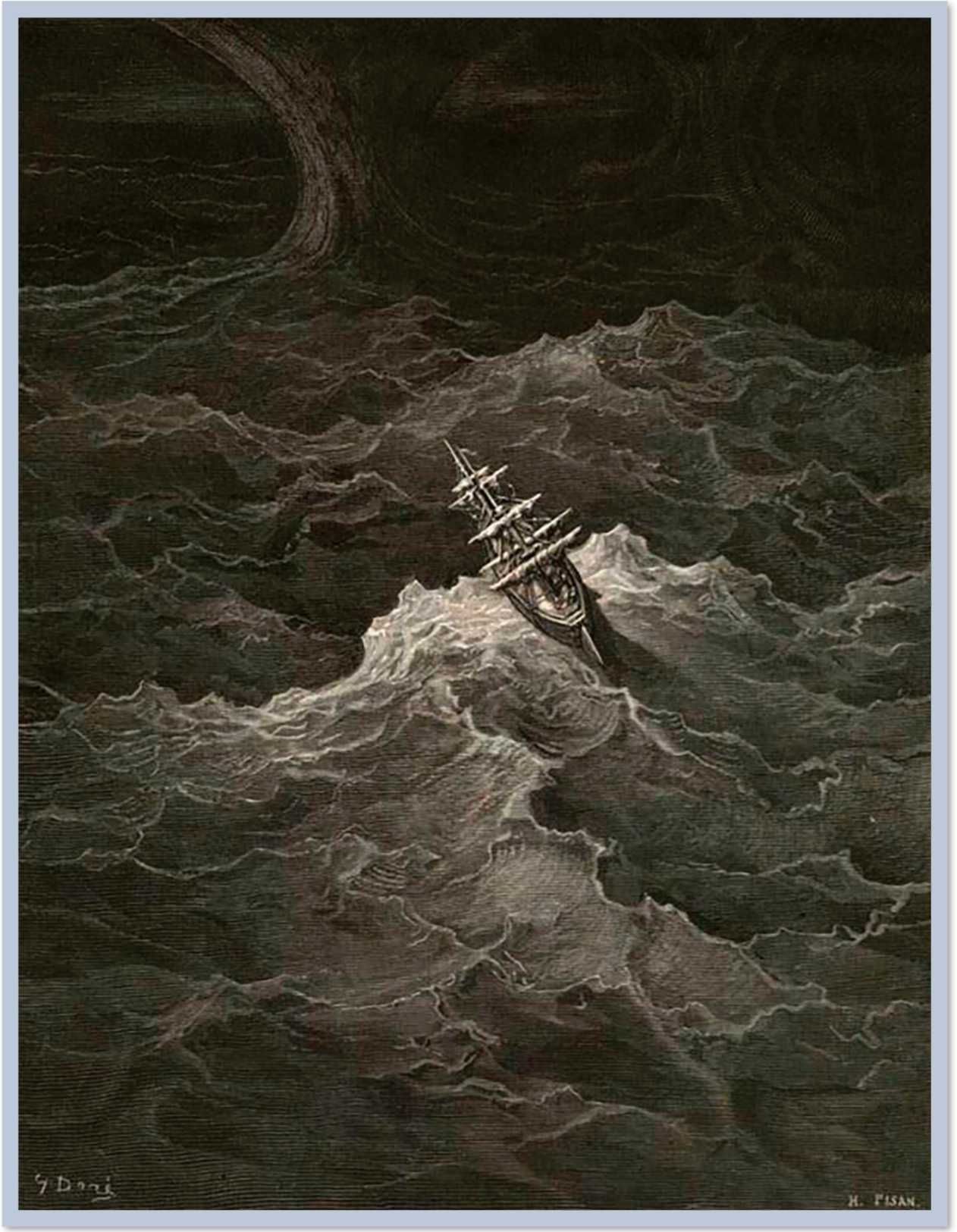
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow, And it grew wondrous cold: And ice, mast-high, came floating by, As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts Did send a dismal sheen: Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken— The ice was all between.

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Image 1.17 | The Ship Fled the Storm Artist | Gustave Dore Source | University of Adelaide License | Public Domain



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The ice was here, the ice was there, The ice was all around:

It cracked and growled, and roared and howled, Like noises in a swound!

At length did cross an Albatross: Thorough the fog it came; As if it had been a Christian soul, We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat, And round and round it flew. The ice did split with a thunder-fit; The helmsman steered us through!

And a good south wind sprung up behind; The Albatross did follow, And every day, for food or play, Came to the mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,

It perched for vespers nine;

Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,

Glimmered the white Moon-shine.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner! From the fiends, that plague thee thus!— Why look'st thou so?"—With my cross-bow I shot the ALBATROSS.

Part The Second

The Sun now rose upon the right: Out of the sea came he, Still hid in mist, and on the left Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind But no sweet bird did follow, Nor any day for food or play Came to the mariners' hollo!

And I had done an hellish thing, And it would work 'em woe:

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For all averred, I had killed the bird That made the breeze to blow. Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay That made the breeze to blow!

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,

The glorious Sun uprist:

Then all averred, I had killed the bird

That brought the fog and mist.

'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,

That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,

The furrow followed free:

We were the first that ever burst

Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down, 'Twas sad as sad could be; And we did speak only to break The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky, The bloody Sun, at noon, Right up above the mast did stand, No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day, We stuck, nor breath nor motion; As idle as a painted ship Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, every where, And all the boards did shrink; Water, water, every where, Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ! That ever this should be! Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs Upon the slimy sea.

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About, about, in reel and rout The death-fires danced at night; The water, like a witch's oils, Burnt green, and blue and white.

And some in dreams assured were Of the spirit that plagued us so: Nine fathom deep he had followed us From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought, Was withered at the root; We could not speak, no more than if We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks Had I from old and young! Instead of the cross, the Albatross About my neck was hung.

Part The Third

There passed a weary time. Each throat Was parched, and glazed each eye. A weary time! a weary time! How glazed each weary eye, When looking westward, I beheld A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck, And then it seemed a mist: It moved and moved, and took at last A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist! And still it neared and neared: As if it dodged a water-sprite, It plunged and tacked and veered.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,

We could not laugh nor wail;

Through utter drought all dumb we stood!

I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,

And cried, A sail! a sail!

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With throats unslaked, with black lips baked, Agape they heard me call: Gramercy! they for joy did grin, And all at once their breath drew in, As they were drinking all.

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more! Hither to work us weal; Without a breeze, without a tide, She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a-flame The day was well nigh done! Almost upon the western wave Rested the broad bright Sun; When that strange shape drove suddenly Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars, (Heaven's Mother send us grace!) As if through a dungeon-grate he peered, With broad and burning face.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud) How fast she nears and nears! Are those her sails that glance in the Sun, Like restless gossameres!

Are those her ribs through which the Sun Did peer, as through a grate? And is that Woman all her crew? Is that a DEATH? and are there two? Is DEATH that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free, Her locks were yellow as gold: Her skin was as white as leprosy, The Night-Mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she,

Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came, And the twain were casting dice; "The game is done! I've won! I've won!"

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Quoth she, and whistles thrice. The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out: At one stride comes the dark; With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea. Off shot the spectre-bark.

We listened and looked sideways up! Fear at my heart, as at a cup, My life-blood seemed to sip!

The stars were dim, and thick the night, The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white; From the sails the dew did drip— Till clombe above the eastern bar The horned Moon, with one bright star Within the nether tip.

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon Too quick for groan or sigh, Each turned his face with a ghastly pang, And cursed me with his eye.

Four times fifty living men, (And I heard nor sigh nor groan) With heavy thump, a lifeless lump, They dropped down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,— They fled to bliss or woe! And every soul, it passed me by, Like the whizz of my CROSS-BOW!

Part The Fourth

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner! I fear thy skinny hand! And thou art long, and lank, and brown, As is the ribbed sea-sand.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye, And thy skinny hand, so brown."— Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest! This body dropt not down.

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Alone, alone, all, all alone, Alone on a wide wide sea! And never a saint took pity on My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful!

And they all dead did lie:

And a thousand thousand slimy things

Lived on; and so did I

I looked upon the rotting sea, And drew my eyes away; I looked upon the rotting deck, And there the dead men lay.

I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray: But or ever a prayer had gusht, A wicked whisper came, and made my heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,

And the balls like pulses beat;

For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky

Lay like a load on my weary eye,

And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs, Nor rot nor reek did they: The look with which they looked on me Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell

A spirit from on high;

But oh! more horrible than that

Is a curse in a dead man's eye!

Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,

And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky, And no where did abide: Softly she was going up, And a star or two beside.

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Her beams bemocked the sultry main, Like April hoar-frost spread; But where the ship's huge shadow lay, The charmed water burnt alway A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,

I watched the water-snakes:

They moved in tracks of shining white,

And when they reared, the elfish light

Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship

I watched their rich attire:

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,

They coiled and swam; and every track

Was a flash of golden fire.

0 happy living things! no tongue Their beauty might declare:

A spring of love gushed from my heart, And I blessed them unaware: Sure my kind saint took pity on me, And I blessed them unaware.

The self same moment I could pray; And from my neck so free The Albatross fell off, and sank Like lead into the sea.

Part The Fifth

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing, Beloved from pole to pole! To Mary Queen the praise be given! She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven, That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck, That had so long remained,

1 dreamt that they were filled with dew; And when I awoke, it rained.

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My lips were wet, my throat was cold, My garments all were dank; Sure I had drunken in my dreams, And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs: I was so light—almost I thought that I had died in sleep, And was a blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind: It did not come anear; But with its sound it shook the sails, That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life! And a hundred fire-flags sheen, To and fro they were hurried about! And to and fro, and in and out, The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud, And the sails did sigh like sedge; And the rain poured down from one black cloud; The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still The Moon was at its side: Like waters shot from some high crag, The lightning fell with never a jag, A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship, Yet now the ship moved on! Beneath the lightning and the Moon The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose, Nor spake, nor moved their eyes; It had been strange, even in a dream, To have seen those dead men rise.

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The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;

Yet never a breeze up blew;

The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,

Where they were wont to do:

They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—

We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son, Stood by me, knee to knee: The body and I pulled at one rope, But he said nought to me.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!" Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest! 'Twas not those souls that fled in pain, Which to their corses came again, But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms, And clustered round the mast; Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths, And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound, Then darted to the Sun; Slowly the sounds came back again, Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky I heard the sky-lark sing; Sometimes all little birds that are, How they seemed to fill the sea and air With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments, Now like a lonely flute; And now it is an angel's song, That makes the Heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on A pleasant noise till noon, A noise like of a hidden brook In the leafy month of June,

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That to the sleeping woods all night Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on, Yet never a breeze did breathe: Slowly and smoothly went the ship, Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep, From the land of mist and snow, The spirit slid: and it was he That made the ship to go. The sails at noon left off their tune, And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast, Had fixed her to the ocean: But in a minute she 'gan stir, With a short uneasy motion— Backwards and forwards half her length With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go, She made a sudden bound: It flung the blood into my head, And I fell down in a swound.

How long in that same fit I lay, I have not to declare; But ere my living life returned, I heard and in my soul discerned Two VOICES in the air.

"Is it he?" quoth one, "Is this the man? By him who died on cross, With his cruel bow he laid full low, The harmless Albatross.

"The spirit who bideth by himself In the land of mist and snow, He loved the bird that loved the man Who shot him with his bow."

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The other was a softer voice,

As soft as honey-dew:

Quoth he, "The man hath penance done,

And penance more will do."

Part The Sixth

First Voice.

But tell me, tell me! speak again,

Thy soft response renewing—

What makes that ship drive on so fast?

What is the OCEAN doing?

Second Voice .

Still as a slave before his lord, The OCEAN hath no blast; His great bright eye most silently Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go; For she guides him smooth or grim See, brother, see! how graciously She looketh down on him.

First Voice .

But why drives on that ship so fast, Without or wave or wind?

Second Voice .

The air is cut away before,

And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high Or we shall be belated: For slow and slow that ship will go, When the Mariner's trance is abated.

I woke, and we were sailing on

As in a gentle weather:

'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high;

The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck, For a charnel-dungeon fitter:

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All fixed on me their stony eyes, That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died, Had never passed away: I could not draw my eyes from theirs, Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more I viewed the ocean green. And looked far forth, yet little saw Of what had else been seen—

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

But soon there breathed a wind on me, Nor sound nor motion made: Its path was not upon the sea, In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek Like a meadow-gale of spring— It mingled strangely with my fears, Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, Yet she sailed softly too: Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze— On me alone it blew.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed The light-house top I see? Is this the hill? is this the kirk? Is this mine own countree!

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar, And I with sobs did pray— O let me be awake, my God! Or let me sleep alway.

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The harbour-bay was clear as glass, So smoothly it was strewn! And on the bay the moonlight lay, And the shadow of the moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less, That stands above the rock: The moonlight steeped in silentness The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light, Till rising from the same, Full many shapes, that shadows were, In crimson colours came.

A little distance from the prow Those crimson shadows were: I turned my eyes upon the deck— Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat, And, by the holy rood! A man all light, a seraph-man, On every corse there stood.

This seraph band, each waved his hand: It was a heavenly sight! They stood as signals to the land, Each one a lovely light:

This seraph-band, each waved his hand, No voice did they impart— No voice; but oh! the silence sank Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars; I heard the Pilot's cheer; My head was turned perforce away, And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot, and the Pilot's boy, I heard them coming fast: Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy The dead men could not blast.

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I saw a third—I heard his voice:

It is the Hermit good!

He singeth loud his godly hymns

That he makes in the wood.

He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away

The Albatross's blood.

Part The Seventh

This Hermit good lives in that wood Which slopes down to the sea. How loudly his sweet voice he rears! He loves to talk with marineres That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn and noon and eve— He hath a cushion plump: It is the moss that wholly hides The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk, "Why this is strange, I trow! Where are those lights so many and fair, That signal made but now?"

"Strange, by my faith!" the Hermit said—

"And they answered not our cheer!

The planks looked warped! and see those sails,

How thin they are and sere!

I never saw aught like to them,

Unless perchance it were

"Brown skeletons of leaves that lag My forest-brook along; When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow, And the owlet whoops to the wolf below, That eats the she-wolf's young."

"Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look— (The Pilot made reply) I am a-feared"—"Push on, push on!" Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship, But I nor spake nor stirred;

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The boat came close beneath the ship, And straight a sound was heard.

Under the water it rumbled on, Still louder and more dread: It reached the ship, it split the bay; The ship went down like lead.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,

Which sky and ocean smote,

Like one that hath been seven days drowned

My body lay afloat;

But swift as dreams, myself I found

Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship, The boat spun round and round; And all was still, save that the hill Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked And fell down in a fit; The holy Hermit raised his eyes, And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,

Who now doth crazy go,

Laughed loud and long, and all the while

His eyes went to and fro.

"Ha! ha!" quoth he, "full plain I see,

The Devil knows how to row."

And now, all in my own countree, I stood on the firm land! The Hermit stepped forth from the boat, And scarcely he could stand.

"O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!" The Hermit crossed his brow. "Say quick," quoth he, "I bid thee say— What manner of man art thou?"

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched With a woeful agony,

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Which forced me to begin my tale; And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour, That agony returns; And till my ghastly tale is told, This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land; I have strange power of speech; That moment that his face I see, I know the man that must hear me: To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door! The wedding-guests are there: But in the garden-bower the bride And bride-maids singing are: And hark the little vesper bell, Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been Alone on a wide wide sea: So lonely 'twas, that God himself Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast, 'Tis sweeter far to me, To walk together to the kirk With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk,

And all together pray,

While each to his great Father bends,

Old men, and babes, and loving friends,

And youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell To thee, thou Wedding-Guest! He prayeth well, who loveth well Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best All things both great and small;

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For the dear God who loveth us He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright, Whose beard with age is hoar, Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned, And is of sense forlorn: A sadder and a wiser man, He rose the morrow morn.

### 1.9.6 From Biographia Literaria 1.9.6.1 From Chapter 4

The Lyrical Ballads with the Preface—Mr. Wordsworth's earlier poems—On fancy and imagination—The investigation of the distinction important to the Fine Arts.

1 Original Note: [This is effected either by giving to the one word a general, and to the other an exclusive use; as "to put on the back" and "to indorse;" or by an actual distinction of meanings, as "naturalist," and "physician;" or by difference of relation, as "I" and "Me" (each of which the rustics of our different provinces still use in all the cases singular of the first personal pronoun). Even the mere difference, or corruption, in the pronunciation of the same word, if it have become general, will produce a new word with a distinct signification; thus "property" and "propriety;" the latter of which, even to the time of Charles II was the written word for all the senses of both. There is a sort of minim immortal among the animalcula infusoria, which has not naturally either birth, or death, absolute beginning, or absolute end: for at a certain period a small point appears on its back, which deepens and lengthens till the creature divides into two, and the same process recommences in each of the halves now become integral. This may be a fanciful, but it is by no means a bad emblem of the formation of words, and may facilitate the conception, how immense a nomenclature may be

This excellence, which in all Mr. Wordsworth's writings is more or less predominant, and which constitutes the character of his mind, I no sooner felt, than I sought to understand. Repeated meditations led me first to suspect,—(and a more intimate analysis of the human faculties, their appropriate marks, functions, and effects matured my conjecture into full conviction,)—that Fancy and Imagination were two distinct and widely different faculties, instead of being, according to the general belief, either two names with one meaning, or, at furthest, the lower and higher degree of one and the same power. It is not, I own, easy to conceive a more apposite translation of the Greek phantasia than the Latin imaginatio; but it is equally true that in all societies there exists an instinct of growth, a certain collective, unconscious good sense working progressively to desynonymize1 those

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words originally of the same meaning, which the conflux of dialects supplied to the more homogeneous languages, as the Greek and German: and which the same cause, joined with accidents of translation from original works of different countries, occasion in mixed languages like our own. The first and most important point to be proved is, that two conceptions perfectly distinct are confused under one and the same word, and—this done—to appropriate that word exclusively to the one meaning, and the synonyme, should there be one, to the other. But if,—(as will be often the case in the arts and sciences,)—no synonyme exists, we must either invent or borrow a word. In the present instance the appropriation has already begun, and been legitimated in the derivative adjective: Milton had a highly imaginative, Cowley a very fanciful mind. If therefore I should succeed in establishing the actual existence of two faculties generally different, the nomenclature would be at once determined. To the faculty by which I had characterized Milton, we should confine the term 'imagination;' while the other would be contra-distinguished as 'fancy.' Now were it once fully ascertained, that this division is no less grounded in nature than that of delirium from mania, or Otway's

Lutes, laurels, seas of milk, and ships of amber,

from Shakespeare's

What! have his daughters brought him to this pass?

or from the preceding apostrophe to the elements; the theory of the fine arts, and of poetry in particular, could not but derive some additional and important light. It would in its immediate effects furnish a torch of guidance to the philosophical critic; and ultimately to the poet himself. In energetic minds, truth soon changes by domestication into power; and from directing in the discrimination and appraisal of the product, becomes influencive in the production. To admire on principle, is the only way to imitate without loss of originality.

organized from a few simple sounds by rational beings in a social state. For each new application, or excitement of the same sound, will call forth a different sensation, which cannot but affect the pronunciation. The after recollections of the sound, without the same vivid sensation, will modify it still further till at length all trace of the original likeness is worn away.]

It has been already hinted, that metaphysics and psychology have long been my hobby-horse. But to have a hobby-horse, and to be vain of it, are so commonly found together, that they pass almost for the same. I trust therefore, that there will be more good humour than contempt, in the smile with which the reader chastises my self-complacency, if I confess myself uncertain, whether the satisfaction from the perception of a truth new to myself may not have been rendered more poignant by the conceit, that it would be equally so to the public. There was a time, certainly, in which I took some little credit to myself, in the belief that I had been the first of my countrymen, who had pointed out the diverse meaning

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of which the two terms were capable, and analyzed the faculties to which they should be appropriated. Mr. W. Taylor's recent volume of synonymes I have not yet seen;2 but his specification of the terms in question has been clearly shown to be both insufficient and erroneous by Mr. Wordsworth in the Preface added to the late collection of his Poems. The explanation which Mr. Wordsworth has himself given, will be found to differ from mine, chiefly, perhaps as our objects are different. It could scarcely indeed happen otherwise, from the advantage I have enjoyed of frequent conversation with him on a subject to which a poem of his own first directed my attention, and my conclusions concerning which he had made more lucid to myself by many happy instances drawn from the operation of natural objects on the mind. But it was Mr. Wordsworth's purpose to consider the influences of fancy and imagination as they are manifested in poetry, and from the different effects to conclude their diversity in kind; while it is my object to investigate the seminal principle, and then from the kind to deduce the degree. My friend has drawn a masterly sketch of the branches with their poetic fruitage. I wish to add the trunk, and even the roots as far as they lift themselves above ground, and are visible to the naked eye of our common consciousness.

2 Original Note: [I ought to have added, with the exception of a single sheet which I accidentally met with at the printer's. Even from this scanty specimen, I found it impossible to doubt the talent, or not to admire the ingenuity, of the author. That his distinctions were for the greater part unsatisfactory to my mind, proves nothing against their accuracy; but it may possibly be serviceable to him, in case of a second edition, if I take this opportunity of suggesting the query; whether he may not have been occasionally misled, by having assumed, as to me he appears to have done, the non-existence of any absolute synonymes in our language? Now I cannot but think, that there are many which remain for our posterity to distinguish and appropriate, and which I regard as so much reversionary wealth in our mother tongue. When two distinct meanings are confounded under one or more words,—(and such must be the case, as sure as our knowledge is progressive and of course imperfect)—erroneous consequences will be drawn, and what is true in one sense of the word will be affirmed as true in toto. Men of research, startled by the consequences, seek in the things themselves—(whether in or out of the mind)—for a knowledge of the fact, and having discovered the difference, remove the equivocation either by the substitution of a new word, or by the appropriation of one of the two or more words, which had before been used promiscuously. When this distinction has been so naturalized and of such general currency that the language does as it were think for us—(like the sliding rule which is the mechanic's safe substitute for arithmetical knowledge)—we then say, that it is evident to common sense. Common sense, therefore, differs in different ages. What was born and christened in the Schools passes by degrees into the world at large, and becomes the property of the market and the tea-table. At least I can discover no other meaning of the term, common sense, if it is to convey any specific difference from sense and judgment in genere, and where it is not used scholastically for the universal reason. Thus in the reign of Charles II the philosophic world was called to arms by the moral sophisms of Hobbes, and the ablest writers exerted themselves in the detection of an error, which a school-boy would now be able to confute by the mere recollection, that compulsion and obligation conveyed two ideas perfectly disparate, and that what appertained to the one, had been falsely transferred to the other by a mere confusion of terms.]

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Yet even in this attempt I am aware that I shall be obliged to draw more largely on the reader's attention, than so immethodical a miscellany as this can authorize; when in such a work (the Ecclesiasical Polity) of such a mind as Hooker's, the judicious author, though no less admirable for the perspicuity than for the port and dignity of his language,—and though he wrote for men of learning in a learned age,—saw nevertheless occasion to anticipate and guard against "complaints of obscurity," as often as he was to trace his subject "to the highest well-spring and fountain." Which, (continues he) "because men are not accustomed to, the pains we take are more needful a great deal, than acceptable; and the matters we handle, seem by reason of newness (till the mind grow better acquainted with them) dark and intricate." I would gladly therefore spare both myself and others this labour, if I knew how without it to present an intelligible statement of my poetic creed,— not as my opinions, which weigh for nothing, but as deductions from established premises conveyed in such a form, as is calculated either to effect a fundamental conviction, or to receive a fundamental confutation. If I may dare once more adopt the words of Hooker, "they, unto whom we shall seem tedious, are in no wise injured by us, because it is in their own hands to spare that labour, which they are not willing to endure." Those at least, let me be permitted to add, who have taken so much pains to render me ridiculous for a perversion of taste, and have supported the charge by attributing strange notions to me on no other authority than their own conjectures, owe it to themselves as well as to me not to refuse their attention to my own statement of the theory which I do acknowledge; or shrink from the trouble of examining the grounds on which I rest it, or the arguments which I offer in its justification.

1.9.6.2 From Chapter 13

On the imagination, or esemplastic power

The IMAGINATION, then, I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary Imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate: or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

FANCY, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phaenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.

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1.9.6.3 Chapter 14

Occasion of the Lyrical Ballads, and the objects originally proposed—Preface to the second edition—The ensuing controversy, its causes and acrimony-Philosophic definitions of a Poem and Poetry with scholia.

During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself—(to which of us I do not recollect)—that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them, when they present themselves.

In this idea originated the plan of the Lyrical Ballads; in which it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention to the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

With this view I wrote The Ancient Mariner, and was preparing among other poems, The Dark Ladie, and the Christabel, in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal, than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth's industry had proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter. Mr. Wordsworth added two or three poems written in his own character, in the impassioned, lofty, and sustained diction, which is characteristic of his genius. In this form the Lyrical Ballads were published; and were presented by him, as an experiment, whether subjects,

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which from their nature rejected the usual ornaments and extra-colloquial style of poems in general, might not be so managed in the language of ordinary life as to produce the pleasurable interest, which it is the peculiar business of poetry to impart. To the second edition he added a preface of considerable length; in which, notwithstanding some passages of apparently a contrary import, he was understood to contend for the extension of this style to poetry of all kinds, and to reject as vicious and indefensible all phrases and forms of speech that were not included in what he (unfortunately, I think, adopting an equivocal expression) called the language of real life. From this preface, prefixed to poems in which it was impossible to deny the presence of original genius, however mistaken its direction might be deemed, arose the whole long-continued controversy. For from the conjunction of perceived power with supposed heresy I explain the inveteracy and in some instances, I grieve to say, the acrimonious passions, with which the controversy has been conducted by the assailants.

Had Mr. Wordsworth's poems been the silly, the childish things, which they were for a long time described as being had they been really distinguished from the compositions of other poets merely by meanness of language and inanity of thought; had they indeed contained nothing more than what is found in the parodies and pretended imitations of them; they must have sunk at once, a dead weight, into the slough of oblivion, and have dragged the preface along with them. But year after year increased the number of Mr. Wordsworth's admirers. They were found too not in the lower classes of the reading public, but chiefly among young men of strong sensibility and meditative minds; and their admiration (inflamed perhaps in some degree by opposition) was distinguished by its intensity, I might almost say, by its religious fervour. These facts, and the intellectual energy of the author, which was more or less consciously felt, where it was outwardly and even boisterously denied, meeting with sentiments of aversion to his opinions, and of alarm at their consequences, produced an eddy of criticism, which would of itself have borne up the poems by the violence with which it whirled them round and round. With many parts of this preface in the sense attributed to them and which the words undoubtedly seem to authorize, I never concurred; but on the contrary objected to them as erroneous in principle, and as contradictory (in appearance at least) both to other parts of the same preface, and to the author's own practice in the greater part of the poems themselves. Mr. Wordsworth in his recent collection has, I find, degraded this prefatory disquisition to the end of his second volume, to be read or not at the reader's choice. But he has not, as far as I can discover, announced any change in his poetic creed. At all events, considering it as the source of a controversy, in which I have been honoured more than I deserve by the frequent conjunction of my name with his, I think it expedient to declare once for all, in what points I coincide with the opinions supported in that preface, and in what points I altogether differ. But in order to render myself intelligible I must previously, in as few words as possible, explain my views, first, of a Poem; and secondly, of Poetry itself, in kind, and in essence.

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The office of philosophical disquisition consists in just distinction; while it is the privilege of the philosopher to preserve himself constantly aware, that distinction is not division. In order to obtain adequate notions of any truth, we must intellectually separate its distinguishable parts; and this is the technical process of philosophy. But having so done, we must then restore them in our conceptions to the unity, in which they actually co-exist; and this is the result of philosophy. A poem contains the same elements as a prose composition; the difference therefore must consist in a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object being proposed. According to the difference of the object will be the difference of the combination. It is possible, that the object may be merely to facilitate the recollection of any given facts or observations by artificial arrangement; and the composition will be a poem, merely because it is distinguished from prose by metre, or by rhyme, or by both conjointly. In this, the lowest sense, a man might attribute the name of a poem to the well-known enumeration of the days in the several months:

Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November, etc.

and others of the same class and purpose. And as a particular pleasure is found in anticipating the recurrence of sounds and quantities, all compositions that have this charm super-added, whatever be their contents, may be entitled poems.

So much for the superficial form. A difference of object and contents supplies an additional ground of distinction. The immediate purpose may be the communication of truths; either of truth absolute and demonstrable, as in works of science; or of facts experienced and recorded, as in history. Pleasure, and that of the highest and most permanent kind, may result from the attainment of the end; but it is not itself the immediate end. In other works the communication of pleasure may be the immediate purpose; and though truth, either moral or intellectual, ought to be the ultimate end, yet this will distinguish the character of the author, not the class to which the work belongs. Blest indeed is that state of society, in which the immediate purpose would be baffled by the perversion of the proper ultimate end; in which no charm of diction or imagery could exempt the Bathyllus even of an Anacreon, or the Alexis of Virgil, from disgust and aversion!

But the communication of pleasure may be the immediate object of a work not metrically composed; and that object may have been in a high degree attained, as in novels and romances. Would then the mere superaddition of metre, with or without rhyme, entitle these to the name of poems? The answer is, that nothing can permanently please, which does not contain in itself the reason why it is so, and not otherwise. If metre be superadded, all other parts must be made consonant with it. They must be such, as to justify the perpetual and distinct attention to each part, which an exact correspondent recurrence of accent and sound are calculated to excite. The final definition then, so deduced, may be thus worded. A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its

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immediate object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species—(having this object in common with it)—it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part.

Controversy is not seldom excited in consequence of the disputants attaching each a different meaning to the same word; and in few instances has this been more striking, than in disputes concerning the present subject. If a man chooses to call every composition a poem, which is rhyme, or measure, or both, I must leave his opinion uncontroverted. The distinction is at least competent to characterize the writer's intention. If it were subjoined, that the whole is likewise entertaining or affecting, as a tale, or as a series of interesting reflections; I of course admit this as another fit ingredient of a poem, and an additional merit. But if the definition sought for be that of a legitimate poem, I answer, it must be one, the parts of which mutually support and explain each other; all in their proportion harmonizing with, and supporting the purpose and known influences of metrical arrangement. The philosophic critics of all ages coincide with the ultimate judgment of all countries, in equally denying the praises of a just poem, on the one hand, to a series of striking lines or distiches, each of which, absorbing the whole attention of the reader to itself, becomes disjoined from its context, and forms a separate whole, instead of a harmonizing part; and on the other hand, to an unsustained composition, from which the reader collects rapidly the general result unattracted by the component parts. The reader should be carried forward, not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, or by a restless desire to arrive at the final solution; but by the pleasureable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself. Like the motion of a serpent, which the Egyptians made the emblem of intellectual power; or like the path of sound through the air;—at every step he pauses and half recedes; and from the retrogressive movement collects the force which again carries him onward. Praecipitandus est liber spiritus, says Petronius most happily. The epithet, liber, here balances the preceding verb; and it is not easy to conceive more meaning condensed in fewer words.

But if this should be admitted as a satisfactory character of a poem, we have still to seek for a definition of poetry. The writings of Plato, and Bishop Taylor, and Burnet's Theoria Sacra of Burnet, furnish undeniable proofs that poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre, and even without the contradistringuishing objects of a poem. The first chapter of Isaiah—(indeed a very large portion of the whole book)—is poetry in the most emphatic sense; yet it would be not less irrational than strange to assert, that pleasure, and not truth was the immediate object of the prophet. In short, whatever specific import we attach to the word poetry, there will be found involved in it, as a necessary consequence, that a poem of any length neither can be, nor ought to be, all poetry. Yet if an harmonious whole is to be produced, the remaining parts must be preserved in keeping with the poetry; and this can be no otherwise effected than by such a studied selection and artificial arrangement, as will partake of one, though not a peculiar property of poetry. And this again can be no other than the property of exciting a more continuous and equal attention than the language of prose aims at, whether colloquial or written.

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My own conclusions on the nature of poetry, in the strictest use of the word, have been in part anticipated in some of the remarks on the Fancy and Imagination in the early part of this work. What is poetry?—is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet?—that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. For it is a distinction resulting from the poetic genius itself, which sustains and modifies the images, thoughts, and emotions of the poet's own mind.

The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which I would exclusively appropriate the name of Imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control, laxis effertur habenis, reveals "itself in the balance or reconcilement of opposite or discordant" qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general with the concrete; the idea with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry. Doubtless, as Sir John Davies observes of the soul—(and his words may with slight alteration be applied, and even more appropriately, to

the poetic IMAGINATION)—

Doubtless this could not be, but that she turns

Bodies to spirit by sublimation strange, As fire converts to fire the things it burns,

As we our food into our nature change.

From their gross matter she abstracts their forms,

And draws a kind of quintessence from things; Which to her proper nature she transforms

To bear them light on her celestial wings .

Thus does she, when from individual states

She doth abstract the universal kinds; Which then re-clothed in divers names and fates

Steal access through the senses to our minds.

Finally, GOOD SENSE is the BODY of poetic genius, FANC its DRAPERY,

MOTION its LIFE, and IMAGINATION the SOUL that is everywhere, and in each;

and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole.

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### 1.9.7 Reading and Review Questions

1. To what degree, if any, is Coleridge's poetry artless? What significance, if any, does his poetry give to artlessness, and why?

2. How, if at all, do Christian practices of sin, recognition of sin, confession, penance, and redemption undergird Rime of the Ancient Mariner, and why? What does the Ancient Mariner need to recognize as his crime, or sin, and why?

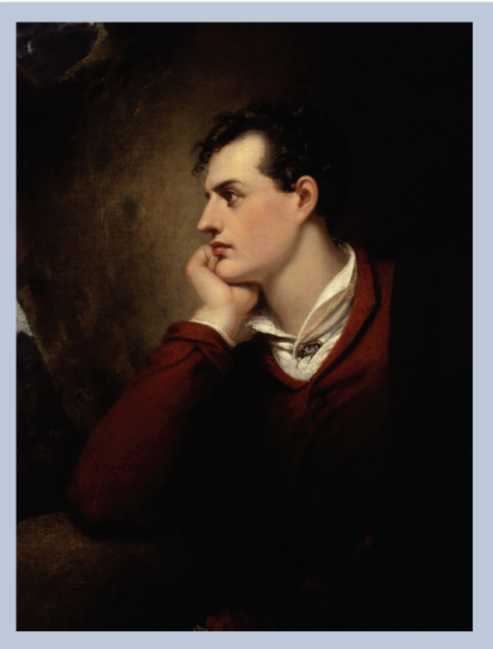
3. How does Coleridge's state of imagination in Dejection: An Ode compare to that of Wordsworth's in Intimations of Immortality? What concerns both men about the imagination? What power(s) of the imagination, if any, do they recover by the end of their respective poems, and how?

4. What, if anything, is radical or revolutionary about Coleridge's vision of unity among man, nature, and God? Why, for example, does he warn readers at the end of "Kubla Khan" to beware the poet?

## 1.10 GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

Image 1.18 | Portrait of George Gordon, Lord Byron

Artist | Richard Westall Source | Wikipedia License | Public Domain



(1788-1824)

The Romantic emphasis on the individual was double-edged. Coleridge's Ancient Mariner travels through a landscape of his mind and spirit, a solitary individual closed off from the guidance and support of oth-ers—until he surpasses himself through an act of love. And while the Mariner learns to appreciate the happiness derived from the company of others, including all of nature (and the supernatural), his unconscious act of self-assertion in killing the albatross also effected a breaking out of boundaries, an expansion of our knowledge of human nature.

This sense of the power and danger of self-realization actuates the Byronic Hero, a Romantic figure named after the poet George Gordon, Lord Byron. A solitary figure, an exile and desperate wanderer at home neither with himself nor others, the Byronic Hero rebelled like Satan against a God he resembled, and like Satan his own mind made his own heaven and hell. His innate sense of superiority and his charisma epitomized both his strengths and limitations. His doubleness, like that of John Milton's Satan in Paradise Lost—of

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glory subdued, of being piteous and unpitied, marked and protected—paralleled the doubleness in Byron's life and works.

Born into an aristocratic family, George Gordon functioned with a clubbed right foot, a disability that many of his contemporaries considered a flaw and that later contributed to characteristics of the flawed Byronic Hero. His father Captain John "Mad Jack" Byron was a spendthrift who recovered his fortune by marrying heiresses. He and his first wife, Amelia Osborne, Machioness of Camarthan, had a daughter, Augusta Maria Byron. Amelia died in 1784; Captain Byron married his second wife, Catherine Gordon, in 1785, before he died in 1791.

Byron inherited his title while still in grammar-school. He became the sixth Baron Byron of Rochdale with a family seat in Nottinghamshire, Newstead Abbey. Lord Byron studied at Harrow and at Trinity College, Cambridge, then took the Grand Tour to obtain knowledge of the world. After visiting Portugal, Albania, Spain, Italy, and Greece, Byron returned to England and entered public life. He sat in the House of Lords on the side of the liberals. His first speech in Lords denounced a proposal for the death penalty for weavers who rioted and protested industrialism by breaking machines.

In 1812, he published the first two cantos of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. It became a sensation, and Byron "woke up and found himself famous." He claimed Harold was a fiction, but readers conflated hero and author in this first appearance of the Byronic hero. A series of ensuing "Eastern" tales added to Byron's exotic aura. The Corsair (1814) sold 10,000 copies on its release; Hebrew Melodies (1815) contains Byron's most famous lyrics, including "She Walks in Beauty." The collection also expresses anti-imperialism and the desire for the freedom of nations subject to empires like the Ottoman or Austrian.

Drawn into the social life of the London aristocrat, Byron met and had an affair with Lady Caroline Lamb, who famously described Byron in her diary as "mad, bad, and dangerous to know." Their affair ended badly, and Lady Caroline avenged herself by publishing Glenarvon (1816), a thinly-veiled roman a clef depicting a Byron-like hero who seduced women and died ignominiously.

Friends encouraged Byron to recover his tarnished reputation by marrying Henriette Milbanke who agreed to marry Byron in order to redeem him. The unhappiness of their marriage was perhaps exacerbated by Byron's growing intimacy with his half-sister Augusta. Byron was thought to be the father of Augusta's daughter Medora. After the birth of their daughter Ada Augusta, Henriette Millbanke divorced Byron; in order to do so, she had to prove just cause, and the complaints she brought against Byron, including incest and sodomy, caused such a scandal that Byron declared that "everybody and her husband hates me." He left England never to return.

He subsequently traveled throughout Europe, befriended Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, fathered a daughter named Allegra with Mary Shelley's half-sister Claire Clairmont (1798-1879), and became the cavaliere servante of Theresa Guccioli who was involved in the movement to

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liberate Italy from Austrian rule and who ultimately encouraged Byron's interest in Greek Independence from Turkey.

His final political activity of financially supporting Greek independence made his reputation as an upholder of freedom and individual liberty at all costs, especially as he believed Greece to be the seat of democracy and his spiritual home. He died there of fever after the Battle of Missolonghi. Greece today still celebrates Byron as a national hero.

The most characteristic feature of Byron's writing is its autobiographical quality. He seemed to live his life as though it were a work of art. As in his life, his poetry blended "virtue" with "vice." For example, the so-called sin that drives Manfred's beloved Astarte to commit suicide recalls Byron's own relationship with his half-sister Augusta. Manfred's extreme skepticism, his sense that he is his own master embodies qualities of both Byron himself and his eponymous hero. In almost all of his writing, Byron's strength of expression is clear, a strength which he himself likened to the spring of a tiger.

### 1.10.1 Manfred, a dramatic poem

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

DRAMATIS PERSONAL

MANFRED CHAMOIS HUNTER ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE

MANUEL HERMAN

WITCH OF THE ALPS ARIMANES NEMESIS THE DESTINIES SPIRITS, etc

The scene of the Drama is amongst the Higher Alps—partly in the Castle of Manfred, and partly in the Mountains.

ACT I

SCENE I

MANFRED alone.—Scene, a Gothic Gallery.—Time, Midnight.

MANFRED. The lamp must be replenish'd, but even then It will not burn so long as I must watch. My slumbers—if I slumber—are not sleep, But a continuance of enduring thought,

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Which then I can resist not: in my heart There is a vigil, and these eyes but close To look within; and yet I live, and bear The aspect and the form of breathing men. But grief should be the instructor of the wise;

Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most 10

Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,

The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.

Philosophy and science, and the springs

Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world,

I have essay'd, and in my mind there is

A power to make these subject to itself—

But they avail not: I have done men good,

And I have met with good even among men—

But this avail'd not: I have had my foes,

And none have baffled, many fallen before me— 20

But this avail'd not: Good, or evil, life,

Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,

Have been to me as rain unto the sands,

Since that all-nameless hour. I have no dread,

And feel the curse to have no natural fear

Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes

Or lurking love of something on the earth.

Now to my task.—

Mysterious Agency! Ye spirits of the unbounded Universe,

Whom I have sought in darkness and in light! 30

Ye, who do compass earth about, and dwell

In subtler essence! ye, to whom the tops

Of mountains inaccessible are haunts,

And earth's and ocean's caves familiar things—

I call upon ye by the written charm

Which gives me power upon you—Rise! appear! [A pause.] They come not yet.—Now by the voice of him Who is the first among you; by this sign, Which makes you tremble; by the claims of him

Who is undying,—Rise! appear!—Appear! [A pause.] 40

If it be so.—Spirits of earth and air,

Ye shall not thus elude me: by a power,

Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant-spell,

Which had its birthplace in a star condemn'd,

The burning wreck of a demolish'd world,

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A wandering hell in the eternal space; By the strong curse which is upon my soul, The thought which is within me and around me, I do compel ye to my will. Appear!

[A star is seen at the darker end of the gallery: it is stationary; and a voice is heard singing.]

FIRST SPIRIT.

Mortal! to thy bidding bow'd, 50

From my mansion in the cloud,

Which the breath of twilight builds,

And the summer's sunset gilds

With the azure and vermilion

Which is mix'd for my pavilion;

Though thy quest may be forbidden,

On a star-beam I have ridden,

To thine adjuration bow'd;

Mortal—be thy wish avow'd!

Voice of the SECOND SPIRIT.

Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains; 60

They crown'd him long ago On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,

With a diadem of snow. Around his waist are forests braced,

The Avalanche in his hand; But ere it fall, that thundering ball

Must pause for my command. The Glacier's cold and restless mass

Moves onward day by day;

But I am he who bids it pass, 70

Or with its ice delay. I am the spirit of the place,

Could make the mountain bow And quiver to his cavern'd base— And what with me wouldst Thou?

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Voice of the THIRD SPIRIT.

In the blue depth of the waters,

Where the wave hath no strife, Where the wind is a stranger

And the sea-snake hath life,

Where the Mermaid is decking 80

Her green hair with shells; Like the storm on the surface

Came the sound of thy spells; O'er my calm Hall of Coral

The deep echo roll'd— To the Spirit of Ocean

Thy wishes unfold!

FOURTH SPIRIT.

Where the slumbering earthquake

Lies pillow'd on fire, And the lakes of bitumen 90

Rise boilingly higher; Where the roots of the Andes

Strike deep in the earth, As their summits to heaven Shoot soaringly forth; I have quitted my birthplace, Thy bidding to bide— Thy spell hath subdued me, Thy will be my guide!

FIFTH SPIRIT.

I am the Rider of the wind, 100

The Stirrer of the storm; The hurricane I left behind

Is yet with lightning warm; To speed to thee, o'er shore and sea

I swept upon the blast: The fleet I met sail'd well, and yet

'T will sink ere night be past.

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SIXTH SPIRIT.

My dwelling is the shadow of the night, Why doth thy magic torture me with light?

SEVENTH SPIRIT

The star which rules thy destiny 110

Was ruled, ere earth began, by me:

It was a world as fresh and fair

As e'er revolved round sun in air;

Its course was free and regular,

Space bosom'd not a lovelier star.

The hour arrived—and it became

A wandering mass of shapeless flame,

A pathless comet, and a curse,

The menace of the universe;

Still rolling on with innate force, 120

Without a sphere, without a course,

A bright deformity on high,

The monster of the upper sky!

And thou! beneath its influence born—

Thou worm! whom I obey and scorn—

Forced by a power (which is not thine,

And lent thee but to make thee mine)

For this brief moment to descend,

Where these weak spirits round thee bend

And parley with a thing like thee— 130 What wouldst thou, Child of Clay! with me?

The SEVEN SPIRITS

Earth, ocean, air, night, mountains, winds, thy star, Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of Clay! Before thee at thy quest their spirits are— What wouldst thou with us, son of mortals—say?

MANFRED. Forgetfulness—

FIRST SPIRIT. Of what—of whom—and why?

MANFRED. Of that which is within me; read it there— Ye know it, and I cannot utter it.

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SPIRIT. We can but give thee that which we possess:

Ask of us subjects, sovereignty, the power 140 O'er earth, the whole, or portion, or a sign Which shall control the elements, whereof We are the dominators,—each and all, These shall be thine.

MANFRED. Oblivion, self-oblivion—

Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms Ye offer so profusely what I ask?

SPIRIT. It is not in our essence, in our skill; But—thou mayst die.

MANFRED. Will death bestow it on me? SPIRIT. We are immortal, and do not forget;

We are eternal; and to us the past 150 Is, as the future, present. Art thou answered?

MANFRED. Ye mock me—but the power which brought ye here

Hath made you mine. Slaves, scoff not at my will!

The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,

The lightning of my being, is as bright,

Pervading, and far-darting as your own,

And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay!

Answer, or I will teach you what I am.

SPIRIT. We answer as we answer'd; our reply Is even in thine own words.

MANFRED. Why say ye so? 160

SPIRIT. If, as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours, We have replied in telling thee, the thing Mortals call death hath nought to do with us.

MANFRED. I then have call'd ye from your realms in vain; Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.

SPIRIT. Say;

What we possess we offer; it is thine:

Bethink ere thou dismiss us, ask again—

Kingdom, and sway, and strength, and length of days—

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MANFRED. Accursed! what have I to do with days?

They are too long already.—Hence—begone! 170

SPIRIT. Yet pause: being here, our will would do thee service;

Bethink thee, is there then no other gift

Which we can make not worthless in thine eyes?

MANFRED. No, none: yet stay—one moment, ere we part—

I would behold ye face to face. I hear

Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds,

As music on the waters; and I see

The steady aspect of a clear large star;

But nothing more. Approach me as ye are,

Or one, or all, in your accustom'd forms. 180

SPIRIT. We have no forms, beyond the elements Of which we are the mind and principle: But choose a form—in that we will appear.

MANFRED. I have no choice, there is no form on earth

Hideous or beautiful to me. Let him,

Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect

As unto him may seem most fitting.—Come!

Seventh spirit (appearing in the shape of a beautiful female figure). Behold!

MANFRED. Oh God! if it be thus, and thou Art not a madness and a mockery

I yet might be most happy—I will clasp thee, 190 And we again will be— [The figure vanishes.]

My heart is crushed!

[MANFRED falls senseless.]

(A voice is heard in the Incantation which follows.)

When the moon is on the wave,

And the glow-worm in the grass, And the meteor on the grave,

And the wisp on the morass; When the falling stars are shooting, And the answer'd owls are hooting, And the silent leaves are still

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In the shadow of the hill,

Shall my soul be upon thine, 200 With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep, Yet thy spirit shall not sleep; There are shades which will not vanish, There are thoughts thou canst not banish; By a power to thee unknown, Thou canst never be alone; Thou art wrapt as with a shroud, Thou art gather'd in a cloud;

And forever shalt thou dwell 210 In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by, Thou shalt feel me with thine eye As a thing that, though unseen, Must be near thee, and hath been; And when in that secret dread Thou hast turn'd around thy head, Thou shalt marvel I am not As thy shadow on the spot,

And the power which thou dost feel 220 Shall be what thou must conceal.

And a magic voice and verse Hath baptized thee with a curse; And a spirit of the air Hath begirt thee with a snare; In the wind there is a voice Shall forbid thee to rejoice; And to thee shall Night deny All the quiet of her sky;

And the day shall have a sun, 230 Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distil An essence which hath strength to kill; From thy own heart I then did wring The black blood in its blackest spring; From thy own smile I snatch'd the snake, For there it coil'd as in a brake;

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From thy own lip I drew the charm Which gave all these their chiefest harm;

In proving every poison known, 240

I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,

By thy unfathom'd gulfs of guile,

By that most seeming virtuous eye,

By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;

By the perfection of thine art

Which pass'd for human thine own heart;

By thy delight in others' pain,

And by thy brotherhood of Cain,

I call upon thee! and compel 250 Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

And on thy head I pour the vial

Which doth devote thee to this trial;

Nor to slumber, nor to die,

Shall be in thy destiny;

Though thy death shall still seem near

To thy wish, but as a fear;

Lo! the spell now works around thee,

And the clankless chain hath bound thee;

O'er thy heart and brain together 260 Hath the word been pass'd—now wither!

SCENE II

The Mountain of the Jungfrau.—Time, Morning.— MANFRED alone upon the Cliffs.

MANFRED. The spirits I have raised abandon me,

The spells which I have studied baffled me,

The remedy I reck'd of tortured me;

I lean no more on super-human aid,

It hath no power upon the past, and for

The future, till the past be gulf'd in darkness,

It is not of my search.—My mother Earth!

And thou fresh breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,

Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye. 270

And thou, the bright eye of the universe

That openest over all, and unto all

Art a delight—thou shin'st not on my heart.

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And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs In dizziness of distance; when a leap, A stir, a motion, even a breath, would bring My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed

To rest forever—wherefore do I pause? 280

I feel the impulse—yet I do not plunge;

I see the peril—yet do not recede;

And my brain reels—and yet my foot is firm.

There is a power upon me which withholds,

And makes it my fatality to live;

If it be life to wear within myself

This barrenness of spirit, and to be

My own soul's sepulchre, for I have ceased

To justify my deeds unto myself —

The last infirmity of evil. Ay, 290

Thou winged and cloud-cleaving minister, [An eagle passes.]

Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,

Well may'st thou swoop so near me—I should be

Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets; thou art gone

Where the eye cannot follow thee; but thine

Yet pierces downward, onward, or above,

With a pervading vision.—Beautiful!

How beautiful is all this visible world!

How glorious in its action and itself!

But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we, 300

Half dust, half deity, alike unfit

To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make

A conflict of its elements, and breathe

The breath of degradation and of pride,

Contending with low wants and lofty will,

Till our mortality predominates,

And men are what they name not to themselves,

And trust not to each other. Hark! the note,

[The Shepherd's pipe in the distance is heard.] The natural music of the mountain reed

(For here the patriarchal days are not 310

A pastoral fable) pipes in the liberal air,

Mix'd with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd;

My soul would drink those echoes.—Oh, that I were

The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,

A living voice, a breathing harmony,

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A bodiless enjoyment—born and dying With the blessed tone which made me!

Enter from below a CHAMOIS HUNTER.

CHAMOIS HUNTER. Even so

This way the chamois leapt: her nimble feet Have baffled me; my gains to-day will scarce

Repay my break-neck travail.—What is here? 320

Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath reach'd

A height which none even of our mountaineers

Save our best hunters, may attain: his garb

Is goodly, his mien manly, and his air

Proud as a freeborn peasant's, at this distance—

I will approach him nearer.

MANFRED (not perceiving the other). To be thus— Gray—hair'd with anguish, like these blasted pines, Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless, A blighted trunk upon a cursed root

Which but supplies a feeling to decay— 330

And to be thus, eternally but thus,

Having been otherwise! Now furrowed o'er

With wrinkles, plough'd by moments, not by years

And hours—all tortured into ages—hours

Which I outlive!—Ye toppling crags of ice!

Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws down

In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!

I hear ye momently above, beneath,

Crash with a frequent conflict, but ye pass,

And only fall on things that still would live; 340 On the young flourishing forest, or the hut And hamlet of the harmless villager.

CHAMOIS HUNTER. The mists begin to rise from up the valley;

I'll warn him to descend, or he may chance To lose at once his way and life together.

MANFRED. The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury, Like foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell, Whose every wave breaks on a living shore

Heap'd with the damn'd like pebbles.—I am giddy. 350

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CHAMOIS HUNTER. I must approach him cautiously; if near A sudden step will startle him, and he Seems tottering already.

MANFRED. Mountains have fallen, Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock Rocking their Alpine brethren; filling up The ripe green valleys with destruction's splinters; Damming the rivers with a sudden dash, Which crush'd the waters into mist, and made Their fountains find another channel—thus,

Thus, in its old age, did Mount Rosenberg— 360 Why stood I not beneath it?

CHAMOIS HUNTER. Friend! have a care,

Your next step may be fatal!—for the love

Of him who made you, stand not on that brink!

MANFRED. (not hearing him). Such would have been for me a

fitting tomb; My bones had then been quiet in their depth; They had not then been strewn upon the rocks For the wind's pastime—as thus—thus they shall be— In this one plunge.—Farewell, ye opening heavens! Look not upon me thus reproachfully—

Ye were not meant for me—Earth! take these atoms! 370

[As MANFRED is in act to spring from the cliff, the CHAMOIS HUNTER seizes and retains him with a sudden grasp.]

CHAMOIS HUNTER. Hold, madman!—though aweary of thy life, Stain not our pure vales with thy guilty blood! Away with me—I will not quit my hold.

MANFRED. I am most sick at heart—nay, grasp me not— I am all feebleness—the mountains whirl Spinning around me—I grow blind—What art thou?

CHAMOIS HUNTER. I'll answer that anon.—Away with me! The clouds grow thicker—there—now lean on me— Place your foot here—here, take this staff, and cling

A moment to that shrub—now give me your hand, 380 And hold fast by my girdle—softly—well—

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The Chalet will be gain'd within an hour. Come on, we'll quickly find a surer footing, And something like a pathway, which the torrent Hath wash'd since winter.—Come, 'tis bravely done; You should have been a hunter.— Follow me.

[As they descend the rocks with difficulty, the scene closes.]

ACT II

SCENE I

A Cottage amongst the Bernese Alps.

MANFRED and the CHAMOIS HUNTER.

CHAMOIS HUNTER. No, no, yet pause, thou must not yet go forth:

Thy mind and body are alike unfit

To trust each other, for some hours, at least;

When thou art better, I will be thy guide—

But whither?

MANFRED. It imports not; I do know

My route full well, and need no further guidance.

CHAMOIS HUNTER. Thy garb and gait bespeak thee of high lineage— One of the many chiefs, whose castled crags Look o'er the lower valleys—which of these

May call thee Lord? I only know their portals; 10

My way of life leads me but rarely down

To bask by the huge hearths of those old halls,

Carousing with the vassals, but the paths,

Which step from out our mountains to their doors,

I know from childhood—which of these is thine?

MANFRED. No matter.

CHAMOIS HUNTER. Well, sir, pardon me the question,

And be of better cheer. Come, taste my wine;

'Tis of an ancient vintage; many a day

'T has thaw'd my veins among our glaciers, now

Let it do thus for thine. Come, pledge me fairly. 20

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MANFRED. Away, away! there's blood upon the brim! Will it then never—never sink in the earth?

CHAMOIS HUNTER. What dost thou mean? thy senses wander from thee.

MANFRED. I say 't is blood—my blood! the pure warm stream

Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours

When we were in our youth, and had one heart

And loved each other as we should not love,

And this was shed: but still it rises up

Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from heaven

Where thou art not—and I shall never be. 30

CHAMOIS HUNTER. Man of strange words, and some half-maddening sin Which makes thee people vacancy, whate'er Thy dread and sufferance be, there's comfort yet— The aid of holy men, and heavenly patience—

MANFRED. Patience and patience! Hence—that word was made For brutes of burthen, not for birds of prey; Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine,— I am not of thine order.

CHAMOIS HUNTER. Thanks to heaven!

I would not be of thine for the free fame

Of William Tell; but whatsoe'er thine ill, 40 It must be borne, and these wild starts are useless.

MANFRED. Do I not bear it?—Look on me—I live.

CHAMOIS HUNTER. This is convulsion, and no healthful life.

MANFRED. I tell thee, man! I have lived many years,

Many long years, but they are nothing now

To those which I must number: ages—ages—

Space and eternity—and consciousness,

With the fierce thirst of death—and still unslaked!

CHAMOIS HUNTER. Why, on thy brow the seal of middle age

Hath scarce been set; I am thine elder far. 50

MANFRED. Think'st thou existence doth depend on time? It doth; but actions are our epochs: mine

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Have made my days and nights imperishable Endless, and all alike, as sands on the shore Innumerable atoms; and one desart Barren and cold, on which the wild waves break, But nothing rests, save carcases and wrecks, Rocks, and the salt-surf weeds of bitterness.

CHAMOIS HUNTER. Alas! he's mad—but yet I must not leave him.

MANFRED. I would I were—for then the things I see 60 Would be but a distemper'd dream.

CHAMOIS HUNTER. What is it

That thou dost see, or think thou look'st upon?

MANFRED. Myself, and thee—a peasant of the Alps— Thy humble virtues, hospitable home And spirit patient, pious, proud and free; Thy self-respect, grafted on innocent thoughts; Thy days of health, and nights of sleep; thy toils By danger dignified, yet guiltless; hopes Of cheerful old age and a quiet grave,

With cross and garland over its green turf, 70

And thy grandchildren's love for epitaph;

This do I see—and then I look within—

It matters not—my soul was scorch'd already!

CHAMOIS HUNTER. And would'st thou then exchange thy lot for mine?

MANFRED. No, friend! I would not wrong thee, nor exchange

My lot with living being: I can bear—

However wretchedly, 't is still to bear—

In life what others could not brook to dream,

But perish in their slumber.

CHAMOIS HUNTER. And with this—

This cautious feeling for another's pain, 80

Canst thou be black with evil?—say not so.

Can one of gentle thoughts have wreak'd revenge

Upon his enemies?

MANFRED. Oh! no, no, no!

My injuries came down on those who loved me—

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On those whom I best loved: I never quell'd An enemy, save in my just defence— But my embrace was fatal.

CHAMOIS HUNTER. Heaven give thee rest!

And penitence restore thee to thyself; My prayers shall be for thee.

MANFRED. I need them not,

But can endure thy pity. I depart— 90

'T is time—farewell!—Here's gold, and thanks for thee;

No words—it is thy due. Follow me not;

I know my path—the mountain peril's past:

And once again, I charge thee, follow not! [Exit MANFRED.]

SCENE II A lower Valley in the Alps.—A Cataract.

Enter MANFRED.

It is not noon—the sunbow's rays still arch The torrent with the many hues of heaven, And roll the sheeted silver's waving column O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular, And fling its lines of foaming height along,

And to and fro, like the pale courser's tall, 100

The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death,

As told in the Apocalypse. No eyes

But mine now drink this sight of loveliness;

I should be sole in this sweet solitude,

And with the Spirit of the place divide

The homage of these waters.—I will call her.

[MANFRED takes some of the water into the palm of his hand, and flings it in the air, muttering the adjuration. After a pause, the WITCH OF THE ALPS rises beneath the arch of the sunbow of the torrent.]

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,

And dazzling eyes of glory, in whose form

The charms of Earth's least mortal daughters grow

To an unearthly stature, in an essence 110 Of purer elements; while the hues of youth (Carnation'd like a sleeping infant's cheek

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Rock'd by the beating of her mother's heart,

Or the rose tints, which summer's twilight leaves

Upon the lofty glacier's virgin snow,

The blush of earth embracing with her heaven)

Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame

The beauties of the sunbow which bends o'er thee.

Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow,

Wherein is glass'd serenity of soul, 120

Which of itself shows immortality,

I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son

Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers permit

At times to commune with them—if that he

Avail him of his spells—to call thee thus,

And gaze on thee a moment.

WITCH. Son of Earth!

I know thee, and the powers which give thee power; I know thee for a man of many thoughts, And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,

Fatal and fated in thy sufferings. 130 I have expected this—what wouldst thou with me?

MANFRED. To look upon thy beauty—nothing further. The face of the earth hath madden'd me, and I Take refuge in her mysteries, and pierce To the abodes of those who govern her— But they can nothing aid me. I have sought From them what they could not bestow, and now I search no further.

WITCH. What could be the quest

Which is not in the power of the most powerful, The rulers of the invisible?

MANFRED. A boon; 140

But why should I repeat it? 'twere in vain.

WITCH. I know not that; let thy lips utter it.

MANFRED. Well, though it torture me, 't is but the same; My pang shall find a voice. From my youth upwards My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men, Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes;

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The thirst of their ambition was not mine;

The aim of their existence was not mine;

My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,

Made me a stranger; though I wore the form, 150

I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,

Nor midst the creatures of clay that girded me

Was there but one who—but of her anon.

I said with men, and with the thoughts of men,

I held but slight communion; but instead,

My joy was in the Wilderness, to breathe

The difficult air of the iced mountain's top,

Where the birds dare not build, nor insect's wing

Flit o'er the herbless granite; or to plunge

Into the torrent, and to roll along 160

On the swift whirl of the new breaking wave

Of river-stream, or ocean, in their flow.

In these my early strength exulted; or

To follow through the night the moving moon,

The stars and their development, or catch

The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim;

Or to look, list'ning, on the scatter'd leaves,

While Autumn winds were at their evening song.

These were my pastimes, and to be alone;

For if the beings, of whom I was one,— 170

Hating to be so,—cross'd me in my path,

I felt myself degraded back to them,

And was all clay again. And then I dived,

In my lone wanderings, to the caves of death,

Searching its cause in its effect, and drew

From wither'd bones, and skulls, and heap'd up dust,

Conclusions most forbidden. Then I pass'd

The nights of years in sciences, untaught

Save in the old-time; and with time and toil,

And terrible ordeal, and such penance 180

As in itself hath power upon the air

And spirits that do compass air and earth,

Space, and the peopled infinite, I made

Mine eyes familiar with Eternity,

Such as, before me, did the Magi, and

He who from out their fountain dwellings raised

Eros and Anteros, at Gadara,

As I do thee,—and with my knowledge grew

The thirst of knowledge, and the power and joy

Of this most bright intelligence, until— 190

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WITCH. Proceed.

MANFRED. Oh! I but thus prolonged my words, Boasting these idle attributes, because As I approach the core of my heart's grief— But to my task. I have not named to thee Father or mother, mistress, friend, or being With whom I wore the chain of human ties; If I had such, they seem'd not such to me— Yet there was one—

WITCH. Spare not thyself—proceed. MANFRED. She was like me in lineaments—her eyes

Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone 200

Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;

But soften'd all, and temper'd into beauty;

She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,

The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind

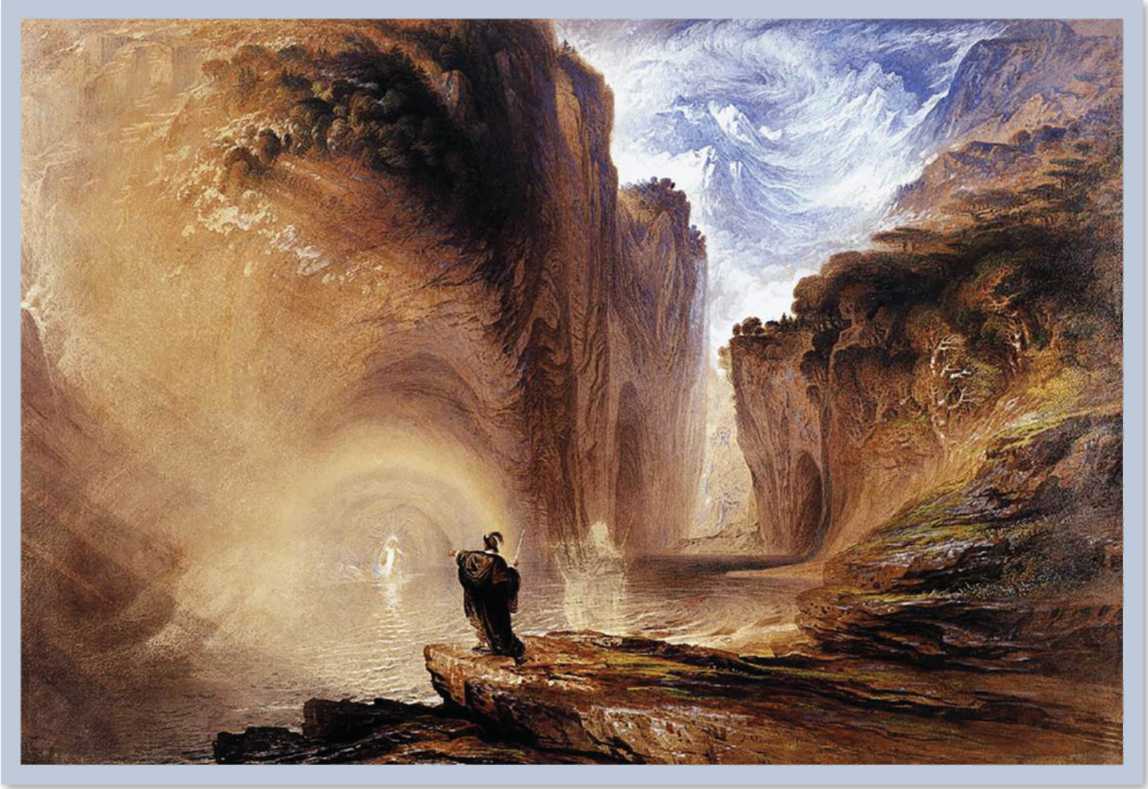
To comprehend the universe: nor these

Image 1.19 | Manfred and the Alpine Witch

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Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine, Pity, and smiles, and tears—which I had not; And tenderness—but that I had for her; Humility—and that I never had.

Her faults were mine—her virtues were her own— 210 I loved her, and destroy'd her!

WITCH. With thy hand?

MANFRED. Not with my hand, but heart—which broke her heart; It gazed on mine, and wither'd. I have shed Blood, but not hers—and yet her blood was shed— I saw, and could not stanch it.

WITCH. And for this—

A being of the race thou dost despise,

The order which thine own would rise above,

Mingling with us and ours, thou dost forego

The gifts of our great knowledge, and shrink'st back

To recreant mortality—Away! 220

MANFRED. Daughter of Air! I tell thee, since that hour—

But words are breath—look on me in my sleep,

Or watch my watchings—Come and sit by me!

My solitude is solitude no more,

But peopled with the Furies,—I have gnash'd

My teeth in darkness till returning morn,

Then cursed myself till sunset;—I have pray'd

For madness as a blessing—'tis denied me.

I have affronted death—but in the war

Of elements the waters shrunk from me, 230

And fatal things pass'd harmless—the cold hand

Of an all—pitiless demon held me back,

Back by a single hair, which would not break.

In fantasy, imagination, all

The affluence of my soul—which one day was

A Croesus in creation—I plunged deep,

But, like an ebbing wave, it dash'd me back

Into the gulf of my unfathom'd thought.

I plunged amidst mankind—Forgetfulness

I sought in all, save where 'tis to be found, 240 And that I have to learn—my sciences, My long pursued and superhuman art,

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Is mortal here; I dwell in my despair— And live—and live for ever.

WITCH. It may be

That I can aid thee.

MANFRED. To do this thy power

Must wake the dead, or lay me low with them. Do so—in any shape—in any hour— With any torture—so it be the last.

WITCH. That is not in my province; but if thou

Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do 250 My bidding, it may help thee to thy wishes.

MANFRED. I will not swear—Obey! and whom? the spirits Whose presence I command, and be the slave Of those who served me—Never!

WITCH. Is this all?

Hast thou no gentler answer?—Yet bethink thee, And pause ere thou rejectest.

MANFRED. I have said it.

WITCH. Enough!—I may retire then—say!

MANFRED. Retire! [The WITCH disappears.]

MANFRED (alone). We are the fools of time and terror: Days Steal on us and steal from us; yet we live,

Loathing our life, and dreading still to die. 260

In all the days of this detested yoke—

This vital weight upon the struggling heart,

Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick with pain,

Or joy that ends in agony or faintness—

In all the days of past and future, for

In life there is no present, we can number

How few, how less than few, wherein the soul

Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back

As from a stream in winter, though the chill

Be but a moment's. I have one resource 270 Still in my science—I can call the dead,

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And ask them what it is we dread to be: The sternest answer can but be the Grave, And that is nothing—if they answer not— The buried Prophet answered to the Hag Of Endor; and the Spartan Monarch drew From the Byzantine maid's unsleeping spirit An answer and his destiny—he slew That which he loved unknowing what he slew,

And died unpardon'd—though he call'd in aid 280

The Phyxian Jove, and in Phigalia roused

The Arcadian Evocators to compel

The indignant shadow to depose her wrath,

Or fix her term of vengeance—she replied

In words of dubious import, but fulfill'd.

If I had never lived, that which I love

Had still been living; had I never loved,

That which I love would still be beautiful—

Happy and giving happiness. What is she?

What is she now?—a sufferer for my sins— 290

A thing I dare not think upon—or nothing.

Within few hours I shall not call in vain—

Yet in this hour I dread the thing I dare:

Until this hour I never shrunk to gaze

On spirit, good or evil—now I tremble,

And feel a strange cold thaw upon my heart.

But I can act even what I most abhor,

And champion human fears.—The night approaches. [Exit.]

SCENE III The Summit of the Jungfrau Mountain.

Enter FIRST DESTINY.

The moon is rising broad, and round, and bright;

And here on snows, where never human foot 300

Of common mortal trod, we nightly tread,

And leave no traces; o'er the savage sea,

The glassy ocean of the mountain ice,

We skim its rugged breakers, which put on

The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam,

Frozen in a moment—a dead whirlpool's image.

And this most steep fantastic pinnacle,

The fretwork of some earthquake—where the clouds

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Pause to repose themselves in passing by—

Is sacred to our revels, or our vigils; 310

Here do I wait my sisters, on our way

To the Hall of Arimanes, for to-night

Is our great festival—'t is strange they come not.

A Voice without, singing.

The Captive Usurper,

Hurl'd down from the throne, Lay buried in torpor,

Forgotten and lone; I broke through his slumbers,

I shiver'd his chain,

I leagued him with numbers— 320 He's Tyrant again! With the blood of a million he'll answer my care, With a nation's destruction—his flight and despair.

Second Voice, without.

The ship sail'd on, the ship sail'd fast, But I left not a sail, and I left not a mast; There is not a plank of the hull or the deck, And there is not a wretch to lament o'er his wreck; Save one, whom I held, as he swam, by the hair, And he was a subject well worthy my care; A traitor on land, and a pirate at sea— 330 But I saved him to wreak further havoc for me!

FIRST DESTINY, answering.

The city lies sleeping;

The morn, to deplore it, May dawn on it weeping:

Sullenly, slowly, The black plague flew o'er it—

Thousands lie lowly; Tens of thousands shall perish—

The living shall fly from

The sick they should cherish; 340 But nothing can vanquish The touch that they die from.

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Sorrow and anguish, And evil and dread, Envelope a nation— The blest are the dead, Who see not the sight

Of their own desolation; This work of a night— This wreck of a realm—this deed of my doing— 350 For ages I've done, and shall still be renewing!

Enter the SECOND and THIRD DESTINIES. The Three.

Our hands contain the hearts of men,

Our footsteps are their graves: We only give to take again

The spirits of our slaves!

FIRST DESTINY. Welcome!—Where's Nemesis?

SECOND DESTINY. At some great work;

But what I know not, for my hands were full.

THIRD DESTINY. Behold she cometh.

Enter NEMESIS. FIRST DESTINY. Say, where hast thou been?

My sisters and thyself are slow to-night.

NEMESIS. l was detain'd repairing shattered thrones, 360

Marrying fools, restoring dynasties,

Avenging men upon their enemies,

And making them repent their own revenge;

Goading the wise to madness, from the dull

Shaping out oracles to rule the world

Afresh, for they were waxing out of date,

And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,

To weigh kings in the balance, and to speak

Of freedom, the forbidden fruit.—Away!

We have outstaid the hour—mount we our clouds! [Exeunt.] 370

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SCENE IV

The Hall of ARIMANES.—ARIMANES on his Throne, a Globe of Fire, surrounded by the SPIRITS.

Hymn of the SPIRITS

Hail to our Master!—Prince of Earth and Air!—

Who walks the clouds and waters—in his hand The sceptre of the elements, which tear

Themselves to chaos at his high command! He breatheth—and a tempest shakes the sea;

He speaketh—and the clouds reply in thunder; He gazeth—from his glance the sunbeams flee;

He moveth—earthquakes rend the world asunder. Beneath his footsteps the volcanoes rise;

His shadow is the Pestilence; his path 380 The comets herald through the crackling skies;

And planets turn to ashes at his wrath. To him War offers daily sacrifice;

To him Death pays his tribute; Life is his, With all its infinite of agonies—

And his the spirit of whatever is!

Enter the DESTINIES and NEMESIS.

FIRST DESTINY. Glory to Arimanes! on the earth His power increaseth—both my sisters did His bidding, nor did I neglect my duty!

SECOND DESTINY. Glory to Arimanes! we who bow 390 The necks of men, bow down before his throne!

THIRD DESTINY. Glory to Arimanes!—we await His nod!

NEMESIS. Sovereign of Sovereigns! we are thine. And all that liveth, more or less, is ours, And most things wholly so; still to increase Our power, increasing thine, demands our care, And we are vigilant—Thy late commands Have been fulfill'd to the utmost.

Enter MANFRED.

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A SPIRIT. What is here?

A mortal!—Thou most rash and fatal wretch,

Bow down and worship!

SECOND SPIRIT. I do know the man— 400 A Magian of great power, and fearful skill!

THIRD SPIRIT. Bow down and worship, slave! What, know'st thou not Thine and our Sovereign?—Tremble, and obey!

ALL THE SPIRITS. Prostrate thyself, and thy condemned clay, Child of the Earth! or dread the worst.

MANFRED. I know it;

And yet ye see I kneel not.

FOURTH SPIRIT. 'T will be taught thee.

MANFRED. 'Tis taught already,—many a night on the earth, On the bare ground, have I bow'd down my face, And strew'd my head with ashes; I have known

The fulness of humiliation, for 410 I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt To my own desolation.

FIFTH SPIRIT. Dost thou dare Refuse to Arimanes on his throne What the whole earth accords, beholding not The terror of his Glory—Crouch! I say.

MANFRED. Bid him bow down to that which is above him,

The overruling Infinite—the Maker

Who made him not for worship—let him kneel,

And we will kneel together.

THE SPIRITS. Crush the worm!

Tear him in pieces!—

FIRST DESTINY. Hence! Avaunt!—he's mine. 420

Prince of the Powers invisible! This man

Is of no common order, as his port

And presence here denote. His sufferings

Have been of an immortal nature, like

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Our own; his knowledge and his powers and will, As far as is compatible with clay, Which clogs the ethereal essence, have been such As clay hath seldom borne; his aspirations Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,

And they have only taught him what we know— 430

That knowledge is not happiness, and science

But an exchange of ignorance for that

Which is another kind of ignorance.

This is not all; the passions, attributes

Of earth and heaven, from which no power, nor being,

Nor breath from the worm upwards is exempt,

Have pierced his heart; and in their consequence

Made him a thing, which I, who pity not,

Yet pardon those who pity. He is mine,

And thine, it may be—be it so, or not, 440

No other Spirit in this region hath

A soul like his—or power upon his soul.

NEMESIS. What doth he here then?

FIRST DESTINY. Let him answer that.

MANFRED. Ye know what I have known; and without power I could not be amongst ye: but there are Powers deeper still beyond—I come in quest Of such, to answer unto what I seek.

NEMESIS. What wouldst thou?

MANFRED. Thou canst not reply to me. Call up the dead—my question is for them.

NEMESIS. Great Arimanes, doth thy will avouch 450 The wishes of this mortal?

ARIMANES. Yea. NEMESIS. Whom wouldst thou

Uncharnel?

MANFRED. One without a tomb—call up Astarte.

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NEMESIS

Shadow! or Spirit!

Whatever thou art, Which still doth inherit

The whole or a part Of the form of thy birth,

Of the mould of thy clay Which returned to the earth,— 460

Re-appear to the day! Bear what thou borest,

The heart and the form, And the aspect thou worest

Redeem from the worm. Appear!—Appear!—Appear! Who sent thee there requires thee here!

[The Phantom of ASTARTE rises and stands in the midst.]

MANFRED. Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek; But now I see it is no living hue,

But a strange hectic—like the unnatural red 470

Which Autumn plants upon the perish'd leaf.

It is the same! Oh, God! that I should dread

To look upon the same—Astarte!—No,

I cannot speak to her—but bid her speak—

Forgive me or condemn me.

NEMESIS

By the power which hath broken

The grave which enthrall'd thee, Speak to him who hath spoken,

Or those who have call'd thee!

MANFRED. She is silent,

And in that silence I am more than answer'd. 480

NEMESIS. My power extends no further.

Prince of air! It rests with thee alone—command her voice.

ARIMANES. Spirit—obey this sceptre!

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NEMESIS. Silent still!

She is not of our order, but belongs

To the other powers. Mortal! thy quest is vain,

And we are baffled also.

MANFRED. Hear me, hear me— Astarte! my beloved! speak to me; I have so much endured—so much endure— Look on me! the grave hath not changed thee more

Than I am changed for thee. Thou lovedst me 490

Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made

To torture thus each other, though it were

The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.

Say that thou loath'st me not—that I do bear

This punishment for both—that thou wilt be

One of the blessed—and that I shall die;

For hitherto all hateful things conspire

To bind me in existence—in a life

Which makes me shrink from immortality—

A future like the past. I cannot rest. 500

I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:

I feel but what thou art—and what I am;

And I would hear yet once before I perish

The voice which was my music—Speak to me!

For I have call'd on thee in the still night,

Startled the slumbering birds from the hush'd boughs,

And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves

Acquainted with thy vainly echo'd name,

Which answer'd me—many things answer'd me—

Spirits and men—but thou wert silent all. 510

Yet speak to me! I have outwatch'd the stars,

And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee.

Speak to me! I have wander'd o'er the earth,

And never found thy likeness—Speak to me!

Look on the fiends around—they feel for me:

I fear them not, and feel for thee alone.

Speak to me! though it be in wrath;—but say—

I reck not what—but let me hear thee once—

This once—once more!

PHANTOM OF ASTARTE. Manfred!

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MANFRED. Say on, say on—

I live but in the sound—it is thy voice! 520

PHANTOM. Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills. Farewell!

MANFRED. Yet one word more—am I forgiven?

PHANTOM. Farewell!

MANFRED. Say, shall we meet again?

PHANTOM. Farewell!

MANFRED. One word for mercy! Say, thou lovest me. PHANTOM. Manfred! [The Spirit of ASTARTE departs.]

NEMESIS. She's gone, and will not be recall'd;

Her words will be fulfill'd. Return to the earth.

A SPIRIT. He is convulsed—This is to be a mortal And seek the things beyond mortality.

ANOTHER SPIRIT. Yet, see, he mastereth himself, and makes

His torture tributary to his will. 530 Had he been one of us, he would have made An awful spirit.

NEMESIS. Hast thou further question Of our great sovereign, or his worshippers?

MANFRED. None.

NEMESIS. Then for a time farewell.

MANFRED. We meet then! Where? On the earth?—

Even as thou wilt: and for the grace accorded

I now depart a debtor. Fare ye well! [Exit MANFRED.]

(Scene closes.)

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ACT III

SCENE I

A Hall in the Castle of Manfred. MANFRED and HERMAN.

MANFRED. What is the hour?

HERMAN. It wants but one till sunset, And promises a lovely twilight.

MANFRED. Say,

Are all things so disposed of in the tower As I directed?

HERMAN. All, my lord, are ready; Here is the key and casket.

MANFRED. It is well:

Thou mayst retire. [Exit HERMAN.]

MANFRED (alone). There is a calm upon me— Inexplicable stillness! which till now Did not belong to what I knew of life. If that I did not know philosophy

To be of all our vanities the motliest, 10

The merest word that ever fool'd the ear

From out the schoolman's jargon, I should deem

The golden secret, the sought 'Kalon,' found,

And seated in my soul. It will not last,

But it is well to have known it, though but once:

It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense,

And I within my tablets would note down

That there is such a feeling. Who is there?

Re-enter HERMAN.

HERMAN. My lord, the abbot of St. Maurice craves To greet your presence.

Enter the ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE.

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ABBOT. Peace be with Count Manfred! 20

MANFRED. Thanks, holy father! welcome to these walls; Thy presence honours them, and blesseth those Who dwell within them.

ABBOT. Would it were so, Count!—

But I would fain confer with thee alone.

MANFRED. Herman, retire.—What would my reverend guest?

ABBOT. Thus, without prelude:—Age and zeal, my office, And good intent, must plead my privilege; Our near, though not acquainted neighbourhood, May also be my herald. Rumours strange,

And of unholy nature, are abroad, 30 And busy with thy name; a noble name For centuries: may he who bears it now Transmit it unimpair'd!

MANFRED. Proceed,—I listen.

ABBOT 'T is said thou holdest converse with the things

Which are forbidden to the search of man;

That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,

The many evil and unheavenly spirits

Which walk the valley of the shade of death,

Thou communest. I know that with mankind,

Thy fellows in creation, thou dost rarely 40 Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy solitude Is as an anchorite's, were it but holy.

MANFRED. And what are they who do avouch these things?

ABBOT. My pious brethren, the scared peasantry, Even thy own vassals, who do look on thee With most unquiet eyes. Thy life's in peril.

MANFRED. Take it.

ABBOT. I come to save, and not destroy.

I would not pry into thy secret soul;

But if these things be sooth, there still is time

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For penitence and pity: reconcile thee 50 With the true church, and through the church to heaven.

MANFRED. I hear thee. This is my reply, whate'er I may have been, or am, doth rest between Heaven and myself; I shall not choose a mortal To be my mediator. Have I sinn'd Against your ordinances? prove and punish!

ABBOT. My son! I did not speak of punishment, But penitence and pardon; with thyself The choice of such remains—and for the last,

Our institutions and our strong belief 60

Have given me power to smooth the path from sin

To higher hope and better thoughts, the first

I leave to heaven—'Vengeance is mine alone!'

So saith the Lord, and with all humbleness

His servant echoes back the awful word.

MANFRED. Old man! there is no power in holy men, Nor charm in prayer, nor purifying form Of penitence, nor outward look, nor fast, Nor agony, nor, greater than all these,

The innate tortures of that deep despair 70

Which is remorse without the fear of hell

But all in all sufficient to itself

Would make a hell of heaven,—can exorcise

From out the unbounded spirit, the quick sense

Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and revenge

Upon itself; there is no future pang

Can deal that justice on the self-condemn'd

He deals on his own soul.

ABBOT. All this is well;

For this will pass away, and be succeeded

By an auspicious hope, which shall look up 80

With calm assurance to that blessed place

Which all who seek may win, whatever be

Their earthly errors, so they be atoned:

And the commencement of atonement is

The sense of its necessity.—Say on—

And all our church can teach thee shall be taught;

And all we can absolve thee, shall be pardon'd.

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MANFRED. When Rome's sixth Emperor was near his last, The victim of a self-inflicted wound,

To shun the torments of a public death 90

From senates once his slaves, a certain soldier,

With show of loyal pity, would have staunch'd

The gushing throat with his officious robe;

The dying Roman thrust him back and said—

Some empire still in his expiring glance—

'It is too late—is this fidelity?'

ABBOT. And what of this?

MANFRED. I answer with the Roman— 'It is too late!'

ABBOT. It never can be so,

To reconcile thyself with thy own soul,

And thy own soul with heaven. Hast thou no hope? 100 'Tis strange—even those who do despair above, Yet shape themselves some phantasy on earth, To which frail twig they cling, like drowning men.

MANFRED. Ay—father! I have had those earthly visions

And noble aspirations in my youth,

To make my own the mind of other men,

The enlightener of nations; and to rise

I knew not whither—it might be to fall;

But fall, even as the mountain—cataract,

Which having leapt from its more dazzling height, 110

Even in the foaming strength of its abyss

(Which casts up misty columns that become

Clouds raining from the re-ascended skies)

Lies low but mighty still.—But this is past,

My thoughts mistook themselves.

ABBOT. And wherefore so?

MANFRED. I could not tame my nature down; for he Must serve who fain would sway—and soothe, and sue, And watch all time, and pry into all place, And be a living lie, who would become

A mighty thing amongst the mean, and such 120 The mass are; I disdain'd to mingle with

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A herd, though to be leader—and of wolves. The lion is alone, and so am I.

ABBOT. And why not live and act with other men?

MANFRED. Because my nature was averse from life;

And yet not cruel; for I would not make,

But find a desolation. Like the wind,

The red—hot breath of the most lone Simoom,

Which dwells but in the desert, and sweeps o'er

The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast 130

And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,

And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,

But being met is deadly,—such hath been

The course of my existence; but there came

Things in my path which are no more.

ABBOT. Alas!

I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid From me and from my calling; yet so young, I still would—

MANFRED. Look on me! there is an order Of mortals on the earth, who do become

Old in their youth, and die ere middle age, 140

Without the violence of warlike death;

Some perishing of pleasure, some of study,

Some worn with toil, some of mere weariness,

Some of disease, and some insanity,

And some of wither'd or of broken hearts;

For this last is a malady which slays

More than are number'd in the lists of Fate,

Taking all shapes, and bearing many names.

Look upon me! for even of all these things

Have I partaken; and of all these things, 150

One were enough; then wonder not that I

Am what I am, but that I ever was,

Or, having been, that I am still on earth.

ABBOT. Yet, hear me still—

MANFRED. Old man! I do respect

Thine order, and revere thine years; I deem

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Thy purpose pious, but it is in vain.

Think me not churlish; I would spare thyself,

Far more than me, in shunning at this time

All further colloquy; and so—farewell. [Exit MANFRED.]

ABBOT. This should have been a noble creature: he 160

Hath all the energy which would have made

A goodly frame of glorious elements,

Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,

It is an awful chaos—light and darkness,

And mind and dust—and passions and pure thoughts,

Mix'd, and contending without end or order,

All dormant or destructive. He will perish,

And yet he must not; I will try once more,

For such are worth redemption; and my duty

Is to dare all things for a righteous end. 170 I'll follow him—but cautiously, though surely. [Exit ABBOT.]

SCENE II

Another Chamber.

MANFRED and HERMAN.

HERMAN. My Lord, you bade me wait on you at sunset: He sinks beyond the mountain.

MANFRED. Doth he so?

I will look on him.

[MANFRED advances to the Window of the Hall.]

Glorious Orb! the idol Of early nature, and the vigorous race Of undiseased mankind the giant sons Of the embrace of angels, with a sex More beautiful than they, which did draw down The erring spirits who can ne'er return;

Most glorious orb! that wert a worship, ere 180

The mystery of thy making was reveal'd!

Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,

Which gladden'd, on their mountain tops, the hearts

Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they pour'd

Themselves in orisons! Thou material God!

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And representative of the Unknown, Who chose thee for his shadow! Thou chief star! Centre of many stars! which mak'st our earth Endurable, and temperest the hues

And hearts of all who walk within thy rays! 190

Sire of the seasons! Monarch of the climes

And those who dwell in them! for near or far

Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee,

Even as our outward aspects;—thou dost rise,

And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well!

I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first glance

Of love and wonder was for thee, then take

My latest look: thou wilt not beam on one

To whom the gifts of life and warmth have been

Of a more fatal nature. He is gone; 200 I follow. [Exit MANFRED.]

SCENEIII

The Mountains.—The Castle of MANFRED at some distance.—A Terrace before a Tower.—Time, Twilight.

HERMAN, MANUEL, and other Dependants of MANFRED.

HERMAN. 'T is strange enough; night after night, for years,

He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,

Without a witness. I have been within it,—

So have we all been oft-times; but from it

Or its contents, it were impossible

To draw conclusions absolute of aught

His studies tend to. To be sure, there is

One chamber where none enter: I would give

The fee of what I have to come these three years 210 To pore upon its mysteries.

MANUEL. 'T were dangerous;

Content thyself with what thou know'st already.

HERMAN. Ah! Manuel! thou art elderly and wise,

And could'st say much; thou hast dwelt within the castle—

How many years is't?

MANUEL. Ere Count Manfred's birth,

I served his father, whom he nought resembles.

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HERMAN. There be more sons in like predicament. But wherein do they differ?

MANUEL. I speak not

Of features or of form, but mind and habits;

Count Sigismund was proud, but gay and free— 220

A warrior and a reveller; he dwelt not

With books and solitude, nor made the night

A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,

Merrier than day; he did not walk the rocks

And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside

From men and their delights.

HERMAN. Beshrew the hour,

But those were jocund times! I would that such Would visit the old walls again; they look As if they had forgotten them.

MANUEL. These walls

Must change their chieftain first. Oh! I have seen 230 Some strange things in them, Herman.

HERMAN. Come, be friendly;

Relate me some to while away our watch:

I've heard thee darkly speak of an event

Which happen'd hereabouts, by this same tower.

MANUEL. That was a night indeed! I do remember 'T was twilight, as it may be now, and such Another evening; yon red cloud, which rests On Eigher's pinnacle, so rested then,— So like that it might be the same; the wind

Was faint and gusty, and the mountain snows 240

Began to glitter with the climbing moon.

Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower,—

How occupied, we knew not, but with him

The sole companion of his wanderings

And watchings—her, whom of all earthly things

That lived, the only thing he seem'd to love,—

As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,

The Lady Astarte, his—

Hush! who comes here?

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Enter the ABBOT.

ABBOT. Where is your master? HERMAN. Yonder in the tower. ABBOT. I must speak with him.

MANUEL. 'T is impossible; 250

He is most private, and must not be thus Intruded on.

ABBOT. Upon myself I take

The forfeit of my fault, if fault there be—

But I must see him.

HERMAN. Thou hast seen him once This eve already.

ABBOT. Herman! I command thee, Knock, and apprize the Count of my approach.

HERMAN. We dare not.

ABBOT. Then it seems I must be herald Of my own purpose.

MANUEL. Reverend father, stop— I pray you pause.

ABBOT. Why so?

MANUEL. But step this way,

And I will tell you further. [Exeunt.] 260

SCENE IV

Interior of the Tower.

MANFRED alone.

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beautiful! I linger yet with Nature, for the night

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Hath been to me a more familiar face Than that of man; and in her starry shade Of dim, and solitary loveliness, I learn'd the language of another world. I do remember me, that in my youth, When I was wandering,—upon such a night

I stood within the Coloseum's wall, 270

Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome.

The trees which grew along the broken arches

Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars

Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar

The watchdog bay'd beyond the Tiber; and

More near from out the Caesars' palace came

The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,

Of distant sentinels the fitful song

Begun and died upon the gentle wind.

Some cypresses beyond the time—worn breach 280

Appear'd to skirt the horizon, yet they stood

Within a bowshot. Where the Caesars dwelt,

And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst

A grove which springs through levell'd battlements,

And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,

Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth;—

But the gladiators' bloody Circus stands,

A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!

While Caesar's chambers, and the Augustan halls

Grovel on earth in indistinct decay.— 290

And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon

All this, and cast a wide and tender light,

Which soften'd down the hoar austerity

Of rugged desolation, and fill'd up,

As 'twere anew, the gaps of centuries;

Leaving that beautiful which still was so,

And making that which was not, till the place

Became religion, and the heart ran o'er

With silent worship of the great of old,—

The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule 300 Our spirits from their urns.—

'T was such a night! 'T is strange that I recall it at this time; But I have found our thoughts take wildest flight Even at the moment when they should array Themselves in pensive order.

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Enter the ABBOT.

ABBOT. My good Lord!

I crave a second grace for this approach; But yet let not my humble zeal offend By its abruptness—all it hath of ill Recoils on me; its good in the effect

May light upon your head—could I say heart— 310 Could I touch that, with words or prayers, I should Recall a noble spirit which hath wander'd But is not yet all lost.

MANFRED. Thou know'st me not;

My days are number'd, and my deeds recorded: Retire, or 't will be dangerous—Away!

ABBOT. Thou dost not mean to menace me?

MANFRED. Not I;

I simply tell thee peril is at hand, And would preserve thee.

ABBOT. What dost thou mean?

MANFRED. Look there!

What dost thou see?

ABBOT. Nothing. MANFRED. Look there, I say,

And steadfastly;—now tell me what thou seest? 320

ABBOT. That which should shake me—but I fear it not; I see a dusk and awful figure rise, Like an infernal god from out the earth; His face wrapt in a mantle, and his form Robed as with angry clouds: he stands between Thyself and me—but I do fear him not.

MANFRED. Thou hast no cause; he shall not harm thee, but His sight may shock thine old limbs into palsy. I say to thee—Retire!

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ABBOT. And, I reply,

Never—till I have battled with this fiend:— 330 What doth he here?

MANFRED. Why—ay—what doth he here?

I did not send for him,—he is unbidden.

ABBOT. Alas! lost mortal! what with guests like these Hast thou to do? I tremble for thy sake: Why doth he gaze on thee, and thou on him? Ah! he unveils his aspect; on his brow The thunder-scars are graven; from his eye Glares forth the immortality of hell— Avaunt!—

MANFRED. Pronounce—what is thy mission?

SPIRIT. Come!

ABBOT. What art thou, unknown being? answer!—speak! 340

SPIRIT. The genius of this mortal.—Come! 't is time.

MANFRED. I am prepared for all things, but deny The power which summons me. Who sent thee here?

SPIRIT. Thou'lt know anon—Come! Come!

MANFRED. I have commanded

Things of an essence greater far than thine, And striven with thy masters. Get thee hence!

SPIRIT. Mortal! thine hour is come—Away! I say.

MANFRED. I knew, and know my hour is come, but not To render up my soul to such as thee:

Away! I'll die as I have lived—alone. 350

SPIRIT. Then I must summon up my brethren.—Rise! [Other spirits rise up.]

ABBOT. Avaunt! ye evil ones!—Avaunt! I say,— Ye have no power where piety hath power, And I do charge ye in the name—

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SPIRIT. Old man!

We know ourselves, our mission, and thine order; Waste not thy holy words on idle uses, It were in vain; this man is forfeited. Once more I summon him—Away! away!

MANFRED. I do defy ye,—though I feel my soul Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye; 360 Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath To breathe my scorn upon ye—earthly strength To wrestle, though with spirits; what ye take Shall be ta'en limb by limb.

SPIRIT. Reluctant mortal!

Is this the Magian who would so pervade The world invisible, and make himself Almost our equal?—Can it be that thou Art thus in love with life? the very life Which made thee wretched!

MANFRED. Thou false fiend, thou liest! My life is in its last hour,—that I know, 370 Nor would redeem a moment of that hour. I do not combat against death, but thee And thy surrounding angels; my past power Was purchased by no compact with thy crew, But by superior science—penance—daring, And length of watching—strength of mind—and skill In knowledge of our fathers when the earth Saw men and spirits walking side by side And gave ye no supremacy: I stand

Upon my strength—I do defy—deny— 380 Spurn back, and scorn ye!—

SPIRIT. But thy many crimes

Have made thee—

MANFRED. What are they to such as thee? Must crimes be punish'd but by other crimes, And greater criminals?—Back to thy hell! Thou hast no power upon me, that I feel; Thou never shalt possess me, that I know: What I have done is done; I bear within

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A torture which could nothing gain from thine. The mind which is immortal makes itself

Requital for its good or evil thoughts, 390

Is its own origin of ill and end,

And its own place and time; its innate sense,

When stripp'd of this mortality, derives

No colour from the fleeting things without,

But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,

Born from the knowledge of its own desert.

Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;

I have not been thy dupe nor am thy prey,

But was my own destroyer, and will be

My own hereafter.—Back, ye baffled fiends! 400 The hand of death is on me—but not yours!

[The Demons disappear.]

ABBOT. Alas! how pale thou art—thy lips are white— And thy breast heaves—and in thy gasping throat The accents rattle. Give thy prayers to Heaven— Pray—albeit but in thought,—but die not thus.

MANFRED. 'T is over—my dull eyes can fix thee not; But all things swim around me, and the earth Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well— Give me thy hand.

ABBOT. Cold—cold—even to the heart—

But yet one prayer—Alas! how fares it with thee? 410

MANFRED. Old man! 't is not so difficult to die. [MANFRED expires.]

ABBOT. He's gone, his soul hath ta'en its earthless flight; Whither? I dread to think; but he is gone.

### 1.10.2 Reading and Review Questions

1. Does Manfred possess any standard or archetypal heroic qualities, and if he does, then why? On what grounds does he base his superiority to others?

2. Why does Manfred reject the virtues of the Chamois Hunter? Why can't he obtain what he desires from the Chamois Hunter?

3. Why does Manfred want oblivion, self-oblivion? Can he achieve it, do you think? Consider the reasons for his loving Astarte. Consider whether

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or not he believes in an after-life (remembering that during the course of the drama he encounters the spirit of a dead woman).

4. Why do you think that Byron thought Manfred's last line to be the most important line of the entire play? How might it contribute to readers viewing Manfred as heroic?

## 1.11 PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

(1792-1822)

Percy Bysshe Shelley was probably the most intellectual of all the Romantic poets; he was certainly one of the most well-educated. He was a non-conformist thinker, a philosopher, and rebel. All of these characteristics join in his theory of poetry and poetic output, with their commitment to radical politics and their visionary idealism influenced by Platonism. Like Byron, Shelley was born into an aristocratic family, was in line to inherit a large estate, and was secured of a seat in the House of Lords in Parliament. Instead, Shelley became the river that made its own banks.

Image 1.20 | Portrait of Percy Bysshe Shelley

Artist | Alfred Clint

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This independence of both thought and action appeared when Shelley wrote a pamphlet On the Necessity of Atheism while at Oxford. Rather than leading to intellectual debate as he expected, this pamphlet led to his being expelled. At the age of nineteen, Shelley eloped with Harriet Westbrook, the daughter of a stable hand. He pursued his intellectual and political interests by befriending the socialist philosopher William Godwin (1756-1836) and publishing Queen Mab, a utopian poem. At the grave of Godwin's deceased wife Mary Wollstonecraft, Shelley also wooed their daughter Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. The two eloped to Europe, Shelley's wife Harriet having refused to join them. In 1816, Harriet Shelley committed suicide by drowning herself in the shallow end of the Serpentine River; she was apparently pregnant with another man's child. Mary Godwin and Percy Bysshe had lost two children of their own before they married upon Harriet's death. Percy Bysshe lost custody of his and Harriet's two children due to his reputation.

Percy Bysshe and Mary Shelley traveled throughout Italy where Percy Bysshe wrote the bulk of his most famous works. In 1822, he drowned while sailing his schooner Don Juan (named after a poem by Byron) from Livorno to Lerici. He may

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have desired this death, disappointed and disaffected with the "triumph of life" over vision. He certainly seems to have predicted this mode of death in Adonais, an elegy he wrote for John Keats: "My spirit's bark is driven,/ Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng/ Whose sails were never to the tempest given" (489-91).

It is important to consider the breadth and height of Shelley's demands on poetry. He had great expectations from poetry and from poets, whom he described as power figures; for poets channel the power of the source itself (rather than the dominion). He therefore presents poets as the channels of power for change, for freedom, for humanity. His The Defense of Poetry takes the challenge Plato made when ejecting poets from his Republic. In it, Shelley describes poets as the best men with the best thoughts who see the seeds of the future cast upon the present. As such, they are the "unacknowledged legislators of the world."

### 1.11.1 "Mont Blanc"

Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni

The everlasting universe of things

Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,

Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—

Now lending splendour, where from secret springs

The source of human thought its tribute brings

Of waters—with a sound but half its own,

Such as a feeble brook will oft assume,

In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,

Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,

Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river

Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine— Thou many-colour'd, many-voiced vale, Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene, Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne, Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame Of lightning through the tempest;—thou dost lie, Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging, Children of elder time, in whose devotion The chainless winds still come and ever came To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging To hear—an old and solemn harmony; Thine earthly rainbows stretch'd across the sweep

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Of the aethereal waterfall, whose veil

Robes some unsculptur'd image; the strange sleep

Which when the voices of the desert fail

Wraps all in its own deep eternity;

Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion,

A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame;

Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,

Thou art the path of that unresting sound—

Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee

I seem as in a trance sublime and strange

To muse on my own separate fantasy,

My own, my human mind, which passively

Now renders and receives fast influencings,

Holding an unremitting interchange

With the clear universe of things around;

One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings

Now float above thy darkness, and now rest

Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,

In the still cave of the witch Poesy,

Seeking among the shadows that pass by

Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,

Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast

From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!

III

Some say that gleams of a remoter world

Visit the soul in sleep, that death is slumber,

And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber

Of those who wake and live.—I look on high;

Has some unknown omnipotence unfurl'd

The veil of life and death? or do I lie

In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep

Spread far around and inaccessibly

Its circles? For the very spirit fails,

Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep

That vanishes among the viewless gales!

Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,

Mont Blanc appears—still, snowy, and serene;

Its subject mountains their unearthly forms

Pile around it, ice and rock; broad vales between

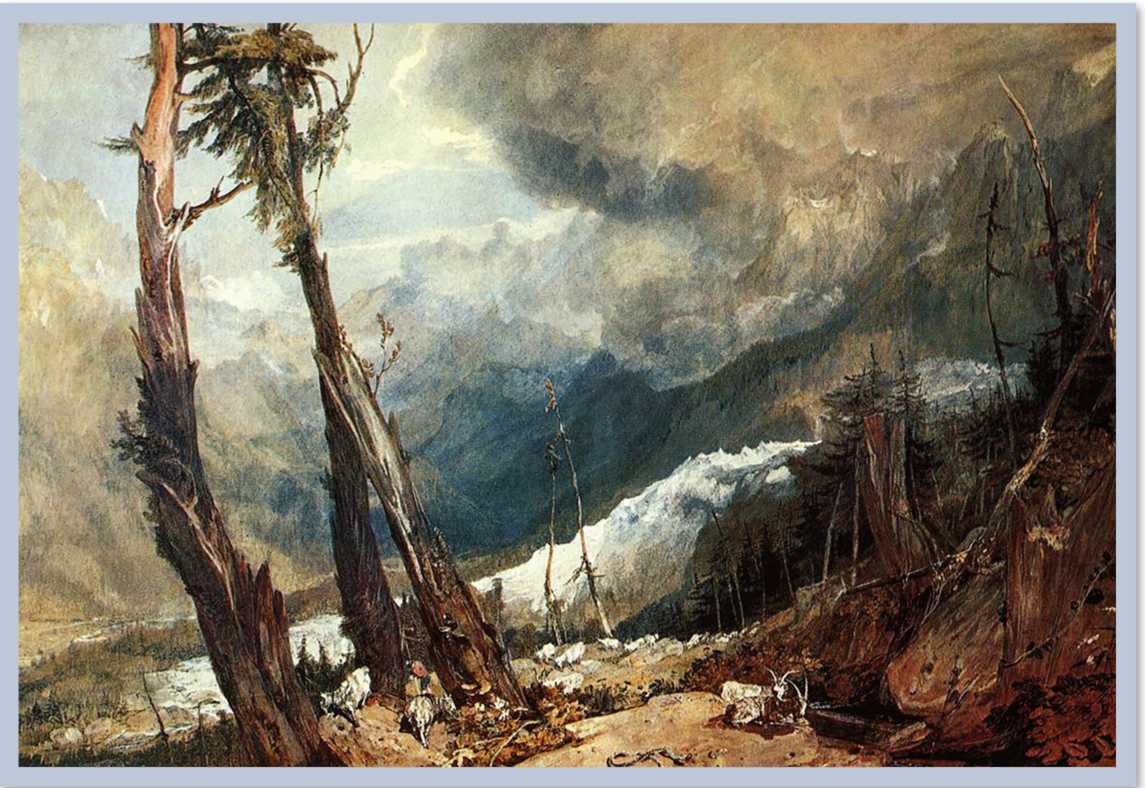
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,

Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread

And wind among the accumulated steeps;

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Image 1.21 | Glacier And Source Of The Arveron, Going Up To The Mer De Glace Artist | J.M.W. Turner Source | WikiArt License | Public Domain



A desert peopled by the storms alone,

Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,

And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously

Its shapes are heap'd around! rude, bare, and high,

Ghastly, and scarr'd, and riven.—Is this the scene

Where the old Earthquake-daemon taught her young

Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea

Of fire envelop once this silent snow?

None can reply—all seems eternal now.

The wilderness has a mysterious tongue

Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,

So solemn, so serene, that man may be,

But for such faith, with Nature reconcil'd;

Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal

Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood

By all, but which the wise, and great, and good

Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams, Ocean, and all the living things that dwell

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Within the daedal earth; lightning, and rain,

Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,

The torpor of the year when feeble dreams

Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep

Holds every future leaf and flower; the bound

With which from that detested trance they leap;

The works and ways of man, their death and birth,

And that of him and all that his may be;

All things that move and breathe with toil and sound

Are born and die; revolve, subside, and swell.

Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,

Remote, serene, and inaccessible:

And this, the naked countenance of earth,

On which I gaze, even these primeval mountains

Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep

Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,

Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice

Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power

Have pil'd: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,

A city of death, distinct with many a tower

And wall impregnable of beaming ice.

Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin

Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky

Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing

Its destin'd path, or in the mangled soil

Branchless and shatter'd stand; the rocks, drawn down

From yon remotest waste, have overthrown

The limits of the dead and living world,

Never to be reclaim'd. The dwelling-place

Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil;

Their food and their retreat for ever gone,

So much of life and joy is lost. The race

Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling

Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,

And their place is not known. Below, vast caves

Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,

Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling

Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,

The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever

Rolls its loud waters to the ocean-waves,

Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

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V

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high:—the power is there,

The still and solemn power of many sights,

And many sounds, and much of life and death.

In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,

In the lone glare of day, the snows descend

Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,

Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,

Or the star-beams dart through them. Winds contend

Silently there, and heap the snow with breath

Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home

The voiceless lightning in these solitudes

Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods

Over the snow. The secret Strength of things

Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome

Of Heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!

And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,

If to the human mind's imaginings

Silence and solitude were vacancy?

### 1.11.2 "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty"

The awful shadow of some unseen Power Floats though unseen among us; visiting This various world with as inconstant wing As summer winds that creep from flower to flower; Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,

It visits with inconstant glance

Each human heart and countenance; Like hues and harmonies of evening,

Like clouds in starlight widely spread,

Like memory of music fled,

Like aught that for its grace may be Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate

With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon Of human thought or form, where art thou gone? Why dost thou pass away and leave our state, This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate? Ask why the sunlight not for ever Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain-river, Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown, Why fear and dream and death and birth

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Cast on the daylight of this earth Such gloom, why man has such a scope For love and hate, despondency and hope?

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever To sage or poet these responses given: Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,

Remain the records of their vain endeavour:

Frail spells whose utter'd charm might not avail to sever, From all we hear and all we see, Doubt, chance and mutability.

Thy light alone like mist o'er mountains driven, Or music by the night-wind sent Through strings of some still instrument, Or moonlight on a midnight stream,

Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart And come, for some uncertain moments lent. Man were immortal and omnipotent,

Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,

Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart. Thou messenger of sympathies, That wax and wane in lovers' eyes;

Thou, that to human thought art nourishment, Like darkness to a dying flame! Depart not as thy shadow came, Depart not—lest the grave should be,

Like life and fear, a dark reality.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped

Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin, And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing Hopes of high talk with the departed dead. I call'd on poisonous names with which our youth is fed; I was not heard; I saw them not; When musing deeply on the lot Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing All vital things that wake to bring News of birds and blossoming, Sudden, thy shadow fell on me; I shriek'd, and clasp'd my hands in ecstasy!

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I vow'd that I would dedicate my powers

To thee and thine: have I not kept the vow? With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now I call the phantoms of a thousand hours Each from his voiceless grave: they have in vision'd bowers

Of studious zeal or love's delight

Outwatch'd with me the envious night: They know that never joy illum'd my brow

Unlink'd with hope that thou wouldst free

This world from its dark slavery,

That thou, O awful LOVELINESS, Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene When noon is past; there is a harmony In autumn, and a lustre in its sky, Which through the summer is not heard or seen, As if it could not be, as if it had not been!

Thus let thy power, which like the truth

Of nature on my passive youth Descended, to my onward life supply

Its calm, to one who worships thee,

And every form containing thee,

Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind To fear himself, and love all human kind.

### 1.11.3 "England in 1819"

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying King; Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring; Rulers who neither see nor feel nor know, But leechlike to their fainting country cling Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow. A people starved and stabbed in th' untilled field; An army, whom liberticide and prey Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield; Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay; Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed; A senate, Time's worst statute, unrepealed— Are graves from which a glorious Phantom may Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

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### 1.11.4 "Ode to the West Wind"

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being, Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low, Each like a corpse within its grave, until Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air) With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere; Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion, Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed, Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread On the blue surface of thine aery surge, Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge

Of the horizon to the zenith's height,

The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre, Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh hear!

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III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay, And saw in sleep old palaces and towers Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear, And tremble and despoil themselves: oh hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;

If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;

A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven, As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need. Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud! I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is: What if my leaves are falling like its own! The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

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Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone, Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce, My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth! And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind! Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

### 1.11.5 "To a Sky-Lark"

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!

Bird thou never wert, That from Heaven, or near it, Pourest thy full heart In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher

From the earth thou springest Like a cloud of fire;

The blue deep thou wingest, And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning

Of the sunken sun, O'er which clouds are bright'ning,

Thou dost float and run; Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even

Melts around thy flight; Like a star of Heaven,

In the broad day-light Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows

Of that silver sphere, Whose intense lamp narrows

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In the white dawn clear Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air

With thy voice is loud, As, when night is bare,

From one lonely cloud The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflow'd.

What thou art we know not;

What is most like thee? From rainbow clouds there flow not

Drops so bright to see As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a Poet hidden

In the light of thought, Singing hymns unbidden,

Till the world is wrought To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden

In a palace-tower, Soothing her love-laden

Soul in secret hour With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden

In a dell of dew, Scattering unbeholden

Its aerial hue

Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embower'd

In its own green leaves, By warm winds deflower'd,

Till the scent it gives Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-winged thieves:

Sound of vernal showers

On the twinkling grass, Rain-awaken'd flowers,

All that ever was Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

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Teach us, Sprite or Bird,

What sweet thoughts are thine: I have never heard

Praise of love or wine That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,

Or triumphal chant, Match'd with thine would be all

But an empty vaunt, A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains

Of thy happy strain? What fields, or waves, or mountains?

What shapes of sky or plain? What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance

Languor cannot be: Shadow of annoyance

Never came near thee: Thou lovest: but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,

Thou of death must deem Things more true and deep

Than we mortals dream, Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,

And pine for what is not: Our sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught; Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn

Hate, and pride, and fear; If we were things born

Not to shed a tear, I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

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Better than all measures

Of delightful sound, Better than all treasures

That in books are found, Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness

That thy brain must know, Such harmonious madness

From my lips would flow The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

### 1.11.6 "In Defense of Poesy"

According to one mode of regarding those two classes of mental action, which are called reason and imagination, the former may be considered as mind contemplating the relations borne by one thought to another, however produced, and the latter, as mind acting upon those thoughts so as to color them with its own light, and composing from them, as from elements, other thoughts, each containing within itself the principle of its own integrity. The one is the τό ποιεϊν, or the principle of synthesis, and has for its objects those forms which are common to universal nature and existence itself; the other is the τό λογιζειν, or principle of analysis, and its action regards the relations of things simply as relations; considering thoughts, not in their integral unity, but as the algebraical representations which conduct to certain general results. Reason is the enumeration of qualities already known; imagination is the perception of the value of those qualities, both separately and as a whole. Reason respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes of things. Reason is to imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance.

Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be "the expression of the imagination": and poetry is connate with the origin of man. Man is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven, like the alternations of an ever-changing wind over an AEolian lyre, which move it by their motion to ever-changing melody. But there is a principle within the human being, and perhaps within all sentient beings, which acts otherwise than in the lyre, and produces not melody alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds or motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them. It is as if the lyre could accommodate its chords to the motions of that which strikes them, in a determined proportion of sound; even as the musician can accommodate his voice to the sound of the lyre. A child at play by itself will express its delight by its voice and motions; and every inflexion of tone and every gesture will bear exact relation to a corresponding antitype in the pleasurable impressions which awakened it; it will be the reflected image of that impression; and as the lyre trembles and sounds after

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the wind has died away, so the child seeks, by prolonging in its voice and motions the duration of the effect, to prolong also a consciousness of the cause. In relation to the objects which delight a child these expressions are what poetry is to higher objects. The savage (for the savage is to ages what the child is to years) expresses the emotions produced in him by surrounding objects in a similar manner; and language and gesture, together with plastic or pictorial imitation, become the image of the combined effect of those objects, and of his apprehension of them. Man in society, with all his passions and his pleasures, next becomes the object of the passions and pleasures of man; an additional class of emotions produces an augmented treasure of expressions; and language, gesture, and the imitative arts, become at once the representation and the medium, the pencil and the picture, the chisel and the statute, the chord and the harmony. The social sympathies, or those laws from which, as from its elements, society results, begin to develop themselves from the moment that two human beings coexist; the future is contained within the present, as the plant within the seed; and equality, diversity, unity, contrast, mutual dependence, become the principles alone capable of affording the motives according to which the will of a social being is determined to action, inasmuch as he is social; and constitute pleasure in sensation, virtue in sentiment, beauty in art, truth in reasoning, and love in the intercourse of kind. Hence men, even in the infancy of society, observe a certain order in their words and actions, distinct from that of the objects and the impressions represented by them, all expression being subject to the laws of that from which it proceeds. But let us dismiss those more general considerations which might involve an inquiry into the principles of society itself, and restrict our view to the manner in which the imagination is expressed upon its forms.

In the youth of the world, men dance and sing and imitate natural objects, observing in these actions, as in all others, a certain rhythm or order. And, although all men observe a similar, they observe not the same order, in the motions of the dance, in the melody of the song, in the combinations of language, in the series of their imitations of natural objects. For there is a certain order or rhythm belonging to each of these classes of mimetic representation, from which the hearer and the spectator receive an intenser and purer pleasure than from any other: the sense of an approximation to this order has been called taste by modern writers. Every man in the infancy of art observes an order which approximates more or less closely to that from which this highest delight results: but the diversity is not sufficiently marked, as that its gradations should be sensible, except in those instances where the predominance of this faculty of approximation to the beautiful (for so we may be permitted to name the relation between this highest pleasure and its cause) is very great. Those in whom it exists in excess are poets, in the most universal sense of the word; and the pleasure resulting from the manner in which they express the influence of society or nature upon their own minds, communicates itself to others, and gathers a sort of reduplication from that community. Their language is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of

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things and perpetuates their apprehension, until the words which represent them, become, through time, signs for portions or classes of thoughts instead of pictures of integral thoughts; and then if no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations which have been thus disorganized, language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse. These similitudes or relations are finely said by Lord Bacon to be "the same footsteps of nature impressed upon the various subjects of the world's—and he considers the faculty which perceives them as the storehouse of axioms common to all knowledge. In the infancy of society every author is necessarily a poet, because language itself is poetry; and to be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful, in a word, the good which exists in the relation, subsisting, first between existence and perception, and secondly between perception and expression. Every original language near to its source is in itself the chaos of a cyclic poem: the copiousness of lexicography and the distinctions of grammar are the works of a later age, and are merely the catalogue and the form of the creations of poetry.

1 Original Note: "De Augment. Scient.," cap. 1, lib. iii.

But poets, or those who imagine and express this indestructible order, are not only the authors of language and of music, of the dance, and architecture, and statuary, and painting: they are the institutors of laws, and the founders of civil society, and the inventors of the arts of life, and the teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is called religion. Hence all original religions are allegorical, or susceptible of allegory, and, like Janus, have a double face of false and true. Poets, according to the circumstances of the age and nation in which they appeared, were called, in the earlier epochs of the world, legislators, or prophets: a poet essentially comprises and unites both these characters. For he not only beholds intensely the present as it is, and discovers those laws according to which present things ought to be ordered, but he beholds the future in the present, and his thoughts are the germs of the flower and the fruit of latest time. Not that I assert poets to be prophets in the gross sense of the word, or that they can foretell the form as surely as they foreknow the spirit of events: such is the pretence of superstition, which would make poetry an attribute of prophecy, rather than prophecy an attribute of poetry. A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as relates to his conceptions, time and place and number are not. The grammatical forms which express the moods of time, and the difference of persons, and the distinction of place, are convertible with respect to the highest poetry without injuring it as poetry; and the choruses of AEschylus, and the book of Job, and Dante's "Paradise" would afford, more than any other writings, examples of this fact, if the limits of this essay did not forbid citation. The creations of sculpture, painting, and music are illustrations still more decisive.

Language, color, form, and religious and civil habits of action, are all the instruments and materials of poetry; they may be called poetry by that figure of speech which considers the effect as a synonym of the cause. But poetry in a more

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restricted sense expresses those arrangements of language, and especially metrical language, which are created by that imperial faculty, whose throne is curtained within the invisible nature of man. And this springs from the nature itself of language, which is a more direct representation of the actions and passions of our internal being, and is susceptible of more various and delicate combinations, than color, form, or motion, and is more plastic and obedient to the control of that faculty of which it is the creation. For language is arbitrarily produced by the imagination, and has relation to thoughts alone; but all other materials, instruments, and conditions of art have relations among each other, which limit and interpose between conception and expression. The former is as a mirror which reflects, the latter as a cloud which enfeebles, the light of which both are mediums of communication. Hence the fame of sculptors, painters, and musicians, although the intrinsic powers of the great masters of these arts may yield in no degree to that of those who have employed language as the hieroglyphic of their thoughts, has never equalled that of poets in the restricted sense of the term; as two performers of equal skill will produce unequal effects from a guitar and a harp. The fame of legislators and founders of religions, so long as their institutions last, alone seems to exceed that of poets in the restricted sense; but it can scarcely be a question, whether, if we deduct the celebrity which their flattery of the gross opinions of the vulgar usually conciliates, together with that which belonged to them in their higher character of poets, any excess will remain.

We have thus circumscribed the word poetry within the limits of that art which is the most familiar and the most perfect expression of the faculty itself. It is necessary, however, to make the circle still narrower, and to determine the distinction between measured and unmeasured language; for the popular division into prose and verse is inadmissible in accurate philosophy.

Sounds as well as thoughts have relation both between each other and towards that which they represent, and a perception of the order of those relations has always been found connected with a perception of the order of the relations of thoughts. Hence the language of poets has ever affected a certain uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, without which it were not poetry, and which is scarcely less indispensable to the communication of its influence, than the words themselves, without reference to that peculiar order. Hence the vanity of translation; it were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its color and odor, as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower—and this is the burden of the curse of Babel.

An observation of the regular mode of the recurrence of harmony in the language of poetical minds, together with its relation to music, produced metre, or a certain system of traditional forms of harmony and language. Yet it is by no means essential that a poet should accommodate his language to this traditional form, so that the harmony, which is its spirit, be observed. The practice is indeed convenient and popular, and to be preferred, especially in such composition as

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includes much action: but every great poet must inevitably innovate upon the example of his predecessors in the exact structure of his peculiar versification. The distinction between poets and prose writers is a vulgar error. The distinction between philosophers and poets has been anticipated. Plato was essentially a poet—the truth and splendor of his imagery, and the melody of his language, are the most intense that it is possible to conceive. He rejected the measure of the epic, dramatic, and lyrical forms, because he sought to kindle a harmony in thoughts divested of shape and action, and he forebore to invent any regular plan of rhythm which would include, under determinate forms, the varied pauses of his style. Cicero sought to imitate the cadence of his periods, but with little success. Lord Bacon was a poet.2 His language has a sweet and majestic rhythm, which satisfies the sense, no less than the almost superhuman wisdom of his philosophy satisfies the intellect; it is a strain which distends, and then bursts the circumference of the reader's mind, and pours itself forth together with it into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy. All the authors of revolutions in opinion are not only necessarily poets as they are inventors, nor even as their words unveil the permanent analogy of things by images which participate in the life of truth; but as their periods are harmonious and rhythmical, and contain in themselves the elements of verse; being the echo of the eternal music. Nor are those supreme poets, who have employed traditional forms of rhythm on account of the form and action of their subjects, less capable of perceiving and teaching the truth of things, than those who have omitted that form. Shakespeare, Dante, and Milton (to confine ourselves to modern writers) are philosophers of the very loftiest power.

2 Original Note: See the "Filum Labyrinthi," and the "Essay on Death" particularly.—S.

A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth. There is this difference between a story and a poem, that a story is a catalogue of detached facts, which have no other connection than time, place, circumstance, cause and effect; the other is the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the Creator, which is itself the image of all other minds. The one is partial, and applies only to a definite period of time, and a certain combination of events which can never again recur; the other is universal, and contains within itself the germ of a relation to whatever motives or actions have place in the possible varieties of human nature. Time, which destroys the beauty and the use of the story of particular facts, stripped of the poetry which should invest them, augments that of poetry, and forever develops new and wonderful applications of the eternal truth which it contains. Hence epitomes have been called the moths of just history; they eat out the poetry of it. A story of particular facts is as a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful; poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted.

The parts of a composition may be poetical, without the composition as a whole being a poem. A single sentence may be considered as a whole, though it may be found in the midst of a series of unassimilated portions; a single word even may be a spark of inextinguishable thought. And thus all the great historians, Herodotus,

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Plutarch, Livy, were poets; and although the plan of these writers, especially that of Livy, restrained them from developing this faculty in its highest degree, they made copious and ample amends for their subjection, by filling all the interstices of their subjects with living images.

Having determined what is poetry, and who are poets, let us proceed to estimate its effects upon society.

Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure: all spirits on which it falls open themselves to receive the wisdom which is mingled with its delight. In the infancy of the world, neither poets themselves nor their auditors are fully aware of the excellence of poetry: for it acts in a divine and unapprehended manner, beyond and above consciousness; and it is reserved for future generations to contemplate and measure the mighty cause and effect in all the strength and splendor of their union. Even in modern times, no living poet ever arrived at the fulness of his fame; the jury which sits in judgment upon a poet, belonging as he does to all time, must be composed of his peers: it must be impanelled by Time from the selectest of the wise of many generations. A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why. The poems of Homer and his contemporaries were the delight of infant Greece; they were the elements of that social system which is the column upon which all succeeding civilization has reposed. Homer embodied the ideal perfection of his age in human character; nor can we doubt that those who read his verses were awakened to an ambition of becoming like to Achilles, Hector, and Ulysses: the truth and beauty of friendship, patriotism, and persevering devotion to an object, were unveiled to the depths in these immortal creations: the sentiments of the auditors must have been refined and enlarged by a sympathy with such great and lovely impersonations, until from admiring they imitated, and from imitation they identified themselves with the objects of their admiration. Nor let it be objected that these characters are remote from moral perfection, and that they can by no means be considered as edifying patterns for general imitation. Every epoch, under names more or less specious, has deified its peculiar errors; Revenge is the naked idol of the worship of a semi-barbarous age: and Self-deceit is the veiled image of unknown evil, before which luxury and satiety lie prostrate. But a poet considers the vices of his contemporaries as the temporary dress in which his creations must be arrayed, and which cover without concealing the eternal proportions of their beauty. An epic or dramatic personage is understood to wear them around his soul, as he may the ancient armor or the modern uniform around his body; whilst it is easy to conceive a dress more graceful than either. The beauty of the internal nature cannot be so far concealed by its accidental vesture, but that the spirit of its form shall communicate itself to the very disguise, and indicate the shape it hides from the manner in which it is worn. A majestic form and graceful motions will express themselves through the most barbarous and tasteless costume. Few poets of the highest class have chosen to exhibit the beauty of their conceptions in its naked

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truth and splendor; and it is doubtful whether the alloy of costume, habit, etc., be not necessary to temper this planetary music for mortal ears.

The whole objection, however, of the immorality of poetry rests upon a misconception of the manner in which poetry acts to produce the moral improvement of man. Ethical science arranges the elements which poetry has created, and propounds schemes and proposes examples of civil and domestic life: nor is it for want of admirable doctrines that men hate, and despise, and censure, and deceive, and subjugate one another. But poetry acts in another and diviner manner. It awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought. Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar; it reproduces all that it represents, and the impersonations clothed in its Elysian light stand thenceforward in the minds of those who have once contemplated them, as memorials of that gentle and exalted content which extends itself over all thoughts and actions with which it coexists. The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasure of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void forever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb. A poet therefore would do ill to embody his own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of his place and time, in his poetical creations, which participate in neither. By this assumption of the inferior office of interpreting the effect, in which perhaps after all he might acquit himself but imperfectly, he would resign a glory in a participation in the cause. There was little danger that Homer, or any of the eternal poets, should have so far misunderstood themselves as to have abdicated this throne of their widest dominion. Those in whom the poetical faculty, though great, is less intense, as Euripides, Lucan, Tasso, Spenser, have frequently affected a moral aim, and the effect of their poetry is diminished in exact proportion to the degree in which they compel us to advert to this purpose.

Homer and the cyclic poets were followed at a certain interval by the dramatic and lyrical poets of Athens, who flourished contemporaneously with all that is most perfect in the kindred expressions of the poetical faculty; architecture, painting, music, the dance, sculpture, philosophy, and, we may add, the forms of civil life. For although the scheme of Athenian society was deformed by many imperfections which the poetry existing in chivalry and Christianity has erased from the habits and institutions of modern Europe; yet never at any other period has so much

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energy, beauty, and virtue been developed; never was blind strength and stubborn form so disciplined and rendered subject to the will of man, or that will less repugnant to the dictates of the beautiful and the true, as during the century which preceded the death of Socrates. Of no other epoch in the history of our species have we records and fragments stamped so visibly with the image of the divinity in man. But it is poetry alone, in form, in action, or in language, which has rendered this epoch memorable above all others, and the store-house of examples to everlasting time. For written poetry existed at that epoch simultaneously with the other arts, and it is an idle inquiry to demand which gave and which received the light, which all, as from a common focus, have scattered over the darkest periods of succeeding time. We know no more of cause and effect than a constant conjunction of events: poetry is ever found to coexist with whatever other arts contribute to the happiness and perfection of man. I appeal to what has already been established to distinguish between the cause and the effect.

It was at the period here adverted to that the drama had its birth; and however a succeeding writer may have equalled or surpassed those few great specimens of the Athenian drama which have been preserved to us, it is indisputable that the art itself never was understood or practised according to the true philosophy of it, as at Athens. For the Athenians employed language, action, music, painting, the dance, and religious institutions, to produce a common effect in the representation of the highest idealism of passion and of power; each division in the art was made perfect in its kind of artists of the most consummate skill, and was disciplined into a beautiful proportion and unity one towards the other. On the modern stage a few only of the elements capable of expressing the image of the poet's conception are employed at once. We have tragedy without music and dancing; and music and dancing without the highest impersonations of which they are the fit accompaniment, and both without religion and solemnity. Religious institution has indeed been usually banished from the stage. Our system of divesting the actor's face of a mask, on which the many expressions appropriated to his dramatic character might be moulded into one permanent and unchanging expression, is favorable only to a partial and inharmonious effect; it is fit for nothing but a monologue, where all the attention may be directed to some great master of ideal mimicry. The modern practice of blending comedy with tragedy, though liable to great abuse in point of practice, is undoubtedly an extension of the dramatic circle; but the comedy should be as in "King Lear," universal, ideal, and sublime. It is perhaps the intervention of this principle which determines the balance in favor of "King Lear" against the "Oedipus Tyrannus" or the "Agamemnon," or, if you will, the trilogies with which they are connected; unless the intense power of the choral poetry, especially that of the latter, should be considered as restoring the equilibrium. "King Lear," if it can sustain this comparison, may be judged to be the most perfect specimen of the dramatic art existing in the world; in spite of the narrow conditions to which the poet was subjected by the ignorance of the philosophy of the drama which has prevailed in modern Europe. Calderon, in his religious autos, has attempted

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to fulfil some of the high conditions of dramatic representation neglected by Shakespeare; such as the establishing a relation between the drama and religion, and the accommodating them to music and dancing; but he omits the observation of conditions still more important, and more is lost than gained by the substitution of the rigidly defined and ever-repeated idealisms of a distorted superstition for the living impersonations of the truth of human passion.

But I digress. The connection of scenic exhibitions with the improvement or corruption of the manners of men has been universally recognized; in other words, the presence or absence of poetry in its most perfect and universal form has been found to be connected with good and evil in conduct or habit. The corruption which has been imputed to the drama as an effect, begins, when the poetry employed in its constitution ends: I appeal to the history of manners whether the periods of the growth of the one and the decline of the other have not corresponded with an exactness equal to any example of moral cause and effect.

The drama at Athens, or wheresoever else it may have approached to its perfection, ever coexisted with the moral and intellectual greatness of the age. The tragedies of the Athenian poets are as mirrors in which the spectator beholds himself, under a thin disguise of circumstance, stripped of all but that ideal perfection and energy which everyone feels to be the internal type of all that he loves, admires, and would become. The imagination is enlarged by a sympathy with pains and passions so mighty, that they distend in their conception the capacity of that by which they are conceived; the good affections are strengthened by pity, indignation, terror, and sorrow; and an exalted calm is prolonged from the satiety of this high exercise of them into the tumult of familiar life: even crime is disarmed of half its horror and all its contagion by being represented as the fatal consequence of the unfathomable agencies of nature; error is thus divested of its wilfulness; men can no longer cherish it as the creation of their choice. In a drama of the highest order there is little food for censure or hatred; it teaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect. Neither the eye nor the mind can see itself, unless reflected upon that which it resembles. The drama, so long as it continues to express poetry, is as a prismatic and many-sided mirror, which collects the brightest rays of human nature and divides and reproduces them from the simplicity of these elementary forms, and touches them with majesty and beauty, and multiplies all that it reflects, and endows it with the power of propagating its like wherever it may fall.

But in periods of the decay of social life, the drama sympathizes with that decay. Tragedy becomes a cold imitation of the form of the great masterpieces of antiquity, divested of all harmonious accompaniment of the kindred arts; and often the very form misunderstood, or a weak attempt to teach certain doctrines, which the writer considers as moral truths; and which are usually no more than specious flatteries of some gross vice or weakness, with which the author, in common with his auditors, are infected. Hence what has been called the classical and domestic drama. Addison's "Cato" is a specimen of the one; and would it were not superfluous to cite examples of the other! To such purposes poetry cannot be

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made subservient. Poetry is a sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, which consumes the scabbard that would contain it. And thus we observe that all dramatic writings of this nature are unimaginative in a singular degree; they affect sentiment and passion, which, divested of imagination, are other names for caprice and appetite. The period in our own history of the grossest degradation of the drama is the reign of Charles II, when all forms in which poetry had been accustomed to be expressed became hymns to the triumph of kingly power over liberty and virtue. Milton stood alone illuminating an age unworthy of him. At such periods the calculating principle pervades all the forms of dramatic exhibition, and poetry ceases to be expressed upon them. Comedy loses its ideal universality: wit succeeds to humor; we laugh from self-complacency and triumph, instead of pleasure; malignity, sarcasm, and contempt succeed to sympathetic merriment; we hardly laugh, but we smile. Obscenity, which is ever blasphemy against the divine beauty in life, becomes, from the very veil which it assumes, more active if less disgusting: it is a monster for which the corruption of society forever brings forth new food, which it devours in secret.

The drama being that form under which a greater number of modes of expression of poetry are susceptible of being combined than any other, the connection of poetry and social good is more observable in the drama than in whatever other form. And it is indisputable that the highest perfection of human society has ever corresponded with the highest dramatic excellence; and that the corruption or the extinction of the drama in a nation where it has once flourished is a mark of a corruption of manners, and an extinction of the energies which sustain the soul of social life. But, as Machiavelli says of political institutions, that life may be preserved and renewed, if men should arise capable of bringing back the drama to its principles. And this is true with respect to poetry in its most extended sense: all language, institution, and form require not only to be produced but to be sustained: the office and character of a poet participate in the divine nature as regards providence, no less than as regards creation.

Civil war, the spoils of Asia, and the fatal predominance first of the Macedonian, and then of the Roman arms, were so many symbols of the extinction or suspension of the creative faculty in Greece. The bucolic writers, who found patronage under the lettered tyrants of Sicily and Egypt, were the latest representatives of its most glorious reign. Their poetry is intensely melodious; like the odor of the tuberose, it overcomes and sickens the spirit with excess of sweetness; whilst the poetry of the preceding age was as a meadow-gale of June, which mingles the fragrance of all the flowers of the field, and adds a quickening and harmonizing spirit of its own which endows the sense with a power of sustaining its extreme delight. The bucolic and erotic delicacy in written poetry is correlative with that softness in statuary, music, and the kindred arts, and even in manners and institutions, which distinguished the epoch to which I now refer. Nor is it the poetical faculty itself, or any misapplication of it, to which this want of harmony is to be imputed. An equal sensibility to the influence of the senses and the affections is to be found in

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the writings of Homer and Sophocles: the former, especially, has clothed sensual and pathetic images with irresistible attractions. Their superiority over these succeeding writers consists in the presence of those thoughts which belong to the inner faculties of our nature, not in the absence of those which are connected with the external; their incomparable perfection consists in a harmony of the union of all. It is not what the erotic poets have, but what they have not, in which their imperfection consists. It is not inasmuch as they were poets, but inasmuch as they were not poets, that they can be considered with any plausibility as connected with the corruption of their age. Had that corruption availed so as to extinguish in them the sensibility to pleasure, passion, and natural scenery, which is imputed to them as an imperfection, the last triumph of evil would have been achieved. For the end of social corruption is to destroy all sensibility to pleasure; and, therefore, it is corruption. It begins at the imagination and the intellect as at the core, and distributes itself thence as a paralyzing venom, through the affections into the very appetites, until all become a torpid mass in which hardly sense survives. At the approach of such a period, poetry ever addresses itself to those faculties which are the last to be destroyed, and its voice is heard, like the footsteps of Astraa, departing from the world. Poetry ever communicates all the pleasure which men are capable of receiving: it is ever still the light of life; the source of whatever of beautiful or generous or true can have place in an evil time. It will readily be confessed that those among the luxurious citizens of Syracuse and Alexandria, who were delighted with the poems of Theocritus, were less cold, cruel, and sensual than the remnant of their tribe. But corruption must utterly have destroyed the fabric of human society before poetry can ever cease. The sacred links of that chain have never been entirely disjoined, which descending through the minds of many men is attached to those great minds, whence as from a magnet the invisible effluence is sent forth, which at once connects, animates, and sustains the life of all. It is the faculty which contains within itself the seeds at once of its own and of social renovation. And let us not circumscribe the effects of the bucolic and erotic poetry within the limits of the sensibility of those to whom it was addressed. They may have perceived the beauty of those immortal compositions, simply as fragments and isolated portions: those who are more finely organized, or born in a happier age, may recognize them as episodes to that great poem, which all poets, like the co-operating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world.

The same revolutions within a narrower sphere had place in ancient Rome; but the actions and forms of its social life never seem to have been perfectly saturated with the poetical element. The Romans appear to have considered the Greeks as the selectest treasuries of the selectest forms of manners and of nature, and to have abstained from creating in measured language, sculpture, music, or architecture, anything which might bear a particular relation to their own condition, whilst it should bear a general one to the universal constitution of the world. But we judge from partial evidence, and we judge perhaps partially. Ennius, Varro, Pacuvius, and Accius, all great poets, have been lost. Lucretius is in the highest, and Vergil

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in a very high sense, a creator. The chosen delicacy of expressions of the latter are as a mist of light which conceal from us the intense and exceeding truth of his conceptions of nature. Livy is instinct with poetry. Yet Horace, Catullus, Ovid, and generally the other great writers of the Vergilian age, saw man and nature in the mirror of Greece. The institutions also, and the religion of Rome, were less poetical than those of Greece, as the shadow is less vivid than the substance. Hence poetry in Rome seemed to follow, rather than accompany, the perfection of political and domestic society. The true poetry of Rome lived in its institutions; for whatever of beautiful, true, and majestic, they contained, could have sprung only from the faculty which creates the order in which they consist. The life of Camillus, the death of Regulus; the expectation of the senators, in their godlike state, of the victorious Gauls; the refusal of the republic to make peace with Hannibal, after the battle of Canna, were not the consequences of a refined calculation of the probable personal advantage to result from such a rhythm and order in the shows of life, to those who were at once the poets and the actors of these immortal dramas. The imagination beholding the beauty of this order, created it out of itself according to its own idea; the consequence was empire, and the reward ever-living fame. These things are not the less poetry, quia carent vate sacro.3 They are the episodes of that cyclic poem written by Time upon the memories of men. The Past, like an inspired rhapsodist, fills the theatre of everlasting generations with their harmony.

At length the ancient system of religion and manners had fulfilled the circle of its revolutions. And the world would have fallen into utter anarchy and darkness, but that there were found poets among the authors of the Christian and chivalric systems of manners and religion, who created forms of opinion and action never before conceived; which, copied into the imaginations of men, became as generals to the bewildered armies of their thoughts. It is foreign to the present purpose to touch upon the evil produced by these systems: except that we protest, on the ground of the principles already established, that no portion of it can be attributed to the poetry they contain.

3 Original Note: "Because they lack the sacred bard."

It is probable that the poetry of Moses, Job, David, Solomon, and Isaiah had produced a great effect upon the mind of Jesus and his disciples. The scattered fragments preserved to us by the biographers of this extraordinary person are all instinct with the most vivid poetry. But his doctrines seem to have been quickly distorted. At a certain period after the prevalence of a system of opinions founded upon those promulgated by him, the three forms into which Plato had distributed the faculties of mind underwent a sort of apotheosis, and became the object of the worship of the civilized world. Here it is to be confessed that "Light seems to thicken," and

"The crow makes wing to the rocky wood, Good things of day begin to droop and drowse, And night's black agents to their preys do rouse."

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But mark how beautiful an order has sprung from the dust and blood of this fierce chaos! how the world, as from a resurrection, balancing itself on the golden wings of Knowledge and of Hope, has reassumed its yet unwearied flight into the heaven of time. Listen to the music, unheard by outward ears, which is as a ceaseless and invisible wind, nourishing its everlasting course with strength and swiftness.

The poetry in the doctrines of Jesus Christ, and the mythology and institutions of the Celtic conquerors of the Roman Empire, outlived the darkness and the convulsions connected with their growth and victory, and blended themselves in a new fabric of manners and opinion. It is an error to impute the ignorance of the dark ages to the Christian doctrines or the predominance of the Celtic nations. Whatever of evil their agencies may have contained sprang from the extinction of the poetical principle, connected with the progress of despotism and superstition. Men, from causes too intricate to be here discussed, had become insensible and selfish: their own will had become feeble, and yet they were its slaves, and thence the slaves of the will of others: lust, fear, avarice, cruelty, and fraud, characterized a race amongst whom no one was to be found capable of creating in form, language, or institution. The moral anomalies of such a state of society are not justly to be charged upon any class of events immediately connected with them, and those events are most entitled to our approbation which could dissolve it most expeditiously. It is unfortunate for those who cannot distinguish words from thoughts, that many of these anomalies have been incorporated into our popular religion.

It was not until the eleventh century that the effects of the poetry of the Christian and chivalric systems began to manifest themselves. The principle of equality had been discovered and applied by Plato in his "Republic" as the theoretical rule of the mode in which the materials of pleasure and of power produced by the common skill and labor of human beings ought to be distributed among them. The limitations of this rule were asserted by him to be determined only by the sensibility of each, or the utility to result to all. Plato, following the doctrines of Timaus and Pythagoras, taught also a moral and intellectual system of doctrine, comprehending at once the past, the present, and the future condition of man. Jesus Christ divulged the sacred and eternal truths contained in these views to mankind, and Christianity, in its abstract purity, became the exoteric expression of the esoteric doctrines of the poetry and wisdom of antiquity. The incorporation of the Celtic nations with the exhausted population of the south impressed upon it the figure of the poetry existing in their mythology and institutions. The result was a sum of the action and reaction of all the causes included in it; for it may be assumed as a maxim that no nation or religion can supersede any other without incorporating into itself a portion of that which it supersedes. The abolition of personal and domestic slavery, and the emancipation of women from a great part of the degrading restraints of antiquity, were among the consequences of these events.

The abolition of personal slavery is the basis of the highest political hope that it can enter into the mind of man to conceive. The freedom of women produced the poetry of sexual love. Love became a religion, the idols of whose worship were ever

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present. It was as if the statues of Apollo and the Muses had been endowed with life and motion, and had walked forth among their worshippers; so that earth became peopled with the inhabitants of a diviner world. The familiar appearance and proceedings of life became wonderful and heavenly, and a paradise was created as out of the wrecks of Eden. And as this creation itself is poetry, so its creators were poets; and language was the instrument of their art: "Galeotto fu il libro, e chi lo scrisse. "4 The Provengal trouveurs, or inventors, preceded Petrarch, whose verses are as spells, which unseal the inmost enchanted fountains of the delight which is in the grief of love. It is impossible to feel them without becoming a portion of that beauty which we contemplate: it were superfluous to explain how the gentleness and the elevation of mind connected with these sacred emotions can render men more amiable, more generous and wise, and lift them out of the dull vapors of the little world of self. Dante understood the secret things of love even more than Petrarch. His "Vita Nuova" is an inexhaustible fountain of purity of sentiment and language: it is the idealized history of that period, and those intervals of his life which were dedicated to love. His apotheosis of Beatrice in Paradise, and the gradations of his own love and her loveliness, by which as by steps he feigns himself to have ascended to the throne of the Supreme Cause, is the most glorious imagination of modern poetry. The acutest critics have justly reversed the judgment of the vulgar, and the order of the great acts of the "Divine Drama," in the measure of the admiration which they accord to the Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. The latter is a perpetual hymn of everlasting love. Love, which found a worthy poet in Plato alone of all the ancients, has been celebrated by a chorus of the greatest writers of the renovated world; and the music has penetrated the caverns of society, and its echoes still drown the dissonance of arms and superstition. At successive intervals, Ariosto, Tasso, Shakespeare, Spenser, Calderon, Rousseau, and the great writers of our own age, have celebrated the dominion of love, planting as it were trophies in the human mind of that sublimest victory over sensuality and force. The true relation borne to each other by the sexes into which humankind is distributed has become less misunderstood; and if the error which confounded diversity with inequality of the powers of the two sexes has been partially recognised in the opinions and institutions of modern Europe, we owe this great benefit to the worship of which chivalry was the law, and poets the prophets.

4 Original Note: "The book, and he who wrote it, was a Galeotto" [i . e., a pander], from the episode of Paolo and Francesca in Dante's "Inferno," v. 137.

The poetry of Dante may be considered as the bridge thrown over the stream of time, which unites the modern and ancient world. The distorted notions of invisible things which Dante and his rival Milton have idealized, are merely the mask and the mantle in which these great poets walk through eternity enveloped and disguised. It is a difficult question to determine how far they were conscious of the distinction which must have subsisted in their minds between their own creeds and that of the people. Dante at least appears to wish to mark the full extent

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of it by placing Rhipaus, whom Vergil calls justissimus unus,5 in Paradise, and observing a most heretical caprice in his distribution of rewards and punishments. And Milton's poem contains within itself a philosophical refutation of that system, of which, by a strange and natural antithesis, it has been a chief popular support. Nothing can exceed the energy and magnificence of the character of Satan as expressed in "Paradise Lost." It is a mistake to suppose that he could ever have been intended for the popular personification of evil. Implacable hate, patient cunning, and a sleepless refinement of device to inflict the extremist anguish on an enemy, these things are evil; and, although venial in a slave, are not to be forgiven in a tyrant; although redeemed by much that ennobles his defeat in one subdued, are marked by all that dishonors his conquest in the victor. Milton's Devil as a moral being is as far superior to his God, as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has conceived to be excellent in spite of adversity and torture, is to one who in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy, not from any mistaken notion of inducing him to repent of a perseverance in enmity, but with the alleged design of exasperating him to deserve new torments. Milton has so far violated the popular creed (if this shall be judged to be a violation) as to have alleged no superiority of moral virtue to his God over his Devil. And this bold neglect of a direct moral purpose is the most decisive proof of the supremacy of Milton's genius. He mingled as it were the elements of human nature as colors upon a single pallet, and arranged them in the composition of his great picture according to the laws of epic truth; that is, according to the laws of that principle by which a series of actions of the external universe and of intelligent and ethical beings is calculated to excite the sympathy of succeeding generations of mankind. The "Divina Commedia" and "Paradise Lost" have conferred upon modern mythology a systematic form; and when change and time shall have added one more superstition to the mass of those which have arisen and decayed upon the earth, commentators will be learnedly employed in elucidating the religion of ancestral Europe, only not utterly forgotten because it will have been stamped with the eternity of genius.

Homer was the first and Dante the second epic poet: that is, the second poet, the series of whose creations bore a defined and intelligible relation to the knowledge and sentiment and religion of the age in which he lived, and of the ages which followed it, developing itself in correspondence with their development. For Lucretius had limed the wings of his swift spirit in the dregs of the sensible world; and Vergil, with a modesty that ill became his genius, had affected the fame of an imitator, even whilst he created anew all that he copied; and none among the flock of mock-birds, though their notes were sweet, Apollonius Rhodius, Quintus Calaber, Nonnus, Lucan, Statius, or Claudian, have sought even to fulfil a single condition of epic truth. Milton was the third epic poet. For if the title of epic in its highest sense be refused to the "AEneid," still less can it be conceded to the "Orlando Furioso," the "Gerusalemme Liberata," the "Lusiad," or the "Faerie Queene."

5 Original Note: "The one most just man."

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Dante and Milton were both deeply penetrated with the ancient religion of the civilized world; and its spirit exists in their poetry probably in the same proportion as its forms survived in the unreformed worship of modern Europe. The one preceded and the other followed the Reformation at almost equal intervals. Dante was the first religious reformer, and Luther surpassed him rather in the rudeness and acrimony than in the boldness of his censures of papal usurpation. Dante was the first awakener of entranced Europe; he created a language, in itself music and persuasion, out of a chaos of inharmonious barbarians. He was the congregator of those great spirits who presided over the resurrection of learning; the Lucifer of that starry flock which in the thirteenth century shone forth from republican Italy, as from a heaven, into the darkness of the benighted world. His very words are instinct with spirit; each is as a spark, a burning atom of inextinguishable thought; and many yet lie covered in the ashes of their birth, and pregnant with the lightning which has yet found no conductor. All high poetry is infinite; it is as the first acorn, which contained all oaks potentially. Veil after veil may be undrawn, and the inmost naked beauty of the meaning never exposed. A great poem is a fountain forever overflowing with the waters of wisdom and delight; and after one person and one age has exhausted all its divine effluence which their peculiar relations enable them to share, another and yet another succeeds, and new relations are ever developed, the source of an unforeseen and an unconceived delight.

The age immediately succeeding to that of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio was characterized by a revival of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Chaucer caught the sacred inspiration, and the superstructure of English literature is based upon the materials of Italian invention.

But let us not be betrayed from a defence into a critical history of poetry and its influence on society. Be it enough to have pointed out the effects of poets, in the large and true sense of the word, upon their own and all succeeding times.

But poets have been challenged to resign the civic crown to reasoners and mechanists, on another plea. It is admitted that the exercise of the imagination is most delightful, but it is alleged that that of reason is more useful. Let us examine as the grounds of this distinction what is here meant by utility. Pleasure or good, in a general sense, is that which the consciousness of a sensitive and intelligent being seeks, and in which, when found, it acquiesces. There are two kinds of pleasure, one durable, universal, and permanent; the other transitory and particular. Utility may either express the means of producing the former or the latter. In the former sense, whatever strengthens and purifies the affections, enlarges the imagination, and adds spirit to sense, is useful. But a narrower meaning may be assigned to the word utility, confining it to express that which banishes the importunity of the wants of our animal nature, the surrounding men with security of life, the dispersing the grosser delusions of superstitions, and the conciliating such a degree of mutual forbearance among men as may consist with the motives of personal advantage.

Undoubtedly the promoters of utility, in this limited sense, have their appointed office in society. They follow the footsteps of poets, and copy the sketches of their

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creations into the book of common life. They make space, and give time. Their exertions are of the highest value, so long as they confine their administration of the concerns of the inferior powers of our nature within the limits due to the superior ones. But whilst the sceptic destroys gross superstitions, let him spare to deface, as some of the French writers have defaced, the eternal truths charactered upon the imaginations of men. Whilst the mechanist abridges, and the political economist combines labor, let them beware that their speculations, for want of correspondence with those first principles which belong to the imagination, do not tend, as they have in modern England, to exasperate at once the extremes of luxury and want. They have exemplified the saying, "To him that hath, more shall be given; and from him that hath not, the little that he hath shall be taken away." The rich have become richer, and the poor have become poorer; and the vessel of the State is driven between the Scylla and Charybdis of anarchy and despotism. Such are the effects which must ever flow from an unmitigated exercise of the calculating faculty.

It is difficult to define pleasure in its highest sense; the definition involving a number of apparent paradoxes. For, from an inexplicable defect of harmony in the constitution of human nature, the pain of the inferior is frequently connected with the pleasures of the superior portions of our being. Sorrow, terror, anguish, despair itself, are often the chosen expressions of an approximation to the highest good. Our sympathy in tragic fiction depends on this principle; tragedy delights by affording a shadow of the pleasure which exists in pain. This is the source also of the melancholy which is inseparable from the sweetest melody. The pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself. And hence the saying, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of mirth." Not that this highest species of pleasure is necessarily linked with pain. The delight of love and friendship, the ecstasy of the admiration of nature, the joy of the perception and still more of the creation of poetry, is often wholly unalloyed.

6 Original Note: Although Rousseau has been thus classed, he was essentially a poet. The others, even Voltaire, were mere reasoners.—S.

The production and assurance of pleasure in this highest sense is true utility. Those who produce and preserve this pleasure are poets or poetical philosophers.

The exertions of Locke, Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, Rousseau,6 and their disciples, in favor of oppressed and deluded humanity, are entitled to the gratitude of mankind. Yet it is easy to calculate the degree of moral and intellectual improvement which the world would have exhibited, had they never lived. A little more nonsense would have been talked for a century or two; and perhaps a few more men, women, and children burnt as heretics. We might not at this moment have been congratulating each other on the abolition of the Inquisition in Spain. But it exceeds all imagination to conceive what would have been the moral condition of the world if neither Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Calderon, Lord Bacon, nor Milton, had ever existed; if Raphael and Michael Angelo had never been born; if the Hebrew poetry had never been translated; if a revival of the study of Greek literature had never taken place; if no monuments of ancient sculpture had been handed down

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to us; and if the poetry of the religion of the ancient world had been extinguished together with its belief. The human mind could never, except by the intervention of these excitements, have been awakened to the invention of the grosser sciences, and that application of analytical reasoning to the aberrations of society, which it is now attempted to exalt over the direct expression of the inventive and creative faculty itself.

We have more moral, political, and historical wisdom than we know how to reduce into practice; we have more scientific and economical knowledge than can be accommodated to the just distribution of the produce which it multiplies. The poetry in these systems of thought is concealed by the accumulation of facts and calculating processes. There is no want of knowledge respecting what is wisest and best in morals, government, and political economy, or at least, what is wiser and better than what men now practise and endure. But we let "I dare not wait upon I would, like the poor cat in the adage." We want the creative faculty to imagine that which we know; we want the generous impulse to act that which we imagine; we want the poetry of life; our calculations have outrun conception; we have eaten more than we can digest. The cultivation of those sciences which have enlarged the limits of the empire of man over the external world, has, for want of the poetical faculty, proportionally circumscribed those of the internal world; and man, having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave. To what but a cultivation of the mechanical arts in a degree disproportioned to the presence of the creative faculty, which is the basis of all knowledge, is to be attributed the abuse of all invention for abridging and combining labor, to the exasperation of the inequality of mankind? From what other cause has it arisen that the discoveries which should have lightened, have added a weight to the curse imposed on Adam? Poetry, and the principle of Self, of which money is the visible incarnation, are the God and Mammon of the world.

The functions of the poetical faculty are twofold: by one it creates new materials of knowledge, and power, and pleasure; by the other it engenders in the mind a desire to reproduce and arrange them according to a certain rhythm and order which may be called the beautiful and the good. The cultivation of poetry is never more to be desired than at periods when, from an excess of the selfish and calculating principle, the accumulation of the materials of external life exceed the quantity of the power of assimilating them to the internal laws of human nature. The body has then become too unwidely for that which animates it.

Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought; it is that from which all spring, and that which adorns all; and that which, if blighted, denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life. It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of all things; it is as the odor and the color of the rose to the texture of the elements which compose it, as the form and splendor of unfaded beauty to the secrets of anatomy and corruption. What

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were virtue, love, patriotism, friendship—what were the scenery of this beautiful universe which we inhabit; what were our consolations on this side of the grave— and what were our aspirations beyond it, if poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar? Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, "I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the color of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results; but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet. I appeal to the greatest poets of the present day, whether it is not an error to assert that the finest passages of poetry are produced by labor and study. The toil and the delay recommended by critics can be justly interpreted to mean no more than a careful observation of the inspired moments, and an artificial connection of the spaces between their suggestions by the intertexture of conventional expressions; a necessity only imposed by the limitedness of the poetical faculty itself; for Milton conceived the "Paradise Lost" as a whole before he executed it in portions. We have his own authority also for the Muse having "dictated" to him the "unpremeditated song." And let this be an answer to those who would allege the fifty-six various readings of the first line of the "Orlando Furioso." Compositions so produced are to poetry what mosaic is to painting. This instinct and intuition of the poetical faculty are still more observable in the plastic and pictorial arts; a great statue or picture grows under the power of the artist as a child in a mother's womb; and the very mind which directs the hands in formation is incapable of accounting to itself for the origin, the gradations, or the media of the process.

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds. We are aware of evanescent visitations of thought and feeling sometimes associated with place or person, sometimes regarding our own mind alone, and always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond all expression: so that even in the desire and the regret they leave, there cannot but be pleasure, participating as it does in the nature of its object. It is as it were the interpretation of a diviner nature through our own; but its footsteps are like those of a wind over the sea, which the coming calm erases, and whose traces remain only as on the wrinkled sand which paves it. These and corresponding conditions of being are experienced principally by those of the most delicate sensibility and the most enlarged imagination; and the state of mind produced by them is at war with every base desire. The enthusiasm of virtue, love, patriotism, and friendship is essentially linked with such emotions; and whilst they last, self appears as what it is, an atom to a universe. Poets are not only subject to these experiences as spirits

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of the most refined organization, but they can color all that they combine with the evanescent hues of this ethereal world; a word, a trait in the representation of a scene or a passion will touch the enchanted chord, and reanimate, in those who have ever experienced these emotions, the sleeping, the cold, the buried image of the past. Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world; it arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the interlunations of life, and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide—abide, because there is no portal of expression from the caverns of the spirit which they inhabit into the universe of things. Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man.

Poetry turns all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed; it marries exultation and horror, grief and pleasure, eternity and change; it subdues to union under its light yoke all irreconcilable things. It transmutes all that it touches, and every form moving within the radiance of its presence is changed by wondrous sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes: its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flow from death through life; it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its forms.

All things exist as they are perceived: at least in relation to the percipient. "The mind is its own place, and of itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." But poetry defeats the curse which binds us to be subjected to the accident of surrounding impressions. And whether it spreads its own figured curtain, or withdraws life's dark veil from before the scene of things, it equally creates for us a being within our being. It makes us the inhabitants of a world to which the familiar world is a chaos. It reproduces the common universe of which we are portions and percipients, and it purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being. It compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know. It creates anew the universe, after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration. It justifies the bold and true words of Tasso— "Non merita nome di creatore, se non Iddio ed il Poeta."7

7 Original Note: "No one merits the name of creator except God and the Poet."

A poet, as he is the author to others of the highest wisdom, pleasure, virtue, and glory, so he ought personally to be the happiest, the best, the wisest, and the most illustrious of men. As to his glory, let time be challenged to declare whether the fame of any other institutor of human life be comparable to that of a poet. That he is the wisest, the happiest, and the best, inasmuch as he is a poet, is equally incontrovertible: the greatest poets have been men of the most spotless virtue, of the most consummate prudence, and, if we would look into the interior of their lives, the most fortunate of men: and the exceptions, as they regard those who possessed the poetic faculty in a high yet inferior degree, will be found on consideration to confine rather than destroy the rule. Let us for a moment stoop to the arbitration

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of popular breath, and usurping and uniting in our own persons the incompatible characters of accuser, witness, judge, and executioner, let us decide without trial, testimony, or form, that certain motives of those who are "there sitting where we dare not soar," are reprehensible. Let us assume that Homer was a drunkard, that Vergil was a flatterer, that Horace was a coward, that Tasso was a madman, that Lord Bacon was a peculator, that Raphael was a libertine, that Spenser was a poet laureate. It is inconsistent with this division of our subject to cite living poets, but posterity has done ample justice to the great names now referred to. Their errors have been weighed and found to have been dust in the balance; if their sins "were as scarlet, they are now white as snow"; they have been washed in the blood of the mediator and redeemer, Time. Observe in what a ludicrous chaos the imputations of real or fictitious crime have been confused in the contemporary calumnies against poetry and poets; consider how little is as it appears —or appears as it is; look to your own motives, and judge not, lest ye be judged.

Poetry, as has been said, differs in this respect from logic, that it is not subject to the control of the active powers of the mind, and that its birth and recurrence have no necessary connection with the consciousness or will. It is presumptuous to determine that these are the necessary conditions of all mental causation, when mental effects are experienced unsusceptible of being referred to them. The frequent recurrence of the poetical power, it is obvious to suppose, may produce in the mind a habit of order and harmony correlative with its own nature and with its effects upon other minds. But in the intervals of inspiration, and they may be frequent without being durable, a poet becomes a man, and is abandoned to the sudden reflux of the influences under which others habitually live. But as he is more delicately organized than other men, and sensible to pain and pleasure, both his own and that of others, in a degree unknown to them, he will avoid the one and pursue the other with an ardor proportioned to this difference. And he renders himself obnoxious to calumny, when he neglects to observe the circumstances under which these objects of universal pursuit and flight have disguised themselves in one another's garments.

But there is nothing necessarily evil in this error, and thus cruelty, envy, revenge, avarice, and the passions purely evil have never formed any portion of the popular imputations on the lives of poets.

I have thought it most favorable to the cause of truth to set down these remarks according to the order in which they were suggested to my mind, by a consideration of the subject itself, instead of observing the formality of a polemical reply; but if the view which they contain be just, they will be found to involve a refutation of the arguers against poetry, so far at least as regards the first division of the subject. I can readily conjecture what should have moved the gall of some learned and intelligent writers who quarrel with certain versifiers; I confess myself, like them, unwilling to be stunned by the Theseids of the hoarse Codri of the day. Bavius and Mavius undoubtedly are, as they ever were, insufferable persons. But it belongs to a philosophical critic to distinguish rather than confound.

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The first part of these remarks has related to poetry in its elements and principles; and it has been shown, as well as the narrow limits assigned them would permit, that what is called poetry, in a restricted sense, has a common source with all other forms of order and of beauty, according to which the materials of human life are susceptible of being arranged, and which is poetry in an universal sense.

The second part will have for its object an application of these principles to the present state of the cultivation of poetry, and a defence of the attempt to idealize the modern forms of manners and opinions, and compel them into a subordination to the imaginative and creative faculty. For the literature of England, an energetic development of which has ever preceded or accompanied a great and free development of the national will, has arisen as it were from a new birth. In spite of the low-thoughted envy which would undervalue contemporary merit, our own will be a memorable age in intellectual achievements, and we live among such philosophers and poets as surpass beyond comparison any who have appeared since the last national struggle for civil and religious liberty. The most unfailing herald, companion, and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is poetry. At such periods there is an accumulation of the power of communicating and receiving intense and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature. The person in whom this power resides, may often, as far as regards many portions of their nature, have little apparent correspondence with that spirit of good of which they are the ministers. But even whilst they deny and abjure, they are yet compelled to serve, that power which is seated on the throne of their own soul. It is impossible to read the compositions of the most celebrated writers of the present day without being startled with the electric life which burns within their words. They measure the circumference and sound the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit, and they are themselves perhaps the most sincerely astonished at its manifestations; for it is less their spirit than the spirit of the age. Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

### 1.11.7 Reading and Review Questions

1. Why does Shelley suggest that a reciprocal relationship exists between the human mind and nature? How does that view differ from Wordsworth's, and why? How does Shelley demonstrate this relationship particularly in the concluding lines of Mont Blanc?

2. How, if at all, does Shelley present the idea of revolution in a positive, rather than threatening, way? Consider the Phantom that illumines our day in England in 1819 and the old palaces and towers that quiver within the waves of the Mediterranean's intenser day in Ode to the West Wind.

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3. How, and why, does Shelley construct the Sky-Lark as a Romantic Image, that is, both a manifestation and product of the poet's imagination?

4. Shelley's contemporaries considered him to be immoral. Yet in his A Defense of Poetry, Shelley describes poets as the best of men. On what grounds does he do so, especially as he considered himself a poet?

## 1.12 FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS

(1793-1835)

Like most women of her era, Felicia Dorothea Hemans was educated at home— first in England, then in Wales—in the expected subjects of art, music, literature, and modern languages. She added to the more commonly-taught French and Italian, Welsh, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and Latin. Unlike most women, she published a collection of Poems (1808) when she was fourteen. It heralded a remarkable, and remarkably successful, literary career. She published numerous collections of poetry, including The Domestic Affections (1812), The Restoration of Works of Art to Italy (1816), Tales and Heroic Scenes (1819), and Songs of the Affections (1830). She also wrote translations of Continental poems, critical reviews, plays, and songs.

Image 1.22 | Portrait of Felicia Dorothea Hemans

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Married in 1812 and separated from Captain Alfred Hemans when he left for Rome, Hemans became, essentially, single mother to their five children. Her work often addressed the difficulty for a woman to write and fulfill her domestic responsibilities—and fulfill them she must, in service to the "natural" superiority of her husband, and, indeed, her nation. The home women sustained served to ground the patriotic ideals of the soldier-son who died in battle—as so many men did during Hemans' lifetime. Hemans' personal difficulties were increased by a mysterious, chronic ailment that caused painful palpitations and general inflammation for most of her life. She continued to write through her pain until, nearly incapacitated, she died in 1835.

Her poetic themes of chivalry, history, the military, and domestic affections ranged among Romantic interests, winning her the praise and admiration of Wordsworth, Byron, P. B. Shelley, and the Scottish poet and playwright Joanna Baillie (1762-1851). Hemans uniquely presented female heroes defending human rights, in such figures as "The Wife of Asdrubal" (1819), who stands atop a temple

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while Carthage burns and denounces the cowardice of her husband, the governor of Carthage. Rather than have them be victims to their father's treachery, she stabs her children and then immolates herself. Similarly, "The Bride of the Greek Isle" (1828) after being kidnapped by pirates sets their ship on fire to avoid slavery and secure her own freedom in death. That these women pay such terrible prices to the nation and for their freedom suggests Hemans' deeper critique of a society and culture that places women in subject positions their entire lives. Her work remained popular in England and America well into the Victorian era, and she earned praise from such important Victorian women writers as Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861) and George Eliot (1819-1880).

### 1.12.1 "Casabianca"

The boy stood on the burning deck, Whence all but him had fled; The flame that lit the battle's wreck Shone round him o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood, As born to rule the storm; A creature of heroic blood, A proud though childlike form.

The flames rolled on—he would not go Without his father's word; That father, faint in death below, His voice no longer heard.

He called aloud, "Say, father, say If yet my task is done?" He knew not that the chieftain lay Unconscious of his son.

"Speak, father!" once again he cried, "If I may yet be gone!" And but the booming shots replied, And fast the flames rolled on.

Upon his brow he felt their breath, And in his waving hair; And looked from that lone post of death, In still, yet brave despair.

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And shouted but once more aloud

"My father! must I stay?"

While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,

The wreathing fires made way.

They wrapt the ship in splendour wild, They caught the flag on high, And streamed above the gallant child Like banners in the sky.

Then came a burst of thunder sound— The boy oh! where was he? —Ask of the winds that far around With fragments strew the sea;

With mast, and helm, and pennon fair, That well had borne their part— But the noblest thing that perished there Was that young, faithful heart.

### 1.12.2 "The Homes of England"

The stately homes of England!

How beautiful they stand, Amidst their tall ancestral trees,

O'er all the pleasant land! The deer across their greensward bound

Through shade and sunny gleam, And the swan glides past them with the sound

Of some rejoicing stream.

The merry homes of England!

Around their hearths by night What gladsome looks of household love

Meet in the ruddy light! There woman's voice flows forth in song,

Or childish tale is told, Or lips move tunefully along

Some glorious page of old.

The blessed homes of England!

How softly on their bowers Is laid the holy quietness

That breathes from Sabbath hours!

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Solemn, yet sweet, the church-bell's chime

Floats through their woods at morn; All other sounds, in that still time,

Of breeze and leaf are born.

The cottage homes of England!

By thousands on her plains, They are smiling o'er the silvery brooks,

And round the hamlets' fanes. Through glowing orchards forth they peep,

Each from its nook of leaves; And fearless there the lowly sleep,

As the bird beneath their eaves.

The free, fair homes of England!

Long, long, in hut and hall May hearts of native proof be reared

To guard each hallowed wall! And green forever be the groves,

And bright the flowery sod, Where first the child's glad spirit loves

Its country and its God!

### 1.12.3 Corinne at the Capitol

'Les femmes doivent penser qu'il est dans cette carriere bien peu de sorte qui puissent valoit la plus obscure vie dune femme aimee et d'une mere heureuse.' -MADAME DE STAEL.

DAUGHTER of th' Italian heaven! Thou, to whom its fires are given, Joyously thy car hath roll'd Where the conqueror's pass'd of old; And the festal sun that shone, O'er three hundred triumphs gone, Makes thy day of glory bright, With a shower of golden light. Now thou tread'st th' ascending road, Freedom's foot so proudly trode; While, from tombs of heroes borne, From the dust of empire shorn, Flowers upon thy graceful head, Chaplets of all hues, are shed, In a soft and rosy rain,

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Touch'd with many a gem-like stain. Thou hast gain'd the summit now! Music hails thee from below; Music, whose rich notes might stir Ashes of the sepulchre; Shaking with victorious notes All the bright air as it floats. Well may woman's heart beat high Unto that proud harmony! Now afar it rolls—it dies-And thy voice is heard to rise With a low and lovely tone In its thrilling power alone; And thy lyre's deep silvery string, Touched as by a breeze's wing, Murmurs tremblingly at first, Ere the tide of rapture burst. All the spirit of thy sky Now hath lit thy large dark eye, And thy cheek a flush hath caught From the joy of kindled thought; And the burning words of song From thy lip flow fast and strong, With a rushing stream's delight In the freedom of its might. Radiant daughter of the sun! Now thy living wreath is won. Crown'd of Rome!—Oh! art thou not Happy in that glorious lot?-Happier, happier far than thou, With the laurel on thy brow, She that makes the humblest hearth Lovely but to one on earth!

### 1.12.4 Reading and Review Questions

1. What, if anything, is the effect in Casabianca of the boy's repeated cries for release remaining unheard by the father? Consider how Hemans emphasizes the father's not hearing the boy, being unconscious of the

boy.

2. How does Hemans characterize the stately homes of England? How does she characterize the cottages? What is significant about their differences? What is significant about their similarities?

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3. Why does Hemans specifically identify women and children as the residents of the stately homes? Whose hearts guard the hallowed halls of the stately homes? And of the cottages?

4. In Corinne at the Capital, how, if at all, is your understanding of the poem affected by its epigraph quote from Madame de Stael lauding the glorious, though obscure, life of a beloved wife and a happy mother? Why?

## 1.13 JOHN KEATS

(1795-1821)

John Keats, like Blake, was trained in a profession. He studied to be a surgeon and was expected to earn his own living. His mother Frances Jennings was from the landed gentry; his father Thomas Keats was a livery stable-keeper. Because his society consequently placed him within the labor class, Keats's decision to write poetry, a "genteel" art, was in itself a radical act.

His poetic aspirations were encouraged by Leigh Hunt (1784-1859), editor at The Examiner, who published Keats' first collection of poems and Endymion, an epic poem based on the poetic myth of a young shepherd who becomes beloved by the goddess of the moon. During the course of writing this epic, Keats honed his skill, expressing the desire for just ten years more to reach his poetic epitome. He lived for only two.

Image 1.23 | Portrait of John Keats

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Keats' first published poems received harsh criticism, to some extent sharpened by Keats' association with Hunt and by Keats' lower class status. The conjunction of these criticisms and Keats's death at the age of twenty-five led some contemporaries to believe that Keats died of a broken heart. This belief connected with some views of Keats' poetry as sensual and emotional without intellectual heft. Keats' letters, though, published after his death, demonstrate his extraordinary conceptual thinking, about poetry's role in society and about what makes a poem or poet great.

His theory of Negative Capability in particular fleshes out his ideas on the imagination. Negative Capability is sustained potentiality; it allows all possibilities to exist at once in the imagination together without the poet reaching towards one and thus eliminating all of the others. Through Negative Capability, the poet sees both the world of color, or the rainbow world, and the world in black and white; sees

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both the glittery surface of the ocean and the menacing whales beneath; sees both the delightful, delicate sparrow and the worm-ravening beast. Through Negative Capability, the poet doesn't reach after fact or reason but allows all things—new stars, flowers bred by the fancy—to be. The completion of an experience is the negative capability, the not reaching after. For Keats, the poet sustains intensity and detachment, poise, suspension.

To learn medicine, Keats worked as a dresser, that is, the person who cleans up after the surgeons' bloody work. He was apprenticed to a surgeon named Hammond—sometimes called "Butcher" Hammond—for five years, but stayed with him three and a half years. Keats then studied with well-known doctors, particularly Astley Cooper, who mentored Keats. After a year more of study, Keats began to doubt his abilities and interest in medicine. He took an apothecary license, but, with six months of study remaining for him to license as a surgeon, Keats left medicine for poetry.

Image 1.24 | Portrait of John Keats on his deathbed

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His medical skills, though, were required in his caring for his brother Tom, who died of tuberculosis. His emotional skills were called on when he fell in love with Fanny Brawne (1800-1865), the daughter of his landlord. He hoped to marry her, but his having contracted tuberculosis—probably from his mother—made that impossible, due to the disease being extremely contagious. In hopes of recovery, he traveled to Rome, accompanied by his friend the portrait artist John Severn (17931879). Keats died in Rome, with both acceptance and bitter awareness of his fate. He described himself as being like a frog going out in the first frost. And he said his epitaph should read that "here is one whose name is writ on water," that is, no sooner visible than gone. His last hours were spent writing letters of to his friends, to whom he made an "awkward bow."

His poetry is characterized by its sensuality, to the point of sensual overload, and its pursuit of beauty—often (but not always) idealized like Greek art; its use of paradox that evokes Negative Capability by sustaining opposites; and its subjectivity to the point of relativity, for what the heart loves becomes its truth and whatever the imagination seizes on as beauty must be true. He lauds imagination as a power to help people recover from sorrow and misery, from the inevitable pains and suffering of life.

### 1.13.1 Letter to George and Thomas Keats

Hampstead Sunday 22 December 1818

My dear Brothers

I must crave your pardon for not having written ere this [ . . . ] [T]he excellence of every Art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty & Truth—Examine King Lear & you will find this exemplified throughout; but in this picture we have unpleasantness without any momentous depth of speculation excited, in which to bury its repulsiveness— The picture is larger than Christ rejected—I dined with Haydon the sunday after you left, & had a very pleasant day, I dined too (for I have been out too much lately) with Horace Smith & met his two brothers with Hill & Kingston & one Du Bois, they only served to convince me, how superior humour is to wit in respect to enjoyment—These men say things which make one start, without making one feel, they are all alike; their manners are alike; they all know fashionables; they have a mannerism in their very eating & drinking, in their mere handling a Decanter— They talked of Kean & his low company—Would I were with that company instead of yours said I to myself! I know such like acquaintance will never do for me & yet I am going to Reynolds, on wednesday—Brown & Dilke walked with me & back from the Christmas pantomime. I had not a dispute but a disquisition with Dilke, on various subjects; several things dovetailed in my mind, & at once it struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in Literature & which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean Negative Capability, that is when

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man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason—Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge. This pursued through Volumes would perhaps take us no further than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration.

### 1.13.2 "The Eve of St. Agnes"

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!

The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;

The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,

And silent was the flock in woolly fold:

Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told

His rosary, and while his frosted breath,

Like pious incense from a censer old,

Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death, Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man; Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees, And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan, Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees: The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze, Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails: Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries, He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door, And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor; But no—already had his deathbell rung; The joys of all his life were said and sung: His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve: Another way he went, and soon among Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve, And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft; And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide, From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft, The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide: The level chambers, ready with their pride,

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Were glowing to receive a thousand guests: The carved angels, ever eager-eyed, Star'd where upon their heads the cornice rests, With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry, With plume, tiara, and all rich array, Numerous as shadows haunting faerily The brain, new stuffd, in youth, with triumphs gay Of old romance. These let us wish away, And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there, Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day, On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care, As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve, Young virgins might have visions of delight, And soft adorings from their loves receive Upon the honey'd middle of the night, If ceremonies due they did aright; As, supperless to bed they must retire, And couch supine their beauties, lily white; Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline: The music, yearning like a God in pain, She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine, Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier, And back retir'd; not cool'd by high disdain, But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere: She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes, Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short: The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort Of whisperers in anger, or in sport; 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn, Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amort, Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,

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And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire, She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors, Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire For Madeline. Beside the portal doors, Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores All saints to give him sight of Madeline, But for one moment in the tedious hours, That he might gaze and worship all unseen; Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things have been.

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell: All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel: For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes, Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords, Whose very dogs would execrations howl Against his lineage: not one breast affords Him any mercy, in that mansion foul, Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came, Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand, To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame, Behind a broad half-pillar, far beyond The sound of merriment and chorus bland: He startled her; but soon she knew his face, And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand, Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place; They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand; He had a fever late, and in the fit He cursed thee and thine, both house and land: Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit! Flit like a ghost away."— "Ah, Gossip dear, We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit, And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not here, not here; Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

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He follow'd through a lowly arched way, Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume, And as she mutter'd "Well-a—well-a-day!" He found him in a little moonlight room, Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb. "Now tell me where is Madeline," said he, "O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom Which none but secret sisterhood may see, When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve— Yet men will murder upon holy days: Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve, And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays, To venture so: it fills me with amaze To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve! God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays This very night: good angels her deceive! But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon, While Porphyro upon her face doth look, Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone Who keepeth clos'd a wond'rous riddle-book, As spectacled she sits in chimney nook. But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold, And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose, Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart Made purple riot: then doth he propose A stratagem, that makes the beldame start: "A cruel man and impious thou art: Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream Alone with her good angels, far apart From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear," Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,

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If one of her soft ringlets I displace, Or look with ruffian passion in her face: Good Angela, believe me by these tears; Or I will, even in a moment's space, Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears, And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and bears."

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul? A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing, Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll; Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening, Were never miss'd."—Thus plaining, doth she bring A gentler speech from burning Porphyro; So woful, and of such deep sorrowing, That Angela gives promise she will do Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy, Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide Him in a closet, of such privacy That he might see her beauty unespy'd, And win perhaps that night a peerless bride, While legion'd faeries pac'd the coverlet, And pale enchantment held her sleepy-ey'd. Never on such a night have lovers met, Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame: "All cates and dainties shall be stored there Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare, For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare On such a catering trust my dizzy head. Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed, Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear. The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd; The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear To follow her; with aged eyes aghast From fright of dim espial. Safe at last, Through many a dusky gallery, they gain

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The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste; Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain. His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade, Old Angela was feeling for the stair, When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid, Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware: With silver taper's light, and pious care, She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led To a safe level matting. Now prepare, Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed; She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in; Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died: She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin To spirits of the air, and visions wide: No uttered syllable, or, woe betide! But to her heart, her heart was voluble, Paining with eloquence her balmy side; As though a tongueless nightingale should swell Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was, All garlanded with carven imag'ries Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass, And diamonded with panes of quaint device, Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes, As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings; And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries, And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings, A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon, And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast, As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon; Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest, And on her silver cross soft amethyst, And on her hair a glory, like a saint: She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest, Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint: She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

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Anon his heart revives: her vespers done, Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees; Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one; Loosens her fragrant boddice; by degrees Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees: Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed, Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees, In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed, But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest, In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay, Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress'd Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away; Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day; Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain; Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray; Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain, As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced, Porphyro gaz'd upon her empty dress, And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced To wake into a slumberous tenderness; Which when he heard, that minute did he bless, And breath'd himself: then from the closet crept, Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness, And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept, And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—how fast she slept.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:— O for some drowsy Morphean amulet! The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion, The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet, Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:— The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep, In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd, While he forth from the closet brought a heap

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Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd; With jellies soother than the creamy curd, And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon; Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one, From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand On golden dishes and in baskets bright Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand In the retired quiet of the night, Filling the chilly room with perfume light.— "And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake! Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite: Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake, Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm Impossible to melt as iced stream: The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam; Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies: It seem'd he never, never could redeem From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes; So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,— Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be, He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute, In Provence call'd, "La belle dame sans mercy": Close to her ear touching the melody;— Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan: He ceas'd—she panted quick—and suddenly Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone: Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld, Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep: There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd The blisses of her dream so pure and deep At which fair Madeline began to weep, And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;

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While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep; Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye, Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear, Made tuneable with every sweetest vow; And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear: How chang'd thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear! Give me that voice again, my Porphyro, Those looks immortal, those complainings dear! Oh leave me not in this eternal woe, For if thy diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far At these voluptuous accents, he arose Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose; Into her dream he melted, as the rose Blendeth its odour with the violet,— Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet: "This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!" 'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat: "No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine! Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.— Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring? I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine, Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;— A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride! Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest? Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil dyed? Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest After so many hours of toil and quest, A famish'd pilgrim,—sav'd by miracle. Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

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"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land, Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed: Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;— The bloated wassaillers will never heed:— Let us away, my love, with happy speed; There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,— Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead: Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be, For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

She hurried at his words, beset with fears, For there were sleeping dragons all around, At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears— Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.— In all the house was heard no human sound. A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door; The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound, Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar; And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall; Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide; Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl, With a huge empty flaggon by his side: The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide, But his sagacious eye an inmate owns: By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:— The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;— The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago These lovers fled away into the storm. That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe, And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm, Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform; The Beadsman, after thousand aves told, For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

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### 1.13.3 "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"

1

Ah what can ail thee, wretched wight,

Alone and palely loitering; The sedge is wither'd from the lake,

And no birds sing.

2

Ah what can ail thee, wretched wight,

So haggard and so woe-begone? The squirrel's granary is full,

And the harvest's done.

3

I see a lilly on thy brow,

With anguish moist and fever dew; And on thy cheek a fading rose

Fast withereth too.

4

I met a lady in the meads

Full beautiful, a fairy's child; Her hair was long, her foot was light,

And her eyes were wild.

5

I set her on my pacing steed,

And nothing else saw all day long;

For sideways would she lean, and sing A faery's song.

6

I made a garland for her head,

And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;

She look'd at me as she did love, And made sweet moan.

7

She found me roots of relish sweet,

And honey wild, and manna dew, And sure in language strange she said,

I love thee true.

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8

She took me to her elfin grot,

And there she gaz'd and sighed deep, And there I shut her wild sad eyes—

So kiss'd to sleep.

9

And there we slumber'd on the moss,

And there I dream'd, ah woe betide The latest dream I ever dream'd

On the cold hill side.

10

I saw pale kings, and princes too,

Pale warriors, death-pale were they all; Who cry'd—"Le belle Dame sans mercy

Hath thee in thrall!"

11

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloom

With horrid warning gaped wide, And I awoke, and found me here

On the cold hill side.

12

And this is why I sojourn here

Alone and palely loitering, Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,

And no birds sing.

### 1.13.4 "Ode to Psyche"

O Goddess! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung

By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear, And pardon that thy secrets should be sung

Even into thine own soft-conched ear: Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see

The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?

I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,

And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise, Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side

In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran A brooklet, scarce espied:

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Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,

Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian, They lay calm-breathing, on the bedded grass;

Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;

Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu, As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber, And ready still past kisses to outnumber

At tender eye-dawn of aurorean love: The winged boy I knew; But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove? His Psyche true!

O latest born and loveliest vision far

Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy! Fairer than Phoebe's sapphire-region'd star,

Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky; Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,

Nor altar heap'd with flowers; Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan

Upon the midnight hours; No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet

From chain-swung censer teeming; No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat

Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,

Too, too late for the fond believing lyre, When holy were the haunted forest boughs,

Holy the air, the water, and the fire; Yet even in these days so far retir'd

From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,

Fluttering among the faint Olympians,

I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspir'd. So let me be thy choir, and make a moan

Upon the midnight hours; Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet

From swinged censer teeming; Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat

Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane

In some untrodden region of my mind, Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,

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Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind: Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees

Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep; And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,

The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep; And in the midst of this wide quietness A rosy sanctuary will I dress With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,

With buds, and bells, and stars without a name, With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,

Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same: And there shall be for thee all soft delight

That shadowy thought can win, A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,

To let the warm Love in!

### 1.13.5 "Ode to a Nightingale"

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk, Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk: 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,

But being too happy in thine happiness,— That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees In some melodious plot Of beechen green, and shadows numberless, Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been

Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth, Tasting of Flora and the country green,

Dance, and Provengal song, and sunburnt mirth! O for a beaker full of the warm South,

Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene, With beaded bubbles winking at the brim, And purple-stained mouth; That I might drink, and leave the world unseen, And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget

What thou among the leaves hast never known,

The weariness, the fever, and the fret

Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

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Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,

Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies; Where but to think is to be full of sorrow And leaden-eyed despairs, Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes, Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,

Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards, But on the viewless wings of Poesy,

Though the dull brain perplexes and retards: Already with thee! tender is the night,

And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne, Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;

But here there is no light, Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown

Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways. I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,

Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs, But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet

Wherewith the seasonable month endows The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild; White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine; Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves; And mid-May's eldest child, The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,

The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time

I have been half in love with easeful Death, Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme, To take into the air my quiet breath;

Now more than ever seems it rich to die, To cease upon the midnight with no pain,

While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad In such an ecstasy! Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain— To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!

No hungry generations tread thee down; The voice I hear this passing night was heard

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In ancient days by emperor and clown: Perhaps the self-same song that found a path

Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home, She stood in tears amid the alien corn; The same that oft-times hath Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell

To toll me back from thee to my sole self! Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well

As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf. Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades

Past the near meadows, over the still stream, Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep In the next valley-glades: Was it a vision, or a waking dream?

Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

### 1.13.6 "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,

Thou foster-child of silence and slow time, Sylvan historian, who canst thus express

A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme: What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape

Of deities or mortals, or of both,

In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

What men or gods are these? What maidens loth? What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard

Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on; Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone: Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave

Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare; Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss, Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;

She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss, For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

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Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;

And, happy melodist, unwearied,

For ever piping songs for ever new;

More happy love! more happy, happy love! For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd, For ever panting, and for ever young;

Image 1.25 | A drawing Keats rendered of an engraving of the

Sosibios Vase

Artist | John Keats

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All breathing human passion far above,

That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd, A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?

To what green altar, O mysterious priest, Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,

And all her silken flanks with garlands drest? What little town by river or sea shore,

Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel, Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn? And, little town, thy streets for evermore

Will silent be; and not a soul to tell

Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede

Of marble men and maidens overwrought, With forest branches and the trodden weed;

Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!

When old age shall this generation waste, Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

### 1.13.7 "Ode on Melancholy"

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist

Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine; Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;

Make not your rosary of yew-berries, Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be

Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;

For shade to shade will come too drowsily,

And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall

Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,

That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,

And hides the green hill in an April shroud;

Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,

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Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave, Or on the wealth of globed peonies; Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows, Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,

And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;

And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,

Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips: Ay, in the very temple of Delight

Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,

Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue

Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine; His soul shalt taste the sadness of her might,

And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

### 1.13.8 "To Autumn"

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun; Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run; To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core; To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells

With a sweet kernel; to set budding more, And still more, later flowers for the bees, Until they think warm days will never cease, For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?

Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,

Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind; Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,

Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers: And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep

Steady thy laden head across a brook;

Or by a cider-press, with patient look, Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

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Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they? Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day, And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue; Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn Among the river sallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies; And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn; Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft, And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

### 1.13.9 Reading and Review Questions

1. What does it mean, in Eve of St. Agnes, for Porphyro to melt into Madeline's dream? Consider that her dream supposedly gives her a vision of her beloved. Consider that she wakes up from her dream to see Porphyro as pallid and dreary. How, and why, can he blend with her vision of him as being spiritual and clear?

2. How, if at all, does La Belle Dame Sans Merci allow the reader to experience Negative Capability? Consider the possible readings of "She looked at me as she did love," or "And sure in language strange she said—I love thee true."

3. Why, of all the gods and goddesses in Greek mythology, does Keats "worship" Psyche?

4. How, if at all, and why does Keats make myths with his own poetry? Consider the new mythical tale he gives of Cupid and Psyche. Consider the song of the nightingale that is heard through the corridors of the past to the present, a past and present that is both sad and happy.

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## 1.14 MARY SHELLEY

(1797-1851)

Mary Shelley was born to important writers and philosophers, Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. Mary Wollstonecraft died soon after Mary was born. She grew up in her father's care along with her half-sister, Fanny Imlay (1794-1816), and, after Godwin's marriage to Mary Jane Clairmont (1766-1841), her stepsister Jane (known as Claire). Claire received a formal education; however, Mary educated herself, mainly through reading her father's many books. She early showed literary aspirations, publishing a poem entitled "Mounseer Nongtongpaw" when she was only ten. She also showed a remarkable independence of spirit by eloping with Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1814. Although Percy Bysshe's wife Harriet refused to join them in this elopement, Mary's stepsister Claire did not refuse to do so.

Image 1.26 | Portrait of Mary Shelley

Artist | Richard Rothwell Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



They led an itinerant life throughout Europe, struggling both financially and emotionally as they lost their first child in 1815 and then their second in 1816. For a summer, they stayed in Switzerland along with Lord Byron and the physician John Polidori (1795-1821). Byron challenged each of them to write a frightening story, and Mary met that challenge with Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus. In the preface to the second edition of this novel, Mary wrote that she dreamt almost in its entirety the moment when the student of "unhallowed arts" brings to life the creature—assembled of body parts selected for their beauty—in a convulsive moment. She awoke from this dream, frightened, and decided that if it frightened her, then it would likely frighten her housemates.

Mary learned of two suicides while she worked on this novel. Her sister Fanny poisoned herself with an overdose of laudanum after suffering years of domestic tension with her father and stepmother. Harriet Shelley drowned herself, perhaps despondent over her out-of-wedlock pregnancy with an unknown man (supposed to be a military officer). A birth also occurred, that of Byron's daughter Allegra with Claire Clairmont. Byron agreed to see to Allegra's upbringing provided that he never have anything more to do with the child's mother. Unsurprisingly, Mary's novel explores not only bringing the dead to life (or "giving birth" without a mother) but also the family's role in a child's rearing, good and bad parenting, and the "making" of a monster through nurture—bad nurturing—rather than the "monstrosity" being attributable to nature.

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Mary and Percy Bysshe married after Harriet's death. They had four children, only one of whom, Percy Florence (1819-1889), survived to adulthood. As a family, the Shelleys were not entirely happy. Percy Bysshe remained unconstrained by conventions and had several affairs with various women, including Claire. After the early deaths of her daughter Clara (1818) and son William (1818), Mary became increasingly depressed and isolated, only recovering with the birth of Percy Florence.

Percy Bysshe drowned in 1822. As a single mother, Mary received some support from Percy Bysshe's father, though he refused to meet Mary in person. Percy Florence inherited the family estate upon Sir Timothy's death in 1844. Mary thereafter dedicated herself to building and protecting Percy Bysshe's literary reputation. And she wrote several works, including travelogues, novels, and plays. Her writing advances and advocates for women's roles not only in the family but also in society, challenging the patriarchy and misogyny current in her time.

Image 1.27 | The Nightmare

Artist | Henry Fuseli

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### 1.14.1 From Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus

Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay To mould Me man? Did I solicit thee From darkness to promote me?— Paradise Lost (X. 743-5)

Letter 1

To Mrs. Saville, England

St. Petersburgh, Dec. 11th, 17-

You will rejoice to hear that no disaster has accompanied the commencement of an enterprise which you have regarded with such evil forebodings. I arrived here yesterday, and my first task is to assure my dear sister of my welfare and increasing confidence in the success of my undertaking.

I am already far north of London, and as I walk in the streets of Petersburgh, I feel a cold northern breeze play upon my cheeks, which braces my nerves and fills me with delight. Do you understand this feeling? This breeze, which has travelled from the regions towards which I am advancing, gives me a foretaste of those icy climes. Inspirited by this wind of promise, my daydreams become more fervent and vivid. I try in vain to be persuaded that the pole is the seat of frost and desolation; it ever presents itself to my imagination as the region of beauty and delight. There, Margaret, the sun is forever visible, its broad disk just skirting the horizon and diffusing a perpetual splendour. There—for with your leave, my sister, I will put some trust in preceding navigators—there snow and frost are banished; and, sailing over a calm sea, we may be wafted to a land surpassing in wonders and in beauty every region hitherto discovered on the habitable globe. Its productions and features may be without example, as the phenomena of the heavenly bodies undoubtedly are in those undiscovered solitudes. What may not be expected in a country of eternal light? I may there discover the wondrous power which attracts the needle and may regulate a thousand celestial observations that require only this voyage to render their seeming eccentricities consistent forever. I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited, and may tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man. These are my enticements, and they are sufficient to conquer all fear of danger or death and to induce me to commence this laborious voyage with the joy a child feels when he embarks in a little boat, with his holiday mates, on an expedition of discovery up his native river. But supposing all these conjectures to be false, you cannot contest the inestimable benefit which I shall confer on all mankind, to the last generation, by discovering a passage near the pole to those countries, to reach which at present so many months are requisite; or by ascertaining the secret of the magnet, which, if at all possible, can only be effected by an undertaking such as mine.

These reflections have dispelled the agitation with which I began my letter, and I feel my heart glow with an enthusiasm which elevates me to heaven, for nothing

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contributes so much to tranquillize the mind as a steady purpose—a point on which the soul may fix its intellectual eye. This expedition has been the favourite dream of my early years. I have read with ardour the accounts of the various voyages which have been made in the prospect of arriving at the North Pacific Ocean through the seas which surround the pole. You may remember that a history of all the voyages made for purposes of discovery composed the whole of our good Uncle Thomas' library. My education was neglected, yet I was passionately fond of reading. These volumes were my study day and night, and my familiarity with them increased that regret which I had felt, as a child, on learning that my father's dying injunction had forbidden my uncle to allow me to embark in a seafaring life.

These visions faded when I perused, for the first time, those poets whose effusions entranced my soul and lifted it to heaven. I also became a poet and for one year lived in a paradise of my own creation; I imagined that I also might obtain a niche in the temple where the names of Homer and Shakespeare are consecrated. You are well acquainted with my failure and how heavily I bore the disappointment. But just at that time I inherited the fortune of my cousin, and my thoughts were turned into the channel of their earlier bent.

Six years have passed since I resolved on my present undertaking. I can, even now, remember the hour from which I dedicated myself to this great enterprise. I commenced by inuring my body to hardship. I accompanied the whale-fishers on several expeditions to the North Sea; I voluntarily endured cold, famine, thirst, and want of sleep; I often worked harder than the common sailors during the day and devoted my nights to the study of mathematics, the theory of medicine, and those branches of physical science from which a naval adventurer might derive the greatest practical advantage. Twice I actually hired myself as an under-mate in a Greenland whaler, and acquitted myself to admiration. I must own I felt a little proud when my captain offered me the second dignity in the vessel and entreated me to remain with the greatest earnestness, so valuable did he consider my services. And now, dear Margaret, do I not deserve to accomplish some great purpose? My life might have been passed in ease and luxury, but I preferred glory to every enticement that wealth placed in my path. Oh, that some encouraging voice would answer in the affirmative! My courage and my resolution is firm; but my hopes fluctuate, and my spirits are often depressed. I am about to proceed on a long and difficult voyage, the emergencies of which will demand all my fortitude: I am required not only to raise the spirits of others, but sometimes to sustain my own, when theirs are failing.

This is the most favourable period for travelling in Russia. They fly quickly over the snow in their sledges; the motion is pleasant, and, in my opinion, far more agreeable than that of an English stagecoach. The cold is not excessive, if you are wrapped in furs—a dress which I have already adopted, for there is a great difference between walking the deck and remaining seated motionless for hours, when no exercise prevents the blood from actually freezing in your veins. I have no ambition to lose my life on the post-road between St. Petersburgh and

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Archangel. I shall depart for the latter town in a fortnight or three weeks; and my intention is to hire a ship there, which can easily be done by paying the insurance for the owner, and to engage as many sailors as I think necessary among those who are accustomed to the whale-fishing. I do not intend to sail until the month of June; and when shall I return? Ah, dear sister, how can I answer this question? If I succeed, many, many months, perhaps years, will pass before you and I may meet. If I fail, you will see me again soon, or never. Farewell, my dear, excellent Margaret. Heaven shower down blessings on you, and save me, that I may again and again testify my gratitude for all your love and kindness.

Your affectionate brother, R. Walton

Letter 2

To Mrs. Saville, England Archangel, 28th March, 17-

How slowly the time passes here, encompassed as I am by frost and snow! Yet a second step is taken towards my enterprise. I have hired a vessel and am occupied in collecting my sailors; those whom I have already engaged appear to be men on whom I can depend and are certainly possessed of dauntless courage.

But I have one want which I have never yet been able to satisfy, and the absence of the object of which I now feel as a most severe evil, I have no friend, Margaret: when I am glowing with the enthusiasm of success, there will be none to participate my joy; if I am assailed by disappointment, no one will endeavour to sustain me in dejection. I shall commit my thoughts to paper, it is true; but that is a poor medium for the communication of feeling. I desire the company of a man who could sympathize with me, whose eyes would reply to mine. You may deem me romantic, my dear sister, but I bitterly feel the want of a friend. I have no one near me, gentle yet courageous, possessed of a cultivated as well as of a capacious mind, whose tastes are like my own, to approve or amend my plans. How would such a friend repair the faults of your poor brother! I am too ardent in execution and too impatient of difficulties. But it is a still greater evil to me that I am self-educated: for the first fourteen years of my life I ran wild on a common and read nothing but our Uncle Thomas' books of voyages. At that age I became acquainted with the celebrated poets of our own country; but it was only when it had ceased to be in my power to derive its most important benefits from such a conviction that I perceived the necessity of becoming acquainted with more languages than that of my native country. Now I am twenty-eight and am in reality more illiterate than many schoolboys of fifteen. It is true that I have thought more and that my daydreams are more extended and magnificent, but they want (as the painters call it) KEEPING; and I greatly need a friend who would have sense enough not to despise me as romantic, and affection enough for me to endeavour to regulate my

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mind. Well, these are useless complaints; I shall certainly find no friend on the wide ocean, nor even here in Archangel, among merchants and seamen. Yet some feelings, unallied to the dross of human nature, beat even in these rugged bosoms. My lieutenant, for instance, is a man of wonderful courage and enterprise; he is madly desirous of glory, or rather, to word my phrase more characteristically, of advancement in his profession. He is an Englishman, and in the midst of national and professional prejudices, unsoftened by cultivation, retains some of the noblest endowments of humanity. I first became acquainted with him on board a whale vessel; finding that he was unemployed in this city, I easily engaged him to assist in my enterprise. The master is a person of an excellent disposition and is remarkable in the ship for his gentleness and the mildness of his discipline. This circumstance, added to his well-known integrity and dauntless courage, made me very desirous to engage him. A youth passed in solitude, my best years spent under your gentle and feminine fosterage, has so refined the groundwork of my character that I cannot overcome an intense distaste to the usual brutality exercised on board ship: I have never believed it to be necessary, and when I heard of a mariner equally noted for his kindliness of heart and the respect and obedience paid to him by his crew, I felt myself peculiarly fortunate in being able to secure his services. I heard of him first in rather a romantic manner, from a lady who owes to him the happiness of her life. This, briefly, is his story. Some years ago he loved a young Russian lady of moderate fortune, and having amassed a considerable sum in prize-money, the father of the girl consented to the match. He saw his mistress once before the destined ceremony; but she was bathed in tears, and throwing herself at his feet, entreated him to spare her, confessing at the same time that she loved another, but that he was poor, and that her father would never consent to the union. My generous friend reassured the suppliant, and on being informed of the name of her lover, instantly abandoned his pursuit. He had already bought a farm with his money, on which he had designed to pass the remainder of his life; but he bestowed the whole on his rival, together with the remains of his prize-money to purchase stock, and then himself solicited the young woman's father to consent to her marriage with her lover. But the old man decidedly refused, thinking himself bound in honour to my friend, who, when he found the father inexorable, quitted his country, nor returned until he heard that his former mistress was married according to her inclinations. "What a noble fellow!" you will exclaim. He is so; but then he is wholly uneducated: he is as silent as a Turk, and a kind of ignorant carelessness attends him, which, while it renders his conduct the more astonishing, detracts from the interest and sympathy which otherwise he would command.

Yet do not suppose, because I complain a little or because I can conceive a consolation for my toils which I may never know, that I am wavering in my resolutions. Those are as fixed as fate, and my voyage is only now delayed until the weather shall permit my embarkation. The winter has been dreadfully severe, but the spring promises well, and it is considered as a remarkably early season, so that perhaps I may sail sooner than I expected. I shall do nothing rashly: you know me

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sufficiently to confide in my prudence and considerateness whenever the safety of others is committed to my care.

I cannot describe to you my sensations on the near prospect of my undertaking. It is impossible to communicate to you a conception of the trembling sensation, half pleasurable and half fearful, with which I am preparing to depart. I am going to unexplored regions, to "the land of mist and snow," but I shall kill no albatross; therefore do not be alarmed for my safety or if I should come back to you as worn and woeful as the "Ancient Mariner." You will smile at my allusion, but I will disclose a secret. I have often attributed my attachment to, my passionate enthusiasm for, the dangerous mysteries of ocean to that production of the most imaginative of modern poets. There is something at work in my soul which I do not understand. I am practically industrious—painstaking, a workman to execute with perseverance and labour—but besides this there is a love for the marvellous, a belief in the marvellous, intertwined in all my projects, which hurries me out of the common pathways of men, even to the wild sea and unvisited regions I am about to explore. But to return to dearer considerations. Shall I meet you again, after having traversed immense seas, and returned by the most southern cape of Africa or America? I dare not expect such success, yet I cannot bear to look on the reverse of the picture. Continue for the present to write to me by every opportunity: I may receive your letters on some occasions when I need them most to support my spirits. I love you very tenderly. Remember me with affection, should you never hear from me again.

Your affectionate brother, Robert Walton

Letter 3

To Mrs. Saville, England July 7th, 17-

My dear Sister,

I write a few lines in haste to say that I am safe—and well advanced on my voyage. This letter will reach England by a merchantman now on its homeward voyage from Archangel; more fortunate than I, who may not see my native land, perhaps, for many years. I am, however, in good spirits: my men are bold and apparently firm of purpose, nor do the floating sheets of ice that continually pass us, indicating the dangers of the region towards which we are advancing, appear to dismay them. We have already reached a very high latitude; but it is the height of summer, and although not so warm as in England, the southern gales, which blow us speedily towards those shores which I so ardently desire to attain, breathe a degree of renovating warmth which I had not expected.

No incidents have hitherto befallen us that would make a figure in a letter. One or two stiff gales and the springing of a leak are accidents which experienced

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navigators scarcely remember to record, and I shall be well content if nothing worse happen to us during our voyage.

Adieu, my dear Margaret. Be assured that for my own sake, as well as yours, I will not rashly encounter danger. I will be cool, persevering, and prudent.

But success SHALL crown my endeavours. Wherefore not? Thus far I have gone, tracing a secure way over the pathless seas, the very stars themselves being witnesses and testimonies of my triumph. Why not still proceed over the untamed yet obedient element? What can stop the determined heart and resolved will of man?

My swelling heart involuntarily pours itself out thus. But must finish. Heaven bless my beloved sister!

R.W.

Letter 4

To Mrs. Saville, England August 5th, 17-

So strange an accident has happened to us that I cannot forbear recording it, although it is very probable that you will see me before these papers can come into your possession.

Last Monday (July 31st) we were nearly surrounded by ice, which closed in the ship on all sides, scarcely leaving her the sea-room in which she floated. Our situation was somewhat dangerous, especially as we were compassed round by a very thick fog. We accordingly lay to, hoping that some change would take place in the atmosphere and weather.

About two o'clock the mist cleared away, and we beheld, stretched out in every direction, vast and irregular plains of ice, which seemed to have no end. Some of my comrades groaned, and my own mind began to grow watchful with anxious thoughts, when a strange sight suddenly attracted our attention and diverted our solicitude from our own situation. We perceived a low carriage, fixed on a sledge and drawn by dogs, pass on towards the north, at the distance of half a mile; a being which had the shape of a man, but apparently of gigantic stature, sat in the sledge and guided the dogs. We watched the rapid progress of the traveller with our telescopes until he was lost among the distant inequalities of the ice. This appearance excited our unqualified wonder. We were, as we believed, many hundred miles from any land; but this apparition seemed to denote that it was not, in reality, so distant as we had supposed. Shut in, however, by ice, it was impossible to follow his track, which we had observed with the greatest attention. About two hours after this occurrence we heard the ground sea, and before night the ice broke and freed our ship. We, however, lay to until the morning, fearing to encounter in the dark those large loose masses which float about after the breaking up of the ice. I profited of this time to rest for a few hours.

In the morning, however, as soon as it was light, I went upon deck and found all the sailors busy on one side of the vessel, apparently talking to someone in

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the sea. It was, in fact, a sledge, like that we had seen before, which had drifted towards us in the night on a large fragment of ice. Only one dog remained alive; but there was a human being within it whom the sailors were persuading to enter the vessel. He was not, as the other traveller seemed to be, a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island, but a European. When I appeared on deck the master said, "Here is our captain, and he will not allow you to perish on the open sea."

On perceiving me, the stranger addressed me in English, although with a foreign accent. "Before I come on board your vessel," said he, "will you have the kindness to inform me whither you are bound?"

You may conceive my astonishment on hearing such a question addressed to me from a man on the brink of destruction and to whom I should have supposed that my vessel would have been a resource which he would not have exchanged for the most precious wealth the earth can afford. I replied, however, that we were on a voyage of discovery towards the northern pole.

Upon hearing this he appeared satisfied and consented to come on board. Good God! Margaret, if you had seen the man who thus capitulated for his safety, your surprise would have been boundless. His limbs were nearly frozen, and his body dreadfully emaciated by fatigue and suffering. I never saw a man in so wretched a condition. We attempted to carry him into the cabin, but as soon as he had quitted the fresh air he fainted. We accordingly brought him back to the deck and restored him to animation by rubbing him with brandy and forcing him to swallow a small quantity. As soon as he showed signs of life we wrapped him up in blankets and placed him near the chimney of the kitchen stove. By slow degrees he recovered and ate a little soup, which restored him wonderfully.

Two days passed in this manner before he was able to speak, and I often feared that his sufferings had deprived him of understanding. When he had in some measure recovered, I removed him to my own cabin and attended on him as much as my duty would permit. I never saw a more interesting creature: his eyes have generally an expression of wildness, and even madness, but there are moments when, if anyone performs an act of kindness towards him or does him the most trifling service, his whole countenance is lighted up, as it were, with a beam of benevolence and sweetness that I never saw equalled. But he is generally melancholy and despairing, and sometimes he gnashes his teeth, as if impatient of the weight of woes that oppresses him.

When my guest was a little recovered I had great trouble to keep off the men, who wished to ask him a thousand questions; but I would not allow him to be tormented by their idle curiosity, in a state of body and mind whose restoration evidently depended upon entire repose. Once, however, the lieutenant asked why he had come so far upon the ice in so strange a vehicle.

His countenance instantly assumed an aspect of the deepest gloom, and he replied, "To seek one who fled from me."

"And did the man whom you pursued travel in the same fashion?"

"Yes."

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"Then I fancy we have seen him, for the day before we picked you up we saw some dogs drawing a sledge, with a man in it, across the ice."

This aroused the stranger's attention, and he asked a multitude of questions concerning the route which the demon, as he called him, had pursued. Soon after, when he was alone with me, he said, "I have, doubtless, excited your curiosity, as well as that of these good people; but you are too considerate to make inquiries."

"Certainly; it would indeed be very impertinent and inhuman in me to trouble you with any inquisitiveness of mine."

"And yet you rescued me from a strange and perilous situation; you have benevolently restored me to life."

Soon after this he inquired if I thought that the breaking up of the ice had destroyed the other sledge. I replied that I could not answer with any degree of certainty, for the ice had not broken until near midnight, and the traveller might have arrived at a place of safety before that time; but of this I could not judge. From this time a new spirit of life animated the decaying frame of the stranger. He manifested the greatest eagerness to be upon deck to watch for the sledge which had before appeared; but I have persuaded him to remain in the cabin, for he is far too weak to sustain the rawness of the atmosphere. I have promised that someone should watch for him and give him instant notice if any new object should appear in sight.

Such is my journal of what relates to this strange occurrence up to the present day. The stranger has gradually improved in health but is very silent and appears uneasy when anyone except myself enters his cabin. Yet his manners are so conciliating and gentle that the sailors are all interested in him, although they have had very little communication with him. For my own part, I begin to love him as a brother, and his constant and deep grief fills me with sympathy and compassion. He must have been a noble creature in his better days, being even now in wreck so attractive and amiable. I said in one of my letters, my dear Margaret, that I should find no friend on the wide ocean; yet I have found a man who, before his spirit had been broken by misery, I should have been happy to have possessed as the brother of my heart.

I shall continue my journal concerning the stranger at intervals, should I have any fresh incidents to record.

August 13th, 17-

My affection for my guest increases every day. He excites at once my admiration and my pity to an astonishing degree. How can I see so noble a creature destroyed by misery without feeling the most poignant grief? He is so gentle, yet so wise; his mind is so cultivated, and when he speaks, although his words are culled with the choicest art, yet they flow with rapidity and unparalleled eloquence. He is now much recovered from his illness and is continually on the deck, apparently watching for the sledge that preceded his own. Yet, although unhappy, he is not so utterly occupied by his own misery but that he interests himself deeply in the projects of

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others. He has frequently conversed with me on mine, which I have communicated to him without disguise. He entered attentively into all my arguments in favour of my eventual success and into every minute detail of the measures I had taken to secure it. I was easily led by the sympathy which he evinced to use the language of my heart, to give utterance to the burning ardour of my soul and to say, with all the fervour that warmed me, how gladly I would sacrifice my fortune, my existence, my every hope, to the furtherance of my enterprise. One man's life or death were but a small price to pay for the acquirement of the knowledge which I sought, for the dominion I should acquire and transmit over the elemental foes of our race. As I spoke, a dark gloom spread over my listener's countenance. At first I perceived that he tried to suppress his emotion; he placed his hands before his eyes, and my voice quivered and failed me as I beheld tears trickle fast from between his fingers; a groan burst from his heaving breast. I paused; at length he spoke, in broken accents: "Unhappy man! Do you share my madness? Have you drunk also of the intoxicating draught? Hear me; let me reveal my tale, and you will dash the cup from your lips!"

Such words, you may imagine, strongly excited my curiosity; but the paroxysm of grief that had seized the stranger overcame his weakened powers, and many hours of repose and tranquil conversation were necessary to restore his composure. Having conquered the violence of his feelings, he appeared to despise himself for being the slave of passion; and quelling the dark tyranny of despair, he led me again to converse concerning myself personally. He asked me the history of my earlier years. The tale was quickly told, but it awakened various trains of reflection. I spoke of my desire of finding a friend, of my thirst for a more intimate sympathy with a fellow mind than had ever fallen to my lot, and expressed my conviction that a man could boast of little happiness who did not enjoy this blessing. "I agree with you," replied the stranger; "we are unfashioned creatures, but half made up, if one wiser, better, dearer than ourselves—such a friend ought to be—do not lend his aid to perfectionate our weak and faulty natures. I once had a friend, the most noble of human creatures, and am entitled, therefore, to judge respecting friendship. You have hope, and the world before you, and have no cause for despair. But I—I have lost everything and cannot begin life anew."

As he said this his countenance became expressive of a calm, settled grief that touched me to the heart. But he was silent and presently retired to his cabin.

Even broken in spirit as he is, no one can feel more deeply than he does the beauties of nature. The starry sky, the sea, and every sight afforded by these wonderful regions seem still to have the power of elevating his soul from earth. Such a man has a double existence: he may suffer misery and be overwhelmed by disappointments, yet when he has retired into himself, he will be like a celestial spirit that has a halo around him, within whose circle no grief or folly ventures.

Will you smile at the enthusiasm I express concerning this divine wanderer? You would not if you saw him. You have been tutored and refined by books and retirement from the world, and you are therefore somewhat fastidious; but

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this only renders you the more fit to appreciate the extraordinary merits of this wonderful man. Sometimes I have endeavoured to discover what quality it is which he possesses that elevates him so immeasurably above any other person I ever knew. I believe it to be an intuitive discernment, a quick but never-failing power of judgment, a penetration into the causes of things, unequalled for clearness and precision; add to this a facility of expression and a voice whose varied intonations are soul-subduing music.

August 19, 17-

Yesterday the stranger said to me, "You may easily perceive, Captain Walton, that I have suffered great and unparalleled misfortunes. I had determined at one time that the memory of these evils should die with me, but you have won me to alter my determination. You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been. I do not know that the relation of my disasters will be useful to you; yet, when I reflect that you are pursuing the same course, exposing yourself to the same dangers which have rendered me what I am, I imagine that you may deduce an apt moral from my tale, one that may direct you if you succeed in your undertaking and console you in case of failure. Prepare to hear of occurrences which are usually deemed marvellous. Were we among the tamer scenes of nature I might fear to encounter your unbelief, perhaps your ridicule; but many things will appear possible in these wild and mysterious regions which would provoke the laughter of those unacquainted with the ever-varied powers of nature; nor can I doubt but that my tale conveys in its series internal evidence of the truth of the events of which it is composed."

You may easily imagine that I was much gratified by the offered communication, yet I could not endure that he should renew his grief by a recital of his misfortunes. I felt the greatest eagerness to hear the promised narrative, partly from curiosity and partly from a strong desire to ameliorate his fate if it were in my power. I expressed these feelings in my answer.

"I thank you," he replied, "for your sympathy, but it is useless; my fate is nearly fulfilled. I wait but for one event, and then I shall repose in peace. I understand your feeling," continued he, perceiving that I wished to interrupt him; "but you are mistaken, my friend, if thus you will allow me to name you; nothing can alter my destiny; listen to my history, and you will perceive how irrevocably it is determined."

He then told me that he would commence his narrative the next day when I should be at leisure. This promise drew from me the warmest thanks. I have resolved every night, when I am not imperatively occupied by my duties, to record, as nearly as possible in his own words, what he has related during the day. If I should be engaged, I will at least make notes. This manuscript will doubtless afford you the greatest pleasure; but to me, who know him, and who hear it from his own lips—with what interest and sympathy shall I read it in some future day! Even now, as I commence my task, his full-toned voice swells in my ears; his lustrous

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eyes dwell on me with all their melancholy sweetness; I see his thin hand raised in animation, while the lineaments of his face are irradiated by the soul within.

Strange and harrowing must be his story, frightful the storm which embraced the gallant vessel on its course and wrecked it—thus!

Chapter 1

I am by birth a Genevese, and my family is one of the most distinguished of that republic. My ancestors had been for many years counsellors and syndics,1 and my father had filled several public situations with honour and reputation. He was respected by all who knew him for his integrity and indefatigable attention to public business. He passed his younger days perpetually occupied by the affairs of his country; a variety of circumstances had prevented his marrying early, nor was it until the decline of life that he became a husband and the father of a family.

As the circumstances of his marriage illustrate his character, I cannot refrain from relating them. One of his most intimate friends was a merchant who, from a flourishing state, fell, through numerous mischances, into poverty. This man, whose name was Beaufort, was of a proud and unbending disposition and could not bear to live in poverty and oblivion in the same country where he had formerly been distinguished for his rank and magnificence. Having paid his debts, therefore, in the most honourable manner, he retreated with his daughter to the town of Lucerne, where he lived unknown and in wretchedness. My father loved Beaufort with the truest friendship and was deeply grieved by his retreat in these unfortunate circumstances. He bitterly deplored the false pride which led his friend to a conduct so little worthy of the affection that united them. He lost no time in endeavouring to seek him out, with the hope of persuading him to begin the world again through his credit and assistance. Beaufort had taken effectual measures to conceal himself, and it was ten months before my father discovered his abode. Overjoyed at this discovery, he hastened to the house, which was situated in a mean street near the Reuss. But when he entered, misery and despair alone welcomed him. Beaufort had saved but a very small sum of money from the wreck of his fortunes, but it was sufficient to provide him with sustenance for some months, and in the meantime he hoped to procure some respectable employment in a merchant's house. The interval was, consequently, spent in inaction; his grief only became more deep and rankling when he had leisure for reflection, and at length it took so fast hold of his mind that at the end of three months he lay on a bed of sickness, incapable of any exertion.

His daughter attended him with the greatest tenderness, but she saw with despair that their little fund was rapidly decreasing and that there was no other prospect of support. But Caroline Beaufort possessed a mind of an uncommon mould, and her courage rose to support her in her adversity. She procured plain work; she plaited straw and by various means contrived to earn a pittance scarcely sufficient to support life.

1 Municipal magistrates

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Several months passed in this manner. Her father grew worse; her time was more entirely occupied in attending him; her means of subsistence decreased; and in the tenth month her father died in her arms, leaving her an orphan and a beggar. This last blow overcame her, and she knelt by Beaufort's coffin weeping bitterly, when my father entered the chamber. He came like a protecting spirit to the poor girl, who committed herself to his care; and after the interment of his friend he conducted her to Geneva and placed her under the protection of a relation. Two years after this event Caroline became his wife.

There was a considerable difference between the ages of my parents, but this circumstance seemed to unite them only closer in bonds of devoted affection. There was a sense of justice in my father's upright mind which rendered it necessary that he should approve highly to love strongly. Perhaps during former years he had suffered from the late-discovered unworthiness of one beloved and so was disposed to set a greater value on tried worth. There was a show of gratitude and worship in his attachment to my mother, differing wholly from the doting fondness of age, for it was inspired by reverence for her virtues and a desire to be the means of, in some degree, recompensing her for the sorrows she had endured, but which gave inexpressible grace to his behaviour to her. Everything was made to yield to her wishes and her convenience. He strove to shelter her, as a fair exotic is sheltered by the gardener, from every rougher wind and to surround her with all that could tend to excite pleasurable emotion in her soft and benevolent mind. Her health, and even the tranquillity of her hitherto constant spirit, had been shaken by what she had gone through. During the two years that had elapsed previous to their marriage my father had gradually relinquished all his public functions; and immediately after their union they sought the pleasant climate of Italy, and the change of scene and interest attendant on a tour through that land of wonders, as a restorative for her weakened frame.

From Italy they visited Germany and France. I, their eldest child, was born at Naples, and as an infant accompanied them in their rambles. I remained for several years their only child. Much as they were attached to each other, they seemed to draw inexhaustible stores of affection from a very mine of love to bestow them upon me. My mother's tender caresses and my father's smile of benevolent pleasure while regarding me are my first recollections. I was their plaything and their idol, and something better—their child, the innocent and helpless creature bestowed on them by heaven, whom to bring up to good, and whose future lot it was in their hands to direct to happiness or misery, according as they fulfilled their duties towards me. With this deep consciousness of what they owed towards the being to which they had given life, added to the active spirit of tenderness that animated both, it may be imagined that while during every hour of my infant life I received a lesson of patience, of charity, and of self-control, I was so guided by a silken cord that all seemed but one train of enjoyment to me.

For a long time I was their only care. My mother had much desired to have a daughter, but I continued their single offspring. When I was about five years old,

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while making an excursion beyond the frontiers of Italy, they passed a week on the shores of the Lake of Como. Their benevolent disposition often made them enter the cottages of the poor. This, to my mother, was more than a duty; it was a necessity, a passion—remembering what she had suffered, and how she had been relieved—for her to act in her turn the guardian angel to the afflicted. During one of their walks a poor cot in the foldings of a vale attracted their notice as being singularly disconsolate, while the number of half-clothed children gathered about it spoke of penury in its worst shape. One day, when my father had gone by himself to Milan, my mother, accompanied by me, visited this abode. She found a peasant and his wife, hard working, bent down by care and labour, distributing a scanty meal to five hungry babes. Among these there was one which attracted my mother far above all the rest. She appeared of a different stock. The four others were dark-eyed, hardy little vagrants; this child was thin and very fair. Her hair was the brightest living gold, and despite the poverty of her clothing, seemed to set a crown of distinction on her head. Her brow was clear and ample, her blue eyes cloudless, and her lips and the moulding of her face so expressive of sensibility and sweetness that none could behold her without looking on her as of a distinct species, a being heaven-sent, and bearing a celestial stamp in all her features.

The peasant woman, perceiving that my mother fixed eyes of wonder and admiration on this lovely girl, eagerly communicated her history. She was not her child, but the daughter of a Milanese nobleman. Her mother was a German and had died on giving her birth. The infant had been placed with these good people to nurse: they were better off then. They had not been long married, and their eldest child was but just born. The father of their charge was one of those Italians nursed in the memory of the antique glory of Italy—one among the schiavi ognor frementi,2 who exerted himself to obtain the liberty of his country. He became the victim of its weakness. Whether he had died or still lingered in the dungeons of Austria was not known. His property was confiscated; his child became an orphan and a beggar. She continued with her foster parents and bloomed in their rude abode, fairer than a garden rose among dark-leaved brambles.

When my father returned from Milan, he found playing with me in the hall of our villa a child fairer than a pictured cherub—a creature who seemed to shed radiance from her looks and whose form and motions were lighter than the chamois of the hills. The apparition was soon explained. With his permission my mother prevailed on her rustic guardians to yield their charge to her. They were fond of the sweet orphan. Her presence had seemed a blessing to them, but it would be unfair to her to keep her in poverty and want when Providence afforded her such powerful protection. They consulted their village priest, and the result was that Elizabeth Lavenza became the inmate of my parents' house—my more than sister— the beautiful and adored companion of all my occupations and my pleasures.

Everyone loved Elizabeth. The passionate and almost reverential attachment with which all regarded her became, while I shared it, my pride and my delight.

2 always restless slaves

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On the evening previous to her being brought to my home, my mother had said playfully, "I have a pretty present for my Victor—tomorrow he shall have it." And when, on the morrow, she presented Elizabeth to me as her promised gift, I, with childish seriousness, interpreted her words literally and looked upon Elizabeth as mine—mine to protect, love, and cherish. All praises bestowed on her I received as made to a possession of my own. We called each other familiarly by the name of cousin. No word, no expression could body forth the kind of relation in which she stood to me—my more than sister, since till death she was to be mine only.

Chapter 2

We were brought up together; there was not quite a year difference in our ages. I need not say that we were strangers to any species of disunion or dispute. Harmony was the soul of our companionship, and the diversity and contrast that subsisted in our characters drew us nearer together. Elizabeth was of a calmer and more concentrated disposition; but, with all my ardour, I was capable of a more intense application and was more deeply smitten with the thirst for knowledge. She busied herself with following the aerial creations of the poets; and in the majestic and wondrous scenes which surrounded our Swiss home—the sublime shapes of the mountains, the changes of the seasons, tempest and calm, the silence of winter, and the life and turbulence of our Alpine summers—she found ample scope for admiration and delight. While my companion contemplated with a serious and satisfied spirit the magnificent appearances of things, I delighted in investigating their causes. The world was to me a secret which I desired to divine. Curiosity, earnest research to learn the hidden laws of nature, gladness akin to rapture, as they were unfolded to me, are among the earliest sensations I can remember.

On the birth of a second son, my junior by seven years, my parents gave up entirely their wandering life and fixed themselves in their native country. We possessed a house in Geneva, and a campagne3 on Belrive, the eastern shore of the lake, at the distance of rather more than a league from the city. We resided principally in the latter, and the lives of my parents were passed in considerable seclusion. It was my temper to avoid a crowd and to attach myself fervently to a few. I was indifferent, therefore, to my school-fellows in general; but I united myself in the bonds of the closest friendship to one among them. Henry Clerval was the son of a merchant of Geneva. He was a boy of singular talent and fancy. He loved enterprise, hardship, and even danger for its own sake. He was deeply read in books of chivalry and romance. He composed heroic songs and began to write many a tale of enchantment and knightly adventure. He tried to make us act plays and to enter into masquerades, in which the characters were drawn from the heroes of Roncesvalles, of the Round Table of King Arthur, and the chivalrous train who shed their blood to redeem the holy sepulchre from the hands of the infidels.

3 country place

No human being could have passed a happier childhood than myself. My parents were possessed by the very spirit of kindness and indulgence. We felt that

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they were not the tyrants to rule our lot according to their caprice, but the agents and creators of all the many delights which we enjoyed. When I mingled with other families I distinctly discerned how peculiarly fortunate my lot was, and gratitude assisted the development of filial love.

My temper was sometimes violent, and my passions vehement; but by some law in my temperature4 they were turned not towards childish pursuits but to an eager desire to learn, and not to learn all things indiscriminately. I confess that neither the structure of languages, nor the code of governments, nor the politics of various states possessed attractions for me. It was the secrets of heaven and earth that I desired to learn; and whether it was the outward substance of things or the inner spirit of nature and the mysterious soul of man that occupied me, still my inquiries were directed to the metaphysical, or in it highest sense, the physical secrets of the world.

Meanwhile Clerval occupied himself, so to speak, with the moral relations of things. The busy stage of life, the virtues of heroes, and the actions of men were his theme; and his hope and his dream was to become one among those whose names are recorded in story as the gallant and adventurous benefactors of our species. The saintly soul of Elizabeth shone like a shrine-dedicated lamp in our peaceful home. Her sympathy was ours; her smile, her soft voice, the sweet glance of her celestial eyes, were ever there to bless and animate us. She was the living spirit of love to soften and attract; I might have become sullen in my study, through the ardour of my nature, but that she was there to subdue me to a semblance of her own gentleness. And Clerval—could aught ill entrench on the noble spirit of Clerval? Yet he might not have been so perfectly humane, so thoughtful in his generosity, so full of kindness and tenderness amidst his passion for adventurous exploit, had she not unfolded to him the real loveliness of beneficence and made the doing good the end and aim of his soaring ambition.

I feel exquisite pleasure in dwelling on the recollections of childhood, before misfortune had tainted my mind and changed its bright visions of extensive usefulness into gloomy and narrow reflections upon self. Besides, in drawing the picture of my early days, I also record those events which led, by insensible steps, to my after tale of misery, for when I would account to myself for the birth of that passion which afterwards ruled my destiny I find it arise, like a mountain river, from ignoble and almost forgotten sources; but, swelling as it proceeded, it became the torrent which, in its course, has swept away all my hopes and joys.

4 temperament

5 Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535), author of De occulta philosophia, in which he claimed that the study of magic was the best means to know God and nature.

Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate; I desire, therefore, in this narration, to state those facts which led to my predilection for that science. When I was thirteen years of age we all went on a party of pleasure to the baths near Thonon; the inclemency of the weather obliged us to remain a day confined to the inn. In this house I chanced to find a volume of the works of Cornelius Agrippa.5 I

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opened it with apathy; the theory which he attempts to demonstrate and the wonderful facts which he relates soon changed this feeling into enthusiasm. A new light seemed to dawn upon my mind, and bounding with joy, I communicated my discovery to my father. My father looked carelessly at the title page of my book and said, "Ah! Cornelius Agrippa! My dear Victor, do not waste your time upon this; it is sad trash."

If, instead of this remark, my father had taken the pains to explain to me that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded and that a modern system of science had been introduced which possessed much greater powers than the ancient, because the powers of the latter were chimerical, while those of the former were real and practical, under such circumstances I should certainly have thrown Agrippa aside and have contented my imagination, warmed as it was, by returning with greater ardour to my former studies. It is even possible that the train of my ideas would never have received the fatal impulse that led to my ruin. But the cursory glance my father had taken of my volume by no means assured me that he was acquainted with its contents, and I continued to read with the greatest avidity.

When I returned home my first care was to procure the whole works of this author, and afterwards of Paracelsus and Albertus Magnus.6 I read and studied the wild fancies of these writers with delight; they appeared to me treasures known to few besides myself. I have described myself as always having been imbued with a fervent longing to penetrate the secrets of nature. In spite of the intense labour and wonderful discoveries of modern philosophers, I always came from my studies discontented and unsatisfied. Sir Isaac Newton is said to have avowed that he felt like a child picking up shells beside the great and unexplored ocean of truth. Those of his successors in each branch of natural philosophy with whom I was acquainted appeared even to my boy's apprehensions as tyros engaged in the same pursuit.

The untaught peasant beheld the elements around him and was acquainted with their practical uses. The most learned philosopher knew little more. He had partially unveiled the face of Nature, but her immortal lineaments were still a wonder and a mystery. He might dissect, anatomize, and give names; but, not to speak of a final cause, causes in their secondary and tertiary grades were utterly unknown to him. I had gazed upon the fortifications and impediments that seemed to keep human beings from entering the citadel of nature, and rashly and ignorantly I had repined.

6 Paracelsus (1493-1541), or Theophrastus Bombastus Hohenheim, was a Swiss alchemist and physician; Albertus Magnus (1193?-128o) was a philosopher and natural scientist.

But here were books, and here were men who had penetrated deeper and knew more. I took their word for all that they averred, and I became their disciple. It may appear strange that such should arise in the eighteenth century; but while I followed the routine of education in the schools of Geneva, I was, to a great degree, self-taught with regard to my favourite studies. My father was not scientific, and I was left to struggle with a child's blindness, added to a student's thirst for knowledge. Under the guidance of my new preceptors I entered with the greatest

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diligence into the search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life; but the latter soon obtained my undivided attention. Wealth was an inferior object, but what glory would attend the discovery if I could banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death!

Nor were these my only visions. The raising of ghosts or devils was a promise liberally accorded by my favourite authors, the fulfillment of which I most eagerly sought; and if my incantations were always unsuccessful, I attributed the failure rather to my own inexperience and mistake than to a want of skill or fidelity in my instructors. And thus for a time I was occupied by exploded systems, mingling, like an unadept, a thousand contradictory theories and floundering desperately in a very slough of multifarious knowledge, guided by an ardent imagination and childish reasoning, till an accident again changed the current of my ideas.

When I was about fifteen years old we had retired to our house near Belrive, when we witnessed a most violent and terrible thunderstorm. It advanced from behind the mountains of Jura, and the thunder burst at once with frightful loudness from various quarters of the heavens. I remained, while the storm lasted, watching its progress with curiosity and delight. As I stood at the door, on a sudden I beheld a stream of fire issue from an old and beautiful oak which stood about twenty yards from our house; and so soon as the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared, and nothing remained but a blasted stump. When we visited it the next morning, we found the tree shattered in a singular manner. It was not splintered by the shock, but entirely reduced to thin ribbons of wood. I never beheld anything so utterly destroyed.

Before this I was not unacquainted with the more obvious laws of electricity. On this occasion a man of great research in natural philosophy was with us, and excited by this catastrophe, he entered on the explanation of a theory which he had formed on the subject of electricity and galvanism, which was at once new and astonishing to me. All that he said threw greatly into the shade Cornelius Agrippa, Albertus Magnus, and Paracelsus, the lords of my imagination; but by some fatality the overthrow of these men disinclined me to pursue my accustomed studies. It seemed to me as if nothing would or could ever be known. All that had so long engaged my attention suddenly grew despicable. By one of those caprices of the mind which we are perhaps most subject to in early youth, I at once gave up my former occupations, set down natural history and all its progeny as a deformed and abortive creation, and entertained the greatest disdain for a would-be science which could never even step within the threshold of real knowledge. In this mood of mind I betook myself to the mathematics and the branches of study appertaining to that science as being built upon secure foundations, and so worthy of my consideration.

Thus strangely are our souls constructed, and by such slight ligaments are we bound to prosperity or ruin. When I look back, it seems to me as if this almost miraculous change of inclination and will was the immediate suggestion of the guardian angel of my life—the last effort made by the spirit of preservation to

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avert the storm that was even then hanging in the stars and ready to envelop me. Her victory was announced by an unusual tranquillity and gladness of soul which followed the relinquishing of my ancient and latterly tormenting studies. It was thus that I was to be taught to associate evil with their prosecution, happiness with their disregard.

It was a strong effort of the spirit of good, but it was ineffectual. Destiny was too potent, and her immutable laws had decreed my utter and terrible destruction.

Chapter 3

When I had attained the age of seventeen my parents resolved that I should become a student at the university of Ingolstadt. I had hitherto attended the schools of Geneva, but my father thought it necessary for the completion of my education that I should be made acquainted with other customs than those of my native country. My departure was therefore fixed at an early date, but before the day solved upon could arrive, the first misfortune of my life occurred—an omen, as it were, of my future misery.

Elizabeth had caught the scarlet fever; her illness was severe, and she was in the greatest danger. During her illness many arguments had been urged to persuade my mother to refrain from attending upon her. She had at first yielded to our entreaties, but when she heard that the life of her favourite was menaced, she could no longer control her anxiety. She attended her sickbed; her watchful attentions triumphed over the malignity of the distemper—Elizabeth was saved, but the consequences of this imprudence were fatal to her preserver. On the third day my mother sickened; her fever was accompanied by the most alarming symptoms, and the looks of her medical attendants prognosticated the worst event. On her deathbed the fortitude and benignity of this best of women did not desert her. She joined the hands of Elizabeth and myself. "My children," she said, "my firmest hopes of future happiness were placed on the prospect of your union. This expectation will now be the consolation of your father. Elizabeth, my love, you must supply my place to my younger children. Alas! I regret that I am taken from you; and, happy and beloved as I have been, is it not hard to quit you all? But these are not thoughts befitting me; I will endeavour to resign myself cheerfully to death and will indulge a hope of meeting you in another world."

She died calmly, and her countenance expressed affection even in death. I need not describe the feelings of those whose dearest ties are rent by that most irreparable evil, the void that presents itself to the soul, and the despair that is exhibited on the countenance. It is so long before the mind can persuade itself that she whom we saw every day and whose very existence appeared a part of our own can have departed forever—that the brightness of a beloved eye can have been extinguished and the sound of a voice so familiar and dear to the ear can be hushed, never more to be heard. These are the reflections of the first days; but when the lapse of time proves the reality of the evil, then the actual bitterness of grief commences. Yet from whom has not that rude hand rent away some dear

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connection? And why should I describe a sorrow which all have felt, and must feel? The time at length arrives when grief is rather an indulgence than a necessity; and the smile that plays upon the lips, although it may be deemed a sacrilege, is not banished. My mother was dead, but we had still duties which we ought to perform; we must continue our course with the rest and learn to think ourselves fortunate whilst one remains whom the spoiler has not seized.

My departure for Ingolstadt, which had been deferred by these events, was now again determined upon. I obtained from my father a respite of some weeks. It appeared to me sacrilege so soon to leave the repose, akin to death, of the house of mourning and to rush into the thick of life. I was new to sorrow, but it did not the less alarm me. I was unwilling to quit the sight of those that remained to me, and above all, I desired to see my sweet Elizabeth in some degree consoled.

She indeed veiled her grief and strove to act the comforter to us all. She looked steadily on life and assumed its duties with courage and zeal. She devoted herself to those whom she had been taught to call her uncle and cousins. Never was she so enchanting as at this time, when she recalled the sunshine of her smiles and spent them upon us. She forgot even her own regret in her endeavours to make us forget.

The day of my departure at length arrived. Clerval spent the last evening with us. He had endeavoured to persuade his father to permit him to accompany me and to become my fellow student, but in vain. His father was a narrow-minded trader, and saw idleness and ruin in the aspirations and ambition of his son. Henry deeply felt the misfortune of being debarred from a liberal education. He said little, but when he spoke I read in his kindling eye and in his animated glance a restrained but firm resolve not to be chained to the miserable details of commerce.

We sat late. We could not tear ourselves away from each other nor persuade ourselves to say the word "Farewell!" It was said, and we retired under the pretence of seeking repose, each fancying that the other was deceived; but when at morning's dawn I descended to the carriage which was to convey me away, they were all there—my father again to bless me, Clerval to press my hand once more, my Elizabeth to renew her entreaties that I would write often and to bestow the last feminine attentions on her playmate and friend.

I threw myself into the chaise that was to convey me away and indulged in the most melancholy reflections. I, who had ever been surrounded by amiable companions, continually engaged in endeavouring to bestow mutual pleasure—I was now alone. In the university whither I was going I must form my own friends and be my own protector. My life had hitherto been remarkably secluded and domestic, and this had given me invincible repugnance to new countenances. I loved my brothers, Elizabeth, and Clerval; these were "old familiar faces," but I believed myself totally unfitted for the company of strangers. Such were my reflections as I commenced my journey; but as I proceeded, my spirits and hopes rose. I ardently desired the acquisition of knowledge. I had often, when at home, thought it hard to remain during my youth cooped up in one place and had longed

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to enter the world and take my station among other human beings. Now my desires were complied with, and it would, indeed, have been folly to repent.

I had sufficient leisure for these and many other reflections during my journey to Ingolstadt, which was long and fatiguing. At length the high white steeple of the town met my eyes. I alighted and was conducted to my solitary apartment to spend the evening as I pleased.

The next morning I delivered my letters of introduction and paid a visit to some of the principal professors. Chance—or rather the evil influence, the Angel of Destruction, which asserted omnipotent sway over me from the moment I turned my reluctant steps from my father's door—led me first to M. Krempe, professor of natural philosophy. He was an uncouth man, but deeply imbued in the secrets of his science. He asked me several questions concerning my progress in the different branches of science appertaining to natural philosophy. I replied carelessly, and partly in contempt, mentioned the names of my alchemists as the principal authors I had studied. The professor stared. "Have you," he said, "really spent your time in studying such nonsense?"

I replied in the affirmative. "Every minute," continued M. Krempe with warmth, "every instant that you have wasted on those books is utterly and entirely lost. You have burdened your memory with exploded systems and useless names. Good God! In what desert land have you lived, where no one was kind enough to inform you that these fancies which you have so greedily imbibed are a thousand years old and as musty as they are ancient? I little expected, in this enlightened and scientific age, to find a disciple of Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus. My dear sir, you must begin your studies entirely anew."

So saying, he stepped aside and wrote down a list of several books treating of natural philosophy which he desired me to procure, and dismissed me after mentioning that in the beginning of the following week he intended to commence a course of lectures upon natural philosophy in its general relations, and that M. Waldman, a fellow professor, would lecture upon chemistry the alternate days that he omitted.

I returned home not disappointed, for I have said that I had long considered those authors useless whom the professor reprobated; but I returned not at all the more inclined to recur to these studies in any shape. M. Krempe was a little squat man with a gruff voice and a repulsive countenance; the teacher, therefore, did not prepossess me in favour of his pursuits. In rather a too philosophical and connected a strain, perhaps, I have given an account of the conclusions I had come to concerning them in my early years. As a child I had not been content with the results promised by the modern professors of natural science. With a confusion of ideas only to be accounted for by my extreme youth and my want of a guide on such matters, I had retrod the steps of knowledge along the paths of time and exchanged the discoveries of recent inquirers for the dreams of forgotten alchemists. Besides, I had a contempt for the uses of modern natural philosophy. It was very different when the masters of the science sought immortality and power; such views,

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although futile, were grand; but now the scene was changed. The ambition of the inquirer seemed to limit itself to the annihilation of those visions on which my interest in science was chiefly founded. I was required to exchange chimeras of boundless grandeur for realities of little worth.

Such were my reflections during the first two or three days of my residence at Ingolstadt, which were chiefly spent in becoming acquainted with the localities and the principal residents in my new abode. But as the ensuing week commenced, I thought of the information which M. Krempe had given me concerning the lectures. And although I could not consent to go and hear that little conceited fellow deliver sentences out of a pulpit, I recollected what he had said of M. Waldman, whom I had never seen, as he had hitherto been out of town.

Partly from curiosity and partly from idleness, I went into the lecturing room, which M. Waldman entered shortly after. This professor was very unlike his colleague. He appeared about fifty years of age, but with an aspect expressive of the greatest benevolence; a few grey hairs covered his temples, but those at the back of his head were nearly black. His person was short but remarkably erect and his voice the sweetest I had ever heard. He began his lecture by a recapitulation of the history of chemistry and the various improvements made by different men of learning, pronouncing with fervour the names of the most distinguished discoverers. He then took a cursory view of the present state of the science and explained many of its elementary terms. After having made a few preparatory experiments, he concluded with a panegyric upon modern chemistry, the terms of which I shall never forget:—

"The ancient teachers of this science," said he, "promised impossibilities and performed nothing. The modern masters promise very little; they know that metals cannot be transmuted and that the elixir of life is a chimera but these philosophers, whose hands seem only made to dabble in dirt, and their eyes to pore over the microscope or crucible, have indeed performed miracles. They penetrate into the recesses of nature and show how she works in her hiding-places. They ascend into the heavens; they have discovered how the blood circulates, and the nature of the air we breathe. They have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world with its own shadows."

Such were the professor's words—rather let me say such the words of the fate— enounced to destroy me. As he went on I felt as if my soul were grappling with a palpable enemy; one by one the various keys were touched which formed the mechanism of my being; chord after chord was sounded, and soon my mind was filled with one thought, one conception, one purpose. So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein—more, far more, will I achieve; treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation.

I closed not my eyes that night. My internal being was in a state of insurrection and turmoil; I felt that order would thence arise, but I had no power to produce it.

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By degrees, after the morning's dawn, sleep came. I awoke, and my yesternight's thoughts were as a dream. There only remained a resolution to return to my ancient studies and to devote myself to a science for which I believed myself to possess a natural talent. On the same day I paid M. Waldman a visit. His manners in private were even more mild and attractive than in public, for there was a certain dignity in his mien during his lecture which in his own house was replaced by the greatest affability and kindness. I gave him pretty nearly the same account of my former pursuits as I had given to his fellow professor. He heard with attention the little narration concerning my studies and smiled at the names of Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus, but without the contempt that M. Krempe had exhibited. He said that "These were men to whose indefatigable zeal modern philosophers were indebted for most of the foundations of their knowledge. They had left to us, as an easier task, to give new names and arrange in connected classifications the facts which they in a great degree had been the instruments of bringing to light. The labours of men of genius, however erroneously directed, scarcely ever fail in ultimately turning to the solid advantage of mankind." I listened to his statement, which was delivered without any presumption or affectation, and then added that his lecture had removed my prejudices against modern chemists; I expressed myself in measured terms, with the modesty and deference due from a youth to his instructor, without letting escape (inexperience in life would have made me ashamed) any of the enthusiasm which stimulated my intended labours. I requested his advice concerning the books I ought to procure.

"I am happy," said M. Waldman, "to have gained a disciple; and if your application equals your ability, I have no doubt of your success. Chemistry is that branch of natural philosophy in which the greatest improvements have been and may be made; it is on that account that I have made it my peculiar study; but at the same time, I have not neglected the other branches of science. A man would make but a very sorry chemist if he attended to that department of human knowledge alone. If your wish is to become really a man of science and not merely a petty experimentalist, I should advise you to apply to every branch of natural philosophy, including mathematics."

He then took me into his laboratory and explained to me the uses of his various machines, instructing me as to what I ought to procure and promising me the use of his own when I should have advanced far enough in the science not to derange their mechanism. He also gave me the list of books which I had requested, and I took my leave.

Thus ended a day memorable to me; it decided my future destiny. Chapter 4

From this day natural philosophy, and particularly chemistry, in the most comprehensive sense of the term, became nearly my sole occupation. I read with ardour those works, so full of genius and discrimination, which modern inquirers have written on these subjects. I attended the lectures and cultivated

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the acquaintance of the men of science of the university, and I found even in M. Krempe a great deal of sound sense and real information, combined, it is true, with a repulsive physiognomy and manners, but not on that account the less valuable. In M. Waldman I found a true friend. His gentleness was never tinged by dogmatism, and his instructions were given with an air of frankness and good nature that banished every idea of pedantry. In a thousand ways he smoothed for me the path of knowledge and made the most abstruse inquiries clear and facile to my apprehension. My application was at first fluctuating and uncertain; it gained strength as I proceeded and soon became so ardent and eager that the stars often disappeared in the light of morning whilst I was yet engaged in my laboratory.

As I applied so closely, it may be easily conceived that my progress was rapid. My ardour was indeed the astonishment of the students, and my proficiency that of the masters. Professor Krempe often asked me, with a sly smile, how Cornelius Agrippa went on, whilst M. Waldman expressed the most heartfelt exultation in my progress. Two years passed in this manner, during which I paid no visit to Geneva, but was engaged, heart and soul, in the pursuit of some discoveries which I hoped to make. None but those who have experienced them can conceive of the enticements of science. In other studies you go as far as others have gone before you, and there is nothing more to know; but in a scientific pursuit there is continual food for discovery and wonder. A mind of moderate capacity which closely pursues one study must infallibly arrive at great proficiency in that study; and I, who continually sought the attainment of one object of pursuit and was solely wrapped up in this, improved so rapidly that at the end of two years I made some discoveries in the improvement of some chemical instruments, which procured me great esteem and admiration at the university. When I had arrived at this point and had become as well acquainted with the theory and practice of natural philosophy as depended on the lessons of any of the professors at Ingolstadt, my residence there being no longer conducive to my improvements, I thought of returning to my friends and my native town, when an incident happened that protracted my stay.

One of the phenomena which had peculiarly attracted my attention was the structure of the human frame, and, indeed, any animal endued with life. Whence, I often asked myself, did the principle of life proceed? It was a bold question, and one which has ever been considered as a mystery; yet with how many things are we upon the brink of becoming acquainted, if cowardice or carelessness did not restrain our inquiries. I revolved these circumstances in my mind and determined thenceforth to apply myself more particularly to those branches of natural philosophy which relate to physiology. Unless I had been animated by an almost supernatural enthusiasm, my application to this study would have been irksome and almost intolerable. To examine the causes of life, we must first have recourse to death. I became acquainted with the science of anatomy, but this was not sufficient; I must also observe the natural decay and corruption of the human body. In my education my father had taken the greatest precautions that my mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors. I do not ever remember to have trembled

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at a tale of superstition or to have feared the apparition of a spirit. Darkness had no effect upon my fancy, and a churchyard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life, which, from being the seat of beauty and strength, had become food for the worm. Now I was led to examine the cause and progress of this decay and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel-houses. My attention was fixed upon every object the most insupportable to the delicacy of the human feelings. I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted; I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain. I paused, examining and analysing all the minutiae of causation, as exemplified in the change from life to death, and death to life, until from the midst of this darkness a sudden light broke in upon me—a light so brilliant and wondrous, yet so simple, that while I became dizzy with the immensity of the prospect which it illustrated, I was surprised that among so many men of genius who had directed their inquiries towards the same science, that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret.

Remember, I am not recording the vision of a madman. The sun does not more certainly shine in the heavens than that which I now affirm is true. Some miracle might have produced it, yet the stages of the discovery were distinct and probable. After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life; nay, more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter.

The astonishment which I had at first experienced on this discovery soon gave place to delight and rapture. After so much time spent in painful labour, to arrive at once at the summit of my desires was the most gratifying consummation of my toils. But this discovery was so great and overwhelming that all the steps by which I had been progressively led to it were obliterated, and I beheld only the result. What had been the study and desire of the wisest men since the creation of the world was now within my grasp. Not that, like a magic scene, it all opened upon me at once: the information I had obtained was of a nature rather to direct my endeavours so soon as I should point them towards the object of my search than to exhibit that object already accomplished. I was like the Arabian who had been buried with the dead7 and found a passage to life, aided only by one glimmering and seemingly ineffectual light.

I see by your eagerness and the wonder and hope which your eyes express, my friend, that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be; listen patiently until the end of my story, and you will easily perceive why I am reserved upon that subject. I will not lead you on, unguarded and ardent as I then was, to your destruction and infallible misery. Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow.

7 the Arabian . . . dead: a reference to Sinbad the Sailor's Fourth Voyage in The Thousand and One Nights.

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When I found so astonishing a power placed within my hands, I hesitated a long time concerning the manner in which I should employ it. Although I possessed the capacity of bestowing animation, yet to prepare a frame for the reception of it, with all its intricacies of fibres, muscles, and veins, still remained a work of inconceivable difficulty and labour. I doubted at first whether I should attempt the creation of a being like myself, or one of simpler organization; but my imagination was too much exalted by my first success to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complete and wonderful as man. The materials at present within my command hardly appeared adequate to so arduous an undertaking, but I doubted not that I should ultimately succeed. I prepared myself for a multitude of reverses; my operations might be incessantly baffled, and at last my work be imperfect, yet when I considered the improvement which every day takes place in science and mechanics, I was encouraged to hope my present attempts would at least lay the foundations of future success. Nor could I consider the magnitude and complexity of my plan as any argument of its impracticability. It was with these feelings that I began the creation of a human being. As the minuteness of the parts formed a great hindrance to my speed, I resolved, contrary to my first intention, to make the being of a gigantic stature, that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionably large. After having formed this determination and having spent some months in successfully collecting and arranging my materials, I began.

No one can conceive the variety of feelings which bore me onwards, like a hurricane, in the first enthusiasm of success. Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs. Pursuing these reflections, I thought that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time (although I now found it impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption.

These thoughts supported my spirits, while I pursued my undertaking with unremitting ardour. My cheek had grown pale with study, and my person had become emaciated with confinement. Sometimes, on the very brink of certainty, I failed; yet still I clung to the hope which the next day or the next hour might realize. One secret which I alone possessed was the hope to which I had dedicated myself; and the moon gazed on my midnight labours, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness, I pursued nature to her hiding-places. Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? My limbs now tremble, and my eyes swim with the remembrance; but then a resistless and almost frantic impulse urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. It was indeed but a passing trance, that only made me feel with renewed acuteness so soon as, the unnatural stimulus ceasing to operate, I had returned to my old habits. I collected bones from charnel-houses and disturbed, with profane fingers,

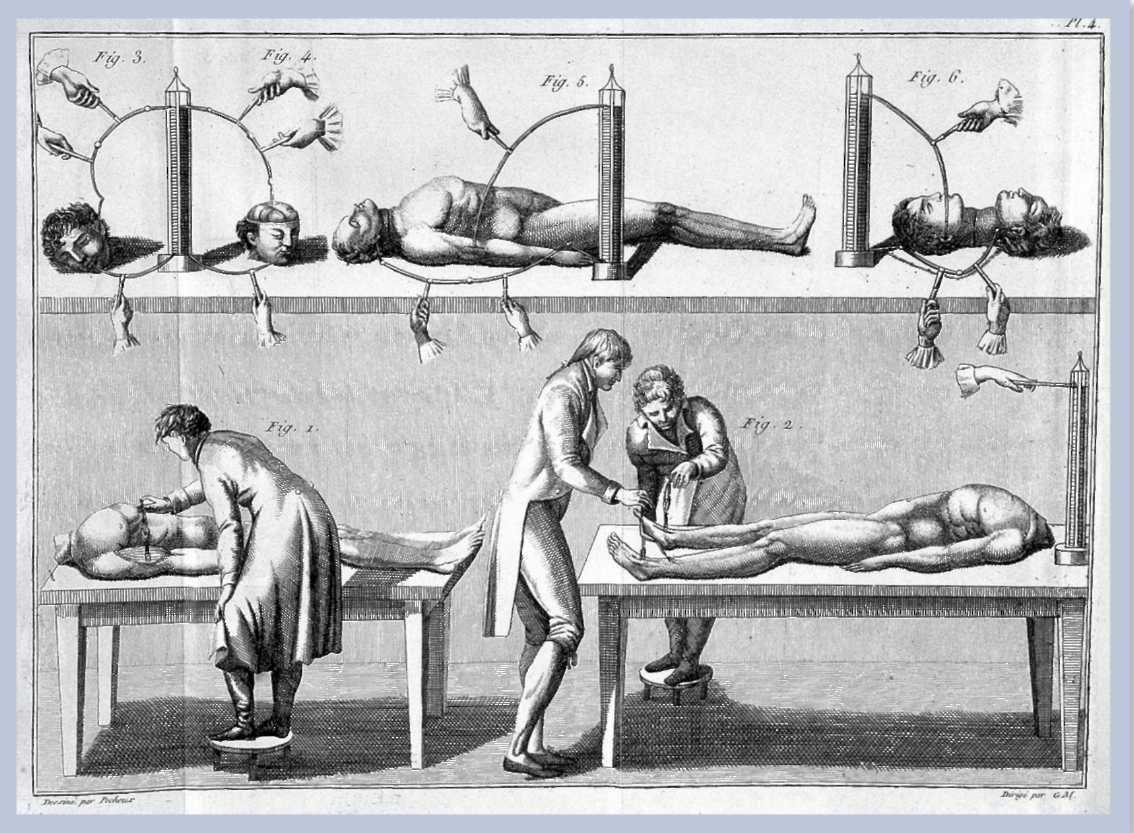
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the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop of filthy creation; my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, whilst, still urged on by an eagerness which perpetually increased, I brought my work near to a conclusion.

The summer months passed while I was thus engaged, heart and soul, in one pursuit. It was a most beautiful season; never did the fields bestow a more plentiful harvest or the vines yield a more luxuriant vintage, but my eyes were insensible to the charms of nature. And the same feelings which made me neglect the scenes around me caused me also to forget those friends who were so many miles absent, and whom I had not seen for so long a time. I knew my silence disquieted them, and I well remembered the words of my father: "I know that while you are pleased with yourself you will think of us with affection, and we shall hear regularly from you. You must pardon me if I regard any interruption in your correspondence as a proof that your other duties are equally neglected."

Image 1.28 | Theoretical and experimental test on galvanism, with a series of experiments.

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I knew well therefore what would be my father's feelings, but I could not tear my thoughts from my employment, loathsome in itself, but which had taken an

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irresistible hold of my imagination. I wished, as it were, to procrastinate all that related to my feelings of affection until the great object, which swallowed up every habit of my nature, should be completed.

I then thought that my father would be unjust if he ascribed my neglect to vice or faultiness on my part, but I am now convinced that he was justified in conceiving that I should not be altogether free from blame. A human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind and never to allow passion or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquillity. I do not think that the pursuit of knowledge is an exception to this rule. If the study to which you apply yourself has a tendency to weaken your affections and to destroy your taste for those simple pleasures in which no alloy can possibly mix, then that study is certainly unlawful, that is to say, not befitting the human mind. If this rule were always observed; if no man allowed any pursuit whatsoever to interfere with the tranquillity of his domestic affections, Greece had not been enslaved, Caesar would have spared his country, America would have been discovered more gradually, and the empires of Mexico and Peru had not been destroyed.

But I forget that I am moralizing in the most interesting part of my tale, and your looks remind me to proceed.

My father made no reproach in his letters and only took notice of my science by inquiring into my occupations more particularly than before. Winter, spring, and summer passed away during my labours; but I did not watch the blossom or the expanding leaves—sights which before always yielded me supreme delight— so deeply was I engrossed in my occupation. The leaves of that year had withered before my work drew near to a close, and now every day showed me more plainly how well I had succeeded. But my enthusiasm was checked by my anxiety, and I appeared rather like one doomed by slavery to toil in the mines, or any other unwholesome trade than an artist occupied by his favourite employment. Every night I was oppressed by a slow fever, and I became nervous to a most painful degree; the fall of a leaf startled me, and I shunned my fellow creatures as if I had been guilty of a crime. Sometimes I grew alarmed at the wreck I perceived that I had become; the energy of my purpose alone sustained me: my labours would soon end, and I believed that exercise and amusement would then drive away incipient disease; and I promised myself both of these when my creation should be complete.

Chapter 5

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

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How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room and continued a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured, and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment; dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for

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so long a space were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

Morning, dismal and wet, at length dawned and discovered to my sleepless and aching eyes the church of Ingolstadt, its white steeple and clock, which indicated the sixth hour. The porter opened the gates of the court, which had that night been my asylum, and I issued into the streets, pacing them with quick steps, as if I sought to avoid the wretch whom I feared every turning of the street would present to my view. I did not dare return to the apartment which I inhabited, but felt impelled to hurry on, although drenched by the rain which poured from a black and comfortless sky.

I continued walking in this manner for some time, endeavouring by bodily exercise to ease the load that weighed upon my mind. I traversed the streets without any clear conception of where I was or what I was doing. My heart palpitated in the sickness of fear, and I hurried on with irregular steps, not daring to look about me:

Like one who, on a lonely road,

Doth walk in fear and dread,

And, having once turned round, walks on,

And turns no more his head;

Because he knows a frightful fiend

Doth close behind him tread.8

8 Coleridge's Ancient Mariner [author's footnote].

Continuing thus, I came at length opposite to the inn at which the various diligences and carriages usually stopped. Here I paused, I knew not why; but I remained some minutes with my eyes fixed on a coach that was coming towards me from the other end of the street. As it drew nearer I observed that it was the Swiss diligence; it stopped just where I was standing, and on the door being opened, I perceived Henry Clerval, who, on seeing me, instantly sprung out. "My dear Frankenstein," exclaimed he, "how glad I am to see you! How fortunate that you should be here at the very moment of my alighting!"

Nothing could equal my delight on seeing Clerval; his presence brought back to my thoughts my father, Elizabeth, and all those scenes of home so dear to my recollection. I grasped his hand, and in a moment forgot my horror and misfortune; I felt suddenly, and for the first time during many months, calm and serene joy. I welcomed my friend, therefore, in the most cordial manner, and we walked towards my college. Clerval continued talking for some time about our mutual friends and his own good fortune in being permitted to come to Ingolstadt. "You may easily believe," said he, "how great was the difficulty to persuade my father that all necessary knowledge was not comprised in the noble art of bookkeeping; and, indeed, I believe I left him incredulous to the last, for his constant answer to my unwearied entreaties was the same as that of the Dutch schoolmaster in The Vicar of Wakefield: 'I have ten thousand florins a year without Greek, I eat

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heartily without Greek.' But his affection for me at length overcame his dislike of learning, and he has permitted me to undertake a voyage of discovery to the land of knowledge."

"It gives me the greatest delight to see you; but tell me how you left my father, brothers, and Elizabeth."

"Very well, and very happy, only a little uneasy that they hear from you so seldom. By the by, I mean to lecture you a little upon their account myself.—But, my dear Frankenstein, continued he, stopping short and gazing full in my face, "I did not before remark how very ill you appear; so thin and pale; you look as if you had been watching for several nights."

"You have guessed right; I have lately been so deeply engaged in one occupation that I have not allowed myself sufficient rest, as you see; but I hope, I sincerely hope, that all these employments are now at an end and that I am at length free."

I trembled excessively; I could not endure to think of, and far less to allude to, the occurrences of the preceding night. I walked with a quick pace, and we soon arrived at my college. I then reflected, and the thought made me shiver, that the creature whom I had left in my apartment might still be there, alive and walking about. I dreaded to behold this monster, but I feared still more that Henry should see him. Entreating him, therefore, to remain a few minutes at the bottom of the stairs, I darted up towards my own room. My hand was already on the lock of the door before I recollected myself. I then paused, and a cold shivering came over me. I threw the door forcibly open, as children are accustomed to do when they expect a spectre to stand in waiting for them on the other side; but nothing appeared. I stepped fearfully in: the apartment was empty, and my bedroom was also freed from its hideous guest. I could hardly believe that so great a good fortune could have befallen me, but when I became assured that my enemy had indeed fled, I clapped my hands for joy and ran down to Clerval.

We ascended into my room, and the servant presently brought breakfast; but I was unable to contain myself. It was not joy only that possessed me; I felt my flesh tingle with excess of sensitiveness, and my pulse beat rapidly. I was unable to remain for a single instant in the same place; I jumped over the chairs, clapped my hands, and laughed aloud. Clerval at first attributed my unusual spirits to joy on his arrival, but when he observed me more attentively, he saw a wildness in my eyes for which he could not account, and my loud, unrestrained, heartless laughter frightened and astonished him.

"My dear Victor," cried he, "what, for God's sake, is the matter? Do not laugh in that manner. How ill you are! What is the cause of all this?"

"Do not ask me," cried I, putting my hands before my eyes, for I thought I saw the dreaded spectre glide into the room; "he can tell. Oh, save me! Save me!" I imagined that the monster seized me; I struggled furiously and fell down in a fit.

Poor Clerval! What must have been his feelings? A meeting, which he anticipated with such joy, so strangely turned to bitterness. But I was not the witness of his grief, for I was lifeless and did not recover my senses for a long, long time.

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This was the commencement of a nervous fever which confined me for several months. During all that time Henry was my only nurse. I afterwards learned that, knowing my father's advanced age and unfitness for so long a journey, and how wretched my sickness would make Elizabeth, he spared them this grief by concealing the extent of my disorder. He knew that I could not have a more kind and attentive nurse than himself; and, firm in the hope he felt of my recovery, he did not doubt that, instead of doing harm, he performed the kindest action that he could towards them.

But I was in reality very ill, and surely nothing but the unbounded and unremitting attentions of my friend could have restored me to life. The form of the monster on whom I had bestowed existence was forever before my eyes, and I raved incessantly concerning him. Doubtless my words surprised Henry; he at first believed them to be the wanderings of my disturbed imagination, but the pertinacity with which I continually recurred to the same subject persuaded him that my disorder indeed owed its origin to some uncommon and terrible event.

By very slow degrees, and with frequent relapses that alarmed and grieved my friend, I recovered. I remember the first time I became capable of observing outward objects with any kind of pleasure, I perceived that the fallen leaves had disappeared and that the young buds were shooting forth from the trees that shaded my window. It was a divine spring, and the season contributed greatly to my convalescence. I felt also sentiments of joy and affection revive in my bosom; my gloom disappeared, and in a short time I became as cheerful as before I was attacked by the fatal passion.

"Dearest Clerval," exclaimed I, "how kind, how very good you are to me. This whole winter, instead of being spent in study, as you promised yourself, has been consumed in my sick room. How shall I ever repay you? I feel the greatest remorse for the disappointment of which I have been the occasion, but you will forgive me."

"You will repay me entirely if you do not discompose yourself, but get well as fast as you can; and since you appear in such good spirits, I may speak to you on one subject, may I not?"

I trembled. One subject! What could it be? Could he allude to an object on whom I dared not even think?

"Compose yourself," said Clerval, who observed my change of colour, "I will not mention it if it agitates you; but your father and cousin would be very happy if they received a letter from you in your own handwriting. They hardly know how ill you have been and are uneasy at your long silence."

"Is that all, my dear Henry? How could you suppose that my first thought would not fly towards those dear, dear friends whom I love and who are so deserving of my love?"

"If this is your present temper, my friend, you will perhaps be glad to see a letter that has been lying here some days for you; it is from your cousin, I believe."

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Frankenstein returns home when he learns that his brother William has been murdered. He spies the Creature lurking in the shadows. Though Frankenstein is sure that the Creature killed William, Frankenstein watches in horror as Justine Moritz, who had been adopted into the Frankenstein family, is condemned and hanged as William's murderer. To recover his spirits, Frankenstein tours the Alps. There he is confronted by the Creature.

Chapter 10

I spent the following day roaming through the valley. I stood beside the sources of the Arveiron, which take their rise in a glacier, that with slow pace is advancing down from the summit of the hills to barricade the valley. The abrupt sides of vast mountains were before me; the icy wall of the glacier overhung me; a few shattered pines were scattered around; and the solemn silence of this glorious presence-chamber of imperial nature was broken only by the brawling waves or the fall of some vast fragment, the thunder sound of the avalanche or the cracking, reverberated along the mountains, of the accumulated ice, which, through the silent working of immutable laws, was ever and anon rent and torn, as if it had been but a plaything in their hands. These sublime and magnificent scenes afforded me the greatest consolation that I was capable of receiving. They elevated me from all littleness of feeling, and although they did not remove my grief, they subdued and tranquillized it. In some degree, also, they diverted my mind from the thoughts over which it had brooded for the last month. I retired to rest at night; my slumbers, as it were, waited on and ministered to by the assemblance of grand shapes which I had contemplated during the day. They congregated round me; the unstained snowy mountaintop, the glittering pinnacle, the pine woods, and ragged bare ravine, the eagle, soaring amidst the clouds—they all gathered round me and bade me be at peace.

Where had they fled when the next morning I awoke? All of soul- inspiriting fled with sleep, and dark melancholy clouded every thought. The rain was pouring in torrents, and thick mists hid the summits of the mountains, so that I even saw not the faces of those mighty friends. Still I would penetrate their misty veil and seek them in their cloudy retreats. What were rain and storm to me? My mule was brought to the door, and I resolved to ascend to the summit of Montanvert. I remembered the effect that the view of the tremendous and ever-moving glacier had produced upon my mind when I first saw it. It had then filled me with a sublime ecstasy that gave wings to the soul and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy. The sight of the awful and majestic in nature had indeed always the effect of solemnizing my mind and causing me to forget the passing cares of life. I determined to go without a guide, for I was well acquainted with the path, and the presence of another would destroy the solitary grandeur of the scene.

The ascent is precipitous, but the path is cut into continual and short windings, which enable you to surmount the perpendicularity of the mountain. It is a scene terrifically desolate. In a thousand spots the traces of the winter avalanche may

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be perceived, where trees lie broken and strewed on the ground, some entirely destroyed, others bent, leaning upon the jutting rocks of the mountain or transversely upon other trees. The path, as you ascend higher, is intersected by ravines of snow, down which stones continually roll from above; one of them is particularly dangerous, as the slightest sound, such as even speaking in a loud voice, produces a concussion of air sufficient to draw destruction upon the head of the speaker. The pines are not tall or luxuriant, but they are sombre and add an air of severity to the scene. I looked on the valley beneath; vast mists were rising from the rivers which ran through it and curling in thick wreaths around the opposite mountains, whose summits were hid in the uniform clouds, while rain poured from the dark sky and added to the melancholy impression I received from the objects around me. Alas! Why does man boast of sensibilities superior to those apparent in the brute; it only renders them more necessary beings. If our impulses were confined to hunger, thirst, and desire, we might be nearly free; but now we are moved by every wind that blows and a chance word or scene that that word may convey to us.

We rest; a dream has power to poison sleep. We rise; one wand'ring thought pollutes the day. We feel, conceive, or reason; laugh or weep, Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away; It is the same: for, be it joy or sorrow, The path of its departure still is free. Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow; Nought may endure but mutability!

It was nearly noon when I arrived at the top of the ascent. For some time I sat upon the rock that overlooks the sea of ice. A mist covered both that and the surrounding mountains. Presently a breeze dissipated the cloud, and I descended upon the glacier. The surface is very uneven, rising like the waves of a troubled sea, descending low, and interspersed by rifts that sink deep. The field of ice is almost a league in width, but I spent nearly two hours in crossing it. The opposite mountain is a bare perpendicular rock. From the side where I now stood Montanvert was exactly opposite, at the distance of a league; and above it rose Mont Blanc, in awful majesty. I remained in a recess of the rock, gazing on this wonderful and stupendous scene. The sea, or rather the vast river of ice, wound among its dependent mountains, whose aerial summits hung over its recesses. Their icy and glittering peaks shone in the sunlight over the clouds. My heart, which was before sorrowful, now swelled with something like joy; I exclaimed, "Wandering spirits, if indeed ye wander, and do not rest in your narrow beds, allow me this faint happiness, or take me, as your companion, away from the joys of life."

As I said this I suddenly beheld the figure of a man, at some distance, advancing towards me with superhuman speed. He bounded over the crevices in the ice, among which I had walked with caution; his stature, also, as he approached, seemed to exceed that of man. I was troubled; a mist came over my eyes, and I felt a faintness seize me, but I was quickly restored by the cold gale of the mountains. I perceived,

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as the shape came nearer (sight tremendous and abhorred!) that it was the wretch whom I had created. I trembled with rage and horror, resolving to wait his approach and then close with him in mortal combat. He approached; his countenance bespoke bitter anguish, combined with disdain and malignity, while its unearthly ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for human eyes. But I scarcely observed this; rage and hatred had at first deprived me of utterance, and I recovered only to overwhelm him with words expressive of furious detestation and contempt.

"Devil," I exclaimed, "do you dare approach me? And do not you fear the fierce vengeance of my arm wreaked on your miserable head? Begone, vile insect! Or rather, stay, that I may trample you to dust! And, oh! That I could, with the extinction of your miserable existence, restore those victims whom you have so diabolically murdered!"

"I expected this reception," said the daemon. "All men hate the wretched; how, then, must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things! Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you will comply with my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends."

"Abhorred monster! Fiend that thou art! The tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for thy crimes. Wretched devil! You reproach me with your creation, come on, then, that I may extinguish the spark which I so negligently bestowed."

My rage was without bounds; I sprang on him, impelled by all the feelings which can arm one being against the existence of another.

He easily eluded me and said,

"Be calm! I entreat you to hear me before you give vent to your hatred on my devoted head. Have I not suffered enough, that you seek to increase my misery? Life, although it may only be an accumulation of anguish, is dear to me, and I will defend it. Remember, thou hast made me more powerful than thyself; my height is superior to thine, my joints more supple. But I will not be tempted to set myself in opposition to thee. I am thy creature, and I will be even mild and docile to my natural lord and king if thou wilt also perform thy part, the which thou owest me. Oh, Frankenstein, be not equitable to every other and trample upon me alone, to whom thy justice, and even thy clemency and affection, is most due. Remember that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous."

"Begone! I will not hear you. There can be no community between you and me; we are enemies. Begone, or let us try our strength in a fight, in which one must fall."

"How can I move thee? Will no entreaties cause thee to turn a favourable eye upon thy creature, who implores thy goodness and compassion? Believe me,

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Frankenstein, I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity; but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow creatures, who owe me nothing? They spurn and hate me. The desert mountains and dreary glaciers are my refuge. I have wandered here many days; the caves of ice, which I only do not fear, are a dwelling to me, and the only one which man does not grudge. These bleak skies I hail, for they are kinder to me than your fellow beings. If the multitude of mankind knew of my existence, they would do as you do, and arm themselves for my destruction. Shall I not then hate them who abhor me? I will keep no terms with my enemies. I am miserable, and they shall share my wretchedness. Yet it is in your power to recompense me, and deliver them from an evil which it only remains for you to make so great, that not only you and your family, but thousands of others, shall be swallowed up in the whirlwinds of its rage. Let your compassion be moved, and do not disdain me. Listen to my tale; when you have heard that, abandon or commiserate me, as you shall judge that I deserve. But hear me. The guilty are allowed, by human laws, bloody as they are, to speak in their own defence before they are condemned. Listen to me, Frankenstein. You accuse me of murder, and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. Oh, praise the eternal justice of man! Yet I ask you not to spare me; listen to me, and then, if you can, and if you will, destroy the work of your hands."

"Why do you call to my remembrance," I rejoined, "circumstances of which I shudder to reflect, that I have been the miserable origin and author? Cursed be the day, abhorred devil, in which you first saw light! Cursed (although I curse myself) be the hands that formed you! You have made me wretched beyond expression. You have left me no power to consider whether I am just to you or not. Begone! Relieve me from the sight of your detested form."

"Thus I relieve thee, my creator," he said, and placed his hated hands before my eyes, which I flung from me with violence; "thus I take from thee a sight which you abhor. Still thou canst listen to me and grant me thy compassion. By the virtues that I once possessed, I demand this from you. Hear my tale; it is long and strange, and the temperature of this place is not fitting to your fine sensations; come to the hut upon the mountain. The sun is yet high in the heavens; before it descends to hide itself behind your snowy precipices and illuminate another world, you will have heard my story and can decide. On you it rests, whether I quit forever the neighbourhood of man and lead a harmless life, or become the scourge of your fellow creatures and the author of your own speedy ruin."

As he said this he led the way across the ice; I followed. My heart was full, and I did not answer him, but as I proceeded, I weighed the various arguments that he had used and determined at least to listen to his tale. I was partly urged by curiosity, and compassion confirmed my resolution. I had hitherto supposed him to be the murderer of my brother, and I eagerly sought a confirmation or denial of this opinion. For the first time, also, I felt what the duties of a creator towards his creature were, and that I ought to render him happy before I complained of his wickedness. These motives urged me to comply with his demand. We crossed the

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ice, therefore, and ascended the opposite rock. The air was cold, and the rain again began to descend; we entered the hut, the fiend with an air of exultation, I with a heavy heart and depressed spirits. But I consented to listen, and seating myself by the fire which my odious companion had lighted, he thus began his tale.

Chapter 11

"It is with considerable difficulty that I remember the original era of my being; all the events of that period appear confused and indistinct. A strange multiplicity of sensations seized me, and I saw, felt, heard, and smelt at the same time; and it was, indeed, a long time before I learned to distinguish between the operations of my various senses. By degrees, I remember, a stronger light pressed upon my nerves, so that I was obliged to shut my eyes. Darkness then came over me and troubled me, but hardly had I felt this when, by opening my eyes, as I now suppose, the light poured in upon me again. I walked and, I believe, descended, but I presently found a great alteration in my sensations. Before, dark and opaque bodies had surrounded me, impervious to my touch or sight; but I now found that I could wander on at liberty, with no obstacles which I could not either surmount or avoid. The light became more and more oppressive to me, and the heat wearying me as I walked, I sought a place where I could receive shade. This was the forest near Ingolstadt; and here I lay by the side of a brook resting from my fatigue, until I felt tormented by hunger and thirst. This roused me from my nearly dormant state, and I ate some berries which I found hanging on the trees or lying on the ground. I slaked my thirst at the brook, and then lying down, was overcome by sleep.

"It was dark when I awoke; I felt cold also, and half frightened, as it were, instinctively, finding myself so desolate. Before I had quitted your apartment, on a sensation of cold, I had covered myself with some clothes, but these were insufficient to secure me from the dews of night. I was a poor, helpless, miserable wretch; I knew, and could distinguish, nothing; but feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept.

"Soon a gentle light stole over the heavens and gave me a sensation of pleasure. I started up and beheld a radiant form rise from among the trees. [The moon] I gazed with a kind of wonder. It moved slowly, but it enlightened my path, and I again went out in search of berries. I was still cold when under one of the trees I found a huge cloak, with which I covered myself, and sat down upon the ground. No distinct ideas occupied my mind; all was confused. I felt light, and hunger, and thirst, and darkness; innumerable sounds rang in my ears, and on all sides various scents saluted me; the only object that I could distinguish was the bright moon, and I fixed my eyes on that with pleasure.

"Several changes of day and night passed, and the orb of night had greatly lessened, when I began to distinguish my sensations from each other. I gradually saw plainly the clear stream that supplied me with drink and the trees that shaded me with their foliage. I was delighted when I first discovered that a pleasant sound,

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which often saluted my ears, proceeded from the throats of the little winged animals who had often intercepted the light from my eyes. I began also to observe, with greater accuracy, the forms that surrounded me and to perceive the boundaries of the radiant roof of light which canopied me. Sometimes I tried to imitate the pleasant songs of the birds but was unable. Sometimes I wished to express my sensations in my own mode, but the uncouth and inarticulate sounds which broke from me frightened me into silence again.

"The moon had disappeared from the night, and again, with a lessened form, showed itself, while I still remained in the forest. My sensations had by this time become distinct, and my mind received every day additional ideas. My eyes became accustomed to the light and to perceive objects in their right forms; I distinguished the insect from the herb, and by degrees, one herb from another. I found that the sparrow uttered none but harsh notes, whilst those of the blackbird and thrush were sweet and enticing.

"One day, when I was oppressed by cold, I found a fire which had been left by some wandering beggars, and was overcome with delight at the warmth I experienced from it. In my joy I thrust my hand into the live embers, but quickly drew it out again with a cry of pain. How strange, I thought, that the same cause should produce such opposite effects! I examined the materials of the fire, and to my joy found it to be composed of wood. I quickly collected some branches, but they were wet and would not burn. I was pained at this and sat still watching the operation of the fire. The wet wood which I had placed near the heat dried and itself became inflamed. I reflected on this, and by touching the various branches, I discovered the cause and busied myself in collecting a great quantity of wood, that I might dry it and have a plentiful supply of fire. When night came on and brought sleep with it, I was in the greatest fear lest my fire should be extinguished. I covered it carefully with dry wood and leaves and placed wet branches upon it; and then, spreading my cloak, I lay on the ground and sank into sleep.

"It was morning when I awoke, and my first care was to visit the fire. I uncovered it, and a gentle breeze quickly fanned it into a flame. I observed this also and contrived a fan of branches, which roused the embers when they were nearly extinguished. When night came again I found, with pleasure, that the fire gave light as well as heat and that the discovery of this element was useful to me in my food, for I found some of the offals that the travellers had left had been roasted, and tasted much more savoury than the berries I gathered from the trees. I tried, therefore, to dress my food in the same manner, placing it on the live embers. I found that the berries were spoiled by this operation, and the nuts and roots much improved.

"Food, however, became scarce, and I often spent the whole day searching in vain for a few acorns to assuage the pangs of hunger. When I found this, I resolved to quit the place that I had hitherto inhabited, to seek for one where the few wants I experienced would be more easily satisfied. In this emigration I exceedingly lamented the loss of the fire which I had obtained through accident and knew not how to reproduce it. I gave several hours to the serious consideration of this

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difficulty, but I was obliged to relinquish all attempt to supply it, and wrapping myself up in my cloak, I struck across the wood towards the setting sun. I passed three days in these rambles and at length discovered the open country. A great fall of snow had taken place the night before, and the fields were of one uniform white; the appearance was disconsolate, and I found my feet chilled by the cold damp substance that covered the ground.

"It was about seven in the morning, and I longed to obtain food and shelter; at length I perceived a small hut, on a rising ground, which had doubtless been built for the convenience of some shepherd. This was a new sight to me, and I examined the structure with great curiosity. Finding the door open, I entered. An old man sat in it, near a fire, over which he was preparing his breakfast. He turned on hearing a noise, and perceiving me, shrieked loudly, and quitting the hut, ran across the fields with a speed of which his debilitated form hardly appeared capable. His appearance, different from any I had ever before seen, and his flight somewhat surprised me. But I was enchanted by the appearance of the hut; here the snow and rain could not penetrate; the ground was dry; and it presented to me then as exquisite and divine a retreat as Pandemonium appeared to the demons of hell after their sufferings in the lake of fire. I greedily devoured the remnants of the shepherd's breakfast, which consisted of bread, cheese, milk, and wine; the latter, however, I did not like. Then, overcome by fatigue, I lay down among some straw and fell asleep.

"It was noon when I awoke, and allured by the warmth of the sun, which shone brightly on the white ground, I determined to recommence my travels; and, depositing the remains of the peasant's breakfast in a wallet I found, I proceeded across the fields for several hours, until at sunset I arrived at a village. How miraculous did this appear! The huts, the neater cottages, and stately houses engaged my admiration by turns. The vegetables in the gardens, the milk and cheese that I saw placed at the windows of some of the cottages, allured my appetite. One of the best of these I entered, but I had hardly placed my foot within the door before the children shrieked, and one of the women fainted. The whole village was roused; some fled, some attacked me, until, grievously bruised by stones and many other kinds of missile weapons, I escaped to the open country and fearfully took refuge in a low hovel, quite bare, and making a wretched appearance after the palaces I had beheld in the village. This hovel however, joined a cottage of a neat and pleasant appearance, but after my late dearly bought experience, I dared not enter it. My place of refuge was constructed of wood, but so low that I could with difficulty sit upright in it. No wood, however, was placed on the earth, which formed the floor, but it was dry; and although the wind entered it by innumerable chinks, I found it an agreeable asylum from the snow and rain.

"Here, then, I retreated and lay down happy to have found a shelter, however miserable, from the inclemency of the season, and still more from the barbarity of man. As soon as morning dawned I crept from my kennel, that I might view the adjacent cottage and discover if I could remain in the habitation I had found. It was

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situated against the back of the cottage and surrounded on the sides which were exposed by a pig sty and a clear pool of water. One part was open, and by that I had crept in; but now I covered every crevice by which I might be perceived with stones and wood, yet in such a manner that I might move them on occasion to pass out; all the light I enjoyed came through the sty, and that was sufficient for me.

"Having thus arranged my dwelling and carpeted it with clean straw, I retired, for I saw the figure of a man at a distance, and I remembered too well my treatment the night before to trust myself in his power. I had first, however, provided for my sustenance for that day by a loaf of coarse bread, which I purloined, and a cup with which I could drink more conveniently than from my hand of the pure water which flowed by my retreat. The floor was a little raised, so that it was kept perfectly dry, and by its vicinity to the chimney of the cottage it was tolerably warm.

"Being thus provided, I resolved to reside in this hovel until something should occur which might alter my determination. It was indeed a paradise compared to the bleak forest, my former residence, the rain-dropping branches, and dank earth. I ate my breakfast with pleasure and was about to remove a plank to procure myself a little water when I heard a step, and looking through a small chink, I beheld a young creature, with a pail on her head, passing before my hovel. The girl was young and of gentle demeanour, unlike what I have since found cottagers and farmhouse servants to be. Yet she was meanly dressed, a coarse blue petticoat and a linen jacket being her only garb; her fair hair was plaited but not adorned: she looked patient yet sad. I lost sight of her, and in about a quarter of an hour she returned bearing the pail, which was now partly filled with milk. As she walked along, seemingly incommoded by the burden, a young man met her, whose countenance expressed a deeper despondence. Uttering a few sounds with an air of melancholy, he took the pail from her head and bore it to the cottage himself. She followed, and they disappeared. Presently I saw the young man again, with some tools in his hand, cross the field behind the cottage; and the girl was also busied, sometimes in the house and sometimes in the yard.

"On examining my dwelling, I found that one of the windows of the cottage had formerly occupied a part of it, but the panes had been filled up with wood. In one of these was a small and almost imperceptible chink through which the eye could just penetrate. Through this crevice a small room was visible, whitewashed and clean but very bare of furniture. In one corner, near a small fire, sat an old man, leaning his head on his hands in a disconsolate attitude. The young girl was occupied in arranging the cottage; but presently she took something out of a drawer, which employed her hands, and she sat down beside the old man, who, taking up an instrument, began to play and to produce sounds sweeter than the voice of the thrush or the nightingale. It was a lovely sight, even to me, poor wretch who had never beheld aught beautiful before. The silver hair and benevolent countenance of the aged cottager won my reverence, while the gentle manners of the girl enticed my love. He played a sweet mournful air which I perceived drew tears from the eyes of his amiable companion, of which the old man took

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no notice, until she sobbed audibly; he then pronounced a few sounds, and the fair creature, leaving her work, knelt at his feet. He raised her and smiled with such kindness and affection that I felt sensations of a peculiar and overpowering nature; they were a mixture of pain and pleasure, such as I had never before experienced, either from hunger or cold, warmth or food; and I withdrew from the window, unable to bear these emotions.

"Soon after this the young man returned, bearing on his shoulders a load of wood. The girl met him at the door, helped to relieve him of his burden, and taking some of the fuel into the cottage, placed it on the fire; then she and the youth went apart into a nook of the cottage, and he showed her a large loaf and a piece of cheese. She seemed pleased and went into the garden for some roots and plants, which she placed in water, and then upon the fire. She afterwards continued her work, whilst the young man went into the garden and appeared busily employed in digging and pulling up roots. After he had been employed thus about an hour, the young woman joined him and they entered the cottage together.

"The old man had, in the meantime, been pensive, but on the appearance of his companions he assumed a more cheerful air, and they sat down to eat. The meal was quickly dispatched. The young woman was again occupied in arranging the cottage, the old man walked before the cottage in the sun for a few minutes, leaning on the arm of the youth. Nothing could exceed in beauty the contrast between these two excellent creatures. One was old, with silver hairs and a countenance beaming with benevolence and love; the younger was slight and graceful in his figure, and his features were moulded with the finest symmetry, yet his eyes and attitude expressed the utmost sadness and despondency. The old man returned to the cottage, and the youth, with tools different from those he had used in the morning, directed his steps across the fields.

"Night quickly shut in, but to my extreme wonder, I found that the cottagers had a means of prolonging light by the use of tapers, and was delighted to find that the setting of the sun did not put an end to the pleasure I experienced in watching my human neighbours. In the evening the young girl and her companion were employed in various occupations which I did not understand; and the old man again took up the instrument which produced the divine sounds that had enchanted me in the morning. So soon as he had finished, the youth began, not to play, but to utter sounds that were monotonous, and neither resembling the harmony of the old man's instrument nor the songs of the birds; I since found that he read aloud, but at that time I knew nothing of the science of words or letters.

"The family, after having been thus occupied for a short time, extinguished their lights and retired, as I conjectured, to rest."

The De Lacey family is joined by Safie, an Arabian woman affianced to Felix. The Creature learns languages, history, and literature by eavesdropping on Safe's studies.

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Chapter 15

. . . "The winter advanced, and an entire revolution of the seasons had taken place since I awoke into life. My attention at this time was solely directed towards my plan of introducing myself into the cottage of my protectors. I revolved many projects, but that on which I finally fixed was to enter the dwelling when the blind old man should be alone. I had sagacity enough to discover that the unnatural hideousness of my person was the chief object of horror with those who had formerly beheld me. My voice, although harsh, had nothing terrible in it; I thought, therefore, that if in the absence of his children I could gain the good will and mediation of the old De Lacey, I might by his means be tolerated by my younger protectors.

"One day, when the sun shone on the red leaves that strewed the ground and diffused cheerfulness, although it denied warmth, Safie, Agatha, and Felix departed on a long country walk, and the old man, at his own desire, was left alone in the cottage. When his children had departed, he took up his guitar and played several mournful but sweet airs, more sweet and mournful than I had ever heard him play before. At first his countenance was illuminated with pleasure, but as he continued, thoughtfulness and sadness succeeded; at length, laying aside the instrument, he sat absorbed in reflection.

"My heart beat quick; this was the hour and moment of trial, which would decide my hopes or realize my fears. The servants were gone to a neighbouring fair. All was silent in and around the cottage; it was an excellent opportunity; yet, when I proceeded to execute my plan, my limbs failed me and I sank to the ground. Again I rose, and exerting all the firmness of which I was master, removed the planks which I had placed before my hovel to conceal my retreat. The fresh air revived me, and with renewed determination I approached the door of their cottage.

"I knocked. "Who is there?' said the old man. "Come in.'

"I entered. "Pardon this intrusion,' said I; "I am a traveller in want of a little rest; you would greatly oblige me if you would allow me to remain a few minutes before the fire.'

"'Enter,' said De Lacey, "and I will try in what manner I can to relieve your wants; but, unfortunately, my children are from home, and as I am blind, I am afraid I shall find it difficult to procure food for you.'

"'Do not trouble yourself, my kind host; I have food; it is warmth and rest only that I need.'

"I sat down, and a silence ensued. I knew that every minute was precious to me, yet I remained irresolute in what manner to commence the interview, when the old man addressed me. "By your language, stranger, I suppose you are my countryman; are you French?'

"'No; but I was educated by a French family and understand that language only. I am now going to claim the protection of some friends, whom I sincerely love, and of whose favour I have some hopes.'

"'Are they Germans?'

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"'No, they are French. But let us change the subject. I am an unfortunate and deserted creature, I look around and I have no relation or friend upon earth. These amiable people to whom I go have never seen me and know little of me. I am full of fears, for if I fail there, I am an outcast in the world forever.'

"'Do not despair. To be friendless is indeed to be unfortunate, but the hearts of men, when unprejudiced by any obvious self-interest, are full of brotherly love and charity. Rely, therefore, on your hopes; and if these friends are good and amiable, do not despair.'

"'They are kind—they are the most excellent creatures in the world; but, unfortunately, they are prejudiced against me. I have good dispositions; my life has been hitherto harmless and in some degree beneficial; but a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster.'

"'That is indeed unfortunate; but if you are really blameless, cannot you undeceive them?'

"'I am about to undertake that task; and it is on that account that I feel so many overwhelming terrors. I tenderly love these friends; I have, unknown to them, been for many months in the habits of daily kindness towards them; but they believe that I wish to injure them, and it is that prejudice which I wish to overcome.'

"'Where do these friends reside?'

"'Near this spot.'

"The old man paused and then continued, "If you will unreservedly confide to me the particulars of your tale, I perhaps may be of use in undeceiving them. I am blind and cannot judge of your countenance, but there is something in your words which persuades me that you are sincere. I am poor and an exile, but it will afford me true pleasure to be in any way serviceable to a human creature.'

"'Excellent man! I thank you and accept your generous offer. You raise me from the dust by this kindness; and I trust that, by your aid, I shall not be driven from the society and sympathy of your fellow creatures.'

"'Heaven forbid! Even if you were really criminal, for that can only drive you to desperation, and not instigate you to virtue. I also am unfortunate; I and my family have been condemned, although innocent; judge, therefore, if I do not feel for your misfortunes.'

"'How can I thank you, my best and only benefactor? From your lips first have I heard the voice of kindness directed towards me; I shall be forever grateful; and your present humanity assures me of success with those friends whom I am on the point of meeting.'

"'May I know the names and residence of those friends?'

"I paused. This, I thought, was the moment of decision, which was to rob me of or bestow happiness on me forever. I struggled vainly for firmness sufficient to answer him, but the effort destroyed all my remaining strength; I sank on the chair and sobbed aloud. At that moment I heard the steps of my younger protectors. I had not a moment to lose, but seizing the hand of the old man, I cried, "Now is the

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time! Save and protect me! You and your family are the friends whom I seek. Do not you desert me in the hour of trial!'

"'Great God!' exclaimed the old man. "Who are you?'

"At that instant the cottage door was opened, and Felix, Safie, and Agatha entered. Who can describe their horror and consternation on beholding me? Agatha fainted, and Safie, unable to attend to her friend, rushed out of the cottage. Felix darted forward, and with supernatural force tore me from his father, to whose knees I clung, in a transport of fury, he dashed me to the ground and struck me violently with a stick. I could have torn him limb from limb, as the lion rends the antelope. But my heart sank within me as with bitter sickness, and I refrained. I saw him on the point of repeating his blow, when, overcome by pain and anguish, I quitted the cottage, and in the general tumult escaped unperceived to my hovel."

The De Lacies abandon the cottage. The Creature decides to seek out Frankenstein. As he travels, he saves the life of a girl who fell into a river and almost drowned. The man who had accompanied her shot the Creature. The Creature encounters a boy whom the Creature hopes is too young to be prejudiced against him and so decides to kidnap the boy to rear as his own child. When struggling against the Creature, the boy identifies himself as William Frankenstein. Realizing the boy is related to his enemy, the Creature strangles William. The Creature left a locket with the portrait of William's mother with the sleeping Justine Moritz to incriminate her in his crime.

Chapter 17

The being finished speaking and fixed his looks upon me in the expectation of a reply. But I was bewildered, perplexed, and unable to arrange my ideas sufficiently to understand the full extent of his proposition. He continued,

"You must create a female for me with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being. This you alone can do, and I demand it of you as a right which you must not refuse to concede."

The latter part of his tale had kindled anew in me the anger that had died away while he narrated his peaceful life among the cottagers, and as he said this I could no longer suppress the rage that burned within me.

"I do refuse it," I replied; "and no torture shall ever extort a consent from me. You may render me the most miserable of men, but you shall never make me base in my own eyes. Shall I create another like yourself, whose joint wickedness might desolate the world. Begone! I have answered you; you may torture me, but I will never consent."

"You are in the wrong," replied the fiend; "and instead of threatening, I am content to reason with you. I am malicious because I am miserable. Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind? You, my creator, would tear me to pieces and triumph; remember that, and tell me why I should pity man more than he pities me? You would not call it murder if you could precipitate me into one of those

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ice-rifts and destroy my frame, the work of your own hands. Shall I respect man when he condemns me? Let him live with me in the interchange of kindness, and instead of injury I would bestow every benefit upon him with tears of gratitude at his acceptance. But that cannot be; the human senses are insurmountable barriers to our union. Yet mine shall not be the submission of abject slavery. I will revenge my injuries; if I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear, and chiefly towards you my archenemy, because my creator, do I swear inextinguishable hatred. Have a care; I will work at your destruction, nor finish until I desolate your heart, so that you shall curse the hour of your birth."

A fiendish rage animated him as he said this; his face was wrinkled into contortions too horrible for human eyes to behold; but presently he calmed himself and proceeded—

"I intended to reason. This passion is detrimental to me, for you do not reflect that YOU are the cause of its excess. If any being felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them a hundred and a hundredfold; for that one creature's sake I would make peace with the whole kind! But I now indulge in dreams of bliss that cannot be realized. What I ask of you is reasonable and moderate; I demand a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself; the gratification is small, but it is all that I can receive, and it shall content me. It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off from all the world; but on that account we shall be more attached to one another. Our lives will not be happy, but they will be harmless and free from the misery I now feel. Oh! My creator, make me happy; let me feel gratitude towards you for one benefit! Let me see that I excite the sympathy of some existing thing; do not deny me my request!"

I was moved. I shuddered when I thought of the possible consequences of my consent, but I felt that there was some justice in his argument. His tale and the feelings he now expressed proved him to be a creature of fine sensations, and did I not as his maker owe him all the portion of happiness that it was in my power to bestow? He saw my change of feeling and continued,

"If you consent, neither you nor any other human being shall ever see us again; I will go to the vast wilds of South America. My food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment. My companion will be of the same nature as myself and will be content with the same fare. We shall make our bed of dried leaves; the sun will shine on us as on man and will ripen our food. The picture I present to you is peaceful and human, and you must feel that you could deny it only in the wantonness of power and cruelty. Pitiless as you have been towards me, I now see compassion in your eyes; let me seize the favourable moment and persuade you to promise what I so ardently desire."

"You propose," replied I, "to fly from the habitations of man, to dwell in those wilds where the beasts of the field will be your only companions. How can you, who long for the love and sympathy of man, persevere in this exile? You will return and again seek their kindness, and you will meet with their detestation; your evil

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passions will be renewed, and you will then have a companion to aid you in the task of destruction. This may not be; cease to argue the point, for I cannot consent."

"How inconstant are your feelings! But a moment ago you were moved by my representations, and why do you again harden yourself to my complaints? I swear to you, by the earth which I inhabit, and by you that made me, that with the companion you bestow I will quit the neighbourhood of man and dwell, as it may chance, in the most savage of places. My evil passions will have fled, for I shall meet with sympathy! My life will flow quietly away, and in my dying moments I shall not curse my maker."

His words had a strange effect upon me. I compassionated him and sometimes felt a wish to console him, but when I looked upon him, when I saw the filthy mass that moved and talked, my heart sickened and my feelings were altered to those of horror and hatred. I tried to stifle these sensations; I thought that as I could not sympathize with him, I had no right to withhold from him the small portion of happiness which was yet in my power to bestow.

"You swear," I said, "to be harmless; but have you not already shown a degree of malice that should reasonably make me distrust you? May not even this be a feint that will increase your triumph by affording a wider scope for your revenge?"

"How is this? I must not be trifled with, and I demand an answer. If I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my portion; the love of another will destroy the cause of my crimes, and I shall become a thing of whose existence everyone will be ignorant. My vices are the children of a forced solitude that I abhor, and my virtues will necessarily arise when I live in communion with an equal. I shall feel the affections of a sensitive being and become linked to the chain of existence and events from which I am now excluded."

I paused some time to reflect on all he had related and the various arguments which he had employed. I thought of the promise of virtues which he had displayed on the opening of his existence and the subsequent blight of all kindly feeling by the loathing and scorn which his protectors had manifested towards him. His power and threats were not omitted in my calculations; a creature who could exist in the ice caves of the glaciers and hide himself from pursuit among the ridges of inaccessible precipices was a being possessing faculties it would be vain to cope with. After a long pause of reflection I concluded that the justice due both to him and my fellow creatures demanded of me that I should comply with his request. Turning to him, therefore, I said,

"I consent to your demand, on your solemn oath to quit Europe forever, and every other place in the neighbourhood of man, as soon as I shall deliver into your hands a female who will accompany you in your exile."

"I swear," he cried, "by the sun, and by the blue sky of heaven, and by the fire of love that burns my heart, that if you grant my prayer, while they exist you shall never behold me again. Depart to your home and commence your labours; I shall watch their progress with unutterable anxiety; and fear not but that when you are ready I shall appear."

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Saying this, he suddenly quitted me, fearful, perhaps, of any change in my sentiments. I saw him descend the mountain with greater speed than the flight of an eagle, and quickly lost among the undulations of the sea of ice. . . .

Victor almost fulfills his promise to create a mate for the Creature. However, fearing the destructive potential of a female version of the Creature, Victor tears the thing to pieces instead of bringing it to life. The Creature swears revenge and promises to be with Victor on his wedding night. The Creature almost immediately murders Felix. Victor, though accused of this crime, proves his innocence. He returns to his family and marries Elizabeth. On their wedding night, the Creature fulfills his promise of revenge by murdering Elizabeth. Victor's father dies of grief. Victor then determines to hunt the Creature down and destroy it The Creature deliberately leads Victor north to the Arctic Circle. There Victor encounters Walton.

Walton, in continuation

August 26th, 17-

You have read this strange and terrific story, Margaret; and do you not feel your blood congeal with horror, like that which even now curdles mine? Sometimes, seized with sudden agony, he could not continue his tale; at others, his voice broken, yet piercing, uttered with difficulty the words so replete with anguish. His fine and lovely eyes were now lighted up with indignation, now subdued to downcast sorrow and quenched in infinite wretchedness. Sometimes he commanded his countenance and tones and related the most horrible incidents with a tranquil voice, suppressing every mark of agitation; then, like a volcano bursting forth, his face would suddenly change to an expression of the wildest rage as he shrieked out imprecations on his persecutor.

His tale is connected and told with an appearance of the simplest truth, yet I own to you that the letters of Felix and Safie, which he showed me, and the apparition of the monster seen from our ship, brought to me a greater conviction of the truth of his narrative than his asseverations, however earnest and connected. Such a monster has, then, really existence! I cannot doubt it, yet I am lost in surprise and admiration. Sometimes I endeavoured to gain from Frankenstein the particulars of his creature's formation, but on this point he was impenetrable. "Are you mad, my friend?" said he. "Or whither does your senseless curiosity lead you? Would you also create for yourself and the world a demoniacal enemy? Peace, peace! Learn my miseries and do not seek to increase your own." Frankenstein discovered that I made notes concerning his history; he asked to see them and then himself corrected and augmented them in many places, but principally in giving the life and spirit to the conversations he held with his enemy. "Since you have preserved my narration," said he, "I would not that a mutilated one should go down to posterity."

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Thus has a week passed away, while I have listened to the strangest tale that ever imagination formed. My thoughts and every feeling of my soul have been drunk up by the interest for my guest which this tale and his own elevated and gentle manners have created. I wish to soothe him, yet can I counsel one so infinitely miserable, so destitute of every hope of consolation, to live? Oh, no! The only joy that he can now know will be when he composes his shattered spirit to peace and death. Yet he enjoys one comfort, the offspring of solitude and delirium; he believes that when in dreams he holds converse with his friends and derives from that communion consolation for his miseries or excitements to his vengeance, that they are not the creations of his fancy, but the beings themselves who visit him from the regions of a remote world. This faith gives a solemnity to his reveries that render them to me almost as imposing and interesting as truth.

Our conversations are not always confined to his own history and misfortunes. On every point of general literature he displays unbounded knowledge and a quick and piercing apprehension. His eloquence is forcible and touching; nor can I hear him, when he relates a pathetic incident or endeavours to move the passions of pity or love, without tears. What a glorious creature must he have been in the days of his prosperity, when he is thus noble and godlike in ruin! He seems to feel his own worth and the greatness of his fall.

"When younger," said he, "I believed myself destined for some great enterprise. My feelings are profound, but I possessed a coolness of judgment that fitted me for illustrious achievements. This sentiment of the worth of my nature supported me when others would have been oppressed, for I deemed it criminal to throw away in useless grief those talents that might be useful to my fellow creatures. When I reflected on the work I had completed, no less a one than the creation of a sensitive and rational animal, I could not rank myself with the herd of common projectors. But this thought, which supported me in the commencement of my career, now serves only to plunge me lower in the dust. All my speculations and hopes are as nothing, and like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, I am chained in an eternal hell. My imagination was vivid, yet my powers of analysis and application were intense; by the union of these qualities I conceived the idea and executed the creation of a man. Even now I cannot recollect without passion my reveries while the work was incomplete. I trod heaven in my thoughts, now exulting in my powers, now burning with the idea of their effects. From my infancy I was imbued with high hopes and a lofty ambition; but how am I sunk! Oh! My friend, if you had known me as I once was, you would not recognize me in this state of degradation. Despondency rarely visited my heart; a high destiny seemed to bear me on, until I fell, never, never again to rise." Must I then lose this admirable being? I have longed for a friend; I have sought one who would sympathize with and love me. Behold, on these desert seas I have found such a one, but I fear I have gained him only to know his value and lose him. I would reconcile him to life, but he repulses the idea.

"I thank you, Walton," he said, "for your kind intentions towards so miserable a wretch; but when you speak of new ties and fresh affections, think you that any

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can replace those who are gone? Can any man be to me as Clerval was, or any woman another Elizabeth? Even where the affections are not strongly moved by any superior excellence, the companions of our childhood always possess a certain power over our minds which hardly any later friend can obtain. They know our infantine dispositions, which, however they may be afterwards modified, are never eradicated; and they can judge of our actions with more certain conclusions as to the integrity of our motives. A sister or a brother can never, unless indeed such symptoms have been shown early, suspect the other of fraud or false dealing, when another friend, however strongly he may be attached, may, in spite of himself, be contemplated with suspicion. But I enjoyed friends, dear not only through habit and association, but from their own merits; and wherever I am, the soothing voice of my Elizabeth and the conversation of Clerval will be ever whispered in my ear. They are dead, and but one feeling in such a solitude can persuade me to preserve my life. If I were engaged in any high undertaking or design, fraught with extensive utility to my fellow creatures, then could I live to fulfil it. But such is not my destiny; I must pursue and destroy the being to whom I gave existence; then my lot on earth will be fulfilled and I may die."

My beloved Sister, September 2nd

I write to you, encompassed by peril and ignorant whether I am ever doomed to see again dear England and the dearer friends that inhabit it. I am surrounded by mountains of ice which admit of no escape and threaten every moment to crush my vessel. The brave fellows whom I have persuaded to be my companions look towards me for aid, but I have none to bestow. There is something terribly appalling in our situation, yet my courage and hopes do not desert me. Yet it is terrible to reflect that the lives of all these men are endangered through me. If we are lost, my mad schemes are the cause.

And what, Margaret, will be the state of your mind? You will not hear of my destruction, and you will anxiously await my return. Years will pass, and you will have visitings of despair and yet be tortured by hope. Oh! My beloved sister, the sickening failing of your heart-felt expectations is, in prospect, more terrible to me than my own death.

But you have a husband and lovely children; you may be happy. Heaven bless you and make you so!

My unfortunate guest regards me with the tenderest compassion. He endeavours to fill me with hope and talks as if life were a possession which he valued. He reminds me how often the same accidents have happened to other navigators who have attempted this sea, and in spite of myself, he fills me with cheerful auguries. Even the sailors feel the power of his eloquence; when he speaks, they no longer despair; he rouses their energies, and while they hear his voice they believe these vast mountains of ice are mole-hills which will vanish before the resolutions of man. These feelings are transitory; each day of expectation delayed fills them with fear, and I almost dread a mutiny caused by this despair.

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September 5th

A scene has just passed of such uncommon interest that, although it is highly probable that these papers may never reach you, yet I cannot forbear recording it.

We are still surrounded by mountains of ice, still in imminent danger of being crushed in their conflict. The cold is excessive, and many of my unfortunate comrades have already found a grave amidst this scene of desolation. Frankenstein has daily declined in health; a feverish fire still glimmers in his eyes, but he is exhausted, and when suddenly roused to any exertion, he speedily sinks again into apparent lifelessness.

I mentioned in my last letter the fears I entertained of a mutiny. This morning, as I sat watching the wan countenance of my friend—his eyes half closed and his limbs hanging listlessly—I was roused by half a dozen of the sailors, who demanded admission into the cabin. They entered, and their leader addressed me. He told me that he and his companions had been chosen by the other sailors to come in deputation to me to make me a requisition which, in justice, I could not refuse. We were immured in ice and should probably never escape, but they feared that if, as was possible, the ice should dissipate and a free passage be opened, I should be rash enough to continue my voyage and lead them into fresh dangers, after they might happily have surmounted this. They insisted, therefore, that I should engage with a solemn promise that if the vessel should be freed I would instantly direct my course southwards.

This speech troubled me. I had not despaired, nor had I yet conceived the idea of returning if set free. Yet could I, in justice, or even in possibility, refuse this demand? I hesitated before I answered, when Frankenstein, who had at first been silent, and indeed appeared hardly to have force enough to attend, now roused himself; his eyes sparkled, and his cheeks flushed with momentary vigour. Turning towards the men, he said, "What do you mean? What do you demand of your captain? Are you, then, so easily turned from your design? Did you not call this a glorious expedition?

"And wherefore was it glorious? Not because the way was smooth and placid as a southern sea, but because it was full of dangers and terror, because at every new incident your fortitude was to be called forth and your courage exhibited, because danger and death surrounded it, and these you were to brave and overcome. For this was it a glorious, for this was it an honourable undertaking. You were hereafter to be hailed as the benefactors of your species, your names adored as belonging to brave men who encountered death for honour and the benefit of mankind. And now, behold, with the first imagination of danger, or, if you will, the first mighty and terrific trial of your courage, you shrink away and are content to be handed down as men who had not strength enough to endure cold and peril; and so, poor souls, they were chilly and returned to their warm firesides. Why, that requires not this preparation; ye need not have come thus far and dragged your captain to the shame of a defeat merely to prove yourselves cowards. Oh! Be men, or be more than men. Be steady to your purposes and firm as a rock. This ice is not made of such

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stuff as your hearts may be; it is mutable and cannot withstand you if you say that it shall not. Do not return to your families with the stigma of disgrace marked on your brows. Return as heroes who have fought and conquered and who know not what it is to turn their backs on the foe." He spoke this with a voice so modulated to the different feelings expressed in his speech, with an eye so full of lofty design and heroism, that can you wonder that these men were moved? They looked at one another and were unable to reply. I spoke; I told them to retire and consider of what had been said, that I would not lead them farther north if they strenuously desired the contrary, but that I hoped that, with reflection, their courage would return. They retired and I turned towards my friend, but he was sunk in languor and almost deprived of life.

How all this will terminate, I know not, but I had rather die than return shamefully, my purpose unfulfilled. Yet I fear such will be my fate; the men, unsupported by ideas of glory and honour, can never willingly continue to endure their present hardships.

September 7th

The die is cast; I have consented to return if we are not destroyed. Thus are my hopes blasted by cowardice and indecision; I come back ignorant and disappointed. It requires more philosophy than I possess to bear this injustice with patience.

September 12th

It is past; I am returning to England. I have lost my hopes of utility and glory; I have lost my friend. But I will endeavour to detail these bitter circumstances to you, my dear sister; and while I am wafted towards England and towards you, I will not despond.

September 9th, the ice began to move, and roarings like thunder were heard at a distance as the islands split and cracked in every direction. We were in the most imminent peril, but as we could only remain passive, my chief attention was occupied by my unfortunate guest whose illness increased in such a degree that he was entirely confined to his bed. The ice cracked behind us and was driven with force towards the north; a breeze sprang from the west, and on the 11th the passage towards the south became perfectly free. When the sailors saw this and that their return to their native country was apparently assured, a shout of tumultuous joy broke from them, loud and long-continued. Frankenstein, who was dozing, awoke and asked the cause of the tumult. "They shout," I said, "because they will soon return to England."

"Do you, then, really return?"

"Alas! Yes; I cannot withstand their demands. I cannot lead them unwillingly to danger, and I must return."

"Do so, if you will; but I will not. You may give up your purpose, but mine is assigned to me by heaven, and I dare not. I am weak, but surely the spirits who assist my vengeance will endow me with sufficient strength." Saying this, he

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endeavoured to spring from the bed, but the exertion was too great for him; he fell back and fainted.

It was long before he was restored, and I often thought that life was entirely extinct. At length he opened his eyes; he breathed with difficulty and was unable to speak. The surgeon gave him a composing draught and ordered us to leave him undisturbed. In the meantime he told me that my friend had certainly not many hours to live.

His sentence was pronounced, and I could only grieve and be patient. I sat by his bed, watching him; his eyes were closed, and I thought he slept; but presently he called to me in a feeble voice, and bidding me come near, said, "Alas! The strength I relied on is gone; I feel that I shall soon die, and he, my enemy and persecutor, may still be in being. Think not, Walton, that in the last moments of my existence I feel that burning hatred and ardent desire of revenge I once expressed; but I feel myself justified in desiring the death of my adversary. During these last days I have been occupied in examining my past conduct; nor do I find it blamable. In a fit of enthusiastic madness I created a rational creature and was bound towards him to assure, as far as was in my power, his happiness and well-being.

"This was my duty, but there was another still paramount to that. My duties towards the beings of my own species had greater claims to my attention because they included a greater proportion of happiness or misery. Urged by this view, I refused, and I did right in refusing, to create a companion for the first creature. He showed unparalleled malignity and selfishness in evil; he destroyed my friends; he devoted to destruction beings who possessed exquisite sensations, happiness, and wisdom; nor do I know where this thirst for vengeance may end. Miserable himself that he may render no other wretched, he ought to die. The task of his destruction was mine, but I have failed. When actuated by selfish and vicious motives, I asked you to undertake my unfinished work, and I renew this request now, when I am only induced by reason and virtue.

"Yet I cannot ask you to renounce your country and friends to fulfil this task; and now that you are returning to England, you will have little chance of meeting with him. But the consideration of these points, and the well balancing of what you may esteem your duties, I leave to you; my judgment and ideas are already disturbed by the near approach of death. I dare not ask you to do what I think right, for I may still be misled by passion.

"That he should live to be an instrument of mischief disturbs me; in other respects, this hour, when I momentarily expect my release, is the only happy one which I have enjoyed for several years. The forms of the beloved dead flit before me, and I hasten to their arms. Farewell, Walton! Seek happiness in tranquillity and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries. Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed."

His voice became fainter as he spoke, and at length, exhausted by his effort, he sank into silence. About half an hour afterwards he attempted again to speak

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but was unable; he pressed my hand feebly, and his eyes closed forever, while the irradiation of a gentle smile passed away from his lips.

Margaret, what comment can I make on the untimely extinction of this glorious spirit? What can I say that will enable you to understand the depth of my sorrow? All that I should express would be inadequate and feeble. My tears flow; my mind is overshadowed by a cloud of disappointment. But I journey towards England, and I may there find consolation.

I am interrupted. What do these sounds portend? It is midnight; the breeze blows fairly, and the watch on deck scarcely stir. Again there is a sound as of a human voice, but hoarser; it comes from the cabin where the remains of Frankenstein still lie. I must arise and examine. Good night, my sister.

Great God! what a scene has just taken place! I am yet dizzy with the remembrance of it. I hardly know whether I shall have the power to detail it; yet the tale which I have recorded would be incomplete without this final and wonderful catastrophe. I entered the cabin where lay the remains of my ill-fated and admirable friend. Over him hung a form which I cannot find words to describe—gigantic in stature, yet uncouth and distorted in its proportions. As he hung over the coffin, his face was concealed by long locks of ragged hair; but one vast hand was extended, in colour and apparent texture like that of a mummy. When he heard the sound of my approach, he ceased to utter exclamations of grief and horror and sprung towards the window. Never did I behold a vision so horrible as his face, of such loathsome yet appalling hideousness. I shut my eyes involuntarily and endeavoured to recollect what were my duties with regard to this destroyer. I called on him to stay.

He paused, looking on me with wonder, and again turning towards the lifeless form of his creator, he seemed to forget my presence, and every feature and gesture seemed instigated by the wildest rage of some uncontrollable passion.

"That is also my victim!" he exclaimed. "In his murder my crimes are consummated; the miserable series of my being is wound to its close! Oh, Frankenstein! Generous and self-devoted being! What does it avail that I now ask thee to pardon me? I, who irretrievably destroyed thee by destroying all thou lovedst. Alas! He is cold, he cannot answer me." His voice seemed suffocated, and my first impulses, which had suggested to me the duty of obeying the dying request of my friend in destroying his enemy, were now suspended by a mixture of curiosity and compassion. I approached this tremendous being; I dared not again raise my eyes to his face, there was something so scaring and unearthly in his ugliness. I attempted to speak, but the words died away on my lips. The monster continued to utter wild and incoherent self-reproaches. At length I gathered resolution to address him in a pause of the tempest of his passion.

"Your repentance," I said, "is now superfluous. If you had listened to the voice of conscience and heeded the stings of remorse before you had urged your diabolical vengeance to this extremity, Frankenstein would yet have lived."

"And do you dream?" said the daemon. "Do you think that I was then dead to agony and remorse? He," he continued, pointing to the corpse, "he suffered not in

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the consummation of the deed. Oh! Not the ten-thousandth portion of the anguish that was mine during the lingering detail of its execution. A frightful selfishness hurried me on, while my heart was poisoned with remorse. Think you that the groans of Clerval were music to my ears? My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy, and when wrenched by misery to vice and hatred, it did not endure the violence of the change without torture such as you cannot even imagine.

"After the murder of Clerval I returned to Switzerland, heart-broken and overcome. I pitied Frankenstein; my pity amounted to horror; I abhorred myself. But when I discovered that he, the author at once of my existence and of its unspeakable torments, dared to hope for happiness, that while he accumulated wretchedness and despair upon me he sought his own enjoyment in feelings and passions from the indulgence of which I was forever barred, then impotent envy and bitter indignation filled me with an insatiable thirst for vengeance. I recollected my threat and resolved that it should be accomplished. I knew that I was preparing for myself a deadly torture, but I was the slave, not the master, of an impulse which I detested yet could not disobey. Yet when she died! Nay, then I was not miserable. I had cast off all feeling, subdued all anguish, to riot in the excess of my despair. Evil thenceforth became my good. Urged thus far, I had no choice but to adapt my nature to an element which I had willingly chosen. The completion of my demoniacal design became an insatiable passion. And now it is ended; there is my last victim!"

I was at first touched by the expressions of his misery; yet, when I called to mind what Frankenstein had said of his powers of eloquence and persuasion, and when I again cast my eyes on the lifeless form of my friend, indignation was rekindled within me. "Wretch!" I said. "It is well that you come here to whine over the desolation that you have made. You throw a torch into a pile of buildings, and when they are consumed, you sit among the ruins and lament the fall. Hypocritical fiend! If he whom you mourn still lived, still would he be the object, again would he become the prey, of your accursed vengeance. It is not pity that you feel; you lament only because the victim of your malignity is withdrawn from your power."

"Oh, it is not thus—not thus," interrupted the being. "Yet such must be the impression conveyed to you by what appears to be the purport of my actions. Yet I seek not a fellow feeling in my misery. No sympathy may I ever find. When I first sought it, it was the love of virtue, the feelings of happiness and affection with which my whole being overflowed, that I wished to be participated. But now that virtue has become to me a shadow, and that happiness and affection are turned into bitter and loathing despair, in what should I seek for sympathy? I am content to suffer alone while my sufferings shall endure; when I die, I am well satisfied that abhorrence and opprobrium should load my memory. Once my fancy was soothed with dreams of virtue, of fame, and of enjoyment. Once I falsely hoped to meet with beings who, pardoning my outward form, would love me for the excellent qualities which I was capable of unfolding. I was nourished with high thoughts of honour and devotion. But now crime has degraded me beneath the meanest

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animal. No guilt, no mischief, no malignity, no misery, can be found comparable to mine. When I run over the frightful catalogue of my sins, I cannot believe that I am the same creature whose thoughts were once filled with sublime and transcendent visions of the beauty and the majesty of goodness. But it is even so; the fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. Yet even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates in his desolation; I am alone.

"You, who call Frankenstein your friend, seem to have a knowledge of my crimes and his misfortunes. But in the detail which he gave you of them he could not sum up the hours and months of misery which I endured wasting in impotent passions. For while I destroyed his hopes, I did not satisfy my own desires. They were forever ardent and craving; still I desired love and fellowship, and I was still spurned. Was there no injustice in this? Am I to be thought the only criminal, when all humankind sinned against me? Why do you not hate Felix, who drove his friend from his door with contumely? Why do you not execrate the rustic who sought to destroy the saviour of his child? Nay, these are virtuous and immaculate beings! I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on. Even now my blood boils at the recollection of this injustice.

"But it is true that I am a wretch. I have murdered the lovely and the helpless; I have strangled the innocent as they slept and grasped to death his throat who never injured me or any other living thing. I have devoted my creator, the select specimen of all that is worthy of love and admiration among men, to misery; I have pursued him even to that irremediable ruin.

"There he lies, white and cold in death. You hate me, but your abhorrence cannot equal that with which I regard myself. I look on the hands which executed the deed; I think on the heart in which the imagination of it was conceived and long for the moment when these hands will meet my eyes, when that imagination will haunt my thoughts no more.

"Fear not that I shall be the instrument of future mischief. My work is nearly complete. Neither yours nor any man's death is needed to consummate the series of my being and accomplish that which must be done, but it requires my own. Do not think that I shall be slow to perform this sacrifice. I shall quit your vessel on the ice raft which brought me thither and shall seek the most northern extremity of the globe; I shall collect my funeral pile and consume to ashes this miserable frame, that its remains may afford no light to any curious and unhallowed wretch who would create such another as I have been. I shall die. I shall no longer feel the agonies which now consume me or be the prey of feelings unsatisfied, yet unquenched. He is dead who called me into being; and when I shall be no more, the very remembrance of us both will speedily vanish. I shall no longer see the sun or stars or feel the winds play on my cheeks.

"Light, feeling, and sense will pass away; and in this condition must I find my happiness. Some years ago, when the images which this world affords first opened upon me, when I felt the cheering warmth of summer and heard the rustling of the leaves and the warbling of the birds, and these were all to me, I should have wept

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to die; now it is my only consolation. Polluted by crimes and torn by the bitterest remorse, where can I find rest but in death?

"Farewell! I leave you, and in you the last of humankind whom these eyes will ever behold. Farewell, Frankenstein! If thou wert yet alive and yet cherished a desire of revenge against me, it would be better satiated in my life than in my destruction. But it was not so; thou didst seek my extinction, that I might not cause greater wretchedness; and if yet, in some mode unknown to me, thou hadst not ceased to think and feel, thou wouldst not desire against me a vengeance greater than that which I feel. Blasted as thou wert, my agony was still superior to thine, for the bitter sting of remorse will not cease to rankle in my wounds until death shall close them forever.

"But soon," he cried with sad and solemn enthusiasm, "I shall die, and what I now feel be no longer felt. Soon these burning miseries will be extinct. I shall ascend my funeral pile triumphantly and exult in the agony of the torturing flames. The light of that conflagration will fade away; my ashes will be swept into the sea by the winds. My spirit will sleep in peace, or if it thinks, it will not surely think thus. Farewell."

He sprang from the cabin window as he said this, upon the ice raft which lay close to the vessel. He was soon borne away by the waves and lost in darkness and distance.

### 1.14.2 Reading and Review Questions

1. Why does Victor Frankenstein perceive the Creature as hideous only after it comes to life? Why does he then fall unconscious and dream of his beloved Elizabeth turning into the corpse of his dead mother?

2. Why do Victor Frankenstein's experiences cause him to warn against the danger of neglecting domestic affections? Remember that the domestic sphere particularly "belonged" to women (or was where women were deemed to particularly belong).

3. What role does communication play in this work? Why? How does Victor's attitude towards communication compare to that of the Creature? Why?

4. How, and to what effect, do the events, characters, and localities recall other Romantic works, such as the Rime of the Ancient Mariner and Manfred? Consider the full title of the novel. Consider its opening epigraph. Consider the location of the final scenes. Consider the Creature's describing Victor Frankenstein as both generous and self-devoted.

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# 2 The Victorian Age (1837-1901)

## 2.1 THE VICTORIAN MOVEMENT IN LITERATURE

Image 2.1 | Portrait of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and their children Artist | Franz Xaver Winterhalter Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



Victorian writers reacted against the Romantics by moving away from what may be considered individual subjectivity toward a more objective stance. While the Romantics alluded to Greek and Roman mythology and art, the Victorians added Greek and Roman classics, especially in terms of structure, subject, and character expression. Rather than the Romantic emphasis on the individual, the

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Victorians embraced social responsibility, engaging with the people, problems, and ideas of their time.

Image 2.2 | Victorian London Slum

Artist | Gustave Dore Source | The Guardian License | Public Domain



The objective poet became the standard, as they reproduced the external world in action, struggle, battle, and engagement in manifesting any feelings and ideas. Indeed, Victorian poetry, like Romantic, is weighted with ideas and issues of the age. But the Victorians thought that Romantic poetry put too much emphasis on expression, metaphors, and the means of poetry at the expense of the subject of poetry. Victorian objectivity shaped their emphasis on action over introspection and overelaboration of feeling. Their critical theory produced dramatic poems rather than the Romantic lyric. From these views and approaches, the dramatic monologue developed as a characteristic form in poetry, a form in which the poem's speaker is not the poet. And realism became the hallmark of prose, particularly in the novel. The extremely popular novels of Charles Dickens (1812-1870), with their wealth of concrete detail and reflection of specific social conditions, exemplify such realism. Overall, Victorian authors strove for realism in style and subject, strove to reproduce nature as it was, not as it was imagined or idealized.

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Literary movements in the Victorian age paralleled societal changes that occurred. John Ruskin (1819-1900) wrote highly influential essays attacking current views supporting laissez-faire, classic economics, and utilitarianism. He believed that labor should be pleasant, that the product of labor should be artistic, and that the whole person should be involved in their work. He expressed the influential view that a society could be judged by the quality of its art and architecture, a view best expressed in his The Stones of Venice (1851-1853). Matthew Arnold's (18221888) essays similarly looked to art as a measure of morality. Ruskin had a great effect on economics; for example, he influenced John A. Hobson (1858-1940), who criticized balancing production with demand, or Say's Law. Ruskin's ideas led to welfare economics, to the realization that society needed to be concerned with the welfare of workers.

Ruskin's admiration for medieval unity contributed to the medieval ideal of the Pre-Raphaelites. The Pre-Raphaelite Movement, represented by such writers as Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) and William Morris (1834-1896), sought to recover an organic construct in society such as they thought existed when medieval lords were directly responsible for their serfs. They sought a comparable unity within themselves and their art, an art that synthesized word and image, expression and product. William Morris actualized these views not only in his writings, such as Defense of Guenevere (1858), but also in his co-founding a manufacturing company that produced textiles, pottery, and glass intended to be both beautiful and useful.

Advances in science had an immense impact on society, not only economically but also culturally. It contributed to a new view of nature as indifferent to all species, including humans. In the latter half of the Victorian era, a Crisis in Faith caused society to turn away from faith and duty toward mercantilism and social Darwinism, an idea tying natural selection to living people. The growing sense that God had no plan for this callous world led many to scramble for security and meaning. Some turned to philosophies like Positivism, a theory that privileged fact and natural phenomenon over religious faith, and that influenced secular religion, or a religion of humanity. Some returned to Roman Catholicism, taking comfort in its dogma and ritual. And some turned to art, expressing a belief in art. Aesthetes lived for beauty; aesthetic artists became priests in service to the religion of art as art gave meaning to the fleeting moment that is human life. The Aesthetic Movement, which advocated art for art's sake, suggested that great art could replace life. Walter Pater (1839-1894) in his Studies in the History of the Renaissance (1873), most famously in its Mona Lisa passage, makes no distinction between life and art. And aesthetic writers, like Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) in his The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891), explored the effects of these views on the individual.

## 2.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As both a historical and literary age, the Victorian era dates chronologically with the reign of Queen Victoria. Some critics, though, see it as beginning with

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Alfred, Lord Tennyson's (1809-1892) publication of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical and the opening of the Liverpool-Manchester railroad, both of which occurred in 1830.

The Victorian Age can be divided into two sections, with the fulcrum occurring around 1870. The first part was characterized by optimism in material, cultural, and social progress. The optimistic saw great progress occurring in this era. The Crimean War (1854-56), though filled with military miscalculations and deaths and achieved no victory, did not diminish this optimism. The second part, however, was affected by the Depression of 1873, which continued until the end of the century. England in the 1860s was at its zenith as a world power, followed by a slow decline over the next 100 years.

Image 2.3 | The Railway

Artist | George S. Measom Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



Image 2.4 | The Crystal Palace

Artist | W. Lacey

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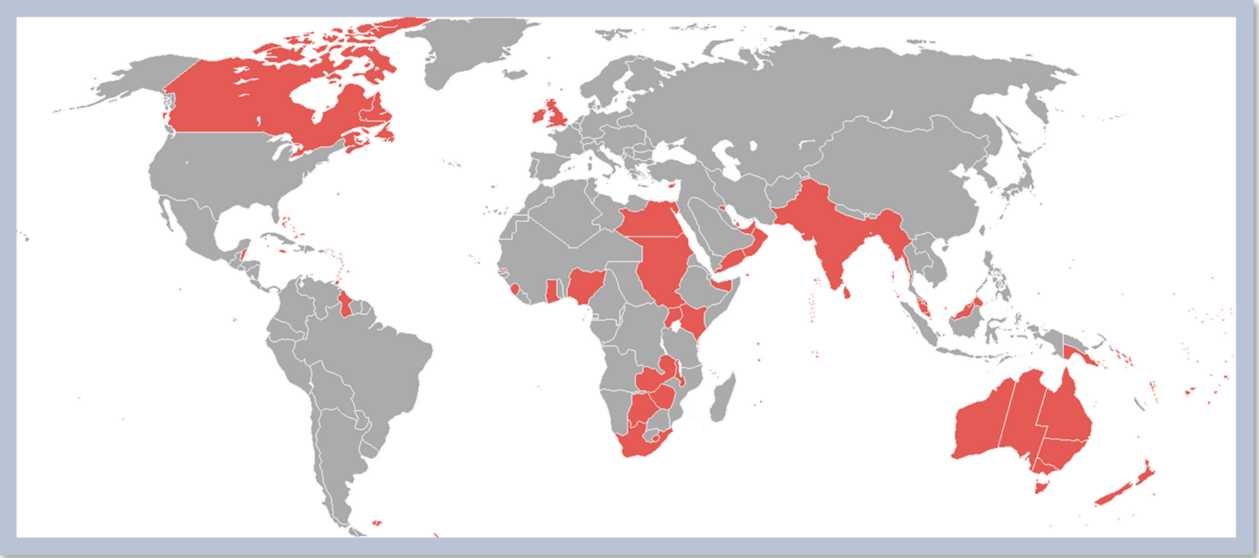
The paramount characteristic of the Victorian Age was rapid change and concomitant conflict. It was a complex age, an age of great wealth and extreme

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poverty, of the family as sacred center and a burgeoning of prostitution, of morality and fraud, of belief in the Bible and in scientific determinism. In the 1830s, railroad expansion transformed England as it spurred immense material progress and economic growth. The Victorians came to think of progress as natural and tied progress to wealth and prosperity.

Britain exceeded the exports of competing nations like the United States by three to four times in number. The British Empire grew in pursuit of resources and markets for its exports. At its height of Empire, Britain ruled about a quarter of the world, including Ceylon, India, Australia, New Zealand, the Sudan, and South Africa. The British saw themselves as the leaders of the world, assuming the "white man's burden" and spreading civilization and religion to the so-called dark places on earth. They overlooked the commercial exploitation, racism, and moral degradation that they also spread. A measure of Britain's place in the world was The Crystal Palace (1851) which collected in one massive glass and iron structure inventions and artifacts taken from all over the British Empire.

Image 2.5 | The British Empire in 1900 Artist | User:Roke~commonswiki Source | Wikimedia Commons License | CC BY-SA 3.0



During this economic and social transformation, England's aristocracy and the rising middle class, comprising industrialists, businessmen, trade leaders, and workers, vied for political power, with the middle class incrementally overtaking the aristocracy. The Reform Bill of 1832 began the process of extending the franchise, ultimately reaching the worker. During this struggle, England shifted from an agrarian to an industrial society. Industrialization wrought a grim physical change on the landscape and in the growth of urban slums around factories. Farmers migrated from the country to the city. The population in London doubled in a matter of a few years. A dramatic increase in the population overall led to an urban concentration, in London and in northern industrial cities like Liverpool, Leeds, and Manchester.

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The laboring masses of the poor, though, had little power. Men, women, and children lived in abysmal conditions, working six days a week for up to sixteen hours a day in factories and mines at a time when there were no minimum wage or age limits. These conditions were partially improved through various acts, including the Factory Act of 1833 that improved conditions in textile factories; the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 that created the Workhouse, a place intended for the desperate destitute as it separated families and forced able-bodied people to work alongside the lunatic and the ill; and the Mine Act of 1842 that excluded women and children from working underground. Nevertheless, women in particular remained considerably disadvantaged.

A large number of women worked as domestic servants and governesses. Prostitution was an option for the desperate, and the number of prostitutes increased tremendously. The Victorian connection of virtue with prosperity allowed what now seems a remarkable hypocrisy in this growth, as Victorians thought that the poor and the prostitute were "no better than they should be" and suffered poverty because of their moral laxity. The other side of this view was the Victorian feminine ideal that viewed women as the standard bearers of morality, as the protectors of virtue in the home, their natural sphere. A woman's duty first was to her husband; a woman's privilege was her freedom from the stress of the public sphere. A married woman's property was in her husband's hands up until the 1870s and 1880s. Despite their apparent spiritual and moral elevation, women were considered inferior to men intellectually, physically, and temperamentally, and the position of women became a concern for social change. Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre (1847) spoke for women's individuality, and John Stuart Mill's The Subjection of Women (1869) advocated for women's education and options for occupations outside the domestic sphere.

Change and reform also occurred in religious life. Since the 1560s, England was a Protestant nation, with the Church of England supported by the government. Protestant evangelicals and dissenters of the church pushed strongly against this unquestioned authority, demanding strong Christian ethics and increased social welfare. Known for their religious fervor, evangelicals stressed the authority of the Bible, considering it to be the direct authority of God. Besides the Evangelical Movement there occurred in the 1870s the Oxford Movement that increased the size and power of the Roman Catholic Church. This movement was led by John Henry Newman (1801-1890) who published his spiritual biography Apologia Pro Vita Sua (1864).

These challenges to the established church reflected a shift in religion and philosophy caused by scientific and higher critical studies, including Sir Charles Lyell's (1797-1875) Principles of Geology (1830-33) that used geology to measure the Earth's age; Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) On the Origins of Species (1859) that saw life as biologically determined; and August Renan's (1823-1894) Life of Jesus (1863), a biography of Jesus as human rather than divine. Additionally, the Empire exposed the British to unexpected diversity of cultures and religion.

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Missionaries intent on spreading the word of God to the so-called heathen were taken by surprise at the rational skepticism of some of their intended converts. John William Colenso (1814-1883), the Bishop of Natal, described the impact of such skepticism in his controversial work of biblical criticism, The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined (1862).

## 2.3 RECOMMENDED READING

Daniel Albright, Tennyson: The Muses' Tug-of-War, 1986. Jerome Buckley, The Victorian Temper, 1951.

Linda C. Dowling, Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siecle, 1986. Richard Ellmann, Oscar Wilde, 1988.

Elizabeth Helsinger, Robin Lauterbach Sheets, and William Veeder, The Woman Question, 3 vols., 1980.

Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870, 1957. Robert Langbaum, The Poetry of Experience, 1957. Sally Mitchell, ed., Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia, 1988. Herbert Tucker, Browning's Beginnings, 1980.

Image 2.6 | Drawing of Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Artist | Field Talfourd

Source | National Portrait Gallery

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## 2.4 ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

(1806-1861)

Elizabeth Barrett Browning both epitomized the condition of women in the Victorian age and refuted it. Held under the "loving" hand of Edward Moulton Barrett, her Victorian patriarch of a father, Barrett Browning was confined to the private realm and the home to an extreme degree. At the age of fifteen, she suffered a spinal injury while saddling a pony. Seven years later a broken blood vessel in her chest left her weakened and suffering a chronic cough. An invalid, she was ultimately confined to her room. Despite these adversities, and with the encouragement and support of her father, Barrett Browning read widely, learned several languages, and published poetry and essays.

Her literary reputation grew to such an extent that she was suggested as a successor

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to Wordsworth as the Poet Laureate—a position that went to Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892). She communicated with the literary giants of her day, including Wordsworth, Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), and Edgar Allen Poe (1809-1849). Her relationship with Robert Browning (1812-1889) began through his writing to her, expressing admiration for her poetry and love for her. His social visits turned quickly to a courtship that, when discovered by Edward Moulton Barrett, was adamantly opposed. Barrett Browning recorded the stress, uncertainty, and joy of this courtship in her Sonnets from the Portuguese (1850). She and Browning ultimately married in secret and sailed to Italy.

In Italy, Barrett Browning became involved in Italian Independence. Much of her work reflects her interest in individual—particularly women's—rights, child labor, prostitution, abolition, and the plight of the poor and downtrodden. These interests combine in many of her greatest works, including Aurora Leigh (1856), a hybrid novel-poem that depicts the limitations placed upon women's public and private ambitions. Its aesthetic devices rely upon woman-centric images and allusions. Her Sonnetsfrom the Portuguese take on the most male-dominated of poetic forms asserting her place in this important tradition. In the most famous sonnet from this sequence, Sonnet 43, her highly personal expressions of love and passion—and ostensibly feminine emotionalism—are framed by the repetition of "I," the poet herself.

### 2.4.1 "The Cry of the Children"

"Pheu pheu, ti prosderkesthe m ommasin, tekna;"

[[Alas, alas, why do you gaze at me with your eyes, my children.]]—Medea.

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,

Ere the sorrow comes with years? They are leaning their young heads against their mothers, —

And that cannot stop their tears. The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;

The young birds are chirping in the nest; The young fawns are playing with the shadows;

The young flowers are blowing toward the west — But the young, young children, O my brothers,

They are weeping bitterly! They are weeping in the playtime of the others,

In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,

Why their tears are falling so? The old man may weep for his to-morrow

Which is lost in Long Ago — The old tree is leafless in the forest — The old year is ending in the frost —

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The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest —

The old hope is hardest to be lost: But the young, young children, O my brothers,

Do you ask them why they stand Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,

In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,

And their looks are sad to see, For the man's grief abhorrent, draws and presses

Down the cheeks of infancy — "Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;"

"Our young feet," they say, "are very weak!" Few paces have we taken, yet are weary —

Our grave-rest is very far to seek! Ask the old why they weep, and not the children,

For the outside earth is cold — And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,

And the graves are for the old!"

"True," say the children, "it may happen

That we die before our time! Little Alice died last year her grave is shapen

Like a snowball, in the rime. We looked into the pit prepared to take her — Was no room for any work in the close clay: From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,

Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.' If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower, With your ear down, little Alice never cries; Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,

For the smile has time for growing in her eyes, — And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in

The shroud, by the kirk-chime! It is good when it happens," say the children, "That we die before our time!"

Alas, the wretched children! they are seeking

Death in life, as best to have! They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,

With a cerement from the grave. Go out, children, from the mine and from the city — Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do —

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Pluck you handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty

Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through! But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows

Like our weeds anear the mine? Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,

From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,

And we cannot run or leap — If we cared for any meadows, it were merely

To drop down in them and sleep. Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping —

We fall upon our faces, trying to go; And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,

The reddest flower would look as pale as snow. For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,

Through the coal-dark, underground — Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron

In the factories, round and round.

"For all day, the wheels are droning, turning, — Their wind comes in our faces, —

Image 2.7 | Children in Factory Photographer | Lewis Hine Source | [OurDocument.gov](http://OurDocument.gov) License | Public Domain



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Till our hearts turn,— our heads, with pulses burning,

And the walls turn in their places Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling — Turns the long light that droppeth down the wall, — Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling —

All are turning, all the day, and we with all! — And all day, the iron wheels are droning;

And sometimes we could pray, 'O ye wheels,' (breaking out in a mad moaning)

'Stop ! be silent for to-day!'"

Ay! be silent! Let them hear each other breathing

For a moment, mouth to mouth — Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing

Of their tender human youth! Let them feel that this cold metallic motion Is not all the life God fashions or reveals — Let them prove their inward souls against the notion

That they live in you, or under you, O wheels! — Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,

As if Fate in each were stark; And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,

Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,

To look up to Him and pray — So the blessed One, who blesseth all the others,

Will bless them another day. They answer, "Who is God that He should hear us,

While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred? When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us

Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word! And we hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)

Strangers speaking at the door: Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,

Hears our weeping any more?

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remember;

And at midnight's hour of harm, — 'Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,

We say softly for a charm. We know no other words, except 'Our Father,'

And we think that, in some pause of angels' song, God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,

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And hold both within His right hand which is strong. 'Our Father!' If He heard us, He would surely

(For they call Him good and mild) Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely, 'Come and rest with me, my child.'

"But, no!" say the children, weeping faster,

"He is speechless as a stone; And they tell us, of His image is the master

Who commands us to work on. Go to! " say the children,—" up in Heaven,

Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find! Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving —

We look up for God, but tears have made us blind." Do ye hear the children weeping and disproving,

O my brothers, what ye preach? For God's possible is taught by His world's loving —

And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you;

They are weary ere they run; They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory

Which is brighter than the sun: They know the grief of man, without its wisdom;

They sink in the despair, without its calm — Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom, — Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm, — Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly

No dear remembrance keep, — Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly:

Let them weep! let them weep!

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,

And their look is dread to see, For they think you see their angels in their places,

With eyes meant for Deity; — "How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,

Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart, — Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,

And tread onward to your throne amid the mart? Our blood splashes upward, O our tyrants,

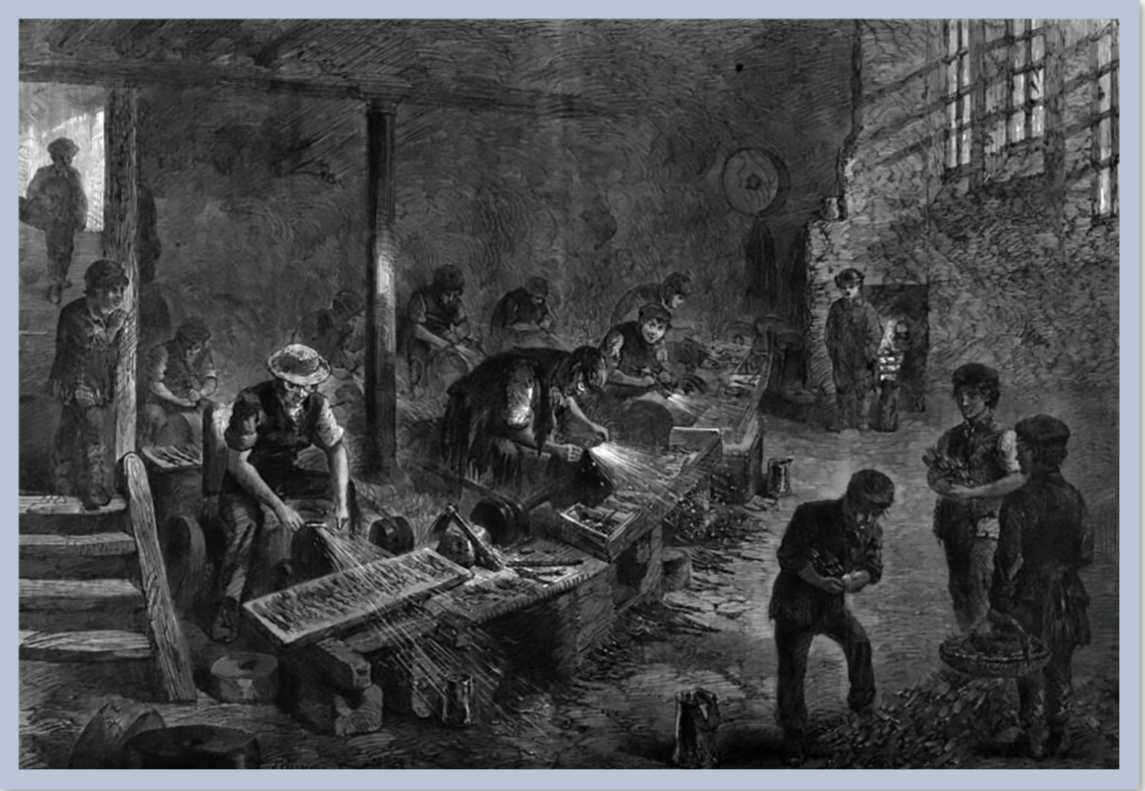
And your purple shews your path; But the child's sob curseth deeper in the silence

Than the strong man in his wrath!"

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Image 2.8 | The Day in the Life of a Young Sheffield Steel Worker

Artist | The Illustrated London News Source | Victorian Web License | Public Domain



### 2.4.2 "To George Sand: A Desire"

Thou large-brained woman and large-hearted man,

Self-called George Sand! whose soul, amid the lions

Of thy tumultuous senses, moans defiance

And answers roar for roar, as spirits can:

I would some mild miraculous thunder ran

Above the applauded circus, in appliance

Of thine own nobler nature's strength and science,

Drawing two pinions, white as wings of swan,

From thy strong shoulders, to amaze the place

With holier light! that thou to woman's claim

And man's, mightst join beside the angel's grace

Of a pure genius sanctified from blame

Till child and maiden pressed to thine embrace

To kiss upon thy lips a stainless fame.

### 2.4.3 "A Recognition"

True genius, but true woman! dost deny The woman's nature with a manly scorn, And break away the gauds and armlets worn

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By weaker women in captivity?

Ah, vain denial! that revolted cry

Is sobbed in by a woman's voice forlorn,-

Thy woman's hair, my sister, all unshorn

Floats back dishevelled strength in agony,

Disproving thy man's name: and while before

The world thou burnest in a poet-fire,

We see thy woman-heart beat evermore

Through the large flame. Beat purer, heart, and higher,

Till God unsex thee on the heavenly shore

Where unincarnate spirits purely aspire!

### 2.4.4 From Aurora Leigh From First Book

I am like,

They tell me, my dear father. Broader brows Howbeit, upon a slenderer undergrowth Of delicate features,—paler, near as grave; But then my mother's smile breaks up the whole, And makes it better sometimes than itself—

So, nine full years, our days were hid with God

Among his mountains. I was just thirteen,

Still growing like the plants from unseen roots

In tongue-tied Springs,—and suddenly awoke

To full life and its needs and agonies,

With an intense, strong, struggling heart beside

A stone-dead father. Life, struck sharp on death,

Makes awful lightning. His last word was, 'Love—'

'Love, my child, love, love!'—(then he had done with grief)

'Love, my child.' Ere I answered he was gone,

And none was left to love in all the world.

There, ended childhood: what succeeded next

I recollect as, after fevers, men

Thread back the passage of delirium,

Missing the turn still, baffled by the door;

Smooth endless days, notched here and there with knives;

A weary, wormy darkness, spurred i' the flank

With flame, that it should eat and end itself

Like some tormented scorpion. Then, at last,

I do remember clearly, how there came

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A stranger with authority, not right,

(I thought not) who commanded, caught me up

From old Assunta's neck; how, with a shriek,

She let me go,—while I, with ears too full

Of my father's silence, to shriek back a word,

In all a child's astonishment at grief

Stared at the wharfage where she stood and moaned,

My poor Assunta, where she stood and moaned!

The white walls, the blue hills, my Italy,

Drawn backward from the shuddering steamer-deck,

Like one in anger drawing back her skirts

Which suppliants catch at. Then the bitter sea

Inexorably pushed between us both,

And sweeping up the ship with my despair

Threw us out as a pasture to the stars.

Ten nights and days we voyaged on the deep;

Ten nights and days, without the common face

Of any day or night; the moon and sun

Cut off from the green reconciling earth,

To starve into a blind ferocity

And glare unnatural; the very sky

(Dropping its bell-net down upon the sea

As if no human heart should scape alive,)

Bedraggled with the desolating salt,

Until it seemed no more than holy heaven

To which my father went. All new, and strange—

The universe turned stranger, for a child.

Then, land!—then, England! oh, the frosty cliffs Looked cold upon me. Could I find a home Among those mean red houses through the fog? And when I heard my father's language first From alien lips which had no kiss for mine, I wept aloud, then laughed, then wept, then wept,— And some one near me said the child was mad Through much sea-sickness. The train swept us on. Was this my father's England? the great isle? The ground seemed cut up from the fellowship Of verdure, field from field, as man from man; The skies themselves looked low and positive, As almost you could touch them with a hand, And dared to do it, they were so far off From God's celestial crystals; all things, blurred

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And dull and vague. Did Shakspeare and his mates Absorb the light here?—not a hill or stone With heart to strike a radiant colour up Or active outline on the indifferent air!

I think I see my father's sister stand

Upon the hall-step of her country-house

To give me welcome. She stood straight and calm,

Her somewhat narrow forehead braided tight

As if for taming accidental thoughts

From possible pulses; brown hair pricked with grey

By frigid use of life, (she was not old,

Although my father's elder by a year)

A nose drawn sharply, yet in delicate lines;

A close mild mouth, a little soured about

The ends, through speaking unrequited loves,

Or peradventure niggardly half-truths;

Eyes of no colour,—once they might have smiled,

But never, never have forgot themselves

In smiling; cheeks in which was yet a rose

Of perished summers, like a rose in a book,

Kept more for ruth than pleasure,—if past bloom,

Past fading also.

She had lived we'll say, A harmless life, she called a virtuous life, A quiet life, which was not life at all, (But that, she had not lived enough to know) Between the vicar and the county squires, The lord-lieutenant looking down sometimes From the empyreal, to assure their souls Against chance vulgarisms, and, in the abyss, The apothecary looked on once a year, To prove their soundness of humility. The poor-club exercised her Christian gifts Of knitting stockings, stitching petticoats, Because we are of one flesh after all And need one flannel, (with a proper sense Of difference in the quality)—and still The book-club guarded from your modern trick Of shaking dangerous questions from the crease, Preserved her intellectual. She had lived A sort of cage-bird life, born in a cage, Accounting that to leap from perch to perch

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Was act and joy enough for any bird. Dear heaven, how silly are the things that live In thickets and eat berries! I, alas,

A wild bird scarcely fledged, was brought to her cage, And she was there to meet me. Very kind. Bring the clean water; give out the fresh seed. She stood upon the steps to welcome me, Calm, in black garb. I clung about her neck,— Young babes, who catch at every shred of wool To draw the new light closer, catch and cling Less blindly. In my ears, my father's word Hummed ignorantly, as the sea in shells, 'Love, love, my child,' She, black there with my grief, Might feel my love—she was his sister once— I clung to her. A moment, she seemed moved, Kissed me with cold lips, suffered me to cling, And drew me feebly through the hall, into The room she sate in.

There, with some strange spasm Of pain and passion, she wrung loose my hands Imperiously, and held me at arm's length, And with two grey-steel naked-bladed eyes Searched through my face,—ay, stabbed it through and through, Through brows and cheeks and chin, as if to find A wicked murderer in my innocent face, If not here, there perhaps. Then, drawing breath, She struggled for her ordinary calm, And missed it rather,—told me not to shrink, As if she had told me not to lie or swear,— 'She loved my father, and would love me too As long as I deserved it.' Very kind.

I understood her meaning afterward;

She thought to find my mother in my face,

And questioned it for that. For she, my aunt,

Had loved my father truly, as she could,

And hated, with the gall of gentle souls,

My Tuscan mother, who had fooled away

A wise man from wise courses, a good man

From obvious duties, and, depriving her,

His sister, of the household precedence,

Had wronged his tenants, robbed his native land,

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And made him mad, alike by life and death,

In love and sorrow. She had pored for years

What sort of woman could be suitable

To her sort of hate, to entertain it with;

And so, her very curiosity

Became hate too, and all the idealism

She ever used in life, was used for hate,

Till hate, so nourished, did exceed at last

The love from which it grew, in strength and heat,

And wrinkled her smooth conscience with a sense

Of disputable virtue (say not, sin)

When Christian doctrine was enforced at church.

And thus my father's sister was to me

My mother's hater. From that day, she did

Her duty to me, (I appreciate it

In her own word as spoken to herself)

Her duty, in large measure, well-pressed out,

But measured always. She was generous, bland,

More courteous than was tender, gave me still

The first place,—as if fearful that God's saints

Would look down suddenly and say, 'Herein

You missed a point, I think, through lack of love.'

Alas, a mother never is afraid

Of speaking angrily to any child,

Since love, she knows, is justified of love.

And I, I was a good child on the whole, A meek and manageable child. Why not? I did not live, to have the faults of life: There seemed more true life in my father's grave Than in all England. Since that threw me off Who fain would cleave, (his latest will, they say, Consigned me to his land) I only thought Of lying quiet there where I was thrown Like sea-weed on the rocks, and suffer her To prick me to a pattern with her pin, Fibre from fibre, delicate leaf from leaf, And dry out from my drowned anatomy The last sea-salt left in me. So it was.

I broke the copious curls upon my head

In braids, because she liked smooth ordered hair.

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I left off saying my sweet Tuscan words

Which still at any stirring of the heart

Came up to float across the English phrase,

As lilies, (Bene . . or che ch'e) because

She liked my father's child to speak his tongue.

I learnt the collects and the catechism,

The creeds, from Athanasius back to Nice,

The Articles . . the Tracts against the times,

(By no means Buonaventure's 'Prick of Love,')

And various popular synopses of

Inhuman doctrines never taught by John,

Because she liked instructed piety.

I learnt my complement of classic French

(Kept pure of Balzac and neologism,)

And German also, since she liked a range

Of liberal education,—tongues, not books.

I learnt a little algebra, a little

Of the mathematics,—brushed with extreme flounce

The circle of the sciences, because

She misliked women who are frivolous.

I learnt the royal genealogies

Of Oviedo, the internal laws

Of the Burmese Empire, . . by how many feet

Mount Chimborazo outsoars Himmeleh,

What navigable river joins itself

To Lara, and what census of the year five

Was taken at Klagenfurt,—because she liked

A general insight into useful facts.

I learnt much music,—such as would have been

As quite impossible in Johnson's day

As still it might be wished—fine sleights of hand

And unimagined fingering, shuffling off

The hearer's soul through hurricanes of notes

To a noisy Tophet; and I drew . . costumes

From French engravings, nereids neatly draped,

With smirks of simmering godship,—I washed in

From nature, landscapes, (rather say, washed out.)

I danced the polka and Cellarius,

Spun glass, stuffed birds, and modelled flowers in wax,

Because she liked accomplishments in girls.

I read a score of books on womanhood

To prove, if women do not think at all,

They may teach thinking, (to a maiden aunt

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Or else the author)—books demonstrating

Their right of comprehending husband's talk

When not too deep, and even of answering

With pretty 'may it please you,' or 'so it is,'—

Their rapid insight and fine aptitude,

Particular worth and general missionariness,

As long as they keep quiet by the fire

And never say 'no' when the world says 'ay,'

For that is fatal,—their angelic reach

Of virtue, chiefly used to sit and darn,

And fatten household sinners—their, in brief,

Potential faculty in everything

Of abdicating power in it: she owned

She liked a woman to be womanly,

And English women, she thanked God and sighed,

(Some people always sigh in thanking God)

Were models to the universe. And last

I learnt cross-stitch, because she did not like

To see me wear the night with empty hands,

A-doing nothing. So, my shepherdess

Was something after all, (the pastoral saints

Be praised for't) leaning lovelorn with pink eyes

To match her shoes, when I mistook the silks;

Her head uncrushed by that round weight of hat

So strangely similar to the tortoise-shell

Which slew the tragic poet.

By the way, The works of women are symbolical. We sew, sew, prick our fingers, dull our sight, Producing what? A pair of slippers, sir, To put on when you're weary—or a stool To tumble over and vex you . . 'curse that stool!' Or else at best, a cushion where you lean And sleep, and dream of something we are not, But would be for your sake. Alas, alas! This hurts most, this . . that, after all, we are paid The worth of our work, perhaps.

In looking down Those years of education, (to return) I wondered if Brinvilliers suffered more In the water torture, . . flood succeeding flood To drench the incapable throat and split the veins . . Than I did. Certain of your feebler souls

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Go out in such a process; many pine

To a sick, inodorous light; my own endured:

I had relations in the Unseen, and drew

The elemental nutriment and heat

From nature, as earth feels the sun at nights,

Or as a babe sucks surely in the dark.

I kept the life, thrust on me, on the outside

Of the inner life, with all its ample room

For heart and lungs, for will and intellect,

Inviolable by conventions. God,

I thank thee for that grace of thine! . . .

Capacity for joy Admits temptation. It seemed, next, worth while To dodge the sharp sword set against my life; To slip down stairs through all the sleepy house, As mute as any dream there, and escape As a soul from the body, out of doors,— Glide through the shrubberies, drop into the lane, And wander on the hills an hour or two, Then back again before the house should stir.

Or else I sat on in my chamber green,

And lived my life, and thought my thoughts, and prayed

My prayers without the vicar; read my books,

Without considering whether they were fit

To do me good. Mark, there. We get no good

By being ungenerous, even to a book,

And calculating profits . . so much help

By so much reading. It is rather when

We gloriously forget ourselves, and plunge

Soul-forward, headlong, into a book's profound,

Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth—

'Tis then we get the right good from a book.

I read much. What my father taught before

From many a volume, Love re-emphasised

Upon the self-same pages: Theophrast

Grew tender with the memory of his eyes,

And AElian made mine wet. The trick of Greek

And Latin, he had taught me, as he would

Have taught me wrestling or the game of fives

If such he had known,—most like a shipwrecked man

Who heaps his single platter with goats' cheese

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And scarlet berries; or like any man Who loves but one, and so gives all at once, Because he has it, rather than because He counts it worthy. Thus, my father gave; And thus, as did the women formerly By young Achilles, when they pinned the veil Across the boy's audacious front, and swept With tuneful laughs the silver-fretted rocks, He wrapt his little daughter in his large Man's doublet, careless did it fit or no.

But, after I had read for memory,

I read for hope. The path my father's foot

Had trod me out, which suddenly broke off,

(What time he dropped the wallet of the flesh

And passed) alone I carried on, and set

My child-heart 'gainst the thorny underwood,

To reach the grassy shelter of the trees.

Ah, babe i' the wood, without a brother-babe!

My own self-pity, like the red-breast bird,

Flies back to cover all that past with leaves.

Sublimest danger, over which none weeps, When any young wayfaring soul goes forth Alone, unconscious of the perilous road, The day-sun dazzling in his limpid eyes, To thrust his own way, he an alien, through The world of books! Ah, you!—you think it fine, You clap hands—'A fair day!'—you cheer him on, As if the worst, could happen, were to rest Too long beside a fountain. Yet, behold, Behold!—the world of books is still the world; And worldlings in it are less merciful And more puissant. For the wicked there Are winged like angels. Every knife that strikes, Is edged from elemental fire to assail A spiritual life. The beautiful seems right By force of beauty, and the feeble wrong Because of weakness. Power is justified, Though armed against St. Michael. Many a crown Covers bald foreheads. In the book-world, true, There's no lack, neither, of God's saints and kings, That shake the ashes of the grave aside

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From their calm locks, and undiscomfited

Look stedfast truths against Time's changing mask.

True, many a prophet teaches in the roads;

True, many a seer pulls down the flaming heavens

Upon his own head in strong martyrdom,

In order to light men a moment's space.

But stay!—who judges?—who distinguishes

'Twixt Saul and Nahash justly, at first sight,

And leaves king Saul precisely at the sin,

To serve king David? who discerns at once

The sound of the trumpets, when the trumpets blow

For Alaric as well as Charlemagne?

Who judges prophets, and can tell true seers

From conjurors? The child, there? Would you leave

That child to wander in a battle-field

And push his innocent smile against the guns?

Or even in the catacombs, . . his torch

Grown ragged in the fluttering air, and all

The dark a-mutter round him? not a child!

I read books bad and good—some bad and good At once: good aims not always make good books; Well-tempered spades turn up ill-smelling soils In digging vineyards, even: books, that prove God's being so definitely, that man's doubt Grows self-defined the other side the line, Made Atheist by suggestion; moral books, Exasperating to license; genial books, Discounting from the human dignity; And merry books, which set you weeping when The sun shines,—ay, and melancholy books, Which make you laugh that any one should weep In this disjointed life, for one wrong more.

The world of books is still the world, I write,

And both worlds have God's providence, thank God,

To keep and hearten: with some struggle, indeed,

Among the breakers, some hard swimming through

The deeps—I lost breath in my soul sometimes,

And cried 'God save me if there's any God.'

But even so, God saved me; and, being dashed

From error on to error, every turn

Still brought me nearer to the central truth.

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I thought so. All this anguish in the thick Of men's opinions . . press and counterpress Now up, now down, now underfoot, and now Emergent . . all the best of it, perhaps, But throws you back upon a noble trust And use of your own instinct,—merely proves Pure reason stronger than bare inference At strongest. Try it,—fix against heaven's wall Your scaling ladders of high logic—mount Step by step!—Sight goes faster; that still ray Which strikes out from you, how, you cannot tell, And why, you know not—(did you eliminate, That such as you, indeed, should analyse?) Goes straight and fast as light, and high as God.

The cygnet finds the water: but the man Is born in ignorance of his element, And feels out blind at first, disorganised By sin i' the blood,—his spirit-insight dulled And crossed by his sensations. Presently We feel it quicken in the dark sometimes; Then, mark, be reverent, be obedient,— For those dumb motions of imperfect life Are oracles of vital Deity Attesting the Hereafter. Let who says 'The soul's a clean white paper,' rather say, A palimpsest, a prophets holograph Defiled, erased and covered by a monk's,— The apocalypse, by a Longus! poring on Which obscene text, we may discern perhaps Some fair, fine trace of what was written once, Some upstroke of an alpha and omega Expressing the old scripture.

Books, books, books! I had found the secret of a garret-room Piled high with cases in my father's name; Piled high, packed large,—where, creeping in and out Among the giant fossils of my past, Like some small nimble mouse between the ribs Of a mastodon, I nibbled here and there At this or that box, pulling through the gap, In heats of terror, haste, victorious joy, The first book first. And how I felt it beat

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Under my pillow, in the morning's dark, An hour before the sun would let me read!

My books! At last, because the time was ripe, I chanced upon the poets.

As the earth Plunges in fury, when the internal fires Have reached and pricked her heart, and, throwing flat The marts and temples, the triumphal gates And towers of observation, clears herself To elemental freedom—thus, my soul, At poetry's divine first finger touch, Let go conventions and sprang up surprised, Convicted of the great eternities

Before two worlds. What's this, Aurora Leigh, You write so of the poets, and not laugh? Those virtuous liars, dreamers after dark, Exaggerators of the sun and moon, And soothsayers in a tea-cup? I write so

Of the only truth-tellers, now left to God,—

The only speakers of essential truth,

Opposed to relative, comparative,

And temporal truths; the only holders by

His sun-skirts, through conventional grey glooms;

The only teachers who instruct mankind,

From just a shadow on a charnel-wall,

To find man's veritable stature out,

Erect, sublime,—the measure of a man,

And that's the measure of an angel, says

The apostle. Ay, and while your common men

Build pyramids, gauge railroads, reign, reap, dine,

And dust the flaunty carpets of the world

For kings to walk on, or our senators,

The poet suddenly will catch them up

With his voice like a thunder . . 'This is soul,

This is life, this word is being said in heaven,

Here's God down on us! what are you about?'

How all those workers start amid their work,

Look round, look up, and feel, a moment's space,

That carpet-dusting, though a pretty trade,

Is not the imperative labour after all.

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My own best poets, am I one with you,

That thus I love you,—or but one through love?

Does all this smell of thyme about my feet

Conclude my visit to your holy hill

In personal presence, or but testify

The rustling of your vesture through my dreams

With influent odours? When my joy and pain,

My thought and aspiration, like the stops

Of pipe or flute, are absolutely dumb

If not melodious, do you play on me,

My pipers,—and if, sooth, you did not blow,

Would not sound come? or is the music mine,

As a man's voice or breath is called his own,

Inbreathed by the Life-breather? There's a doubt

For cloudy seasons!

But the sun was high When first I felt my pulses set themselves For concords; when the rhythmic turbulence Of blood and brain swept outward upon words, As wind upon the alders blanching them By turning up their under-natures till They trembled in dilation. O delight And triumph of the poet,—who would say A man's mere 'yes,' a woman's common 'no,' A little human hope of that or this, And says the word so that it burns you through With a special revelation, shakes the heart Of all the men and women in the world, As if one came back from the dead and spoke, With eyes too happy, a familiar thing Become divine i' the utterance! while for him The poet, the speaker, he expands with joy; The palpitating angel in his flesh Thrills inly with consenting fellowship To those innumerous spirits who sun themselves Outside of time.

O life, O poetry, —Which means life in life! cognisant of life Beyond this blood-beat,—passionate for truth Beyond these senses,—poetry, my life,— My eagle, with both grappling feet still hot From Zeus's thunder, who has ravished me Away from all the shepherds, sheep, and dogs,

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And set me in the Olympian roar and round

Of luminous faces, for a cup-bearer,

To keep the mouths of all the godheads moist

For everlasting laughters,—I, myself,

Half drunk across the beaker, with their eyes!

How those gods look!

Enough so, Ganymede. We shall not bear above a round or two— We drop the golden cup at Here's foot And swoon back to the earth,—and find ourselves Face-down among the pine-cones, cold with dew, While the dogs bark, and many a shepherd scoffs, 'What's come now to the youth?' Such ups and downs Have poets.

Am I such indeed? The name Is royal, and to sign it like a queen, Is what I dare not,—though some royal blood Would seem to tingle in me now and then, With sense of power and ache,—with imposthumes And manias usual to the race. Howbeit I dare not: 'tis too easy to go mad, And ape a Bourbon in a crown of straws; The thing's too common.

Many fervent souls Strike rhyme on rhyme, who would strike steel on steel If steel had offered, in a restless heat Of doing something. Many tender souls Have strung their losses on a rhyming thread, As children, cowslips:—the more pains they take, The work more withers. Young men, ay, and maids, Too often sow their wild oats in tame verse, Before they sit down under their own vine And live for use. Alas, near all the birds Will sing at dawn,—and yet we do not take The chaffering swallow for the holy lark.

In those days, though, I never analysed

Myself even. All analysis comes late.

You catch a sight of Nature, earliest,

In full front sun-face, and your eyelids wink

And drop before the wonder of't; you miss

The form, through seeing the light. I lived, those days,

And wrote because I lived—unlicensed else:

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My heart beat in my brain. Life's violent flood

Abolished bounds,—and, which my neighbour's field,

Which mine, what mattered? It is so in youth.

We play at leap-frog over the god Term;

The love within us and the love without

Are mixed, confounded; if we are loved or love,

We scarce distinguish. So, with other power.

Being acted on and acting seem the same:

In that first onrush of life's chariot-wheels,

We know not if the forests move or we.

And so, like most young poets, in a flush Of individual life, I poured myself Along the veins of others, and achieved Mere lifeless imitations of live verse, And made the living answer for the dead, Profaning nature. 'Touch not, do not taste, Nor handle,'—we're too legal, who write young: We beat the phorminx till we hurt our thumbs, As if still ignorant of counterpoint; We call the Muse . . 'O Muse, benignant Muse!'— As if we had seen her purple-braided head With the eyes in it start between the boughs As often as a stag's. What make-believe, With so much earnest! what effete results, From virile efforts! what cold wire-drawn odes From such white heats!—bucolics, where the cows Would scare the writer if they splashed the mud In lashing off the flies,—didactics, driven Against the heels of what the master said; And counterfeiting epics, shrill with trumps A babe might blow between two straining cheeks Of bubbled rose, to make his mother laugh; And elegiac griefs, and songs of love, Like cast-off nosegays picked up on the road, The worse for being warm: all these things, writ On happy mornings, with a morning heart, That leaps for love, is active for resolve, Weak for art only. Oft, the ancient forms Will thrill, indeed, in carrying the young blood. The wine-skins, now and then, a little warped, Will crack even, as the new wine gurgles in. Spare the old bottles!—spill not the new wine.

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By Keats's soul, the man who never stepped In gradual progress like another man, But, turning grandly on his central self, Ensphered himself in twenty perfect years And died, not young,—(the life of a long life, Distilled to a mere drop, falling like a tear Upon the world's cold cheek to make it burn For ever;) by that strong excepted soul, I count it strange, and hard to understand, That nearly all young poets should write old; That Pope was sexagenarian at sixteen, And beardless Byron academical, And so with others. It may be, perhaps, Such have not settled long and deep enough In trance, to attain to clairvoyance,—and still The memory mixes with the vision, spoils, And works it turbid.

Or perhaps, again, In order to discover the Muse-Sphinx, The melancholy desert must sweep round, Behind you, as before.—

For me, I wrote False poems, like the rest, and thought them true, Because myself was true in writing them. I, peradventure, have writ true ones since With less complacence.

But I could not hide My quickening inner life from those at watch. They saw a light at a window now and then, They had not set there. Who had set it there? My father's sister started when she caught My soul agaze in my eyes. She could not say I had no business with a sort of soul, But plainly she objected,—and demurred, That souls were dangerous things to carry straight Through all the spilt saltpetre of the world.

She said sometimes, 'Aurora, have you done

Your task this morning?—have you read that book?

And are you ready for the crochet here?'—

As if she said, 'I know there's something wrong,

I know I have not ground you down enough

To flatten and bake you to a wholesome crust

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For household uses and proprieties,

Before the rain has got into my barn

And set the grains a-sprouting. What, you're green

With out-door impudence? you almost grow?'

To which I answered, 'Would she hear my task,

And verify my abstract of the book?

And should I sit down to the crochet work?

Was such her pleasure?' . . Then I sate and teased

The patient needle till it spilt the thread,

Which oozed off from it in meandering lace

From hour to hour. I was not, therefore, sad;

My soul was singing at a work apart

Behind the wall of sense, as safe from harm

As sings the lark when sucked up out of sight,

In vortices of glory and blue air.

And so, through forced work and spontaneous work,

The inner life informed the outer life,

Reduced the irregular blood to settled rhythms,

Made cool the forehead with fresh-sprinkling dreams,

And, rounding to the spheric soul the thin

Pined body, struck a colour up the cheeks,

Though somewhat faint. I clenched my brows across

My blue eyes greatening in the looking-glass,

And said, 'We'll live, Aurora! we'll be strong.

The dogs are on us—but we will not die.'

Whoever lives true life, will love true love. I learnt to love that England. Very oft, Before the day was born, or otherwise Through secret windings of the afternoons, I threw my hunters off and plunged myself Among the deep hills, as a hunted stag Will take the waters, shivering with the fear And passion of the course. And when, at last Escaped,—so many a green slope built on slope Betwixt me and the enemy's house behind, I dared to rest, or wander,—like a rest Made sweeter for the step upon the grass,— And view the ground's most gentle dimplement, (As if God's finger touched but did not press In making England!) such an up and down Of verdure,—nothing too much up or down,

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A ripple of land; such little hills, the sky Can stoop to tenderly and the wheatfields climb; Such nooks of valleys, lined with orchises, Fed full of noises by invisible streams; And open pastures, where you scarcely tell White daisies from white dew,—at intervals The mythic oaks and elm-trees standing out Self-poised upon their prodigy of shade,— I thought my father's land was worthy too Of being my Shakspeare's.

Very oft alone, Unlicensed; not unfrequently with leave To walk the third with Romney and his friend The rising painter, Vincent Carrington, Whom men judge hardly, as bee-bonneted, Because he holds that, paint a body well, You paint a soul by implication, like The grand first Master. Pleasant walks! for if He said . . 'When I was last in Italy' . . It sounded as an instrument that's played Too far off for the tune—and yet it's fine

To listen.

Often we walked only two, If cousin Romney pleased to walk with me. We read, or talked, or quarrelled, as it chanced: We were not lovers, nor even friends well-matched— Say rather, scholars upon different tracks, And thinkers disagreed; he, overfull Of what is, and I, haply, overbold For what might be.

But then the thrushes sang, And shook my pulses and the elms' new leaves,— And then I turned, and held my finger up, And bade him mark that, howsoe'er the world Went ill, as he related, certainly The thrushes still sang in it.—At which word His brow would soften,—and he bore with me In melancholy patience, not unkind, While, breaking into voluble ecstasy, I flattered all the beauteous country round, As poets use . . the skies, the clouds, the fields, The happy violets hiding from the roads The primroses run down to, carrying gold,—

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The tangled hedgerows, where the cows push out Impatient horns and tolerant churning mouths 'Twixt dripping ash-boughs,—hedgerows all alive With birds and gnats and large white butterflies Which look as if the May-flower had sought life And palpitated forth upon the wind,— Hills, vales, woods, netted in a silver mist, Farms, granges, doubled up among the hills, And cattle grazing in the watered vales, And cottage-chimneys smoking from the woods, And cottage-gardens smelling everywhere, Confused with smell of orchards. 'See,' I said, 'And see! is God not with us on the earth? And shall we put Him down by aught we do? Who says there's nothing for the poor and vile Save poverty and wickedness? behold!' And ankle-deep in English grass I leaped, And clapped my hands, and called all very fair. In the beginning when God called all good, Even then, was evil near us, it is writ. But we, indeed, who call things good and fair, The evil is upon us while we speak; Deliver us from evil, let us pray.

### 2.4.5 Sonnets from the Portuguese I.

I thought once how Theocritus had sung Of the sweet years, the dear and wished for years, Who each one in a gracious hand appears To bear a gift for mortals, old or young: And, as I mused it in his antique tongue, I saw, in gradual vision through my tears, The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years, . . Those of my own life, who by turns had flung A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware, So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair; And a voice said in mastery while I strove, . . "Guess now who holds thee?"—"Death!" I said, But, there,

The silver answer rang . . "Not Death, but Love."

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II.

But only three in all God's universe

Have heard this word thou hast said; Himself, beside

Thee speaking and me listening! and replied

One of us . . that was God! . . and laid the curse

So darkly on my eyelids as to amerce

My sight from seeing thee,—that if I had died,

The deathweights, placed there, would have signified

Less absolute exclusion. "Nay" is worse

From God than from all others, O my friend!

Men could not part us with their worldly jars,

Nor the seas change us, nor the tempests bend:

Our hands would touch, for all the mountain-bars;—

And, heaven being rolled between us at the end,

We should but vow the faster for the stars.

III.

Unlike are we, unlike, O princely Heart!

Unlike our uses, and our destinies.

Our ministering two angels look surprise

On one another, as they strike athwart

Their wings in passing. Thou, bethink thee, art

A guest for queens to social pageantries,

With gages from a hundred brighter eyes

Than tears, even, can make mine, to ply thy part

Of chief musician. What hast thou to do

With looking from the lattice-lights at me,

A poor, tired, wandering singer? . . singing through

The dark, and leaning up a cypress tree?

The chrism is on thine head,—on mine, the dew,—

And Death must dig the level where these agree.

IV.

Thou hast thy calling to some palace floor, Most gracious singer of high poems! where The dancers will break footing from the care Of watching up thy pregnant lips for more. And dost thou lift this house's latch too poor For hand of thine? and canst thou think and bear To let thy music drop here unaware In folds of golden fulness at my door? Look up and see the casement broken in, Hie bats and owlets builders in the roof!

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My cricket chirps against thy mandolin.

Hush! call no echo up in further proof

Of desolation! there's a voice within

That weeps . . as thou must sing . . alone, aloof.

V.

I lift my heavy heart up solemnly,

As once Electra her sepulchral urn,

And, looking in thine eyes, I overturn

The ashes at thy feet. Behold and see

What a great heap of grief lay hid in me,

And how the red wild sparkles dimly burn

Through the ashen greyness. If thy foot in scorn

Could tread them out to darkness utterly,

It might be well perhaps. But if instead

Thou wait beside me for the wind to blow

The grey dust up, . . . those laurels on thine head,

O My beloved, will not shield thee so,

That none of all the fires shall scorch and shred

The hair beneath. Stand farther off then! Go.

VI.

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore Alone upon the threshold of my door Of individual life, I shall command The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand Serenely in the sunshine as before, Without the sense of that which I forbore, . . Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine With pulses that beat double. What I do And what I dream include thee, as the wine Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue God for myself. He hears that name of thine, And sees within my eyes, the tears of two.

VII.

The face of all the world is changed, I think, Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul Move still, oh, still, beside me; as they stole Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink Of obvious death, where I who thought to sink

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Was caught up into love and taught the whole Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink, And praise its sweetness, sweet, with thee anear. The names of country, heaven, are changed away For where thou art or shalt be, there or here; And this . . this lute and song . . loved yesterday, (The singing angels know) are only dear, Because thy name moves right in what they say.

VIII.

What can I give thee back, O liberal

And princely giver, . . who hast brought the gold

And purple of thine heart, unstained, untold,

And laid them on the outside of the wall,

For such as I to take, or leave withal,

In unexpected largesse? Am I cold,

Ungrateful, that for these most manifold

High gifts, I render nothing back at all?

Not so. Not cold!—but very poor instead!

Ask God who knows! for frequent tears have run

The colours from my life, and left so dead

And pale a stuff, it were not fitly done

To give the same as pillow to thy head.

Go farther! Let it serve to trample on.

IX.

Can it be right to give what I can give?

To let thee sit beneath the fall of tears

As salt as mine, and hear the sighing years

Re-sighing on my lips renunciative

Through those infrequent smiles, which fail to live

For all thy adjurations? O my fears,

That this can scarce be right! We are not peers,

So to be lovers; and I own and grieve

That givers of such gifts as mine are, must

Be counted with the ungenerous. Out, alas!

I will not soil thy purple with my dust,

Nor breathe my poison on thy Venice-glass,

Nor give thee any love . . . which were unjust.

Beloved, I only love thee! let it pass.

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X.

Yet, love, mere love, is beautiful indeed

And worthy of acceptation. Fire is bright,

Let temple bum, or flax! An equal light

Leaps in the flame from cedar-plank or weed.

And love is fire: and when I say at need

I love thee . . mark! . . I love thee! . . in thy sight

I stand transfigured, glorified aright,

With conscience of the new rays that proceed

Out of my face toward thine. There's nothing low

In love, when love the lowest: meanest creatures

Who love God, God accepts while loving so.

And what I feel, across the inferior features

Of what I am, doth flash itself, and show

How that great work of Love enhances Nature's.

XI.

And therefore if to love can be desert,

I am not all unworthy. Cheeks as pale

As these you see, and trembling knees that fail

To bear the burden of a heavy heart,

This weary minstrel-life that once was girt

To climb Aornus, and can scarce avail

To pipe now 'gainst the woodland nightingale

A melancholy music! . . why advert

To these things? O Beloved, it is plain

I am not of thy worth nor for thy place:

And yet because I love thee, I obtain

From that same love this vindicating grace,

To live on still in love and yet in vain, . .

To bless thee yet renounce thee to thy face.

XII.

Indeed this very love which is my boast,

And which, when rising up from breast to brow,

Doth crown me with a ruby large enow

To draw men's eyes, and prove the inner cost, . .

This love even, all my worth, to the uttermost,

I should not love withal, unless that thou

Hadst set me an example, shown me how,

When first thine earnest eyes with mine were crossed,

And love called love. And thus, I cannot speak

Of love even, as a good thing of my own.

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Thy soul hath snatched up mine all faint and weak, And placed it by thee on a golden throne,— And that I love, (O soul, I must be meek!) Is by thee only, whom I love alone.

XIII.

And wilt thou have me fashion into speech

The love I bear thee, finding words enough,

And hold the torch out, while the winds are rough,

Between our faces, to cast light on each?—

I drop it at thy feet. I cannot teach

My hand to hold my spirit so far off

From myself. . me . . that I should bring thee proof

In words, of love hid in me out of reach.

Nay, let the silence of my womanhood

Commend my woman-love to thy belief,—

Seeing that I stand unwon, however wooed,

And rend the garment of my life, in brief,

By a most dauntless, voiceless fortitude,

Lest one touch of this heart, convey its grief.

XIV.

If thou must love me, let it be for nought

Except for love's sake only. Do not say

"I love her for her smile . . her look . . her way

Of speaking gently, . . for a trick of thought

That falls in well with mine, and certes brought

A sense of pleasant ease on such a day"—

For these things in themselves, Beloved, may

Be changed, or change for thee,—and love so wrought,

May be unwrought so. Neither love me for

Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,

Since one might well forget to weep who bore

Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby.

But love me for love's sake, that evermore

Thou may'st love on through love's eternity.

XV.

Accuse me not, beseech thee, that I wear Too calm and sad a face in front of thine; For we two look two ways, and cannot shine With the same sunlight on our brow and hair. On me thou lookest, with no doubting care,

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As on a bee shut in a crystalline,— For sorrow hath shut me safe in love's divine, And to spread wing and fly in the outer air Were most impossible failure, if I strove To fail so. But I look on thee . . on thee . . Beholding, besides love, the end of love, Hearing oblivion beyond memory . . . As one who sits and gazes, from above, Over the rivers to the bitter sea.

XVI.

And yet, because thou overcomest so,

Because thou art more noble and like a king,

Thou canst prevail against my fears and fling

Thy purple round me, till my heart shall grow

Too close against thine heart, henceforth to know

How it shook when alone. Why, conquering

May prove as lordly and complete a thing

In lifting upward as in crushing low:

And, as a soldier struck down by a sword

May cry, "My strife ends here," and sink to earth

Even so, Beloved, I at last record,

Here ends my doubt! If thou invite me forth,

I rise above abasement at the word.

Make thy love larger to enlarge my worth.

XVII.

My poet, thou canst touch on all the notes God set between His After and Before, And strike up and strike off the general roar Of the rushing worlds, a melody that floats In a serene air purely. Antidotes Of medicated music, answering for Mankind's forlornest uses, thou canst pour From thence into their ears. God's will devotes Thine to such ends, and mine to wait on thine! How, Dearest, wilt thou have me for most use? A hope, to sing by gladly? . . or a fine Sad memory, with thy songs to interfuse? . . A shade, in which to sing . . . of palm or pine? A grave, on which to rest from singing? . . Choose.

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XVIII.

I never gave a lock of hair away

To a man, Dearest, except this to thee,

Which now upon my fingers thoughtfully

I ring out to the full brown length and say

"Take it." My day of youth went yesterday;

My hair no longer bounds to my foot's glee,

Nor plant I it from rose or myrtle-tree,

As girls do, any more. It only may

Now shade on two pale cheeks, the mark of tears,

Taught drooping from the head that hangs aside

Through sorrow's trick. I thought the funeral-shears

Would take this first; but Love is justified:

Take it thou, . . finding pure, from all those years,

The kiss my mother left here when she died.

XIX.

The soul's Rialto hath its merchandise;

I barter curl for curl upon that mart;

And from my poet's forehead to my heart,

Receive this lock which outweighs argosies,—

As purply black, as erst to Pindar's eyes

The dim purpureal tresses gloomed athwart

The nine white Muse-brows. For this counterpart, . .

The bay-crown's shade, Beloved, I surmise,

Still lingers on thy curl, it is so black!

Thus, with a fillet of smooth-kissing breath,

I tie the shadow safe from gliding back,

And lay the gift where nothing hindereth,

Here on my heart as on thy brow, to lack

No natural heat till mine grows cold in death.

XX.

Beloved, my Beloved, when I think

That thou wast in the world a year ago,

What time I sate alone here in the snow

And saw no footprint, heard the silence sink

No moment at thy voice, . . but link by link

Went counting all my chains as if that so

They never could fall off at any blow

Struck by thy possible hand . . . . why, thus I drink

Of life's great cup of wonder. Wonderful,

Never to feel thee thrill the day or night

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With personal act or speech,—nor ever cull Some prescience of thee with the blossoms white Thou sawest growing! Atheists are as dull, Who cannot guess God's presence out of sight.

XXI.

Say over again and yet once over again

That thou dost love me. Though the word repeated

Should seem "a cuckoo-song," as thou dost treat it,

Remember never to the hill or plain,

Valley and wood, without her cuckoo-strain,

Comes the fresh Spring in all her green completed!

Beloved, I, amid the darkness greeted

By a doubtful spirit-voice, in that doubt's pain

Cry . . speak once more . . thou lovest! Who can fear

Too many stars, though each in heaven shall roll—

Too many flowers, though each shall crown the year?

Say thou dost love me, love me, love me—toll

The silver iterance!—only minding, Dear,

To love me also in silence, with thy soul.

XXII.

When our two souls stand up erect and strong, Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher, Until the lengthening wings break into fire At either curved point,—what bitter wrong Can the earth do to us, that we should not long Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher, The angels would press on us, and aspire To drop some golden orb of perfect song Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay Rather on earth, Beloved,—where the unfit Contrarious moods of men recoil away And isolate pure spirits, and permit A place to stand and love in for a day, With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

XXIII.

Is it indeed so? If I lay here dead, Would'st thou miss any life in losing mine, And would the sun for thee more coldly shine, Because of grave-damps falling round my head? I marvelled, my Beloved, when I read

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Thy thought so in the letter. I am thine—

But . . so much to thee? Can I pour thy wine

While my hands tremble? Then my soul, instead

Of dreams of death, resumes life's lower range!

Then, love me, Love! look on me . . breathe on me!

As brighter ladies do not count it strange,

For love, to give up acres and degree,

I yield the grave for thy sake, and exchange

My near sweet view of Heaven, for earth with thee!

XXIV.

Let the world's sharpness like a clasping knife

Shut in upon itself and do no harm

In this close hand of Love, now soft and warm;

And let us hear no sound of human strife,

After the click of the shutting. Life to life—

I lean upon thee, Dear, without alarm,

And feel as safe as guarded by a charm,

Against the stab of worldlings who if rife

Are weak to injure. Very whitely still

The lilies of our lives may reassure

Their blossoms from their roots! accessible

Alone to heavenly dews that drop not fewer;

Growing straight, out of man's reach, on the hill.

God only, who made us rich, can make us poor.

XXV.

A heavy heart, Beloved, have I borne

From year to year until I saw thy face,

And sorrow after sorrow took the place

Of all those natural joys as lightly worn

As the stringed pearls . . each lifted in its turn

By a beating heart at dance-time. Hopes apace

Were changed to long despairs, . . till God's own grace

Could scarcely lift above the world forlorn

My heavy heart. Then thou didst bid me bring

And let it drop adown thy calmly great

Deep being! Fast it sinketh, as a thing

Which its own nature doth precipitate,

While thine doth close above it mediating

Betwixt the stars and the unaccomplished fate.

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XXVI.

I lived with visions for my company

Instead of men and women, years ago,

And found them gentle mates, nor thought to know

A sweeter music than they played to me.

But soon their trailing purple was not free

Of this world's dust,—their lutes did silent grow,

And I myself grew faint and blind below

Their vanishing eyes. Then thou didst come . . to be,

Beloved, what they seemed. Their shining fronts,

Their songs, their splendours . . (better, yet the same, . .

As river-water hallowed into fonts . . )

Met in thee, and from out thee overcame

My soul with satisfaction of all wants—

Because God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame.

XXVII.

My own Beloved, who hast lifted me From this drear flat of earth where I was thrown, And in betwixt the languid ringlets, blown A life-breath, till the forehead hopefully Shines out again, as all the angels see, Before thy saving kiss! My own, my own, Who earnest to me when the world was gone, And I who looked for only God, found thee! I find thee: I am safe, and strong, and glad. As one who stands in dewless asphodel Looks backward on the tedious time he had In the upper life . . so I, with bosom-swell, Make witness here between the good and bad, That Love, as strong as Death, retrieves as well.

XXVIII.

My letters! all dead paper, . . mute and white!— And yet they seem alive and quivering Against my tremulous hands, which loose the string And let them drop down on my knee to-night. This said, . . he wished to have me in his sight Once, as a friend: this fixed a day in spring To come and touch my hand . . . a simple thing, Yet I wept for it!—this, . . the paper's light . . Said, Dear, I love thee: and I sank and quailed As if God's future thundered on my past:

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This said, I am thine—and so its ink has paled With lying at my heart that beat too fast: And this . . . O Love, thy words have ill availed, Is what this said, I dared repeat at last!

XXIX.

I think of thee!—my thoughts do twine and bud

About thee, as wild vines about a tree,—

Put out broad leaves, and soon there's nought to see

Except the straggling green which hides the wood.

Yet, O my palm-tree, be it understood

I will not have my thoughts instead of thee

Who art dearer, better! Rather instantly

Renew thy presence! As a strong tree should,

Rustle thy boughs, and set thy trunk all bare,

And let these bands of greenery which insphere thee,

Drop heavily down, . . burst, shattered, everywhere!

Because, in this deep joy to see and hear thee

And breathe within thy shadow a new air,

I do not think of thee—I am too near thee.

XXX.

I see thine image through my tears to-night, And yet to-day I saw thee smiling. How Refer the cause?—Beloved, is it thou Or I? Who makes me sad? The acolyte Amid the chanted joy and thankful rite, May so fall flat, with pale insensate brow, On the altar-stair. I hear thy voice and vow Perplexed, uncertain, since thou'rt out of sight, As he, in his swooning ears, the choir's amen! Beloved, dost thou love? or did I see all The glory as I dreamed, and fainted when Too vehement light dilated my ideal For my soul's eyes? Will that light come again, As now these tears come . . . falling hot and real?

XXXI.

Thou comest! all is said without a word.

I sit beneath thy looks, as children do

In the noon-sun, with souls that tremble through

Their happy eyelids from an unaverred

Yet prodigal inward joy. Behold, I erred

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In that last doubt! and yet I cannot rue

The sin most, but the occasion . . . that we two

Should for a moment stand unministered

By a mutual presence. Ah, keep near and close,

Thou dovelike help! and, when my fears would rise,

With thy broad heart serenely interpose!

Brood down with thy divine sufficiencies

These thoughts which tremble when bereft of those,

Like callow birds left desert to the skies.

XXXII.

The first time that the sun rose on thine oath

To love me, I looked forward to the moon

To slacken all those bonds which seemed too soon

And quickly tied to make a lasting troth.

Quick-loving hearts, I thought, may quickly loathe;

And, looking on myself, I seemed not one

For such man's love!—more like an out of tune

Worn viol, a good singer would be wroth

To spoil his song with, and which, snatched in haste,

Is laid down at the first ill-sounding note.

I did not wrong myself so, but I placed

A wrong on thee. For perfect strains may float

'Neath master-hands, from instruments defaced,—

And great souls, at one stroke, may do and doat.

XXXIII.

Yes, call me by my pet-name! let me hear

The name I used to run at, when a child,

From innocent play, and leave the cowslips piled,

To glance up in some face that proved me dear

With the look of its eyes. I miss the clear

Fond voices, which, being drawn and reconciled

Into the music of Heaven's undefiled,

Call me no longer. Silence on the bier,

While I call God . . call God!—So let thy mouth

Be heir to those who are now exanimate:

Gather the north flowers to complete the south,

And catch the early love up in the late!

Yes, call me by that name,—and I, in truth,

With the same heart, will answer, and not wait.

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XXXIV.

With the same heart, I said, I'll answer thee As those, when thou shalt call me by my name— Lo, the vain promise! Is the same, the same, Perplexed and ruffled by life's strategy? When called before, I told how hastily I dropped my flowers, or brake off from a game, To run and answer with the smile that came At play last moment, and went on with me Through my obedience. When I answer now, I drop a grave thought;—break from solitude:— Yet still my heart goes to thee . . . ponder how . . Not as to a single good but all my good! Lay thy hand on it, best one, and allow That no child's foot could run fast as this blood.

XXXV.

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange And be all to me? Shall I never miss Home-talk and blessings and the common kiss That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange, When I look up, to drop on a new range Of walls and floors . . another home than this? Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is Filled by dead eyes, too tender to know change? That's hardest! If to conquer love, has tried, To conquer grief tries more . . . as all things prove For grief indeed is love, and grief beside, Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to love— Yet love me—wilt thou? Open thine heart wide, And fold within, the wet wings of thy dove.

XXXVI.

When we met first and loved, I did not build Upon the event with marble. Could it mean To last, a love set pendulous between Sorrow and sorrow? Nay, I rather thrilled, Distrusting every light that seemed to gild The onward path, and feared to overlean A finger even. And, though I have grown serene And strong since then, I think that God has willed A still renewable fear . . O love, O troth . . Lest these enclasped hands should never hold,

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This mutual kiss drop down between us both As an unowned thing, once the lips being cold. And Love be false! if he, to keep one oath, Must lose one joy by his life's star foretold.

XXXVII.

Pardon, oh, pardon, that my soul should make Of all that strong divineness which I know For thine and thee, an image only so Formed of the sand, and fit to shift and break. It is that distant years which did not take Thy sovranty, recoiling with a blow, Have forced my swimming brain to undergo Their doubt and dread, and blindly to forsake Thy purity of likeness, and distort Thy worthiest love with worthless counterfeit. As if a shipwrecked Pagan, safe in port, His guardian sea-god to commemorate, Should set a sculptured porpoise, gills a-snort, And vibrant tail, within the temple-gate.

XXXVIII.

First time he kissed me, he but only kissed

The fingers of this hand wherewith I write,

And ever since it grew more clean and white, . . .

Slow to world-greetings . . quick with its "Oh, list,"

When the angels speak. A ring of amethyst

I could not wear here plainer to my sight,

Than that first kiss. The second passed in height

The first, and sought the forehead, and half missed,

Half falling on the hair. O beyond meed!

That was the chrism of love, which love's own crown,

With sanctifying sweetness, did precede.

The third, upon my lips, was folded down

In perfect, purple state! since when, indeed,

I have been proud and said, "My Love, my own."

XXXIX.

Because thou hast the power and own'st the grace To look through and behind this mask of me, (Against which, years have beat thus blenchingly With their rains!) and behold my soul's true face, The dim and weary witness of life's race:—

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Because thou hast the faith and love to see, Through that same soul's distracting lethargy, The patient angel waiting for his place In the new Heavens: because nor sin nor woe, Nor God's infliction, nor death's neighbourhood, Nor all, which others viewing, turn to go, . . Nor all which makes me tired of all, self-viewed, . . Nothing repels thee, . . Dearest, teach me so To pour out gratitude, as thou dost, good!

XL.

Oh, yes! they love through all this world of ours!

I will not gainsay love, called love forsooth.

I have heard love talked in my early youth,

And since, not so long back but that the flowers

Then gathered, smell still. Mussulmans and Giaours

Throw kerchiefs at a smile, and have no ruth

For any weeping. Polypheme's white tooth

Slips on the nut, if after frequent showers

The shell is over-smooth; and not so much

Will turn the thing called love, aside to hate,

Or else to oblivion. But thou art not such

A lover, my Beloved! thou canst wait

Through sorrow and sickness, to bring souls to touch,

And think it soon when others cry "Too late."

XLI.

I thank all who have loved me in their hearts,

With thanks and love from mine. Deep thanks to all

Who paused a little near the prison-wall,

To hear my music in its louder parts,

Ere they went onward, each one to the mart's

Or temple's occupation, beyond call.

But thou, who in my voice's sink and fall,

When the sob took it, thy divinest Art's

Own instrument, didst drop down at thy foot,

To hearken what I said between my tears, . .

Instruct me how to thank thee!—Oh, to shoot

My soul's full meaning into future years,

That they should lend it utterance, and salute

Love that endures! with Life that disappears!

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XLII.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of Being and Ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of everyday's

Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise;

I love thee with the passion put to use

In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith;

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,

I shall but love thee better after death.

XLIII.

Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers

Plucked in the garden, all the summer through

And winter, and it seemed as if they grew

In this close room, nor missed the sun and showers.

So, in the like name of that love of ours,

Take back these thoughts, which here unfolded too,

And which on warm and cold days I withdrew

Front my heart's ground. Indeed, those beds and bowers

Be overgrown with bitter weeds and rue,

And wait thy weeding: yet here's eglantine,

Here's ivy!—take them, as I used to do

Thy flowers, and keep them where they shall not pine;

Instruct thine eyes to keep their colours true,

And tell thy soul, their roots are left in mine.

### 2.4.6 Mother and Poet I.

Dead! One of them shot by the sea in the east, And one of them shot in the west by the sea. Dead! both my boys! When you sit at the feast And are wanting a great song for Italy free, Let none look at me!

II.

Yet I was a poetess only last year,

And good at my art, for a woman, men said;

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But this woman, this, who is agonized here, —The east sea and west sea rhyme on in her head For ever instead.

III.

What art can a woman be good at? Oh, vain! What art is she good at, but hurting her breast With the milk-teeth of babes, and a smile at the pain? Ah boys, how you hurt! you were strong as you pressed, And I proud, by that test.

IV.

What art's for a woman? To hold on her knees Both darlings! to feel all their arms round her throat, Cling, strangle a little! to sew by degrees And 'broider the long-clothes and neat little coat ; To dream and to doat.

V.

To teach them . . . It stings there! I made them indeed Speak plain the word country. I taught them, no doubt, That a country's a thing men should die for at need. I prated of liberty, rights, and about The tyrant cast out.

VI.

And when their eyes flashed . . . O my beautiful eyes! . . .

I exulted; nay, let them go forth at the wheels

Of the guns, and denied not. But then the surprise

When one sits quite alone! Then one weeps, then one kneels!

God, how the house feels!

VII.

At first, happy news came, in gay letters moiled

With my kisses,—of camp-life and glory, and how

They both loved me; and, soon coming home to be spoiled

In return would fan off every fly from my brow

With their green laurel-bough.

VIII.

Then was triumph at Turin: Ancona was free!' And some one came out of the cheers in the street, With a face pale as stone, to say something to me.

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My Guido was dead! I fell down at his feet, While they cheered in the street.

IX.

I bore it; friends soothed me; my grief looked sublime As the ransom of Italy. One boy remained To be leant on and walked with, recalling the time When the first grew immortal, while both of us strained To the height he had gained.

X.

And letters still came, shorter, sadder, more strong, Writ now but in one hand, I was not to faint, — One loved me for two—would be with me ere long : And Viva l' Italia!—he died for, our saint, Who forbids our complaint."

XI.

My Nanni would add, he was safe, and aware Of a presence that turned off the balls,—was imprest It was Guido himself, who knew what I could bear, And how 'twas impossible, quite dispossessed, To live on for the rest."

XII.

On which, without pause, up the telegraph line Swept smoothly the next news from Gaeta : — Shot. Tell his mother. Ah, ah, his, 'their ' mother,—not mine,' No voice says "My mother" again to me. What! You think Guido forgot

XIII.

Are souls straight so happy that, dizzy with Heaven, They drop earth's affections, conceive not of woe? I think not. Themselves were too lately forgiven Through THAT Love and Sorrow which reconciled so The Above and Below.

XIV.

O Christ of the five wounds, who look'dst through the dark To the face of Thy mother! consider, I pray, How we common mothers stand desolate, mark, Whose sons, not being Christs, die with eyes turned away, And no last word to say!

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XV.

Both boys dead? but that's out of nature. We all

Have been patriots, yet each house must always keep one.

'Twere imbecile, hewing out roads to a wall;

And, when Italy's made, for what end is it done

If we have not a son?

XVI.

Ah, ah, ah! when Gaeta's taken, what then? When the fair wicked queen sits no more at her sport Of the fire-balls of death crashing souls out of men? When the guns of Cavalli with final retort Have cut the game short?

XVII.

When Venice and Rome keep their new jubilee,

When your flag takes all heaven for its white, green, and red,

When you have your country from mountain to sea,

When King Victor has Italy's crown on his head,

(And I have my Dead) —

XVIII.

What then? Do not mock me. Ah, ring your bells low, And burn your lights faintly! My country is there, Above the star pricked by the last peak of snow: My Italy 's THERE, with my brave civic Pair, To disfranchise despair!

XIX.

Forgive me. Some women bear children in strength, And bite back the cry of their pain in self-scorn; But the birth-pangs of nations will wring us at length Into wail such as this—and we sit on forlorn When the man-child is born.

XX.

Dead! One of them shot by the sea in the east, And one of them shot in the west by the sea. Both! both my boys! If in keeping the feast You want a great song for your Italy free, Let none look at me!

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### 2.4.6 Reading and Review Questions

1. How, and why, do Barrett Browning's poems call attention to religious and moral hypocrisies? How, if at all, does she deploy that criticism against social ills?

2. Why, and to what effect, does Barrett Browning's poetry focus on love? How do you know? How, if at all, does she consider the gendered differences and effects of love?

3. Why, and to what effect, are political issues included in Barrett Browning's poetry? How does she present, or describe, political issues? What is her viewpoint on the issues she presents? How do you know?

4. Which predecessors or literary mentors, if any, does Barrett Browning lay claim to in her poetry, and why?

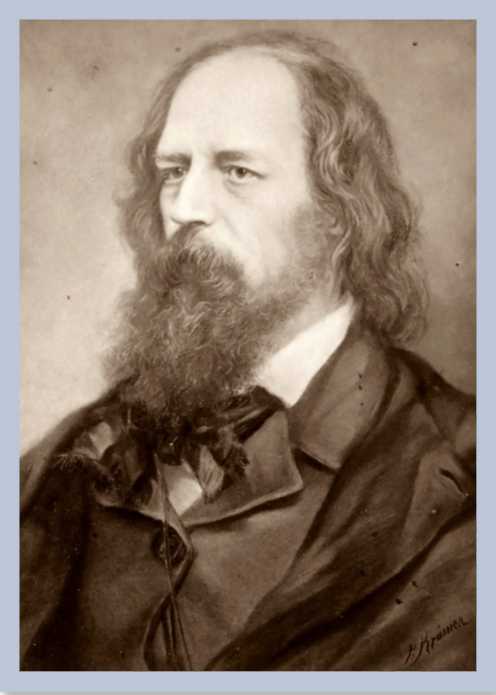
## 2.5 ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Image 2.9 | Portrait of Alfred Lord Tennyson

Artist | P. Kramer

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(1809-1892)

Although born in the Victorian era, Alfred, Lord Tennyson felt much affinity for the Romantic era. As with the Romantics, his first impulse was to think rather than do, and he relied more on emotional intelligence rather than rational judgment. These tendencies appear in the melancholy note of much of his early poetry, including "Oenone" (1829) and "Mariana" (1830). They may have been fostered by his painful childhood and early adulthood.

Tennyson was one of twelve children born to George Clayton Tennyson, a rector, and Elizabeth Fychte. A profoundly unhappy and emotionally unstable man, George Tennyson had been disinherited by his rich father. George took to drink, drugs, and abusive behavior, including one time threatening to kill Alfred's older brother.

Tennyson escaped the strains of this home environment by attending Trinity College at Cambridge University. His extraordinary talent in writing poetry that incomparably matched sound and sense gave him ready entree to The Apostles, an undergraduate society. Among that group was Arthur Henry Hallam who encouraged Tennyson's literary pursuits and who seemed to have helped him

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achieve a sense of self and identity independent from the ravages of his father's mental instability. His need (and perhaps over-reliance) on Hallam's help came to the fore upon Hallam's unexpected, early death and Tennyson's consequent writing of his great poem In Memoriam: To AHH. This poem marks both personal and general currents in Tennyson's lifetime, for instance matching studies in geology with his own sense of despair. And it evinces his own propensity towards Romantic emotionalism and imagination, a propensity which he felt increasingly at odds with due to his era's push towards outward action and realism.

These tensions appear in "The Palace of Art" (1832), "The Lady of Shalott," Maud (1855), and even "Ulysses." In this poem, the protagonist wants to live life to the lees, yet foresees nothing but death before him. As his poems resonated with his readers, Tennyson's fame grew. Upon the death of Wordsworth, Tennyson was named Poet Laureate (1850), confirming his place as one of England's greatest poets. His Idylls of the King (1859) projected Victorian values onto Arthurian figures and fed into England's great national myth of being the best of all worlds.

Tennyson's personal life also had extremes of happiness and sorrow. After a prolonged engagement, Tennyson married Emily Selwood. Of their two children, the youngest, Lionel, died early of fever while returning from India. Tennyson was offered a peerage in 1884 and so became Alfred, Lord Tennyson. He died in 1892.

### 2.5.1 "The Lady of Shalott"

Part the First.

On either side the river lie Long fields of barley and of rye, That clothe the wold and meet the sky; And thro' the field the road runs by

To many-tower'd Camelot; The yellow-leaved waterlily The green-sheathed daffodilly Tremble in the water chilly

Round about Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens shiver.

The sunbeam showers break and quiver

In the stream that runneth ever

By the island in the river

Flowing down to Camelot. Four gray walls, and four gray towers Overlook a space of flowers, And the silent isle imbowers

The Lady of Shalott.

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Underneath the bearded barley, The reaper, reaping late and early, Hears her ever chanting cheerly, Like an angel, singing clearly,

O'er the stream of Camelot. Piling the sheaves in furrows airy, Beneath the moon, the reaper weary Listening whispers, ' 'Tis the fairy,

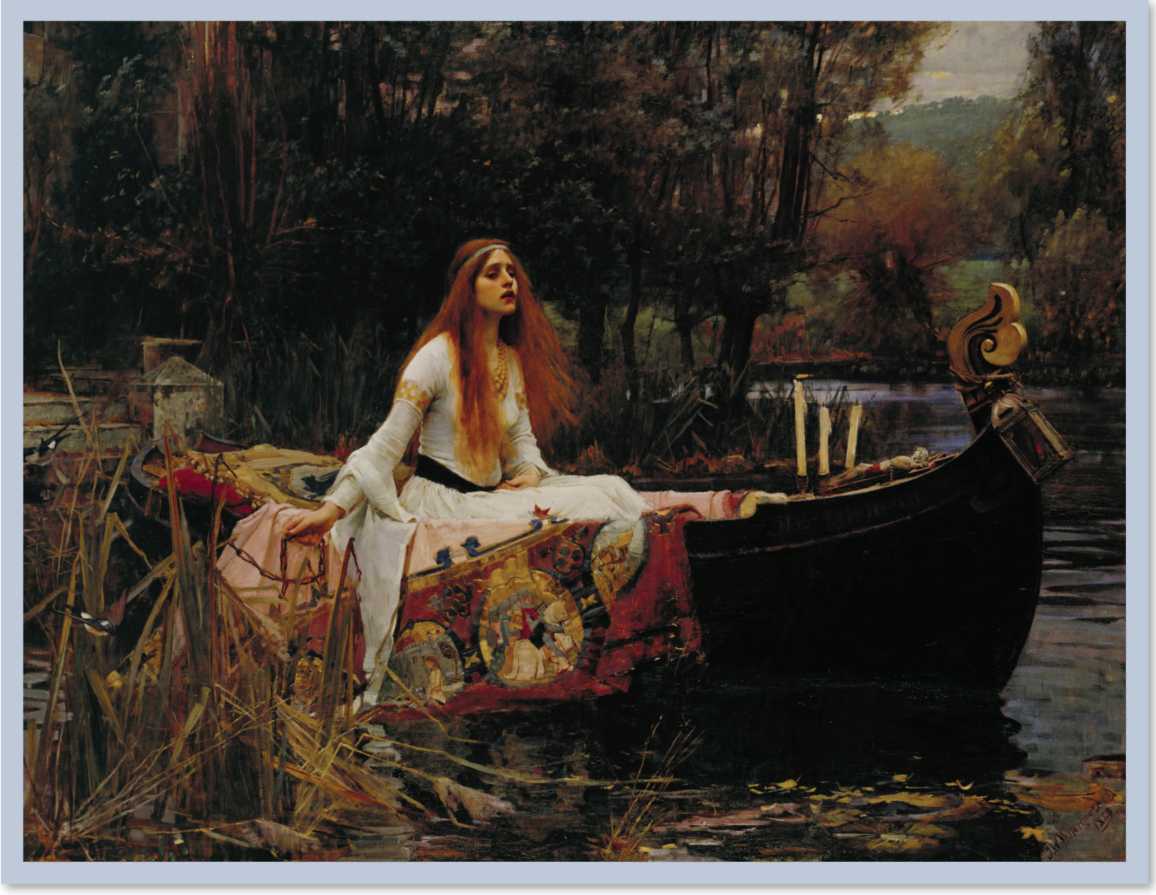
Lady of Shalott.'

The little isle is all inrail'd With a rose-fence, and overtrail'd With roses: by the marge unhail'd The shallop flitteth silken sail'd,

Skimming down to Camelot. A pearl garland winds her head: She leaneth on a velvet bed, Full royally apparelled,

The Lady of Shalott.

Image 2.10 | The Lady of Shallott Artist | John William Waterhouse Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



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Part the Second.

No time hath she to sport and play: A charmed web she weaves alway. A curse is on her, if she stay Her weaving, either night or day,

To look down to Camelot. She knows not what the curse may be; Therefore she weaveth steadily, Therefore no other care hath she,

The Lady of Shalott.

She lives with little joy or fear. Over the water, running near, The sheepbell tinkles in her ear. Before her hangs a mirror clear,

Reflecting tower'd Camelot. And as the mazy web she whirls, She sees the surly village churls, And the red cloaks of market girls

Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad, An abbot on an ambling pad, Sometimes a curly shepherd lad, Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,

Goes by to tower'd Camelot: And sometimes thro' the mirror blue The knights come riding two and two: She hath no loyal knight and true,

The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights To weave the mirror's magic sights, For often thro' the silent nights A funeral, with plumes and lights

And music, came from Camelot: Or when the moon was overhead Came two young lovers lately wed; 'I am half sick of shadows,' said

The Lady of Shalott.

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Part the Third.

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves, He rode between the barley-sheaves, The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves, And flam'd upon the brazen greaves

Of bold Sir Lancelot. A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd To a lady in his shield, That sparkled on the yellow field,

Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free, Like to some branch of stars we see Hung in the golden Galaxy. The bridle bells rang merrily

As he rode down from Camelot: And from his blazon'd baldric slung A mighty silver bugle hung, And as he rode his arm our rung,

Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather, The helmet and the helmet-feather Burn'd like one burning flame together,

As he rode down from Camelot. As often thro' the purple night, Below the starry clusters bright, Some bearded meteor, trailing light,

Moves over green Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd; On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode; From underneath his helmet flow'd His coal-black curls as on he rode,

As he rode down from Camelot. From the bank and from the river He flash'd into the crystal mirror, 'Tirra lirra, tirra lirra:'

Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom She made three paces thro' the room

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She saw the water-flower bloom, She saw the helmet and the plume,

She look'd down to Camelot. Out flew the web and floated wide; The mirror crack'd from side to side; 'The curse is come upon me,' cried

The Lady of Shalott.

Part the Fourth.

In the stormy east-wind straining, The pale yellow woods were waning, The broad stream in his banks complaining, Heavily the low sky raining

Over tower'd Camelot; Outside the isle a shallow boat Beneath a willow lay afloat, Below the carven stern she wrote,

The Lady of Shalott.

A cloudwhite crown of pearl she dight, All raimented in snowy white That loosely flew (her zone in sight Clasp'd with one blinding diamond bright)

Her wide eyes fix'd on Camelot, Though the squally east-wind keenly Blew, with folded arms serenely By the water stood the queenly

Lady of Shalott.

With a steady stony glance— Like some bold seer in a trance, Beholding all his own mischance, Mute, with a glassy countenance—

She look'd down to Camelot. It was the closing of the day: She loos'd the chain, and down she lay; The broad stream bore her far away,

The Lady of Shalott.

As when to sailors while they roam, By creeks and outfalls far from home, Rising and dropping with the foam, From dying swans wild warblings come,

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Blown shoreward; so to Camelot Still as the boathead wound along The willowy hills and fields among, They heard her chanting her deathsong,

The Lady of Shalott.

A longdrawn carol, mournful, holy, She chanted loudly, chanted lowly, Till her eyes were darken'd wholly, And her smooth face sharpen'd slowly,

Turn'd to tower'd Camelot: For ere she reach'd upon the tide The first house by the water-side, Singing in her song she died,

The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,

By garden wall and gallery,

A pale, pale corpse she floated by,

Deadcold, between the houses high,

Dead into tower'd Camelot. Knight and burgher, lord and dame, To the planked wharfage came: Below the stern they read her name,

The Lady of Shalott.

They cross'd themselves, their stars they blest, Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire, and guest. There lay a parchment on her breast, That puzzled more than all the rest,

The wellfed wits at Camelot. 'The web was woven curiously, The charm is broken utterly, Draw near and fear not,—this is I,

The Lady of Shalott.'

### 2.5.2 "The Lotos Eaters"

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,

"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."

In the afternoon they came unto a land

In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.

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Full-faced above the valley stood the moon; And like a downward smoke, the slender stream Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;

And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.

They saw the gleaming river seaward flow

From the inner land: far off, three mountaintops,

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,

Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset lingered low adown

In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down

Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale;

A land where all things always seem'd the same!

And round about the keel with faces pale,

Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,

The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem, Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave To each, but whoso did receive of them, And taste, to him the gushing of the wave Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave On alien shores; and if his fellow spake, His voice was thin, as voices from the grave; And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake, And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand, Between the sun and moon upon the shore; And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland, Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar, Weary the wandering fields of barren foam. Then some one said, "We will return no more;" And all at once they sang, "Our island home Is far beyond the wave we will no longer roam."

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### 2.5.3 "The Palace of Art"

I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house,

Wherein at ease for aye to dwell. I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,

Dear soul, for all is well." A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass,

I chose. The ranged ramparts bright From level meadow-bases of deep grass

Suddenly scaled the light. Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf

The rock rose clear, or winding stair. My soul would live alone unto herself

In her high palace there. And "while the world runs round and round," I said,

"Reign thou apart, a quiet king, Still as, while Saturn whirls his stedfast shade

Sleeps on his luminous ring." To which my soul made answer readily:

"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide In this great mansion, that is built for me,

So royal-rich and wide." Four courts I made, East, West and South and North,

In each a squared lawn, wherefrom The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth

A flood of fountain-foam. And round the cool green courts there ran a row

Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods, Echoing all night to that sonorous flow

Of spouted fountain-floods. And round the roofs a gilded gallery

That lent broad verge to distant lands, Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky

Dipt down to sea and sands. From those four jets four currents in one swell

Across the mountain stream'd below In misty folds, that floating as they fell

Lit up a torrent-bow. And high on every peak a statue seem'd

To hang on tiptoe, tossing up A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd

From out a golden cup. So that she thought, "And who shall gaze upon

My palace with unblinded eyes,

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While this great bow will waver in the sun,

And that sweet incense rise?" For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,

And, while day sank or mounted higher, The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,

Burnt like a fringe of fire. Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced,

Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,

And tipt with frost-like spires. Full of long-sounding corridors it was,

over-vaulted grateful gloom, Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass,

Well-pleased, from room to room. Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,

All various, each a perfect whole From living Nature, fit for every mood

And change of my still soul. For some were hung with arras green and blue,

Showing a gaudy summer-morn, Where with puffd cheek the belted hunter blew

His wreathed bugle-horn. One seemed all dark and red—a tract of sand,

And some one pacing there alone, Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,

Lit with a low large moon. One showed an iron coast and angry waves.

You seemed to hear them climb and fall And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,

Beneath the windy wall. And one, a full-fed river winding slow

By herds upon an endless plain, The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,

With shadow-streaks of rain. And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.

In front they bound the sheaves. Behind Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,

And hoary to the wind. And one a foreground black with stones and slags,

Beyond, a line of heights, and higher All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,

And highest, snow and fire. And one, an English home-gray twilight pour'd

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On dewey pastures, dewey trees, Softer than sleep-all things in order stored,

A haunt of ancient Peace. Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,

As fit for every mood of mind, Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,

Not less than truth design'd. Or the maid-mother by a crucifix.

In tracts of pasture sunny-warm. Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx

Sat smiling, babe in arm. Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,

Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair with white roses, slept Saint Cecily;

An angel look'd at her. Or thronging all one porch of Paradise

A group of Houris bow'd to see The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes

That said, We wait for thee. Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son

In some fair space of sloping greens Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,

And watch'd by weeping queens. Or hollowing one hand against his ear,

To list a foot-fall, ere he saw The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear

Of wisdom and of law. Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,

And many a tract of palm and rice, The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd

A summer fann'd with spice. Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,

From off her shoulder backward borne: From one hand droop'd a crocus: one hand grasp'd

The mild bull's golden horn. Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh

Half-buried in the Eagle's down, Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky

Above the pillar'd town. Nor these alone: but every legend fair

Which the supreme Caucasian mind Carved out of Nature for itself was there'

Not less than life design'd.

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Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,

Moved of themselves, with silver sound; And with choice paintings of wise men I hung

The royal dais round. For there was Milton like a seraph strong,

Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild; And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,

And somewhat grimly smiled. And there the Ionian father of the rest;

A million wrinkles carved his skin; A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,

From cheek and throat and chin. Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set

Many an arch high- up did lift, And angels rising and descending met

With interchange of gift. Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd

With cycles of the human tale Of this wide world, the times of every land

So wrought they will not fail. The people here, a beast of burden slow,

Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings; Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro

The heads and crowns of kings; Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind

All force in bonds that might endure, And here once more like some sick man declined,

And trusted any cure. But over these she trod: and those great bells

Began to chime. She took her throne: She sat betwixt the shining Oriels.

To sing her songs alone. And thro' the topmost Oriels, coloured flame

Two godlike faces gazed below; Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,

The first of those who know. And all those names that in their motion were

Full-welling fountain-heads of change, Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair

In diverse raiment strange: Thro' which the lights' rose, amber, emerald, blue,

Flush'd in her temples and her eyes, And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew

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Rivers of melodies. No nightingale delighteth to prolong

Her low preamble all alone, More than my soul to hear her echo'd song

Throb thro' the ribbed stone; Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,

Joying to feel herself alive, Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,

Lord of the senses five; Communing with herself: "All these are mine,

And let the world have peace or wars, 'T is one to me." She—when young night divine

Crown'd dying day with stars, Making sweet close of his delicious toils —

Lit light in wreaths and anadems, And pure quintessences of precious oils

In hollow'd moons of gems, To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and cried,

I marvel if my still delight In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,

Be flatter'd to the height. "O all things fair to sate my various eyes!

O shapes and hues that please me well!

O silent faces of the Great and Wise, My Gods, with whom I dwell!

"O God-like isolation which art mine,

I can but count thee perfect gain,

What time I watch the darkening droves of swine

That range on yonder plain. "In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,

They graze and wallow, breed and sleep; And oft some brainless devil enters in,

And drives them to the deep." Then of the moral instinct would she prate

And of the rising from the dead, As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate;

And at the last she said: "I take possession of man's mind and deed.

I care not what the sects may brawl.

I sit as God holding no form of creed,

But contemplating all." Full oft the riddle of the painful earth Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,

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Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,

And intellectual throne. And so she throve and prosper'd: so three years

She prosper'd; on the fourth she fell, Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,

Struck thro' with pangs of hell. Lest she should fail and perish utterly,

God, before whom ever lie bare The abysmal deeps of Personality,

Plagued her with sore despair. When she would think, where'er she turn'd her sight

The airy hand confusion wrought, Wrote, "Mene, mene," and divided quite

The kingdom of her thought. Deep dread and loathing of her solitude

Fell on her, from which mood was born Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood

Laughter at her self-scorn. "What! is not this my place of strength," she said,

"My spacious mansion built for me, Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid

Since my first memory." But in dark corners of her palace stood

uncertain shapes; and unawares On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,

And horrible nightmares, And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,

And, with dim fretted foreheads all, On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,

That stood against the wall. A spot of dull stagnation, without light

Or power of movement, seem'd my soul, 'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite

Making for one sure goal. A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,

Left on the shore; that hears all night The plunging seas draw backward from the land

Their moon-led waters white. A star that with the choral starry dance

Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw The hollow orb of moving Circumstance

Roll'd round by one fix'd law. Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd

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"No voice," she shriek'd in that lone hall, "No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world:

One deep, deep silence all!" She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,

Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame, Lay there exiled from eternal God,

Lost to her place and name; And death and life she hated equally,

And nothing saw, for her despair, But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,

No comfort anywhere; Remaining utterly confused with fears,

And ever worse with growing time, And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,

And all alone in crime: Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round

With blackness as a solid wall, Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound

Of human footsteps fall. As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,

In doubt and great perplexity, A little before moon-rise hears the low

Moan of an unknown sea; And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound

Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, "I have found

A new land, but I die." She howl'd aloud, "I am on fire within.

There comes no murmur of reply. What is it that will take away my sin,

And save me lest I die?" So when four years were wholly finished,

She threw her royal robes away. "Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,

"Where I may mourn and pray. "Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are

So lightly, beautifully built. Perchance I may return with others there

When I have purged my guilt."

### 2.5.4 "Ulysses"

It little profits that an idle king,

By this still hearth, among these barren crags,

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Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,

That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink

Life to the lees; all times I have enjoy'd

Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those

That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when

Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades

Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;

For always roaming with a hungry heart

Much have I seen and known; cities of men

And manners, climates, councils, governments,

Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;

And drunk delight of battle with my peers,

Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy,

I am a part of all that I have met;

Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'

Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades

For ever and for ever when I move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,

To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!

As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life

Were all too little, and of one to me

Little remains: but every hour is saved

From that eternal silence, something more,

A bringer of new things; and vile it were

For some three suns to store and hoard myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire

To follow knowledge like a sinking star,

Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus, To whom I leave the scepter and the isle— Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil This labour, by slow prudence to make mild A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees Subdue them to the useful and the good. Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere Of common duties, decent not to fail In offices of tenderness, and pay Meet adoration to my household gods, When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

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There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail: There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners, Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me— That ever with a frolic welcome took The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old; Old age hath yet his honour and his toil; Death closes all: but something ere the end, Some work of noble note, may yet be done, Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods. The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks: The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends, 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world. Push off, and sitting well in order smite The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths Of all the western stars, until I die. It may be that the gulfs will wash us down: It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles, And see the great Achilles, whom we knew. Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho' We are not now that strength which in old days Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are; One equal temper of heroic hearts, Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

### 2.5.5 "In Memoriam A.H.H."

Preface

Strong Son of God, immortal Love, Whom we, that have not seen thy face, By faith, and faith alone, embrace, Believing where we cannot prove; Thine are these orbs of light and shade; Thou madest Life in man and brute; Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot Is on the skull which thou hast made. Thou wilt not leave us in the dust: Thou madest man, he knows not why, He thinks he was not made to die; And thou hast made him: thou art just. Thou seemest human and divine,

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The highest, holiest manhood, thou. Our wills are ours, we know not how; Our wills are ours, to make them thine. Our little systems have their day; They have their day and cease to be: They are but broken lights of thee, And thou, O Lord, art more than they. We have but faith: we cannot know; For knowledge is of things we see And yet we trust it comes from thee, A beam in darkness: let it grow. Let knowledge grow from more to more, But more of reverence in us dwell; That mind and soul, according well, May make one music as before, But vaster. We are fools and slight; We mock thee when we do not fear: But help thy foolish ones to bear; Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light. Forgive what seem'd my sin in me; What seem'd my worth since I began; For merit lives from man to man, And not from man, O Lord, to thee. Forgive my grief for one removed, Thy creature, whom I found so fair. I trust he lives in thee, and there I find him worthier to be loved. Forgive these wild and wandering cries, Confusions of a wasted youth; Forgive them where they fail in truth, And in thy wisdom make me wise. 1849.

I

I held it truth, with him who sings To one clear harp in divers tones, That men may rise on stepping-stones Of their dead selves to higher things. But who shall so forecast the years And find in loss a gain to match? Or reach a hand thro' time to catch The far-off interest of tears? Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,

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Let darkness keep her raven gloss: Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss, To dance with death, to beat the ground, Than that the victor Hours should scorn The long result of love, and boast, 'Behold the man that loved and lost, But all he was is overworn.'

II

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones That name the under-lying dead, Thy fibres net the dreamless head, Thy roots are wrapt about the bones. The seasons bring the flower again, And bring the firstling to the flock; And in the dusk of thee, the clock Beats out the little lives of men. O, not for thee the glow, the bloom, Who changest not in any gale, Nor branding summer suns avail To touch thy thousand years of gloom: And gazing on thee, sullen tree, Sick for thy stubborn hardihood, I seem to fail from out my blood And grow incorporate into thee.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship, O Priestess in the vaults of Death, O sweet and bitter in a breath, What whispers from thy lying lip? 'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run; A web is wov'n across the sky; From out waste places comes a cry, And murmurs from the dying sun: 'And all the phantom, Nature, stands? With all the music in her tone, A hollow echo of my own,? A hollow form with empty hands.' And shall I take a thing so blind, Embrace her as my natural good; Or crush her, like a vice of blood, Upon the threshold of the mind?

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IV

To Sleep I give my powers away; My will is bondsman to the dark; I sit within a helmless bark, And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now, That thou should'st fail from thy desire, Who scarcely darest to inquire, 'What is it makes me beat so low?' Something it is which thou hast lost, Some pleasure from thine early years. Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears, That grief hath shaken into frost! Such clouds of nameless trouble cross All night below the darken'd eyes; With morning wakes the will, and cries, 'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

V

I sometimes hold it half a sin To put in words the grief I feel; For words, like Nature, half reveal And half conceal the Soul within. But, for the unquiet heart and brain, A use in measured language lies; The sad mechanic exercise,

Like dull narcotics, numbing pain. In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er, Like coarsest clothes against the cold: But that large grief which these enfold Is given in outline and no more.

VI

One writes, that 'Other friends remain,' That 'Loss is common to the race'? And common is the commonplace, And vacant chaff well meant for grain. That loss is common would not make My own less bitter, rather more: Too common! Never morning wore To evening, but some heart did break. O father, wheresoe'er thou be, Who pledgest now thy gallant son;

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A shot, ere half thy draught be done,

Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save

Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,

His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud

Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought

At that last hour to please him well;

Who mused on all I had to tell,

And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home;

And ever met him on his way

With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'

Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,

That sittest ranging golden hair;

And glad to find thyself so fair,

Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows

In expectation of a guest;

And thinking 'this will please him best,'

She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;

And with the thought her colour burns;

And, having left the glass, she turns

Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse

Had fallen, and her future Lord

Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,

Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?

And what to me remains of good?

To her, perpetual maidenhood,

And unto me no second friend.

VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand

Here in the long unlovely street,

Doors, where my heart was used to beat

So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more?

Behold me, for I cannot sleep,

And like a guilty thing I creep

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At earliest morning to the door. He is not here; but far away The noise of life begins again, And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII

A happy lover who has come To look on her that loves him well, Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell, And learns her gone and far from home; He saddens, all the magic light Dies off at once from bower and hall, And all the place is dark, and all The chambers emptied of delight: So find I every pleasant spot In which we two were wont to meet, The field, the chamber, and the street, For all is dark where thou art not. Yet as that other, wandering there In those deserted walks, may find A flower beat with rain and wind, Which once she foster'd up with care; So seems it in my deep regret,

O my forsaken heart, with thee And this poor flower of poesy Which little cared for fades not yet. But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,

I go to plant it on his tomb, That if it can it there may bloom, Or, dying, there at least may die.

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore Sailest the placid ocean-plains With my lost Arthur's loved remains, Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er. So draw him home to those that mourn In vain; a favourable speed Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn. All night no ruder air perplex Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright

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As our pure love, thro' early light Shall glimmer on the dewy decks. Sphere all your lights around, above; Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow; Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now, My friend, the brother of my love; My Arthur, whom I shall not see Till all my widow'd race be run; Dear as the mother to the son, More than my brothers are to me.

X

I hear the noise about thy keel; I hear the bell struck in the night: I see the cabin-window bright; I see the sailor at the wheel. Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife, And travell'd men from foreign lands; And letters unto trembling hands; And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life. So bring him; we have idle dreams: This look of quiet flatters thus Our home-bred fancies. O to us, The fools of habit, sweeter seems To rest beneath the clover sod, That takes the sunshine and the rains, Or where the kneeling hamlet drains The chalice of the grapes of God; Than if with thee the roaring wells Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine; And hands so often clasp'd in mine, Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound, Calm as to suit a calmer grief, And only thro' the faded leaf The chestnut pattering to the ground: Calm and deep peace on this high world, And on these dews that drench the furze, And all the silvery gossamers That twinkle into green and gold: Calm and still light on yon great plain

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That sweeps with all its autumn bowers, And crowded farms and lessening towers, To mingle with the bounding main: Calm and deep peace in this wide air, These leaves that redden to the fall; And in my heart, if calm at all, If any calm, a calm despair: Calm on the seas, and silver sleep, And waves that sway themselves in rest, And dead calm in that noble breast Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe, Some dolorous message knit below The wild pulsation of her wings; Like her I go; I cannot stay; I leave this mortal ark behind, A weight of nerves without a mind, And leave the cliffs, and haste away O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large, And reach the glow of southern skies, And see the sails at distance rise, And linger weeping on the marge, And saying; 'Comes he thus, my friend? Is this the end of all my care?' And circle moaning in the air: 'Is this the end? Is this the end?' And forward dart again, and play About the prow, and back return To where the body sits, and learn That I have been an hour away.

XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees

A late-lost form that sleep reveals,

And moves his doubtful arms, and feels

Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,

A void where heart on heart reposed;

And, where warm hands have prest and closed,

Silence, till I be silent too.

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Which weep the comrade of my choice,

An awful thought, a life removed,

The human-hearted man I loved,

A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come, Time, and teach me, many years,

I do not suffer in a dream;

For now so strange do these things seem,

Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,

And glance about the approaching sails,

As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,

And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV

If one should bring me this report, That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day, And I went down unto the quay, And found thee lying in the port; And standing, muffled round with woe, Should see thy passengers in rank Come stepping lightly down the plank, And beckoning unto those they know; And if along with these should come The man I held as half-divine; Should strike a sudden hand in mine, And ask a thousand things of home; And I should tell him all my pain, And how my life had droop'd of late, And he should sorrow o'er my state And marvel what possess'd my brain; And I perceived no touch of change, No hint of death in all his frame, But found him all in all the same, I should not feel it to be strange.

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise And roar from yonder dropping day: The last red leaf is whirl'd away, The rooks are blown about the skies; The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd, The cattle huddled on the lea; And wildly dash'd on tower and tree

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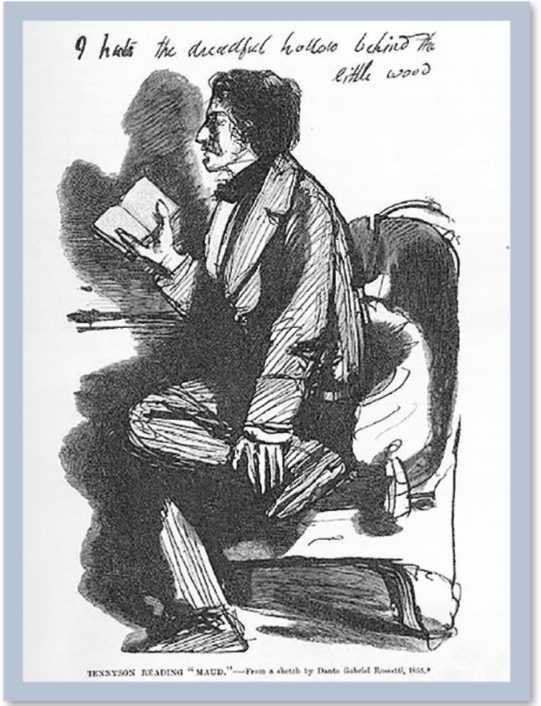
The sunbeam strikes along the world: And but for fancies, which aver That all thy motions gently pass Athwart a plane of molten glass, I scarce could brook the strain and stir That makes the barren branches loud; And but for fear it is not so, The wild unrest that lives in woe Would dote and pore on yonder cloud That rises upward always higher, And onward drags a labouring breast, And topples round the dreary west, A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI

What words are these have falle'n from me? Can calm despair and wild unrest Be tenants of a single breast, Or sorrow such a changeling be? Or cloth she only seem to take The touch of change in calm or storm; But knows no more of transient form In her deep self, than some dead lake That holds the shadow of a lark Hung in the shadow of a heaven? Or has the shock, so harshly given, Confused me like the unhappy bark That strikes by night a craggy shelf, And staggers blindly ere she sink? And stunn'd me from my power to think And all my knowledge of myself; And made me that delirious man Whose fancy fuses old and new, And flashes into false and true, And mingles all without a plan?

Image 2.11 | Drawing of Tennyson

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XVII

Thou comest, much wept for: such a breeze Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer Was as the whisper of an air To breathe thee over lonely seas. For I in spirit saw thee move Thro' circles of the bounding sky,

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Week after week: the days go by: Come quick, thou bringest all I love. Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam, My blessing, like a line of light, Is on the waters day and night, And like a beacon guards thee home. So may whatever tempest mars Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark; And balmy drops in summer dark Slide from the bosom of the stars. So kind an office hath been done, Such precious relics brought by thee; The dust of him I shall not see Till all my widow'd race be run.

XVIII

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand

Where he in English earth is laid,

And from his ashes may be made

The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth

As if the quiet bones were blest

Among familiar names to rest

And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head

That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,

And come, whatever loves to weep,

And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,

I, falling on his faithful heart,

Would breathing thro' his lips impart

The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,

And slowly forms the firmer mind,

Treasuring the look it cannot find,

The words that are not heard again.

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave The darken'd heart that beat no more; They laid him by the pleasant shore, And in the hearing of the wave. There twice a day the Severn fills;

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The salt sea-water passes by, And hushes half the babbling Wye, And makes a silence in the hills. The Wye is hush'd nor moved along, And hush'd my deepest grief of all, When fill'd with tears that cannot fall, I brim with sorrow drowning song. The tide flows down, the wave again Is vocal in its wooded walls; My deeper anguish also falls, And I can speak a little then.

XX

The lesser griefs that may be said, That breathe a thousand tender vows, Are but as servants in a house Where lies the master newly dead; Who speak their feeling as it is, And weep the fulness from the mind: 'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find Another service such as this.' My lighter moods are like to these, That out of words a comfort win; But there are other griefs within, And tears that at their fountain freeze; For by the hearth the children sit Cold in that atmosphere of Death, And scarce endure to draw the breath, Or like to noiseless phantoms flit; But open converse is there none, So much the vital spirits sink To see the vacant chair, and think, 'How good! how kind! and he is gone.'

XXI

I sing to him that rests below,

And, since the grasses round me wave,

I take the grasses of the grave,

And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,

And sometimes harshly will he speak:

'This fellow would make weakness weak,

And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

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Another answers, 'Let him be, He loves to make parade of pain That with his piping he may gain The praise that comes to constancy.' A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour For private sorrow's barren song, When more and more the people throng The chairs and thrones of civil power? 'A time to sicken and to swoon, When Science reaches forth her arms To feel from world to world, and charms Her secret from the latest moon?' Behold, ye speak an idle thing: Ye never knew the sacred dust: I do but sing because I must, And pipe but as the linnets sing: And one is glad; her note is gay, For now her little ones have ranged; And one is sad; her note is changed, Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII

The path by which we twain did go, Which led by tracts that pleased us well, Thro' four sweet years arose and fell, From flower to flower, from snow to snow: And we with singing cheer'd the way, And, crown'd with all the season lent, From April on to April went, And glad at heart from May to May: But where the path we walk'd began To slant the fifth autumnal slope, As we descended following Hope, There sat the Shadow fear'd of man; Who broke our fair companionship, And spread his mantle dark and cold, And wrapt thee formless in the fold, And dull'd the murmur on thy lip, And bore thee where I could not see Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste, And think, that somewhere in the waste The Shadow sits and waits for me.

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XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,

Or breaking into song by fits,

Alone, alone, to where he sits,

The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,

I wander, often falling lame,

And looking back to whence I came,

Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it ran

Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb;

But all the lavish hills would hum

The murmur of a happy Pan:

When each by turns was guide to each,

And Fancy light from Fancy caught,

And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought

Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,

And all was good that Time could bring,

And all the secret of the Spring

Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy

On Argive heights divinely sang,

And round us all the thicket rang

To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV

And was the day of my delight

As pure and perfect as I say?

The very source and fount of Day

Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,

This earth had been the Paradise

It never look'd to human eyes

Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief

Makes former gladness loom so great?

The lowness of the present state,

That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win

A glory from its being far;

And orb into the perfect star

We saw not, when we moved therein?

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XXV

I know that this was Life, the track Whereon with equal feet we fared; And then, as now, the day prepared The daily burden for the back. But this it was that made me move As light as carrier-birds in air; I loved the weight I had to bear, Because it needed help of Love: Nor could I weary, heart or limb, When mighty Love would cleave in twain The lading of a single pain, And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way; I with it; for I long to prove No lapse of moons can canker Love, Whatever fickle tongues may say. And if that eye which watches guilt And goodness, and hath power to see Within the green the moulder'd tree, And towers fall'n as soon as built? Oh, if indeed that eye foresee Or see (in Him is no before) In more of life true life no more And Love the indifference to be, Then might I find, ere yet the morn Breaks hither over Indian seas, That Shadow waiting with the keys, To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods The captive void of noble rage, The linnet born within the cage, That never knew the summer woods: I envy not the beast that takes His license in the field of time, Unfetter'd by the sense of crime, To whom a conscience never wakes; Nor, what may count itself as blest, The heart that never plighted troth

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But stagnates in the weeds of sloth; Nor any want-begotten rest. I hold it true, whate'er befall; I feel it, when I sorrow most; 'Tis better to have loved and lost Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ: The moon is hid; the night is still; The Christmas bells from hill to hill Answer each other in the mist. Four voices of four hamlets round, From far and near, on mead and moor, Swell out and fail, as if a door Were shut between me and the sound: Each voice four changes on the wind, That now dilate, and now decrease, Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace, Peace and goodwill, to all mankind. This year I slept and woke with pain, I almost wish'd no more to wake, And that my hold on life would break Before I heard those bells again: But they my troubled spirit rule, For they controll'd me when a boy; They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy, The merry merry bells of Yule.

XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve As daily vexes household peace, And chains regret to his decease, How dare we keep our Christmas-eve; Which brings no more a welcome guest To enrich the threshold of the night With shower'd largess of delight In dance and song and game and jest? Yet go, and while the holly boughs Entwine the cold baptismal font, Make one wreath more for Use and Wont, That guard the portals of the house; Old sisters of a day gone by,

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Gray nurses, loving nothing new; Why should they miss their yearly due Before their time? They too will die.

XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave

The holly round the Christmas hearth;

A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,

And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall

We gambol'd, making vain pretence

Of gladness, with an awful sense

Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech:

We heard them sweep the winter land;

And in a circle hand-in-hand

Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;

We sung, tho' every eye was dim,

A merry song we sang with him

Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept

Upon us: surely rest is meet:

'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is sweet,'

And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;

Once more we sang: 'They do not die

Nor lose their mortal sympathy,

Nor change to us, although they change;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail

With gather'd power, yet the same,

Pierces the keen seraphic flame

From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,

Draw forth the cheerful day from night:

O Father, touch the east, and light

The light that shone when Hope was born.

XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave, And home to Mary's house return'd, Was this demanded—if he yearn'd To hear her weeping by his grave?

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'Where wert thou, brother, those four days?'

There lives no record of reply,

Which telling what it is to die

Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,

The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,

A solemn gladness even crown'd

The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!

The rest remaineth unreveal'd;

He told it not; or something seal'd

The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer, Nor other thought her mind admits But, he was dead, and there he sits, And he that brought him back is there. Then one deep love doth supersede All other, when her ardent gaze Roves from the living brother's face, And rests upon the Life indeed. All subtle thought, all curious fears, Borne down by gladness so complete, She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet With costly spikenard and with tears. Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers, Whose loves in higher love endure; What souls possess themselves so pure, Or is there blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air, Whose faith has centre everywhere, Nor cares to fix itself to form, Leave thou thy sister when she prays, Her early Heaven, her happy views; Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse A life that leads melodious days. Her faith thro' form is pure as thine, Her hands are quicker unto good: Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood

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To which she links a truth divine! See thou, that countess reason ripe In holding by the law within, Thou fail not in a world of sin, And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this, That life shall live for evermore, Else earth is darkness at the core, And dust and ashes all that is; This round of green, this orb of flame, Fantastic beauty such as lurks In some wild Poet, when he works Without a conscience or an aim. What then were God to such as I? 'Twere hardly worth my while to choose Of things all mortal, or to use A tattle patience ere I die; 'Twere best at once to sink to peace, Like birds the charming serpent draws, To drop head-foremost in the jaws Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust

Should murmur from the narrow house,

'The cheeks drop in; the body bows;

Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:'

Might I not say? 'Yet even here,

But for one hour, O Love, I strive

To keep so sweet a thing alive:'

But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,

The sound of streams that swift or slow

Draw down ^Eonian hills, and sow

The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,

'The sound of that forgetful shore

Will change my sweetness more and more,

Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put

An idle case? If Death were seen

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At first as Death, Love had not been,

Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,

Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape

Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,

And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join, Deep-seated in our mystic frame, We yield all blessing to the name Of Him that made them current coin; For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers, Where truth in closest words shall fail, When truth embodied in a tale Shall enter in at lowly doors. And so the Word had breath, and wrought With human hands the creed of creeds In loveliness of perfect deeds, More strong than all poetic thought; Which he may read that binds the sheaf, Or builds the house, or digs the grave, And those wild eyes that watch the wave In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:

'Thou pratest here where thou art least;

This faith has many a purer priest,

And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,

On thy Parnassus set thy feet,

And hear thy laurel whisper sweet

About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,

A touch of shame upon her cheek:

'I am not worthy ev'n to speak

Of thy prevailing mysteries;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,

And owning but a little art

To lull with song an aching heart,

And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,

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And all he said of things divine, (And dear to me as sacred wine To dying lips is all he said), 'I murmur'd, as I came along, Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd; And loiter'd in the master's field, And darken'd sanctities with song.'

XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on, Tho' always under alter'd skies The purple from the distance dies, My prospect and horizon gone. No joy the blowing season gives, The herald melodies of spring, But in the songs I love to sing A doubtful gleam of solace lives. If any care for what is here Survive in spirits render'd free, Then are these songs I sing of thee Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones, And answering now my random stroke With fruitful cloud and living smoke, Dark yew, that graspest at the stones And dippest toward the dreamless head, To thee too comes the golden hour When flower is feeling after flower; But Sorrow? fixt upon the dead, And darkening the dark graves of men,? What whisper'd from her lying lips? Thy gloom is kindled at the tips, And passes into gloom again.

XL

Could we forget the widow'd hour And look on Spirits breathed away, As on a maiden in the day When first she wears her orange-flower! When crown'd with blessing she doth rise To take her latest leave of home,

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And hopes and light regrets that come

Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,

And tears are on the mother's face,

As parting with a long embrace

She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,

Becoming as is meet and fit

A link among the days, to knit

The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given

A life that bears immortal fruit

In those great offices that suit

The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!

How often shall her old fireside

Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,

How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,

And bring her babe, and make her boast,

Till even those that miss'd her most

Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,

Till growing winters lay me low;

My paths are in the fields I know.

And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XLI

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss Did ever rise from high to higher; As mounts the heavenward altar-fire, As flies the lighter thro' the gross. But thou art turn'd to something strange, And I have lost the links that bound Thy changes; here upon the ground, No more partaker of thy change. Deep folly! yet that this could be? That I could wing my will with might To leap the grades of life and light, And flash at once, my friend, to thee. For tho' my nature rarely yields To that vague fear implied in death; Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,

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The howlings from forgotten fields; Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor An inner trouble I behold, A spectral doubt which makes me cold, That I shall be thy mate no more, Tho' following with an upward mind The wonders that have come to thee, Thro' all the secular to-be, But evermore a life behind.

XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim:

He still outstript me in the race;

It was but unity of place

That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,

And he the much-beloved again,

A lord of large experience, train

To riper growth the mind and will:

And what delights can equal those

That stir the spirit's inner deeps,

When one that loves but knows not, reaps

A truth from one that loves and knows?

XLIII

If Sleep and Death be truly one, And every spirit's folded bloom Thro' all its intervital gloom In some long trance should slumber on; Unconscious of the sliding hour, Bare of the body, might it last, And silent traces of the past Be all the colour of the flower: So then were nothing lost to man; So that still garden of the souls In many a figured leaf enrolls The total world since life began; And love will last as pure and whole As when he loved me here in Time, And at the spiritual prime Rewaken with the dawning soul.

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XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead? For here the man is more and more; But he forgets the days before God shut the doorways of his head. The days have vanish'd, tone and tint, And yet perhaps the hoarding sense Gives out at times (he knows not whence) A little flash, a mystic hint; And in the long harmonious years (If Death so taste Lethean springs May some dim touch of earthly things) Surprise thee ranging with thy peers. If such a dreamy touch should fall, O, turn thee round, resolve the doubt; My guardian angel will speak out In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV

The baby new to earth and sky, What time his tender palm is prest Against the circle of the breast, Has never thought that 'this is I:' But as he grows he gathers much, And learns the use of 'I' and 'me,' And finds 'I am not what I see, And other than the things I touch.' So rounds he to a separate mind From whence clear memory may begin, As thro' the frame that binds him in His isolation grows defined. This use may lie in blood and breath, Which else were fruitless of their due, Had man to learn himself anew Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLVI

We ranging down this lower track, The path we came by, thorn and flower, Is shadow'd by the growing hour, Lest life should fail in looking back. So be it: there no shade can last In that deep dawn behind the tomb,

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But clear from marge to marge shall bloom

The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;

The fruitful hours of still increase;

Days order'd in a wealthy peace,

And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,

A bounded field, nor stretching far;

Look also, Love, a brooding star,

A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole, Should move his rounds, and fusing all The skirts of self again, should fall Remerging in the general Soul, Is faith as vague as all unsweet: Eternal form shall still divide The eternal soul from all beside; And I shall know him when we meet: And we shall sit at endless feast, Enjoying each the other's good: What vaster dream can hit the mood Of Love on earth? He seeks at least Upon the last and sharpest height, Before the spirits fade away, Some landing-place, to clasp and say, 'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born, Were taken to be such as closed Grave doubts and answers here proposed, Then these were such as men might scorn: Her care is not to part and prove; She takes, when harsher moods remit, What slender shade of doubt may flit, And makes it vassal unto love: And hence, indeed, she sports with words, But better serves a wholesome law, And holds it sin and shame to draw The deepest measure from the chords: Nor dare she trust a larger lay,

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But rather loosens from the lip Short swallow-flights of song, that dip Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools, Let random influences glance, Like light in many a shiver'd lance That breaks about the dappled pools: The lightest wave of thought shall lisp, The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe, The slightest air of song shall breathe To make the sullen surface crisp. And look thy look, and go thy way, But blame not thou the winds that make The seeming-wanton ripple break, The tender-pencil'd shadow play. Beneath all fancied hopes and fears Ay me, the sorrow deepens down. Whose muffled motions blindly drown The bases of my life in tears.

L

Be near me when my light is low,

When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick

And tingle; and the heart is sick,

And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame

Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;

And Time, a maniac scattering dust,

And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,

And men the flies of latter spring,

That lay their eggs, and sting and sing

And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,

To point the term of human strife,

And on the low dark verge of life

The twilight of eternal day.

LI

Do we indeed desire the dead Should still be near us at our side?

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Is there no baseness we would hide? No inner vileness that we dread? Shall he for whose applause I strove, I had such reverence for his blame, See with clear eye some hidden shame And I be lessen'd in his love? I wrong the grave with fears untrue: Shall love be blamed for want of faith? There must be wisdom with great Death: The dead shall look me thro' and thro'. Be near us when we climb or fall: Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours With larger other eyes than ours, To make allowance for us all.

LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,

For love reflects the thing beloved;

My words are only words, and moved

Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'

The Spirit of true love replied;

'Thou canst not move me from thy side,

Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true

To that ideal which he bears?

What record? not the sinless years

That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:

'So fret not, like an idle girl,

That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.

Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in,

When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.'

LIII

How many a father have I seen, A sober man, among his boys, Whose youth was full of foolish noise, Who wears his manhood hale and green: And dare we to this fancy give, That had the wild oat not been sown, The soil, left barren, scarce had grown The grain by which a man may live? Or, if we held the doctrine sound

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For life outliving heats of youth, Yet who would preach it as a truth To those that eddy round and round? Hold thou the good: define it well: For fear divine Philosophy Should push beyond her mark, and be Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good Will be the final goal of ill, To pangs of nature, sins of will, Defects of doubt, and taints of blood; That nothing walks with aimless feet; That not one life shall be destroy'd, Or cast as rubbish to the void, When God hath made the pile complete; That not a worm is cloven in vain; That not a moth with vain desire Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire, Or but subserves another's gain. Behold, we know not anything; I can but trust that good shall fall At last—far off—at last, to all, And every winter change to spring. So runs my dream: but what am I? An infant crying in the night: An infant crying for the light: And with no language but a cry.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole No life may fail beyond the grave, Derives it not from what we have The likest God within the soul? Are God and Nature then at strife, That Nature lends such evil dreams? So careful of the type she seems, So careless of the single life; That I, considering everywhere Her secret meaning in her deeds, And finding that of fifty seeds She often brings but one to bear,

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I falter where I firmly trod, And falling with my weight of cares Upon the great world's altar-stairs That slope thro' darkness up to God, I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope, And gather dust and chaff, and call To what I feel is Lord of all, And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI

'So careful of the type?' but no. From scarped cliff and quarried stone She cries, 'A thousand types are gone: I care for nothing, all shall go. 'Thou makest thine appeal to me: I bring to life, I bring to death: The spirit does but mean the breath: I know no more.' And he, shall he, Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair, Such splendid purpose in his eyes, Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies, Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer, Who trusted God was love indeed And love Creation's final law? Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw With ravine, shriek'd against his creed? Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills, Who battled for the True, the Just, Be blown about the desert dust, Or seal'd within the iron hills? No more? A monster then, a dream, A discord. Dragons of the prime, That tare each other in their slime, Were mellow music match'd with him. O life as futile, then, as frail! O for thy voice to soothe and bless! What hope of answer, or redress? Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII

Peace; come away: the song of woe

Is after all an earthly song:

Peace; come away: we do him wrong

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To sing so wildly: let us go. Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale; But half my life I leave behind: Methinks my friend is richly shrined; But I shall pass; my work will fail. Yet in these ears, till hearing dies, One set slow bell will seem to toll The passing of the sweetest soul That ever look'd with human eyes. I hear it now, and o'er and o'er, Eternal greetings to the dead; And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said, 'Adieu, adieu,' for evermore.

LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell:

Like echoes in sepulchral halls,

As drop by drop the water falls

In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace

Of hearts that beat from day to day,

Half-conscious of their dying clay,

And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore grieve

Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?

Abide a little longer here,

And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me No casual mistress, but a wife, My bosom-friend and half of life; As I confess it needs must be; O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood, Be sometimes lovely like a bride, And put thy harsher moods aside, If thou wilt have me wise and good. My centred passion cannot move, Nor will it lessen from to-day; But I'll have leave at times to play As with the creature of my love; And set thee forth, for thou art mine, With so much hope for years to come,

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That, howsoe'er I know thee, some Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LX

He past; a soul of nobler tone: My spirit loved and loves him yet, Like some poor girl whose heart is set On one whose rank exceeds her own. He mixing with his proper sphere, She finds the baseness of her lot, Half jealous of she knows not what, And envying all that meet him there. The little village looks forlorn; She sighs amid her narrow days, Moving about the household ways, In that dark house where she was born. The foolish neighbors come and go, And tease her till the day draws by: At night she weeps, 'How vain am I!' How should he love a thing so low?'

LXI

If, in thy second state sublime, Thy ransom'd reason change replies With all the circle of the wise, The perfect flower of human time; And if thou cast thine eyes below, How dimly character'd and slight, How dwarfd a growth of cold and night, How blanch'd with darkness must I grow! Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore, Where thy first form was made a man; I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

LXII

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast Could make thee somewhat blench or fail, Then be my love an idle tale, And fading legend of the past; And thou, as one that once declined, When he was little more than boy, On some unworthy heart with joy,

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But lives to wed an equal mind; And breathes a novel world, the while His other passion wholly dies, Or in the light of deeper eyes Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven, And love in which my hound has part, Can hang no weight upon my heart In its assumptions up to heaven; And I am so much more than these, As thou, perchance, art more than I, And yet I spare them sympathy, And I would set their pains at ease. So mayst thou watch me where I weep, As, unto vaster motions bound, The circuits of thine orbit round A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been, As some divinely gifted man, Whose life in low estate began And on a simple village green; Who breaks his birth's invidious bar, And grasps the skirts of happy chance, And breasts the blows of circumstance, And grapples with his evil star; Who makes by force his merit known And lives to clutch the golden keys, To mould a mighty state's decrees, And shape the whisper of the throne; And moving up from high to higher, Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope The pillar of a people's hope, The centre of a world's desire; Yet feels, as in a pensive dream, When all his active powers are still, A distant dearness in the hill, A secret sweetness in the stream, The limit of his narrower fate, While yet beside its vocal springs

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He play'd at counsellors and kings, With one that was his earliest mate; Who ploughs with pain his native lea And reaps the labour of his hands, Or in the furrow musing stands; 'Does my old friend remember me?'

LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt; I lull a fancy trouble-tost With 'Love's too precious to be lost, A little grain shall not be spilt.' And in that solace can I sing, Till out of painful phases wrought There flutters up a happy thought, Self-balanced on a lightsome wing: Since we deserved the name of friends, And thine effect so lives in me, A part of mine may live in thee And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI

Y thought my heart too far diseased; You wonder when my fancies play To find me gay among the gay, Like one with any trifle pleased. The shade by which my life was crost, Which makes a desert in the mind, Has made me kindly with my kind, And like to him whose sight is lost; Whose feet are guided thro' the land, Whose jest among his friends is free, Who takes the children on his knee, And winds their curls about his hand: He plays with threads, he beats his chair For pastime, dreaming of the sky; His inner day can never die, His night of loss is always there.

LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls, I know that in thy place of rest By that broad water of the west,

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There comes a glory on the walls; Thy marble bright in dark appears, As slowly steals a silver flame Along the letters of thy name, And o'er the number of thy years. The mystic glory swims away; From off my bed the moonlight dies; And closing eaves of wearied eyes I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray; And then I know the mist is drawn A lucid veil from coast to coast, And in the dark church like a ghost Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,

Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;

Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,

Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,

When all our path was fresh with dew,

And all the bugle breezes blew

Reveillee to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,

I find a trouble in thine eye,

Which makes me sad I know not why,

Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea

I wake, and I discern the truth;

It is the trouble of my youth

That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,

That Nature's ancient power was lost:

The streets were black with smoke and frost,

They chatter'd trifles at the door:

I wander'd from the noisy town,

I found a wood with thorny boughs:

I took the thorns to bind my brows,

I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns

From youth and babe and hoary hairs:

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They call'd me in the public squares The fool that wears a crown of thorns: They call'd me fool, they call'd me child: I found an angel of the night; The voice was low, the look was bright; He look'd upon my crown and smiled: He reach'd the glory of a hand, That seem'd to touch it into leaf: The voice was not the voice of grief, The words were hard to understand.

LXX

I cannot see the features right,

When on the gloom I strive to paint

The face I know; the hues are faint

And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,

A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,

A hand that points, and palled shapes

In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,

And shoals of pucker'd faces drive;

Dark bulks that tumble half alive,

And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will

I hear a wizard music roll,

And thro' a lattice on the soul

Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance And madness, thou hast forged at last A night-long Present of the Past In which we went thro' summer France. Hadst thou such credit with the soul? Then bring an opiate trebly strong, Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong That so my pleasure may be whole; While now we talk as once we talk'd Of men and minds, the dust of change, The days that grow to something strange, In walking as of old we walk'd Beside the river's wooded reach,

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The fortress, and the mountain ridge, The cataract flashing from the bridge, The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again, And howlest, issuing out of night, With blasts that blow the poplar white, And lash with storm the streaming pane? Day, when my crown'd estate begun To pine in that reverse of doom, Which sicken'd every living bloom, And blurr'd the splendour of the sun; Who usherest in the dolorous hour With thy quick tears that make the rose Pull sideways, and the daisy close Her crimson fringes to the shower; Who might'st have heaved a windless flame Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd A chequer-work of beam and shade Along the hills, yet look'd the same. As wan, as chill, as wild as now; Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime, When the dark hand struck down thro' time, And cancell'd nature's best: but thou, Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows Thro' clouds that drench the morning star, And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar, And sow the sky with flying boughs, And up thy vault with roaring sound Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day; Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray, And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do, So little done, such things to be, How know I what had need of thee, For thou wert strong as thou wert true? The fame is quench'd that I foresaw, The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath: I curse not Nature, no, nor Death; For nothing is that errs from law.

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We pass; the path that each man trod Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds: What fame is left for human deeds In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame, Fade wholly, while the soul exults, And self-infolds the large results

Of force that would have forged a name.

LXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face, To those that watch it more and more, A likeness, hardly seen before, Comes out—to some one of his race: So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,

I see thee what thou art, and know Thy likeness to the wise below, Thy kindred with the great of old. But there is more than I can see, And what I see I leave unsaid,

Nor speak it, knowing Death has made His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd In verse that brings myself relief, And by the measure of my grief I leave thy greatness to be guess'd; What practice howsoe'er expert In fitting aptest words to things, Or voice the richest-toned that sings, Hath power to give thee as thou wert? I care not in these fading days To raise a cry that lasts not long, And round thee with the breeze of song To stir a little dust of praise. Thy leaf has perish'd in the green, And, while we breathe beneath the sun, The world which credits what is done Is cold to all that might have been. So here shall silence guard thy fame; But somewhere, out of human view, Whate'er thy hands are set to do Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

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LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,

And in a moment set thy face

Where all the starry heavens of space

Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'

The secular abyss to come,

And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb

Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke

The darkness of our planet, last,

Thine own shall wither in the vast,

Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers

With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;

And what are they when these remain

The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme To him, who turns a musing eye On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie Foreshorten'd in the tract of time? These mortal lullabies of pain May bind a book, may line a box, May serve to curl a maiden's locks; Or when a thousand moons shall wane A man upon a stall may find, And, passing, turn the page that tells A grief, then changed to something else, Sung by a long-forgotten mind. But what of that? My darken'd ways Shall ring with music all the same; To breathe my loss is more than fame, To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave The holly round the Christmas hearth; The silent snow possess'd the earth, And calmly fell our Christmas-eve: The yule-log sparkled keen with frost, No wing of wind the region swept,

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But over all things brooding slept The quiet sense of something lost. As in the winters left behind, Again our ancient games had place, The mimic picture's breathing grace, And dance and song and hoodman-blind. Who show'd a token of distress? No single tear, no mark of pain: O sorrow, then can sorrow wane? O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die! No—mixt with all this mystic frame, Her deep relations are the same, But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXIX

'More than my brothers are to me,'? Let this not vex thee, noble heart!

I know thee of what force thou art To hold the costliest love in fee. But thou and I are one in kind, As moulded like in Nature's mint; And hill and wood and field did print The same sweet forms in either mind. For us the same cold streamlet curl'd Thro' all his eddying coves, the same All winds that roam the twilight came In whispers of the beauteous world. At one dear knee we proffer'd vows, One lesson from one book we learn'd, Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd To black and brown on kindred brows. And so my wealth resembles thine, But he was rich where I was poor, And he supplied my want the more As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX

If any vague desire should rise, That holy Death ere Arthur died Had moved me kindly from his side, And dropt the dust on tearless eyes; Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,

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The grief my loss in him had wrought, A grief as deep as life or thought, But stay'd in peace with God and man. I make a picture in the brain; I hear the sentence that he speaks; He bears the burthen of the weeks But turns his burthen into gain. His credit thus shall set me free; And, influence-rich to soothe and save, Unused example from the grave Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here, 'My love shall now no further range; There cannot come a mellower change, For now is love mature in ear'? Love, then, had hope of richer store: What end is here to my complaint? This haunting whisper makes me faint, 'More years had made me love thee more.' But Death returns an answer sweet: 'My sudden frost was sudden gain, And gave all ripeness to the grain, It might have drawn from after-heat.'

LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death

For changes wrought on form and face;

No lower life that earth's embrace

May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,

From state to state the spirit walks;

And these are but the shatter'd stalks,

Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare

The use of virtue out of earth:

I know transplanted human worth

Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak

The wrath that garners in my heart;

He put our lives so far apart

We cannot hear each other speak.

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LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore, O sweet new-year delaying long; Thou doest expectant nature wrong; Delaying long, delay no more. What stays thee from the clouded noons, Thy sweetness from its proper place? Can trouble live with April days, Or sadness in the summer moons? Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire, The little speedwell's darling blue, Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew, Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long, Delayest the sorrow in my blood, That longs to burst a frozen bud And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone The life that had been thine below, And fix my thoughts on all the glow To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good, A central warmth diffusing bliss

In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,

On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;

For now the day was drawing on,

When thou should'st link thy life with one

Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;

But that remorseless iron hour

Made cypress of her orange flower,

Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,

To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.

I see their unborn faces shine

Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,

Thy partner in the flowery walk

Of letters, genial table-talk,

Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

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While now thy prosperous labor fills The lips of men with honest praise, And sun by sun the happy days Descend below the golden hills With promise of a morn as fair; And all the train of bounteous hours Conduct by paths of growing powers, To reverence and the silver hair; Till slowly worn her earthly robe, Her lavish mission richly wrought, Leaving great legacies of thought, Thy spirit should fail from off the globe; What time mine own might also flee, As link'd with thine in love and fate, And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait To the other shore, involved in thee, Arrive at last the blessed goal, And He that died in Holy Land Would reach us out the shining hand, And take us as a single soul. What reed was that on which I leant? Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake The old bitterness again, and break The low beginnings of content.

LXXXV

This truth came borne with bier and pall,

I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,

'Tis better to have loved and lost,

Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed,

Demanding, so to bring relief

To this which is our common grief,

What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above

Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;

And whether love for him have drain'd

My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws

A faithful answer from the breast,

Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,

And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,

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Till on mine ear this message falls,

That in Vienna's fatal walls

God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair

That range above our mortal state,

In circle round the blessed gate,

Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,

And show'd him in the fountain fresh

All knowledge that the sons of flesh

Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,

Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,

To wander on a darken'd earth,

Where all things round me breathed of him.'

O friendship, equal-poised control,

O heart, with kindliest motion warm,

O sacred essence, other form,

O solemn ghost, O crowned soul! Yet none could better know than I, How much of act at human hands The sense of human will demands By which we dare to live or die. Whatever way my days decline,

I felt and feel, tho' left alone, His being working in mine own, The footsteps of his life in mine; A life that all the Muses deck'd With gifts of grace, that might express All-comprehensive tenderness, All-subtilising intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved To works of weakness, but I find An image comforting the mind, And in my grief a strength reserved. Likewise the imaginative woe, That loved to handle spiritual strife Diffused the shock thro' all my life, But in the present broke the blow. My pulses therefore beat again For other friends that once I met; Nor can it suit me to forget The mighty hopes that make us men.

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I woo your love: I count it crime

To mourn for any overmuch;

I, the divided half of such

A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is

Eternal, separate from fears:

The all-assuming months and years

Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming floods,

And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,

And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,

That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave

Recalls, in change of light or gloom,

My old affection of the tomb,

And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,

A part of stillness, yearns to speak:

'Arise, and get thee forth and seek

A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;

Thy spirit up to mine can reach;

But in dear words of human speech

We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain

The starry clearness of the free?

How is it? Canst thou feel for me

Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall:

'Tis hard for thee to fathom this;

I triumph in conclusive bliss,

And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;

Or so methinks the dead would say;

Or so shall grief with symbols play

And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,

That these things pass, and I shall prove

A meeting somewhere, love with love,

I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,

I, clasping brother-hands, aver

I could not, if I would, transfer

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The whole I felt for him to you. For which be they that hold apart The promise of the golden hours? First love, first friendship, equal powers, That marry with the virgin heart. Still mine, that cannot but deplore, That beats within a lonely place, That yet remembers his embrace, But at his footstep leaps no more, My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest Quite in the love of what is gone, But seeks to beat in time with one That warms another living breast. Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring, Knowing the primrose yet is dear, The primrose of the later year, As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,

That rollest from the gorgeous gloom

Of evening over brake and bloom

And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below

Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,

And shadowing down the horned flood

In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh

The full new life that feeds thy breath

Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,

Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas

On leagues of odour streaming far,

To where in yonder orient star

A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls In which of old I wore the gown; I roved at random thro' the town, And saw the tumult of the halls; And heard once more in college fanes The storm their high-built organs make,

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And thunder-music, rolling, shake The prophet blazon'd on the panes; And caught once more the distant shout, The measured pulse of racing oars Among the willows; paced the shores And many a bridge, and all about The same gray flats again, and felt The same, but not the same; and last Up that long walk of limes I past To see the rooms in which he dwelt. Another name was on the door: I linger'd; all within was noise Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys That crash'd the glass and beat the floor; Where once we held debate, a band Of youthful friends, on mind and art, And labour, and the changing mart, And all the framework of the land; When one would aim an arrow fair, But send it slackly from the string; And one would pierce an outer ring, And one an inner, here and there; And last the master-bowman, he, Would cleave the mark. A willing ear We lent him. Who, but hung to hear The rapt oration flowing free From point to point, with power and grace And music in the bounds of law, To those conclusions when we saw The God within him light his face, And seem to lift the form, and glow In azure orbits heavenly-wise; And over those ethereal eyes The bar of Michael Angelo?

LXXXVIII

Wild bird whose warble, liquid sweet, Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks, O tell me where the senses mix, O tell me where the passions meet, Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ Thy spirits in the darkening leaf, And in the midmost heart of grief

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Thy passion clasps a secret joy: And I—my harp would prelude woe— I cannot all command the strings; The glory of the sum of things Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor

Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;

And thou, with all thy breadth and height

Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,

My Arthur found your shadows fair,

And shook to all the liberal air

The dust and din and steam of town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;

He mixt in all our simple sports;

They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts

And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,

Inmantled in ambrosial dark,

To drink the cooler air, and mark

The landscape winking thro' the heat:

O sound to rout the brood of cares,

The sweep of scythe in morning dew,

The gust that round the garden flew,

And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn

About him, heart and ear were fed

To hear him, as he lay and read

The Tuscan poets on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon

A guest, or happy sister, sung,

Or here she brought the harp and flung

A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,

Beyond the bounding hill to stray,

And break the livelong summer day

With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,

Discuss'd the books to love or hate,

Or touch'd the changes of the state,

Or threaded some Socratic dream;

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But if I praised the busy town, He loved to rail against it still, For 'ground in yonder social mill We rub each other's angles down, 'And merge,' he said, 'in form and gloss The picturesque of man and man.' We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran, The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss, Or cool'd within the glooming wave; And last, returning from afar, Before the crimson-circled star Had fall'n into her father's grave, And brushing ankle-deep in flowers, We heard behind the woodbine veil The milk that bubbled in the pail, And buzzings of the honied hours.

XC

He tasted love with half his mind, Nor ever drank the inviolate spring Where nighest heaven, who first could fling This bitter seed among mankind; That could the dead, whose dying eyes Were closed with wail, resume their life, They would but find in child and wife An iron welcome when they rise: 'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine, To pledge them with a kindly tear, To talk them o'er, to wish them here, To count their memories half divine; But if they came who past away, Behold their brides in other hands; The hard heir strides about their lands, And will not yield them for a day. Yea, tho' their sons were none of these, Not less the yet-loved sire would make Confusion worse than death, and shake The pillars of domestic peace. Ah dear, but come thou back to me: Whatever change the years have wrought, I find not yet one lonely thought That cries against my wish for thee.

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XCI

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch, And rarely pipes the mounted thrush; Or underneath the barren bush Flits by the sea-blue bird of March; Come, wear the form by which I know Thy spirit in time among thy peers; The hope of unaccomplish'd years Be large and lucid round thy brow. When summer's hourly-mellowing change May breathe, with many roses sweet, Upon the thousand waves of wheat, That ripple round the lonely grange; Come: not in watches of the night, But where the sunbeam broodeth warm, Come, beauteous in thine after form, And like a finer light in light.

XCII

If any vision should reveal

Thy likeness, I might count it vain

As but the canker of the brain;

Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast

Together in the days behind,

I might but say, I hear a wind

Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view

A fact within the coming year;

And tho' the months, revolving near,

Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,

But spiritual presentiments,

And such refraction of events

As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say No spirit ever brake the band That stays him from the native land Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay? No visual shade of some one lost, But he, the Spirit himself, may come

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Where all the nerve of sense is numb; Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost. O, therefore from thy sightless range With gods in unconjectured bliss, O, from the distance of the abyss Of tenfold-complicated change, Descend, and touch, and enter; hear The wish too strong for words to name; That in this blindness of the frame My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,

With what divine affections bold

Should be the man whose thought would hold

An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call

The spirits from their golden day,

Except, like them, thou too canst say,

My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,

Imaginations calm and fair,

The memory like a cloudless air,

The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,

And doubt beside the portal waits,

They can but listen at the gates

And hear the household jar within.

XCV

By night we linger'd on the lawn, For underfoot the herb was dry; And genial warmth; and o'er the sky The silvery haze of summer drawn; And calm that let the tapers burn Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd: The brook alone far-off was heard, And on the board the fluttering urn: And bats went round in fragrant skies, And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes And woolly breasts and beaded eyes; While now we sang old songs that peal'd

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From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees

Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,

Withdrew themselves from me and night,

And in the house light after light

Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read

Of that glad year which once had been,

In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,

The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke

The silent-speaking words, and strange

Was love's dumb cry defying change

To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell

On doubts that drive the coward back,

And keen thro' wordy snares to track

Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,

The dead man touch'd me from the past,

And all at once it seem'd at last

The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd

About empyreal heights of thought,

And came on that which is, and caught

The deep pulsations of the world,

Conian music measuring out

The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—

The blows of Death. At length my trance

Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame

In matter-moulded forms of speech,

Or ev'n for intellect to reach

Thro' memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd

The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees

Laid their dark arms about the field;

And suck'd from out the distant gloom

A breeze began to tremble o'er

The large leaves of the sycamore,

And fluctuate all the still perfume,

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And gathering freshlier overhead, Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung The heavy-folded rose, and flung The lilies to and fro, and said, 'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away; And East and West, without a breath, Mixt their dim lights, like life and death, To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,

Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes

Are tender over drowning flies,

You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew

In many a subtle question versed,

Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,

But ever strove to make it true:

Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,

At last he beat his music out.

There lives more faith in honest doubt,

Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,

He would not make his judgment blind,

He faced the spectres of the mind

And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;

And Power was with him in the night,

Which makes the darkness and the light,

And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,

As over Sinai's peaks of old,

While Israel made their gods of gold,

Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;

He finds on misty mountain-ground

His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;

He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—

I look'd on these and thought of thee

In vastness and in mystery,

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And of my spirit as of a wife. These two—they dwelt with eye on eye, Their hearts of old have beat in tune, Their meetings made December June Their every parting was to die. Their love has never past away; The days she never can forget Are earnest that he loves her yet, Whate'er the faithless people say. Her life is lone, he sits apart, He loves her yet, she will not weep, Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep He seems to slight her simple heart. He thrids the labyrinth of the mind, He reads the secret of the star, He seems so near and yet so far, He looks so cold: she thinks him kind. She keeps the gift of years before A wither'd violet is her bliss She knows not what his greatness is, For that, for all, she loves him more. For him she plays, to him she sings Of early faith and plighted vows; She knows but matters of the house, And he, he knows a thousand things. Her faith is fixt and cannot move, She darkly feels him great and wise, She dwells on him with faithful eyes, 'I cannot understand: I love.'

XCVIII

You leave us: you will see the Rhine, And those fair hills I sail'd below, When I was there with him; and go By summer belts of wheat and vine To where he breathed his latest breath, That City. All her splendour seems No livelier than the wisp that gleams On Lethe in the eyes of Death. Let her great Danube rolling fair Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me: I have not seen, I will not see Vienna; rather dream that there,

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A treble darkness, Evil haunts The birth, the bridal; friend from friend Is oftener parted, fathers bend Above more graves, a thousand wants Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey By each cold hearth, and sadness flings Her shadow on the blaze of kings: And yet myself have heard him say, That not in any mother town With statelier progress to and fro The double tides of chariots flow By park and suburb under brown Of lustier leaves; nor more content, He told me, lives in any crowd, When all is gay with lamps, and loud With sport and song, in booth and tent, Imperial halls, or open plain; And wheels the circled dance, and breaks The rocket molten into flakes Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again, So loud with voices of the birds, So thick with lowings of the herds, Day, when I lost the flower of men; Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast By meadows breathing of the past, And woodlands holy to the dead; Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves A song that slights the coming care, And Autumn laying here and there A fiery finger on the leaves; Who wakenest with thy balmy breath To myriads on the genial earth, Memories of bridal, or of birth, And unto myriads more, of death. O, wheresoever those may be, Betwixt the slumber of the poles, To-day they count as kindred souls; They know me not, but mourn with me.

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C

I climb the hill: from end to end Of all the landscape underneath, I find no place that does not breathe Some gracious memory of my friend; No gray old grange, or lonely fold, Or low morass and whispering reed, Or simple stile from mead to mead, Or sheepwalk up the windy wold; Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw That hears the latest linnet trill, Nor quarry trench'd along the hill And haunted by the wrangling daw; Nor runlet tinkling from the rock; Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves To left and right thro' meadowy curves, That feed the mothers of the flock; But each has pleased a kindred eye, And each reflects a kindlier day; And, leaving these, to pass away, I think once more he seems to die.

CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway, The tender blossom flutter down, Unloved, that beech will gather brown, This maple burn itself away; Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair, Ray round with flames her disk of seed, And many a rose-carnation feed With summer spice the humming air; Unloved, by many a sandy bar, The brook shall babble down the plain, At noon or when the lesser wain Is twisting round the polar star; Uncared for, gird the windy grove, And flood the haunts of hern and crake; Or into silver arrows break The sailing moon in creek and cove; Till from the garden and the wild A fresh association blow, And year by year the landscape grow Familiar to the stranger's child;

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As year by year the labourer tills His wonted glebe, or lops the glades; And year by year our memory fades From all the circle of the hills.

CII

We leave the well-beloved place Where first we gazed upon the sky; The roofs, that heard our earliest cry, Will shelter one of stranger race. We go, but ere we go from home, As down the garden-walks I move, Two spirits of a diverse love Contend for loving masterdom. One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung Long since its matin song, and heard The low love-language of the bird In native hazels tassel-hung.' The other answers, 'Yea, but here Thy feet have stray'd in after hours With thy lost friend among the bowers, And this hath made them trebly dear.' These two have striven half the day, And each prefers his separate claim, Poor rivals in a losing game, That will not yield each other way. I turn to go: my feet are set To leave the pleasant fields and farms; They mix in one another's arms To one pure image of regret.

CIII

On that last night before we went From out the doors where I was bred, I dream'd a vision of the dead, Which left my after-morn content. Methought I dwelt within a hall, And maidens with me: distant hills From hidden summits fed with rills A river sliding by the wall. The hall with harp and carol rang. They sang of what is wise and good And graceful. In the centre stood

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A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,

The shape of him I loved, and love

For ever: then flew in a dove

And brought a summons from the sea:

And when they learnt that I must go

They wept and wail'd, but led the way

To where a little shallop lay

At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,

And shadowing bluff that made the banks,

We glided winding under ranks

Of iris, and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore

And roll'd the floods in grander space,

The maidens gather'd strength and grace

And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart

And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb;

I felt the thews of Anakim,

The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,

And one would chant the history

Of that great race, which is to be,

And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides

Began to foam, and we to draw

From deep to deep, to where we saw

A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,

But thrice as large as man he bent

To greet us. Up the side I went,

And fell in silence on his neck;

Whereat those maidens with one mind

Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:

'We served thee here,' they said, 'so long,

And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win

An answer from my lips, but he

Replying, 'Enter likewise ye

And go with us:' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep

A music out of sheet and shroud,

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We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud That landlike slept along the deep.

CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ; The moon is hid, the night is still; A single church below the hill Is pealing, folded in the mist. A single peal of bells below, That wakens at this hour of rest A single murmur in the breast, That these are not the bells I know. Like strangers' voices here they sound, In lands where not a memory strays, Nor landmark breathes of other days, But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave This laurel, let this holly stand: We live within the stranger's land, And strangely falls our Christmas-eve. Our father's dust is left alone And silent under other snows: There in due time the woodbine blows, The violet comes, but we are gone. No more shall wayward grief abuse The genial hour with mask and mime, For change of place, like growth of time, Has broke the bond of dying use. Let cares that petty shadows cast, By which our lives are chiefly proved, A little spare the night I loved, And hold it solemn to the past. But let no footstep beat the floor, Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm; For who would keep an ancient form Thro' which the spirit breathes no more? Be neither song, nor game, nor feast; Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown; No dance, no motion, save alone What lightens in the lucid east Of rising worlds by yonder wood.

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Long sleeps the summer in the seed; Run out your measured arcs, and lead The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky, The flying cloud, the frosty light: The year is dying in the night; Ring out, wild bells, and let him die. Ring out the old, ring in the new, Ring, happy bells, across the snow: The year is going, let him go; Ring out the false, ring in the true. Ring out the grief that saps the mind, For those that here we see no more; Ring out the feud of rich and poor, Ring in redress to all mankind. Ring out a slowly dying cause, And ancient forms of party strife; Ring in the nobler modes of life, With sweeter manners, purer laws. Ring out the want, the care, the sin, The faithless coldness of the times; Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes, But ring the fuller minstrel in. Ring out false pride in place and blood, The civic slander and the spite; Ring in the love of truth and right, Ring in the common love of good. Ring out old shapes of foul disease; Ring out the narrowing lust of gold; Ring out the thousand wars of old, Ring in the thousand years of peace. Ring in the valiant man and free, The larger heart, the kindlier hand; Ring out the darkness of the land, Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII

It is the day when he was born, A bitter day that early sank Behind a purple-frosty bank Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

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The time admits not flowers or leaves To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies The blast of North and East, and ice Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves, And bristles all the brakes and thorns To yon hard crescent, as she hangs Above the wood which grides and clangs Its leafless ribs and iron horns Together, in the drifts that pass To darken on the rolling brine That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine, Arrange the board and brim the glass; Bring in great logs and let them lie, To make a solid core of heat; Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat Of all things ev'n as he were by; We keep the day. With festal cheer, With books and music, surely we Will drink to him, whate'er he be, And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,

And, lest I stiffen into stone,

I will not eat my heart alone,

Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,

And vacant yearning, tho' with might

To scale the heaven's highest height,

Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,

But mine own phantom chanting hymns?

And on the depths of death there swims

The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be

Of sorrow under human skies:

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,

Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk From household fountains never dry; The critic clearness of an eye,

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That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force

To seize and throw the doubts of man;

Impassion'd logic, which outran

The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,

But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;

And passion pure in snowy bloom

Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,

Of freedom in her regal seat

Of England; not the schoolboy heat,

The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace

In such a sort, the child would twine

A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,

And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes

Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,

My shame is greater who remain,

Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,

The men of rathe and riper years:

The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,

Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,

The proud was half disarm'd of pride,

Nor cared the serpent at thy side

To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,

The flippant put himself to school

And heard thee, and the brazen fool

Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,

And felt thy triumph was as mine;

And loved them more, that they were thine,

The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,

But mine the love that will not tire,

And, born of love, the vague desire

That spurs an imitative will.

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CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down Along the scale of ranks, thro' all, To him who grasps a golden ball, By blood a king, at heart a clown; The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil His want in forms for fashion's sake, Will let his coltish nature break At seasons thro' the gilded pale: For who can always act? but he, To whom a thousand memories call, Not being less but more than all The gentleness he seem'd to be, Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd Each office of the social hour To noble manners, as the flower And native growth of noble mind; Nor ever narrowness or spite, Or villain fancy fleeting by, Drew in the expression of an eye, Where God and Nature met in light; And thus he bore without abuse The grand old name of gentleman, Defamed by every charlatan, And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,

That I, who gaze with temperate eyes

On glorious insufficiencies,

Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room

Of all my love, art reason why

I seem to cast a careless eye

On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power

Sprang up for ever at a touch,

And hope could never hope too much,

In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,

And tracts of calm from tempest made,

And world-wide fluctuation sway'd

In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

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CXIII

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;

Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee

Which not alone had guided me,

But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen

In intellect, with force and skill

To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—

I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,

A soul on highest mission sent,

A potent voice of Parliament,

A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,

Becoming, when the time has birth,

A lever to uplift the earth

And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,

With agonies, with energies,

With overthrowings, and with cries

And undulations to and fro.

CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail Against her beauty? May she mix With men and prosper! Who shall fix Her pillars? Let her work prevail. But on her forehead sits a fire: She sets her forward countenance And leaps into the future chance, Submitting all things to desire. Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain? She cannot fight the fear of death. What is she, cut from love and faith, But some wild Pallas from the brain Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst All barriers in her onward race For power. Let her know her place; She is the second, not the first. A higher hand must make her mild, If all be not in vain; and guide Her footsteps, moving side by side With wisdom, like the younger child:

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For she is earthly of the mind, But Wisdom heavenly of the soul. O, friend, who camest to thy goal So early, leaving me behind, I would the great world grew like thee, Who grewest not alone in power And knowledge, but by year and hour In reverence and in charity.

CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow, Now burgeons every maze of quick About the flowering squares, and thick By ashen roots the violets blow. Now rings the woodland loud and long, The distance takes a lovelier hue, And drown'd in yonder living blue The lark becomes a sightless song. Now dance the lights on lawn and lea, The flocks are whiter down the vale, And milkier every milky sail On winding stream or distant sea; Where now the seamew pipes, or dives In yonder greening gleam, and fly The happy birds, that change their sky To build and brood; that live their lives From land to land; and in my breast Spring wakens too; and my regret Becomes an April violet, And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVI

Is it, then, regret for buried time

That keenlier in sweet April wakes,

And meets the year, and gives and takes

The colours of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,

The life re-orient out of dust

Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust

In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine

Upon me, while I muse alone;

And that dear voice, I once have known,

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Still speak to me of me and mine: Yet less of sorrow lives in me For days of happy commune dead; Less yearning for the friendship fled, Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this To hold me from my proper place, A little while from his embrace, For fuller gain of after bliss: That out of distance might ensue Desire of nearness doubly sweet; And unto meeting when we meet, Delight a hundredfold accrue, For every grain of sand that runs, And every span of shade that steals, And every kiss of toothed wheels, And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,

The giant labouring in his youth;

Nor dream of human love and truth,

As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead

Are breathers of an ampler day

For ever nobler ends. They say,

The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,

And grew to seeming-random forms,

The seeming prey of cyclic storms,

Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,

The herald of a higher race,

And of himself in higher place,

If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;

Or, crown'd with attributes of woe

Like glories, move his course, and show

That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,

And heated hot with burning fears,

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And dipt in baths of hissing tears, And batter'd with the shocks of doom To shape and use. Arise and fly The reeling Faun, the sensual feast; Move upward, working out the beast, And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat So quickly, not as one that weeps I come once more; the city sleeps; I smell the meadow in the street; I hear a chirp of birds; I see Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn A light-blue lane of early dawn, And think of early days and thee, And bless thee, for thy lips are bland, And bright the friendship of thine eye; And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:

I think we are not wholly brain,

Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,

Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:

Let Science prove we are, and then

What matters Science unto men,

At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs

Hereafter, up from childhood shape

His action like the greater ape,

But I was born to other things.

CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun And ready, thou, to die with him, Thou watchest all things ever dim And dimmer, and a glory done. The team is loosen'd from the wain, The boat is drawn upon the shore; Thou listenest to the closing door,

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And life is darken'd in the brain. Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night, By thee the world's great work is heard Beginning, and the wakeful bird; Behind thee comes the greater light. The market boat is on the stream, And voices hail it from the brink; Thou hear'st the village hammer clink, And see'st the moving of the team. Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name For what is one, the first, the last, Thou, like my present and my past, Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

CXXII

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then, While I rose up against my doom, And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom, To bare the eternal Heavens again, To feel once more, in placid awe, The strong imagination roll A sphere of stars about my soul, In all her motion one with law? If thou wert with me, and the grave Divide us not, be with me now, And enter in at breast and brow, Till all my blood, a fuller wave, Be quicken'd with a livelier breath, And like an inconsiderate boy, As in the former flash of joy, I slip the thoughts of life and death; And all the breeze of Fancy blows, And every dew-drop paints a bow, The wizard lightnings deeply glow, And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree. O earth, what changes hast thou seen! There where the long street roars, hath been The stillness of the central sea. The hills are shadows, and they flow From form to form, and nothing stands;

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They melt like mist, the solid lands,

Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,

And dream my dream, and hold it true;

For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,

I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless; Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt; He, They, One, All; within, without; The Power in darkness whom we guess,— I found Him not in world or sun, Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye, Nor thro' the questions men may try, The petty cobwebs we have spun. If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep, I heard a voice 'believe no more,' And heard an ever-breaking shore That tumbled in the Godless deep, A warmth within the breast would melt The freezing reason's colder part, And like a man in wrath the heart Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.' No, like a child in doubt and fear: But that blind clamour made me wise; Then was I as a child that cries, But, crying, knows his father near; And what I am beheld again What is, and no man understands; And out of darkness came the hands That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung, Some bitter notes my harp would give, Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live A contradiction on the tongue, Yet Hope had never lost her youth, She did but look through dimmer eyes; Or Love but play'd with gracious lies, Because he felt so fix'd in truth; And if the song were full of care,

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He breathed the spirit of the song; And if the words were sweet and strong He set his royal signet there; Abiding with me till I sail To seek thee on the mystic deeps, And this electric force, that keeps A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI

Love is and was my Lord and King, And in his presence I attend To hear the tidings of my friend, Which every hour his couriers bring. Love is and was my King and Lord, And will be, tho' as yet I keep Within his court on earth, and sleep Encompass'd by his faithful guard, And hear at times a sentinel Who moves about from place to place, And whispers to the worlds of space, In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII

And all is well, tho' faith and form Be sunder'd in the night of fear; Well roars the storm to those that hear A deeper voice across the storm, Proclaiming social truth shall spread, And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again The red fool-fury of the Seine Should pile her barricades with dead. But ill for him that wears a crown, And him, the lazar, in his rags: They tremble, the sustaining crags; The spires of ice are toppled down, And molten up, and roar in flood; The fortress crashes from on high, The brute earth lightens to the sky, And the great AEon sinks in blood, And compass'd by the fires of Hell; While thou, dear spirit, happy star, O'erlook'st the tumult from afar, And smilest, knowing all is well.

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CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,

Unpalsied when he met with Death,

Is comrade of the lesser faith

That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood

Of onward time shall yet be made,

And throned races may degrade;

Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,

If all your office had to do

With old results that look like new;

If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,

To fool the crowd with glorious lies,

To cleave a creed in sects and cries,

To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,

To cramp the student at his desk,

To make old bareness picturesque

And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend

On you and yours. I see in part

That all, as in some piece of art,

Is toil cooperant to an end.

CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire, So far, so near in woe and weal,

O loved the most, when most I feel There is a lower and a higher; Known and unknown, human, divine; Sweet human hand and lips and eye; Dear heavenly friend that canst not die, Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine; Strange friend, past, present, and to be; Loved deeplier, darklier understood; Behold, I dream a dream of good, And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;

I hear thee where the waters run;

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Thou standest in the rising sun, And in the setting thou art fair. What art thou then? I cannot guess; But tho' I seem in star and flower To feel thee some diffusive power, I do not therefore love thee less. My love involves the love before; My love is vaster passion now; Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou, I seem to love thee more and more. Far off thou art, but ever nigh; I have thee still, and I rejoice; I prosper, circled with thy voice; I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure

When all that seems shall suffer shock,

Rise in the spiritual rock,

Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust

A voice as unto him that hears,

A cry above the conquer'd years

To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,

The truths that never can be proved

Until we close with all we loved,

And all we flow from, soul in soul.

[Epilogue]

O true and tried, so well and long,

Demand not thou a marriage lay;

In that it is thy marriage day

Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss

Since first he told me that he loved

A daughter of our house, nor proved

Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er

Some thrice three years: they went and came,

Remade the blood and changed the frame,

And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm

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In dying songs a dead regret, But like a statue solid-set, And moulded in colossal calm. Regret is dead, but love is more Than in the summers that are flown, For I myself with these have grown To something greater than before; Which makes appear the songs I made As echoes out of weaker times, As half but idle brawling rhymes, The sport of random sun and shade. But where is she, the bridal flower, That must be made a wife ere noon? She enters, glowing like the moon Of Eden on its bridal bower: On me she bends her blissful eyes And then on thee; they meet thy look And brighten like the star that shook Betwixt the palms of paradise. O when her life was yet in bud, He too foretold the perfect rose. For thee she grew, for thee she grows For ever, and as fair as good. And thou art worthy; full of power; As gentle; liberal-minded, great, Consistent; wearing all that weight Of learning lightly like a flower. But now set out: the noon is near, And I must give away the bride; She fears not, or with thee beside And me behind her, will not fear. For I that danced her on my knee, That watch'd her on her nurse's arm, That shielded all her life from harm At last must part with her to thee; Now waiting to be made a wife, Her feet, my darling, on the dead Their pensive tablets round her head, And the most living words of life Breathed in her ear. The ring is on, The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and again The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out of twain Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

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Now sign your names, which shall be read,

Mute symbols of a joyful morn,

By village eyes as yet unborn;

The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells

The joy to every wandering breeze;

The blind wall rocks, and on the trees

The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours

Await them. Many a merry face

Salutes them—maidens of the place,

That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride

With him to whom her hand I gave.

They leave the porch, they pass the grave

That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,

For them he light of life increased,

Who stay to share the morning feast,

Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance

To meet and greet a whiter sun;

My drooping memory will not shun

The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,

And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,

As drinking health to bride and groom

We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I

Conjecture of a stiller guest,

Perchance, perchance, among the rest,

And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,

And those white-favour'd horses wait;

They rise, but linger; it is late;

Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark

From little cloudlets on the grass,

But sweeps away as out we pass

To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,

And talk of others that are wed,

And how she look'd, and what he said,

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And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,

The shade of passing thought, the wealth

Of words and wit, the double health,

The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance;—till I retire:

Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,

And high in heaven the streaming cloud,

And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,

Till over down and over dale

All night the shining vapour sail

And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,

And catch at every mountain head,

And o'er the friths that branch and spread

Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,

With tender gloom the roof, the wall;

And breaking let the splendour fall

To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,

And, star and system rolling past,

A soul shall draw from out the vast

And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,

Result in man, be born and think,

And act and love, a closer link

Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look

On knowledge, under whose command

Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand

Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,

For all we thought and loved and did,

And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed

Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod

This planet, was a noble type

Appearing ere the times were ripe,

That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,

One God, one law, one element,

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And one far-off divine event,

To which the whole creation moves.

### 2.5.6 The Charge of the Light Brigade 1.

Half a league, half a league,

Half a league onward, All in the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred. "Charge," was the captain's cry; Their's not to reason why, Their's not to make reply, Their's but to do and die, Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

2.

Cannon to right of them, Cannon to left of them, Cannon in front of them

Volley'd and thunder'd; Storm'd at with shot and shell, Boldly they rode and well; Into the jaws of Death, Into the mouth of Hell,

Rode the six hundred.

3.

Flash'd all their sabres bare, Flash'd all at once in air, Sabring the gunners there, Charging an army, while

All the world wonder'd: Plunged in the battery-smoke Fiercely the line they broke; Strong was the sabre-stroke; Making an army reel

Shaken and sunder'd. Then they rode back, but not,

Not the six hundred.

4.

Cannon to right of them, Cannon to left of them,

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Cannon behind them

Volley'd and thunder'd; Storm'd at with shot and shell, They that had struck so well Rode thro' the jaws of Death, Half a league back again, Up from the mouth of Hell, All that was left of them,

Left of six hundred.

5.

Honour the brave and bold! Long shall the tale be told, Yea, when our babes are old— How they rode onward.

### 2.5.7 Reading and Review Questions

1. What insights, if any, do Tennyson's poems give to his characters' mental and emotional states? Why? How do you know?

2. On what grounds does Tennyson reaffirm religious faith and confidence in the future in his poetry, particularly in In Memoriam A. H . H.? How convincing is his reaffirmation, and why?

3. If one considers the Lady of Shalott to be an artistic figure, considering her weaving and her singing, what strengths does she have due to her art? What weaknesses? Why?

4. How does the matching of sound and meaning in "Ulysses," for example, affect your understanding of the poem? Particularly consider its last stanza. How does the sound of "Charge of the Light Brigade" affect its meaning, do you think, and why?

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## 2.6 ROBERT BROWNING

(1812-1889)

Robert Browning's father, Robert Browning, worked as a clerk in the Bank of England. His mother, Sarah Anna Wiedemann, was devoutly religious. So Browning was born into an apparently conventional middle-class Victorian household. But Browning's father had a strong scholarly bent and encouraged his son to delve into art and literature, particularly by means of the quirky personal library Browning senior had amassed. Browning consequently became something of an autodidact, even as he received formal education at home from his father. His mother, too, had a deep love of music that seems to have influenced Browning's work, both in style and subject matter.

Image 2.12 | Portrait of Robert Browning

Artist | Michele Gordigiani Source | National Portrait Gallery License | Public Domain



Critics deemed Browning's first published work, Pauline: A Fragment of a Confession

(1833), as too inclined towards Romanticism, revealing too much influence by Shelley. He consequently moved towards more objective expression, in both dramatic and poetic form, particularly his Dramatic Lyrics (1842). Many poems in this collection take the Dramatic Monologue form. This form takes a relativistic attitude to Truth. Because it derives its effects from the ambiguity of values, it makes demands on the reader's perceptivity. Dramatic Monologues always have a single, first person speaker, an audience, and an action. The action is usually a deepening of the reader's understanding of the speaker's mind.

The Dramatic Monologue became a popular form in the Victorian era probably due to a reaction to Romanticism. The Romantics established the "I" as the prophetic speaker, the visionary voice, the authority. The Victorians were suspicious of this prophetic position; they wanted to establish a difference between the speaker and the poet and their different points of view, so they resorted to drama. Like the Romantics, though, Browning's poetry worked toward a greater understanding of human nature. The speakers of many of his poems stretch stereotypes and expectations. The titular speaker of "Porphyria's Lover," with terrifying passive aggression, strangles Porphyria to save her from her frivolous love—even though his voice, stance, and actions express extraordinary anger at a woman who rejects him as a social inferior yet who has "loved" him and clearly enjoys his suffering love for her.

The Duke of Ferrari, the speaker in "My Last Duchess," seems indifferent to anyone's judgement but his own—to the point that he confesses to having his

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wife killed for not sufficiently deferring to his pride. The subject matter of this poem suggests Browning's interest in women's issues, in the situation of women condemned to remain under the rule of fathers and husbands who may be domestic tyrants and even murderers. And Browning's interest in religion appears through the "The Bishop Orders His Tomb," which criticizes the Oxford Movement and its goal of having England return to "ideal" Roman Catholicism.

In 1846, Browning eloped with Elizabeth Barrett to Italy where they had a son, Robert "Pen" Browning (1849-1912). After Elizabeth Barrett Browning died in 1861, Robert and Pen returned to London. Browning began to win critical acclaim, particularly with the publication of his monumental The Ring and the Book (1868-69), a poem based on the seventeenth-century trial testimony of an Italian nobleman condemned to death for murdering his wife.

### 2.6.1 "Porphyria's Love"

The rain set early in to-night, The sullen wind was soon awake, It tore the elm-tops down for spite, And did its worst to vex the lake: I listened with heart fit to break. When glided in Porphyria; straight She shut the cold out and the storm, And kneeled and made the cheerless grate Blaze up, and all the cottage warm; Which done, she rose, and from her form Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl, And laid her soiled gloves by, untied Her hat and let the damp hair fall, And, last, she sat down by my side And called me. When no voice replied, She put my arm about her waist, And made her smooth white shoulder bare And all her yellow hair displaced, And, stooping, made my cheek lie there, And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair, Murmuring how she loved me—she Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour, To set its struggling passion free From pride, and vainer ties dissever, And give herself to me forever. But passion sometimes would prevail, Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain A sudden thought of one so pale For love of her, and all in vain:

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So, she was come through wind and rain Be sure I looked up at her eyes Happy and proud; at last I knew Porphyria worshiped me; surprise Made my heart swell, and still it grew While I debated what to do. That moment she was mine, mine, fair, Perfectly pure and good: I found A thing to do, and all her hair In one long yellow string I wound Three times her little throat around, And strangled her. No pain felt she; I am quite sure she felt no pain. As a shut bud that holds a bee, I warily oped her lids: again Laughed the blue eyes without a stain. And I untightened next the tress About her neck; her cheek once more Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss: I propped her head up as before, Only, this time my shoulder bore Her head, which droops upon it still: The smiling rosy little head, So glad it has its utmost will, That all it scorned at once is fled, And I, its love, am gained instead! Porphyria's love: she guessed not how Her darling one wish would be heard. And thus we sit together now, And all night long we have not stirred, And yet God has not said a word!

### 2.6.2 "My Last Duchess"

Ferrara

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall, Looking as if she were alive. I call That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolf's hands Worked busily a day, and there she stands. Will't please you sit and look at her? I said 'Fra Pandolf by design, for never read Strangers like you that pictured countenance, The depth and passion of its earnest glance, But to myself they turned (since none puts by

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The curtain I have drawn for you, but I) And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst, How such a glance came there; so, not the first Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not Her husband's presence only, called that spot Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps Fra Pandolf chanced to say 'Her mantle laps Over my lady's wrist too much,' or, 'Paint Must never hope to reproduce the faint Half-flush that dies along her throat:' such stuff Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough

Image 2.13 | My Last Duchess Artist | Agnolo Bronzino Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



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For calling up that spot of joy. She had

A heart—how shall I say—too soon made glad,

Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er

She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.

Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,

The dropping of the daylight in the West,

The bough of cherries some officious fool

Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule

She rode with round the terrace—all and each

Would draw from her alike the approving speech,

Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked

Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked

My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name

With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame

This sort of trifling? Even had you skill

In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will

Quite clear to such an one, and say, 'Just this

Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,

Or there exceed the mark'—and if she let

Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set

Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,

- E'en that would be some stooping; and I choose

Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,

Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without

Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;

Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands

As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet

The company below, then. I repeat,

The Count your master's known munificence

Is ample warrant that no just pretence

Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;

Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed

At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go

Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,

Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,

Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

### 2.6.3 "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" I

GR-R-R—there go, my heart's abhorrence! Water your damned flower-pots, do! If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence, God's blood, would not mine kill you!

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What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming? Oh, that rose has prior claims— Needs its leaden vase filled brimming? Hell dry you up with its flames!

II

At the meal we sit together:

Salve tibi! I must hear

Wise talk of the kind of weather,

Sort of season, time of year:

Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely

Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:

What's the Latin name for "parsley"?

What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

III

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished, Laid with care on our own sheld! With a fire-new spoon we're furnished, And a goblet for oneself, Rinsed like something sacrificial Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps-Marked with L. for our initial! (He-he! There his lily snaps!)

IV

Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores Squats outside the Convent bank With Sanchicha, telling stories, Steeping tresses in the tank, Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs, —Can't I see his dead eye glow, Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's? (That is, if he'd let it show!)

V

When he finishes refection, Knife and fork he never lays Cross-wise to my recollection, As do I, in Jesu's praise. I the Trinity illustrate, Drinking watered orange-pulp—

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In three sips the Arian frustrate; While he drains his at one gulp.

VI

Oh, those melons? If he's able We're to have a feast! so nice! One goes to the Abbot's table, All of us get each a slice. How go on your flowers? None double? Not one fruit-sort can you spy? Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble, Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

VII

There's a great text in Galatians, Once you trip on it, entails Twenty-nine distinct damnations, One sure, if another fails: If I trip him just a-dying, Sure of heaven as sure can be, Spin him round and send him flying Off to hell, a Manichee?

VIII

Or my scrofulous French novel On gray paper with blunt type! Simply glance at it, you grovel Hand and foot in Belial's gripe: If I double down its pages At the woeful sixteenth print, When he gathers his greengages, Ope a sieve and slip it in't?

IX

Or, there's Satan!—one might venture Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave Such a flaw in the indenture As he'd miss till, past retrieve, Blasted lay that rose-acacia We're so proud of! Hy, Zy, Hine. 'St, there's Vespers! Plena gratia

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### 2.6.4 "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church"

Rome, 15—

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!

Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?

Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not! Well—

She, men would have to be your mother once,

Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!

What's done is done, and she is dead beside,

Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,

And as she died and so must we die ourselves,

And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.

Life, how and what is it? As here I lie

In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,

Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask

"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.

Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;

And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought

With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:

—Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;

Shrews was that snatch from out the corner South

He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!

Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence

One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,

And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,

ANd up into the aery dome where live

The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk:

And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,

And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,

With those nine columns round me, two and two,

The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:

Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe

As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.

—Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,

Put me where I may look at him! True peach,

Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!

Draw close: that conflagration of my church

—What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!

My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig

The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,

Drop water gently till the surface sink,

And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not, I! . . .

Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,

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And corded up in a tight olive-frail,

Some lump, ah God, of lapis lazuli,

Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,

Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .

Sons, all I have bequeathed you, villas, all,

That brave Frascati villa with its bath,

So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,

Like God the Father's globe on both his hands

Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,

For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!

Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:

Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?

Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—

'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else

Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?

The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,

Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance

Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,

The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,

Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan

Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,

And Moses with the tables . . . but I know

Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,

Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope

To revel down my villas while I gasp

Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine

Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!

Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!

'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve

My bath must needs be left behind, alas!

One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,

There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—

And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray

Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,

And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?

—That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,

Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,

No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—

Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!

And then how I shall lie through centuries,

And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,

And see God made and eaten all day long,

And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste

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Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!

For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,

Dying in state and by such slow degrees,

I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,

And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,

And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop

Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work:

And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts

Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,

About the life before I lived this life,

And this life too, popes, cardinals and priests,

Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,

Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,

And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,

And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,

—Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?

No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!

Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.

All lapis, all, sons! Else I give the Pope

My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?

Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,

They glitter like your mother's for my soul,

Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,

Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase

With grapes, and add a vizor and a Term,

And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx

That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,

To comfort me on my entablature

Whereon I am to lie till I must ask

"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!

For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude

To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone—

Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat

As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—

And no more lapis to delight the world!

Well go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,

But in a row: and, going, turn your backs

—Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,

And leave me in my church, the church for peace,

That I may watch at leisure if he leers—

Old Gandolf, at me, from his onion-stone,

As still he envied me, so fair she was!

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### 2.6.5 "Bishop Blougram's Apology"

No more wine? then we'll push back chairs and talk.

A final glass for me, though: cool, i' faith!

We ought to have our Abbey back, you see.

It's different, preaching in basilicas,

And doing duty in some masterpiece

Like this of brother Pugin's, bless his heart!

I doubt if they're half baked, those chalk rosettes,

Ciphers and stucco-twiddlings everywhere;

It's just like breathing in a lime-kiln: eh?

These hot long ceremonies of our church

Cost us a little—oh, they pay the price,

You take me—amply pay it! Now, we'll talk.

So, you despise me, Mr. Gigadibs. No deprecation—nay, I beg you, sir! Beside 't is our engagement: don't you know, I promised, if you'd watch a dinner out, We'd see truth dawn together?—truth that peeps Over the glasses' edge when dinner's done, And body gets its sop and holds its noise And leaves soul free a little. Now's the time: Truth's break of day! You do despise me then. And if I say, "despise me"—never fear! I know you do not in a certain sense— Not in my arm-chair, for example: here, I well imagine you respect my place (Status, entourage, worldly circumstance) Quite to its value—very much indeed: —Are up to the protesting eyes of you In pride at being seated here for once— You'll turn it to such capital account! When somebody, through years and years to come, Hints of the bishop—names me—that's enough: "Blougram? I knew him"—(into it you slide) "Dined with him once, a Corpus Christi Day, All alone, we two; he's a clever man: And after dinner—why, the wine you know— Oh, there was wine, and good!—what with the wine . . . 'Faith, we began upon all sorts of talk! He's no bad fellow, Blougram; he had seen Something of mine he relished, some review: He's quite above their humbug in his heart,

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Half-said as much, indeed—the thing's his trade.

I warrant, Blougram's sceptical at times:

How otherwise? I liked him, I confess!"

Che che, my dear sir, as we say at Rome,

Don't you protest now! It's fair give and take;

You have had your turn and spoken your home-truths:

The hand's mine now, and here you follow suit.

Thus much conceded, still the first fact stays— You do despise me; your ideal of life Is not the bishop's: you would not be I. You would like better to be Goethe, now, Or Buonaparte, or, bless me, lower still, Count D'Orsay—so you did what you preferred, Spoke as you thought, and, as you cannot help, Believed or disbelieved, no matter what, So long as on that point, whate'er it was, You loosed your mind, were whole and sole yourself. —That, my ideal never can include, Upon that element of truth and worth Never be based! for say they make me Pope— (They can't—suppose it for our argument!) Why, there I'm at my tether's end, I've reached My height, and not a height which pleases you: An unbelieving Pope won't do, you say. It's like those eerie stories nurses tell, Of how some actor on a stage played Death, With pasteboard crown, sham orb and tinselled dart, And called himself the monarch of the world; Then, going in the tire-room afterward, Because the play was done, to shift himself, Got touched upon the sleeve familiarly, The moment he had shut the closet door, By Death himself. Thus God might touch a Pope At unawares, ask what his baubles mean, And whose part he presumed to play just now. Best be yourself, imperial, plain and true!

So, drawing comfortable breath again, You weigh and find, whatever more or less I boast of my ideal realized Is nothing in the balance when opposed To your ideal, your grand simple life,

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Of which you will not realize one jot.

I am much, you are nothing; you would be all,

I would be merely much: you beat me there.

No, friend, you do not beat me: hearken why! The common problem, yours, mine, every one's, Is—not to fancy what were fair in life Provided it could be—but, finding first What may be, then find how to make it fair Up to our means: a very different thing! No abstract intellectual plan of life Quite irrespective of life's plainest laws, But one, a man, who is man and nothing more, May lead within a world which (by your leave) Is Rome or London, not Fool's-paradise. Embellish Rome, idealize away, Make paradise of London if you can, You're welcome, nay, you're wise.

A simile!

We mortals cross the ocean of this world

Each in his average cabin of a life;

The best's not big, the worst yields elbow-room.

Now for our six months' voyage—how prepare?

You come on shipboard with a landsman's list

Of things he calls convenient: so they are!

An India screen is pretty furniture,

A piano-forte is a fine resource,

All Balzac's novels occupy one shelf,

The new edition fifty volumes long;

And little Greek books, with the funny type

They get up well at Leipsic, fill the next:

Go on! slabbed marble, what a bath it makes!

And Parma's pride, the Jerome, let us add!

'T were pleasant could Correggio's fleeting glow

Hang full in face of one where'er one roams,

Since he more than the others brings with him

Italy's self—the marvellous Modenese!—

Yet was not on your list before, perhaps.

—Alas, friend, here's the agent . . . is't the name?

The captain, or whoever's master here—

You see him screw his face up; what's his cry

Ere you set foot on shipboard? "Six feet square!"

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If you won't understand what six feet mean, Compute and purchase stores accordingly— And if, in pique because he overhauls Your Jerome, piano, bath, you come on board Bare—why, you cut a figure at the first While sympathetic landsmen see you off; Not afterward, when long ere half seas over, You peep up from your utterly naked boards Into some snug and well-appointed berth, Like mine for instance (try the cooler jug— Put back the other, but don't jog the ice!) And mortified you mutter "Well and good; He sits enjoying his sea-furniture; 'Tis stout and proper, and there's store of it; Though I've the better notion, all agree, Of fitting rooms up. Hang the carpenter, Neat ship-shape fixings and contrivances— I would have brought my Jerome, frame and all!" And meantime you bring nothing: never mind— You've proved your artist-nature: what you don't You might bring, so despise me, as I say.

Now come, let's backward to the starting-place. See my way: we're two college friends, suppose. Prepare together for our voyage, then; Each note and check the other in his work— Here's mine, a bishop's outfit; criticise! What's wrong? why won't you be a bishop too?

Why first, you don't believe, you don't and can't, (Not statedly, that is, and fixedly And absolutely and exclusively) In any revelation called divine. No dogmas nail your faith; and what remains But say so, like the honest man you are? First, therefore, overhaul theology! Nay, I too, not a fool, you please to think, Must find believing every whit as hard: And if I do not frankly say as much, The ugly consequence is clear enough.

Now wait, my friend: well, I do not believe— If you'll accept no faith that is not fixed,

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Absolute and exclusive, as you say.

You're wrong—I mean to prove it in due time.

Meanwhile, I know where difficulties lie

I could not, cannot solve, nor ever shall,

So give up hope accordingly to solve—

(To you, and over the wine). Our dogmas then

With both of us, though in unlike degree,

Missing full credence—overboard with them!

I mean to meet you on your own premise:

Good, there go mine in company with yours!

And now what are we? unbelievers both, Calm and complete, determinately fixed To-day, to-morrow and forever, pray? You'll guarantee me that? Not so, I think! In no wise! all we've gained is, that belief, As unbelief before, shakes us by fits, Confounds us like its predecessor. Where's The gain? how can we guard our unbelief, Make it bear fruit to us?—the problem here. Just when we are safest, there's a sunset-touch, A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death, A chorus-ending from Euripides— And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears As old and new at once as nature's self, To rap and knock and enter in our soul, Take hands and dance there, a fantastic ring, Round the ancient idol, on his base again— The grand Perhaps! We look on helplessly. There the old misgivings, crooked questions are— This good God—what he could do, if he would, Would, if he could—then must have done long since: If so, when, where and how? some way must be— Once feel about, and soon or late you hit Some sense, in which it might be, after all. Why not, "The Way, the Truth, the Life?"

—That way Over the mountain, which who stands upon Is apt to doubt if it be meant for a road; While, if he views it from the waste itself, Up goes the line there, plain from base to brow, Not vague, mistakable! what's a break or two

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Seen from the unbroken desert either side?

And then (to bring in fresh philosophy)

What if the breaks themselves should prove at last

The most consummate of contrivances

To train a man's eye, teach him what is faith?

And so we stumble at truth's very test!

All we have gained then by our unbelief

Is a life of doubt diversified by faith,

For one of faith diversified by doubt:

We called the chess-board white—we call it black.

"Well," you rejoin, "the end's no worse, at least; We've reason for both colors on the board: Why not confess then, where I drop the faith And you the doubt, that I'm as right as you?"

Because, friend, in the next place, this being so, And both things even—faith and unbelief Left to a man's choice—we'll proceed a step, Returning to our image, which I like.

A man's choice, yes—but a cabin-passenger's— The man made for the special life o' the world— Do you forget him? I remember though! Consult our ship's conditions and you find One and but one choice suitable to all; The choice, that you unluckily prefer, Turning things topsy-turvy—they or it Going to the ground. Belief or unbelief Bears upon life, determines its whole course, Begins at its beginning. See the world Such as it is—you made it not, nor I; I mean to take it as it is—and you, Not so you'll take it—though you get naught else. I know the special kind of life I like, What suits the most my idiosyncrasy, Brings out the best of me and bears me fruit In power, peace, pleasantness and length of days. I find that positive belief does this For me, and unbelief, no whit of this. —For you, it does, however?—that, we'll try! 'T is clear, I cannot lead my life, at least, Induce the world to let me peaceably,

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Without declaring at the outset, "Friends,

I absolutely and peremptorily

Believe!"—I say, faith is my waking life:

One sleeps, indeed, and dreams at intervals,

We know, but waking's the main point with us,

And my provision's for life's waking part.

Accordingly, I use heart, head and hand

All day, I build, scheme, study, and make friends;

And when night overtakes me, down I lie,

Sleep, dream a little, and get done with it,

The sooner the better, to begin afresh.

What's midnight's doubt before the dayspring's faith?

You, the philosopher, that disbelieve,

That recognize the night, give dreams their weight—

To be consistent you should keep your bed,

Abstain from healthy acts that prove you man,

For fear you drowse perhaps at unawares!

And certainly at night you'll sleep and dream,

Live through the day and bustle as you please.

And so you live to sleep as I to wake,

To unbelieve as I to still believe?

Well, and the common sense o' the world calls you

Bed-ridden—and its good things come to me.

Its estimation, which is half the fight,

That's the first-cabin comfort I secure:

The next . . . but you perceive with half an eye!

Come, come, it's best believing, if we may;

You can't but own that!

Next, concede again, If once we choose belief, on all accounts We can't be too decisive in our faith, Conclusive and exclusive in its terms, To suit the world which gives us the good things. In every man's career are certain points Whereon he dares not be indifferent; The world detects him clearly, if he dare, As baffled at the game, and losing life. He may care little or he may care much For riches, honor, pleasure, work, repose, Since various theories of life and life's Success are extant which might easily Comport with either estimate of these;

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And whoso chooses wealth or poverty, Labor or quiet, is not judged a fool Because his fellow would choose otherwise; We let him choose upon his own account So long as he's consistent with his choice. But certain points, left wholly to himself, When once a man has arbitrated on, We say he must succeed there or go hang. Thus, he should wed the woman he loves most Or needs most, whatsoe'er the love or need— For he can't wed twice. Then, he must avouch, Or follow, at the least, sufficiently, The form of faith his conscience holds the best, Whate'er the process of conviction was: For nothing can compensate his mistake On such a point, the man himself being judge: He cannot wed twice, nor twice lose his soul.

Well now, there's one great form of Christian faith I happened to be born in—which to teach Was given me as I grew up, on all hands, As best and readiest means of living by; The same on examination being proved The most pronounced moreover, fixed, precise And absolute form of faith in the whole world— Accordingly, most potent of all forms For working on the world. Observe, my friend! Such as you know me, I am free to say, In these hard latter days which hamper one, Myself—by no immoderate exercise Of intellect and learning, but the tact To let external forces work for me, —Bid the street's stones be bread and they are bread; Bid Peter's creed, or rather, Hildebrand's, Exalt me o'er my fellows in the world And make my life an ease and joy and pride; It does so—which for me 's a great point gained, Who have a soul and body that exact A comfortable care in many ways. There's power in me and will to dominate Which I must exercise, they hurt me else: In many ways I need mankind's respect, Obedience, and the love that's born of fear:

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While at the same time, there's a taste I have, A toy of soul, a titillating thing, Refuses to digest these dainties crude. The naked life is gross till clothed upon: I must take what men offer, with a grace As though I would not, could I help it, take An uniform I wear though over-rich— Something imposed on me, no choice of mine; No fancy-dress worn for pure fancy's sake And despicable therefore! now folk kneel And kiss my hand—of course the Church's hand. Thus I am made, thus life is best for me, And thus that it should be I have procured; And thus it could not be another way, I venture to imagine.

You'll reply, So far my choice, no doubt, is a success; But were I made of better elements, With nobler instincts, purer tastes, like you, I hardly would account the thing success Though it did all for me I say.

But, friend, We speak of what is; not of what might be, And how 'twere better if 'twere otherwise. I am the man you see here plain enough: Grant I'm a beast, why, beasts must lead beasts' lives! Suppose I own at once to tail and claws; The tailless man exceeds me: but being tailed I'll lash out lion fashion, and leave apes To dock their stump and dress their haunches up. My business is not to remake myself, But make the absolute best of what God made. Or—our first simile—though you prove me doomed To a viler berth still, to the steerage-hole, The sheep-pen or the pig-stye, I should strive To make what use of each were possible; And as this cabin gets upholstery, That hutch should rustle with sufficient straw.

But, friend, I don't acknowledge quite so fast I fail of all your manhood's lofty tastes

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Enumerated so complacently,

On the mere ground that you forsooth can find

In this particular life I choose to lead

No fit provision for them. Can you not?

Say you, my fault is I address myself

To grosser estimators than should judge?

And that's no way of holding up the soul,

Which, nobler, needs men's praise perhaps, yet knows

One wise man's verdict outweighs all the fools'—

Would like the two, but, forced to choose, takes that.

I pine among my million imbeciles

(You think) aware some dozen men of sense

Eye me and know me, whether I believe

In the last winking Virgin, as I vow,

And am a fool, or disbelieve in her

And am a knave—approve in neither case,

Withhold their voices though I look their way:

Like Verdi when, at his worst opera's end

(The thing they gave at Florence—what's its name?)

While the mad houseful's plaudits near outbang

His orchestra of salt-box, tongs and bones,

He looks through all the roaring and the wreaths

Where sits Rossini patient in his stall.

Nay, friend, I meet you with an answer here— That even your prime men who appraise their kind Are men still, catch a wheel within a wheel, See more in a truth than the truth's simple self, Confuse themselves. You see lads walk the street Sixty the minute; what's to note in that? You see one lad o'erstride a chimney-stack; Him you must watch—he's sure to fall, yet stands! Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things. The honest thief, the tender murderer, The superstitious atheist, demirep That loves and saves her soul in new French books— We watch while these in equilibrium keep The giddy line midway: one step aside, They're classed and done with. I, then, keep the line Before your sages—just the men to shrink From the gross weights, coarse scales and labels broad You offer their refinement. Fool or knave? Why needs a bishop be a fool or knave

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When there's a thousand diamond weights between?

So, I enlist them. Your picked twelve, you'll find,

Profess themselves indignant, scandalized

At thus being held unable to explain

How a superior man who disbelieves

May not believe as well: that's Schelling's way!

It's through my coming in the tail of time,

Nicking the minute with a happy tact.

Had I been born three hundred years ago

They'd say, "What's strange? Blougram of course believes;"

And, seventy years since, "disbelieves of course."

But now, "He may believe; and yet, and yet

How can he?" All eyes turn with interest.

Whereas, step off the line on either side—

You, for example, clever to a fault,

The rough and ready man who write apace,

Read somewhat seldomer, think perhaps even less—

You disbelieve! Who wonders and who cares?

Lord So-and-so—his coat bedropped with wax,

All Peter's chains about his waist, his back

Brave with the needlework of Noodledom—

Believes! Again, who wonders and who cares?

But I, the man of sense and learning too,

The able to think yet act, the this, the that,

I, to believe at this late time of day!

Enough; you see, I need not fear contempt.

—Except it's yours! Admire me as these may, You don't. But whom at least do you admire? Present your own perfection, your ideal, Your pattern man for a minute—oh, make haste, Is it Napoleon you would have us grow? Concede the means; allow his head and hand, (A large concession, clever as you are) Good! In our common primal element Of unbelief (we can't believe, you know— We're still at that admission, recollect!) Where do you find—apart from, towering o'er The secondary temporary aims Which satisfy the gross taste you despise— Where do you find his star?—his crazy trust God knows through what or in what? it's alive And shines and leads him, and that's all we want.

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Have we aught in our sober night shall point

Such ends as his were, and direct the means

Of working out our purpose straight as his,

Nor bring a moment's trouble on success

With after-care to justify the same?

—Be a Napoleon, and yet disbelieve—

Why, the man's mad, friend, take his light away!

What's the vague good o' the world, for which you dare

With comfort to yourself blow millions up?

We neither of us see it! we do see

The blown-up millions—spatter of their brains

And writhing of their bowels and so forth,

In that bewildering entanglement

Of horrible eventualities

Past calculation to the end of time!

Can I mistake for some clear word of God

(Which were my ample warrant for it all)

His puff of hazy instinct, idle talk,

"The State, that's I," quack-nonsense about crowns,

And (when one beats the man to his last hold)

A vague idea of setting things to rights,

Policing people efficaciously,

More to their profit, most of all to his own;

The whole to end that dismallest of ends

By an Austrian marriage, cant to us the Church,

And resurrection of the old regime?

Would I, who hope to live a dozen years,

Fight Austerlitz for reasons such and such?

No: for, concede me but the merest chance

Doubt may be wrong—there's judgment, life to come

With just that chance, I dare not. Doubt proves right?

This present life is all?—you offer me

Its dozen noisy years, without a chance

That wedding an archduchess, wearing lace,

And getting called by divers new-coined names,

Will drive off ugly thoughts and let me dine,

Sleep, read and chat in quiet as I like!

Therefore I will not.

Take another case; Fit up the cabin yet another way. What say you to the poets? shall we write Hamlet, Othello—make the world our own,

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Without a risk to run of either sort?

I can't!—to put the strongest reason first.

"But try," you urge, "the trying shall suffice;

The aim, if reached or not, makes great the life:

Try to be Shakespeare, leave the rest to fate!"

Spare my self-knowledge—there's no fooling me!

If I prefer remaining my poor self,

I say so not in self-dispraise but praise.

If I'm a Shakespeare, let the well alone;

Why should I try to be what now I am?

If I'm no Shakespeare, as too probable—

His power and consciousness and self-delight

And all we want in common, shall I find—

Trying forever? while on points of taste

Wherewith, to speak it humbly, he and I

Are dowered alike—I'll ask you, I or he,

Which in our two lives realizes most?

Much, he imagined—somewhat, I possess.

He had the imagination; stick to that!

Let him say, "In the face of my soul's works

Your world is worthless and I touch it not

Lest I should wrong them"—I'll withdraw my plea.

But does he say so? look upon his life!

Himself, who only can, gives judgment there.

He leaves his towers and gorgeous palaces

To build the trimmest house in Stratford town;

Saves money, spends it, owns the worth of things,

Giulio Romano's pictures, Dowland's lute;

Enjoys a show, respects the puppets, too,

And none more, had he seen its entry once,

Than "Pandulph, of fair Milan cardinal."

Why then should I who play that personage,

The very Pandulph Shakespeare's fancy made,

Be told that had the poet chanced to start

From where I stand now (some degree like mine

Being just the goal he ran his race to reach)

He would have run the whole race back, forsooth,

And left being Pandulph, to begin write plays?

Ah, the earth's best can be but the earth's best!

Did Shakespeare live, he could but sit at home

And get himself in dreams the Vatican,

Greek busts, Venetian paintings, Roman walls,

And English books, none equal to his own,

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Which I read, bound in gold (he never did).

—Terni's fall, Naples' bay and Gothard's top—

Eh, friend? I could not fancy one of these;

But, as I pour this claret, there they are:

I've gained them—crossed St. Gothard last July

With ten mules to the carriage and a bed

Slung inside; is my hap the worse for that?

We want the same things, Shakespeare and myself,

And what I want, I have: he, gifted more,

Could fancy he too had them when he liked,

But not so thoroughly that, if fate allowed,

He would not have them . . . also in my sense.

We play one game; I send the ball aloft

No less adroitly that of fifty strokes

Scarce five go o'er the wall so wide and high

Which sends them back to me: I wish and get.

He struck balls higher and with better skill,

But at a poor fence level with his head,

And hit—his Stratford house, a coat of arms,

Successful dealings in his grain and wool—

While I receive heaven's incense in my nose

And style myself the cousin of Queen Bess.

Ask him, if this life's all, who wins the game?

Believe—and our whole argument breaks up. Enthusiasm's the best thing, I repeat; Only, we can't command it; fire and life Are all, dead matter's nothing, we agree: And be it a mad dream or God's very breath, The fact's the same—belief's fire, once in us, Makes of all else mere stuff to show itself; We penetrate our life with such a glow As fire lends wood and iron—this turns steel, That burns to ash—all's one, fire proves its power For good or ill, since men call flare success. But paint a fire, it will not therefore burn. Light one in me, I'll find it food enough! Why, to be Luther—that's a life to lead, Incomparably better than my own. He comes, reclaims God's earth for God, he says, Sets up God's rule again by simple means, Re-opens a shut book, and all is done. He flared out in the flaring of mankind;

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Such Luther's luck was: how shall such be mine?

If he succeeded, nothing's left to do:

And if he did not altogether—well,

Strauss is the next advance. All Strauss should be

I might be also. But to what result?

He looks upon no future: Luther did.

What can I gain on the denying side?

Ice makes no conflagration. State the facts,

Read the text right, emancipate the world—

The emancipated world enjoys itself

With scarce a thank-you: Blougram told it first

It could not owe a farthing—not to him

More than Saint Paul! 't would press its pay, you think?

Then add there's still that plaguy hundredth chance

Strauss may be wrong. And so a risk is run—

For what gain? not for Luther's, who secured

A real heaven in his heart throughout his life,

Supposing death a little altered things.

"Ay, but since really you lack faith," you cry, "You run the same risk really on all sides, In cool indifference as bold unbelief. As well be Strauss as swing 'twixt Paul and him. It's not worth having, such imperfect faith, No more available to do faith's work Than unbelief like mine. Whole faith, or none!"

Softly, my friend! I must dispute that point. Once own the use of faith, I'll find you faith. We're back on Christian ground. You call for faith; I show you doubt, to prove that faith exists. The more of doubt, the stronger faith, I say, If faith o'ercomes doubt. How I know it does? By life and man's free will. God gave for that! To mould life as we choose it, shows our choice: That's our one act, the previous work's his own. You criticise the soul? it reared this tree— This broad life and whatever fruit it bears! What matter though I doubt at every pore, Head-doubts, heart-doubts, doubts at my fingers' ends, Doubts in the trivial work of every day, Doubts at the very bases of my soul In the grand moments when she probes herself—

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If finally I have a life to show,

The thing I did, brought out in evidence

Against the thing done to me underground

By hell and all its brood, for aught I know?

I say, whence sprang this? shows it faith or doubt?

All's doubt in me; where's break of faith in this?

It is the idea, the feeling and the love,

God means mankind should strive for and show forth

Whatever be the process to that end—

And not historic knowledge, logic sound,

And metaphysical acumen, sure!

"What think ye of Christ," friend? when all's done and said,

Like you this Christianity or not?

It may be false, but will you wish it true?

Has it your vote to be so if it can?

Trust you an instinct silenced long ago

That will break silence and enjoin you love

What mortified philosophy is hoarse,

And all in vain, with bidding you despise?

If you desire faith—then you've faith enough:

What else seeks God—nay, what else seek ourselves?

You form a notion of me, we'll suppose,

On hearsay; it's a favorable one:

"But still" (you add) "there was no such good man,

Because of contradiction in the facts.

One proves, for instance, he was born in Rome,

This Blougram; yet throughout the tales of him

I see he figures as an Englishman."

Well, the two things are reconcilable.

But would I rather you discovered that,

Subjoining—"Still, what matter though they be?

Blougram concerns me naught, born here or there."

Pure faith indeed—you know not what you ask! Naked belief in God the Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, sears too much The sense of conscious creatures to be borne. It were the seeing him, no flesh shall dare. Some think, Creation's meant to show him forth: I say it's meant to hide him all it can, And that's what all the blessed evil's for. Its use in Time is to environ us, Our breath, our drop of dew, with shield enough

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Against that sight till we can bear its stress. Under a vertical sun, the exposed brain And lidless eye and disemprisoned heart Less certainly would wither up at once Than mind, confronted with the truth of him. But time and earth case-harden us to live; The feeblest sense is trusted most; the child Feels God a moment, ichors o'er the place, Plays on and grows to be a man like us. With me, faith means perpetual unbelief Kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's foot Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe. Or, if that's too ambitious—here's my box— I need the excitation of a pinch Threatening the torpor of the inside-nose Nigh on the imminent sneeze that never comes. "Leave it in peace" advise the simple folk: Make it aware of peace by itching-fits, Say I—let doubt occasion still more faith!

You'll say, once all believed, man, woman, child, In that dear middle-age these noodles praise. How you'd exult if I could put you back Six hundred years, blot out cosmogony, Geology, ethnology, what not, (Greek endings, each the little passing-bell That signifies some faith's about to die) And set you square with Genesis again— When such a traveller told you his last news, He saw the ark a-top of Ararat But did not climb there since 'twas getting dusk And robber-bands infest the mountain's foot! How should you feel, I ask, in such an age, How act? As other people felt and did; With soul more blank than this decanter's knob, Believe—and yet lie, kill, rob, fornicate Full in belief's face, like the beast you'd be!

No, when the fight begins within himself, A man's worth something. God stoops o'er his head, Satan looks up between his feet—both tug— He's left, himself, i' the middle: the soul wakes And grows. Prolong that battle through his life!

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Never leave growing till the life to come!

Here, we've got callous to the Virgin's winks

That used to puzzle people wholesomely:

Men have outgrown the shame of being fools.

What are the laws of nature, not to bend

If the Church bid them?—brother Newman asks.

Up with the Immaculate Conception, then—

On to the rack with faith!—is my advice.

Will not that hurry us upon our knees,

Knocking our breasts, "It can't be—yet it shall!

Who am I, the worm, to argue with my Pope?

Low things confound the high things!" and so forth.

That's better than acquitting God with grace

As some folk do. He's tried—no case is proved,

Philosophy is lenient—he may go!

You'll say, the old system's not so obsolete But men believe still: ay, but who and where? King Bomba's lazzaroni foster yet The sacred flame, so Antonelli writes; But even of these, what ragamuffin-saint Believes God watches him continually, As he believes in fire that it will burn, Or rain that it will drench him? Break fire's law, Sin against rain, although the penalty Be just a singe or soaking? "No," he smiles; "Those laws are laws that can enforce themselves."

The sum of all is—yes, my doubt is great, My faith's still greater, then my faith's enough. I have read much, thought much, experienced much, Yet would die rather than avow my fear The Naples' liquefaction may be false, When set to happen by the palace-clock According to the clouds or dinner-time. I hear you recommend, I might at least Eliminate, decrassify my faith Since I adopt it; keeping what I must And leaving what I can—such points as this. I won't—that is, I can't throw one away. Supposing there's no truth in what I hold About the need of trial to man's faith, Still, when you bid me purify the same,

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To such a process I discern no end. Clearing off one excrescence to see two, There's ever a next in size, now grown as big, That meets the knife: I cut and cut again! First cut the Liquefaction, what comes last But Fichte's clever cut at God himself? Experimentalize on sacred things! I trust nor hand nor eye nor heart nor brain To stop betimes: they all get drunk alike. The first step, I am master not to take.

You'd find the cutting-process to your taste As much as leaving growths of lies unpruned, Nor see more danger in it—you retort. Your taste's worth mine; but my taste proves more wise When we consider that the steadfast hold On the extreme end of the chain of faith Gives all the advantage, makes the difference With the rough purblind mass we seek to rule: We are their lords, or they are free of us, Justas we tighten or relax our hold. So, other matters equal, we'll revert To the first problem—which, if solved my way And thrown into the balance, turns the scale— How we may lead a comfortable life, How suit our luggage to the cabin's size.

Of course you are remarking all this time How narrowly and grossly I view life, Respect the creature-comforts, care to rule The masses, and regard complacently "The cabin," in our old phrase. Well, I do. I act for, talk for, live for this world now, As this world prizes action, life and talk: No prejudice to what next world may prove, Whose new laws and requirements, my best pledge To observe then, is that I observe these now, Shall do hereafter what I do meanwhile. Let us concede (gratuitously though) Next life relieves the soul of body, yields Pure spiritual enjoyment: well, my friend, Why lose this life i' the meantime, since its use May be to make the next life more intense?

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Do you know, I have often had a dream (Work it up in your next month's article) Of man's poor spirit in its progress, still Losing true life forever and a day Through ever trying to be and ever being— In the evolution of successive spheres— Before its actual sphere and place of life, Halfway into the next, which having reached, It shoots with corresponding foolery Halfway into the next still, on and off! As when a traveller, bound from North to South, Scouts far in Russia: what's its use in France? In France spurns flannel: where's its need in Spain? In Spain drops cloth, too cumbrous for Algiers! Linen goes next, and last the skin itself, A superfluity at Timbuctoo. When, through his journey, was the fool at ease? I'm at ease now, friend; worldly in this world, I take and like its way of life; I think My brothers, who administer the means, Live better for my comfort—that's good too; And God, if he pronounce upon such life, Approves my service, which is better still. If he keep silence—why, for you or me Or that brute beast pulled-up in to-day's "Times," What odds is 't, save to ourselves, what life we lead?

You meet me at this issue: you declare— All special-pleading done with—truth is truth, And justifies itself by undreamed ways. You don't fear but it's better, if we doubt, To say so, act up to our truth perceived However feebly. Do then—act away! 'T is there I'm on the watch for you. How one acts Is, both of us agree, our chief concern: And how you 'll act is what I fain would see If, like the candid person you appear, You dare to make the most of your life's scheme As I of mine, live up to its full law Since there's no higher law that counterchecks. Put natural religion to the test You've just demolished the revealed with—quick, Down to the root of all that checks your will,

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All prohibition to lie, kill and thieve,

Or even to be an atheistic priest!

Suppose a pricking to incontinence—

Philosophers deduce you chastity

Or shame, from just the fact that at the first

Whoso embraced a woman in the field,

Threw club down and forewent his brains beside,

So, stood a ready victim in the reach

Of any brother savage, club in hand;

Hence saw the use of going out of sight

In wood or cave to prosecute his loves:

I read this in a French book t' other day.

Does law so analyzed coerce you much?

Oh, men spin clouds of fuzz where matters end,

But you who reach where the first thread begins,

You'll soon cut that!—which means you can, but won't,

Through certain instincts, blind, unreasoned-out,

You dare not set aside, you can't tell why,

But there they are, and so you let them rule.

Then, friend, you seem as much a slave as I,

A liar, conscious coward and hypocrite,

Without the good the slave expects to get,

In case he has a master after all!

You own your instincts? why, what else do I,

Who want, am made for, and must have a God

Ere I can be aught, do aught?—no mere name

Want, but the true thing with what proves its truth,

To wit, a relation from that thing to me,

Touching from head to foot—which touch I feel,

And with it take the rest, this life of ours!

I live my life here; yours you dare not live,

—Not as I state it, who (you please subjoin) Disfigure such a life and call it names. While, to your mind, remains another way For simple men: knowledge and power have rights, But ignorance and weakness have rights too. There needs no crucial effort to find truth If here or there or anywhere about: We ought to turn each side, try hard and see, And if we can't, be glad we've earned at least The right, by one laborious proof the more, To graze in peace earth's pleasant pasturage.

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Men are not angels, neither are they brutes: Something we may see, all we cannot see. What need of lying? I say, I see all, And swear to each detail the most minute In what I think a Pan's face—you, mere cloud: I swear I hear him speak and see him wink, For fear, if once I drop the emphasis, Mankind may doubt there's any cloud at all. You take the simple life—ready to see, Willing to see (for no cloud 's worth a face)— And leaving quiet what no strength can move, And which, who bids you move? who has the right? I bid you; but you are God's sheep, not mine; "Pastor est tui Dominus." You find In this the pleasant pasture of our life Much you may eat without the least offence, Much you don't eat because your maw objects, Much you would eat but that your fellow-flock Open great eyes at you and even butt, And thereupon you like your mates so well You cannot please yourself, offending them; Though when they seem exorbitantly sheep, You weigh your pleasure with their butts and bleats And strike the balance. Sometimes certain fears Restrain you, real checks since you find them so; Sometimes you please yourself and nothing checks: And thus you graze through life with not one lie, And like it best.

But do you, in truth's name? If so, you beat—which means you are not I— Who needs must make earth mine and feed my fill Not simply unbutted at, unbickered with, But motioned to the velvet of the sward By those obsequious wethers' very selves. Look at me. sir; my age is double yours: At yours, I knew beforehand, so enjoyed, What now I should be—as, permit the word, I pretty well imagine your whole range And stretch of tether twenty years to come. We both have minds and bodies much alike: In truth's name, don't you want my bishopric, My daily bread, my influence and my state?

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You're young. I'm old; you must be old one day;

Will you find then, as I do hour by hour,

Women their lovers kneel to, who cut curls

From your fat lap-dog's ear to grace a brooch—

Dukes, who petition just to kiss your ring—

With much beside you know or may conceive?

Suppose we die to-night: well, here am I,

Such were my gains, life bore this fruit to me,

While writing all the same my articles

On music, poetry, the fictile vase

Found at Albano, chess, Anacreon's Greek.

But you—the highest honor in your life,

The thing you'll crown yourself with, all your days,

Is—dining here and drinking this last glass

I pour you out in sign of amity

Before we part forever. Of your power

And social influence, worldly worth in short,

Judge what's my estimation by the fact,

I do not condescend to enjoin, beseech,

Hint secrecy on one of all these words!

You're shrewd and know that should you publish one

The world would brand the lie—my enemies first,

Who'd sneer—"the bishop's an arch-hypocrite

And knave perhaps, but not so frank a fool."

Whereas I should not dare for both my ears

Breathe one such syllable, smile one such smile,

Before the chaplain who reflects myself—

My shade's so much more potent than your flesh.

What's your reward, self-abnegating friend?

Stood you confessed of those exceptional

And privileged great natures that dwarf mine—

A zealot with a mad ideal in reach,

A poet just about to print his ode,

A statesman with a scheme to stop this war,

An artist whose religion is his art—

I should have nothing to object: such men

Carry the fire, all things grow warm to them,

Their drugget's worth my purple, they beat me.

But you—you 're just as little those as I—

You, Gigadibs, who, thirty years of age,

Write statedly for Blackwood's Magazine,

Believe you see two points in Hamlet's soul

Unseized by the Germans yet—which view you'll print—

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Meantime the best you have to show being still

That lively lightsome article we took

Almost for the true Dickens—what's its name?

"The Slum and Cellar, or Whitechapel life

Limned after dark!" it made me laugh, I know,

And pleased a month, and brought you in ten pounds.

—Success I recognize and compliment,

And therefore give you, if you choose, three words

(The card and pencil-scratch is quite enough)

Which whether here, in Dublin or New York,

Will get you, prompt as at my eyebrow's wink,

Such terms as never you aspired to get

In all our own reviews and some not ours.

Go write your lively sketches! be the first

"Blougram, or The Eccentric Confidence"—

Or better simply say, "The Outward-bound."

Why, men as soon would throw it in my teeth

As copy and quote the infamy chalked broad

About me on the church-door opposite.

You will not wait for that experience though,

I fancy, howsoever you decide,

To discontinue—not detesting, not

Defaming, but at least—despising me!

Over his wine so smiled and talked his hour

Sylvester Blougram, styled in partibus

Episcopus, nec non—(the deuce knows what

It's changed to by our novel hierarchy)

With Gigadibs the literary man,

Who played with spoons, explored his plate's design,

And ranged the olive-stones about its edge,

While the great bishop rolled him out a mind

Long crumpled, till creased consciousness lay smooth.

For Blougram, he believed, say, half he spoke. The other portion, as he shaped it thus For argumentatory purposes, He felt his foe was foolish to dispute. Some arbitrary accidental thoughts That crossed his mind, amusing because new, He chose to represent as fixtures there, Invariable convictions (such they seemed

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Beside his interlocutor's loose cards

Flung daily down, and not the same way twice)

While certain hell-deep instincts, man's weak tongue

Is never bold to utter in their truth

Because styled hell-deep ('t is an old mistake

To place hell at the bottom of the earth)

He ignored these—not having in readiness

Their nomenclature and philosophy:

He said true things, but called them by wrong names.

"On the whole," he thought, "I justify myself

On every point where cavillers like this

Oppugn my life: he tries one kind of fence,

I close, he's worsted, that's enough for him.

He's on the ground: if ground should break away

I take my stand on, there's a firmer yet

Beneath it, both of us may sink and reach.

His ground was over mine and broke the first:

So, let him sit with me this many a year!"

He did not sit five minutes. Just a week Sufficed his sudden healthy vehemence. Something had struck him in the "Outward-bound" Another way than Blougram's purpose was: And having bought, not cabin-furniture But settler's-implements (enough for three) And started for Australia—there, I hope, By this time he has tested his first plough, And studied his last chapter of St. John.

### 2.6.6 "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came"

(See Edgar's Song in "Lear")

I.

My first thought was, he lied in every word, That hoary cripple, with malicious eye Askance to watch the working of his lie On mine, and mouth scarce able to afford Suppression of the glee that pursed and scored Its edge, at one more victim gained thereby.

II.

What else should he be set for, with his staff? What, save to waylay with his lies, ensnare

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All travellers who might find him posted there, And ask the road? I guessed what skull-like laugh Would break, what crutch 'gin write my epitaph For pastime in the dusty thoroughfare,

III.

If at his counsel I should turn aside Into that ominous tract which, all agree, Hides the Dark Tower. Yet acquiescingly I did turn as he pointed: neither pride Nor hope rekindling at the end descried, So much as gladness that some end might be.

IV.

For, what with my whole world-wide wandering,

What with my search drawn out thro' years, my hope

Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope

With that obstreperous joy success would bring,

I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring

My heart made, finding failure in its scope.

Image 2.14 | Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came Artist | Thomas Moran Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



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V.

As when a sick man very near to death Seems dead indeed, and feels begin and end The tears and takes the farewell of each friend, And hears one bid the other go, draw breath Freelier outside ("since all is o'er," he saith, "And the blow fallen no grieving can amend")

VI.

While some discuss if near the other graves Be room enough for this, and when a day Suits best for carrying the corpse away, With care about the banners, scarves and staves: And still the man hears all, and only craves He may not shame such tender love and stay.

VII.

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest,

Heard failure prophesied so oft, been writ

So many times among "The Band"—to wit,

The knights who to the Dark Tower's search addressed

Their steps—that just to fail as they, seemed best,

And all the doubt was now—should I be fit?

VIII.

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him, That hateful cripple, out of his highway Into the path he pointed. All the day Had been a dreary one at best, and dim Was settling to its close, yet shot one grim Red leer to see the plain catch its estray.

IX.

For mark! no sooner was I fairly found Pledged to the plain, after a pace or two, Than, pausing to throw backward a last view O'er the safe road, 'twas gone; grey plain all round: Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound. I might go on; nought else remained to do.

X.

So, on I went. I think I never saw

Such starved ignoble nature; nothing throve:

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For flowers—as well expect a cedar grove! But cockle, spurge, according to their law Might propagate their kind, with none to awe, You'd think; a burr had been a treasure trove.

XI.

No! penury, inertness and grimace,

In some strange sort, were the land's portion. "See

Or shut your eyes," said Nature peevishly,

"It nothing skills: I cannot help my case:

'Tis the Last Judgment's fire must cure this place,

Calcine its clods and set my prisoners free."

XII.

If there pushed any ragged thistle-stalk Above its mates, the head was chopped; the bents Were jealous else. What made those holes and rents In the dock's harsh swarth leaves, bruised as to baulk All hope of greenness? 'tis a brute must walk Pashing their life out, with a brute's intents.

XIII.

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair In leprosy; thin dry blades pricked the mud Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood. One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare, Stood stupefied, however he came there: Thrust out past service from the devil's stud!

XIV.

Alive? he might be dead for aught I know, With that red gaunt and colloped neck a-strain, And shut eyes underneath the rusty mane; Seldom went such grotesqueness with such woe; I never saw a brute I hated so; He must be wicked to deserve such pain.

XV.

I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart.

As a man calls for wine before he fights,

I asked one draught of earlier, happier sights,

Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.

Think first, fight afterwards—the soldier's art:

One taste of the old time sets all to rights.

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XVI.

Not it! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening face Beneath its garniture of curly gold, Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold An arm in mine to fix me to the place That way he used. Alas, one night's disgrace! Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

XVII.

Giles then, the soul of honour—there he stands Frank as ten years ago when knighted first. What honest men should dare (he said) he durst. Good—but the scene shifts—faugh! what hangman hands Pin to his breast a parchment? His own bands Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon and curst!

XVIII.

Better this present than a past like that;

Back therefore to my darkening path again!

No sound, no sight as far as eye could strain.

Will the night send a howlet or a bat?

I asked: when something on the dismal flat

Came to arrest my thoughts and change their train.

XIX.

A sudden little river crossed my path

As unexpected as a serpent comes.

No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms;

This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath

For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see the wrath

Of its black eddy bespate with flakes and spumes.

XX.

So petty yet so spiteful! All along

Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;

Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit

Of mute despair, a suicidal throng:

The river which had done them all the wrong,

Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

XXI.

Which, while I forded,—good saints, how I feared To set my foot upon a dead man's cheek,

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Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek For hollows, tangled in his hair or beard! —It may have been a water-rat I speared, But, ugh! it sounded like a baby's shriek.

XXII.

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.

Now for a better country. Vain presage!

Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage,

Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank

Soil to a plash? Toads in a poisoned tank,

Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage—

XXIII.

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.

What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?

No foot-print leading to that horrid mews,

None out of it. Mad brewage set to work

Their brains, no doubt, like galley-slaves the Turk

Pits for his pastime, Christians against Jews.

XXIV.

And more than that—a furlong on—why, there! What bad use was that engine for, that wheel, Or brake, not wheel—that harrow fit to reel Men's bodies out like silk? with all the air Of Tophet's tool, on earth left unaware, Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth of steel.

XXV.

Then came a bit of stubbed ground, once a wood, Next a marsh, it would seem, and now mere earth Desperate and done with; (so a fool finds mirth, Makes a thing and then mars it, till his mood Changes and off he goes!) within a rood— Bog, clay and rubble, sand and stark black dearth.

XXVI.

Now blotches rankling, coloured gay and grim, Now patches where some leanness of the soil's Broke into moss or substances like boils; Then came some palsied oak, a cleft in him Like a distorted mouth that splits its rim Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils.

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XXVII.

And just as far as ever from the end!

Nought in the distance but the evening, nought

To point my footstep further! At the thought,

A great black bird, Apollyon's bosom-friend,

Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing dragon-penned

That brushed my cap—perchance the guide I sought.

XXVIII.

For, looking up, aware I somehow grew, 'Spite of the dusk, the plain had given place All round to mountains—with such name to grace Mere ugly heights and heaps now stolen in view. How thus they had surprised me,—solve it, you! How to get from them was no clearer case.

XXIX.

Yet half I seemed to recognise some trick Of mischief happened to me, God knows when— In a bad dream perhaps. Here ended, then, Progress this way. When, in the very nick Of giving up, one time more, came a click As when a trap shuts—you're inside the den!

XXX.

Burningly it came on me all at once,

This was the place! those two hills on the right,

Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight;

While to the left, a tall scalped mountain . . . Dunce,

Dotard, a-dozing at the very nonce,

After a life spent training for the sight!

XXXI.

What in the midst lay but the Tower itself? The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart Built of brown stone, without a counterpart In the whole world. The tempest's mocking elf Points to the shipman thus the unseen shelf He strikes on, only when the timbers start.

XXXII.

Not see? because of night perhaps?—why, day Came back again for that! before it left,

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The dying sunset kindled through a cleft: The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay,— "Now stab and end the creature—to the heft!"

XXXIII.

Not hear? when noise was everywhere! it tolled

Increasing like a bell. Names in my ears

Of all the lost adventurers my peers,—

How such a one was strong, and such was bold,

And such was fortunate, yet each of old

Lost, lost! one moment knelled the woe of years.

XXXIV.

There they stood, ranged along the hillsides, met

To view the last of me, a living frame

For one more picture! in a sheet of flame

I saw them and I knew them all. And yet

Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,

And blew "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came."

### 2.6.7 "Fra Lippo Lippi"

I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave! You need not clap your torches to my face. Zooks, what's to blame? you think you see a monk! What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the rounds, And here you catch me at an alley's end Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar? The Carmine's my cloister: hunt it up, Do—harry out, if you must show your zeal, Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole, And nip each softling of a wee white mouse, Weke, weke, that's crept to keep him company! Aha, you know your betters! Then, you'll take Your hand away that's fiddling on my throat, And please to know me likewise. Who am I? Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend Three streets off—he's a certain . . . how d'ye call? Master—a . . . Cosimo of the Medici, I' the house that caps the corner. Boh! you were best! Remember and tell me, the day you're hanged, How you affected such a gullet's gripe! But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves

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Pick up a manner nor discredit you:

Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the streets

And count fair prize what comes into this net?

He's Judas to a tittle, that man is!

Just such a face! Why, sir, you make amends.

Lord, I'm not angry! Bid your hangdogs go

Drink out this quarter-florin to the health

Of the munificent House that harbors me

(And many more beside, lads! more beside!)

And all's come square again. I'd like his face—

His, elbowing on his comrade in the door

With the pike and lantern—for the slave that holds

John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair

With one hand ("Look you, now," as who should say)

And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!

It's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,

A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!

Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so.

What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down,

You know them and they take you? like enough!

I saw the proper twinkle in your eye—

'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.

Let's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.

Here's spring come, and the nights one makes up bands

To roam the town and sing out carnival,

And I've been three weeks shut within my mew,

A-painting for the great man, saints and saints

And saints again. I could not paint all night—

Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh air.

There came a hurry of feet and little feet,

A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whifts of song—

Flower o' the broom,

Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!

Flower o' the quince,

I let Lisa go, and what good in life since?

Flower o' the thyme—and so on. Round they went.

Scarce had they turned the corner when a titter

Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight—three slim shapes,

And a face that looked up...zooks, sir, flesh and blood,

That's all I'm made of! Into shreds it went,

Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,

All the bed-furniture—a dozen knots,

There was a ladder! Down I let myself,

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Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and so dropped, And after them. I came up with the fun Hard by Saint Laurence, hail fellow, well met— Flower o' the rose,

If I've been merry, what matter who knows!

And so as I was stealing back again

To get to bed and have a bit of sleep

Ere I rise up tomorrow and go work

On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast

With his great round stone to subdue the flesh,

You snape me of the sudden. Ah, I see!

Though your eye twinkles still, you shake your head—

Mine's shaves—a monk, you say—the sting's in that!

If Master Cosimo announced himself,

Mum's the word naturally; but a monk!

Come, what am I a beast for? tell us, now!

I was a baby when my mother died

And father died and left me in the street.

I starved there, God knows how, a year or two

On fig skins, melon parings, rinds and shucks,

Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty day,

My stomach being empty as your hat,

The wind doubled me up and down I went.

Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one hand

(Its fellow was a stinger as I knew),

And so along the wall, over the bridge,

By the straight cut to the convent. Six words there,

While I stood munching my first bread that month:

"So, boy, you're minded," quoth the good fat father

Wiping his own mouth, 'twas refection time—

"To quit this very miserable world?

Will you renounce" . . . "the mouthful of bread?" thought I;

By no means! Brief, they made a monk of me;

I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,

Palace, farm, villa, shop, and banking house,

Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici

Have given their hearts to—all at eight years old.

Well, sir, I found in time, you may be sure,

'Twas not for nothing—the good bellyful,

The warm serge and the rope that goes all round,

And day-long blessed idleness beside!

"Let's see what the urchin's fit for"—that came next.

Not overmuch their way, I must confess.

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Such a to-do! They tried me with their books: Lord, they'd have taught me Latin in pure waste! Flower o' the clove,

All the Latin I construe is "amo,"I love!

But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets

Eight years together, as my fortune was,

Watching folk's faces to know who will fling

The bit of half-stripped grape bunch he desires,

And who will curse or kick him for his pains—

Which gentleman processional and fine,

Holding a candle to the Sacrament,

Will wink and let him lift a plate and catch

The droppings of the wax to sell again,

Or holla for the Eight and have him whipped—

How say I?—nay, which dog bites, which lets drop

His bone from the heap of offal in the street—

Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,

He learns the look of things, and none the less

For admonition from the hunger-pinch.

I had a store of such remarks, be sure,

Which, after I found leisure, turned to use.

I drew men's faces on my copy-books,

Scrawled them within the antiphonary's marge,

Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,

Found eyes and nose and chin for A's and B's,

And made a string of pictures of the world

Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,

On the wall, the bench, the door. The monks looked black.

"Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him out d'ye say?

In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark.

What if at least we get our man of parts,

We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese

And Preaching Friars, to do our church up fine

And put the front on it that ought to be!"

And hereupon he bade me daub away.

Thank you! my head being crammed, the walls a blank,

Never was such prompt disemburdening.

First, every sort of monk, the black and white,

I drew them, fat and lean: then, folk at church,

From good old gossips waiting to confess

Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends,—

To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,

Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting there

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With the little children round him in a row

Of admiration, half for his beard and half

For that white anger of his victim's son

Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm,

Signing himself with the other because of Christ

(Whose sad face on the cross sees only this

After the passion of a thousand years)

Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her head,

(Which the intense eyes looked through) came at eve

On tiptoe, said a word, dropped in a loaf,

Her pair of earrings and a bunch of flowers

(The brute took growling), prayed, and so was gone.

I painted all, then cried "'Tis ask and have;

Choose, for more's ready!"—laid the ladder flat,

And showed my covered bit of cloister-wall.

The monks closed in a circle and praised loud

Till checked, taught what to see and not to see,

Being simple bodies,—"That's the very man!

Look at the boy who stoops to pat the dog!

That woman's like the Prior's niece who comes

To care about his asthma: it's the life!"

But there my triumph's straw-fire flared and funked;

Their betters took their turn to see and say:

The Prior and the learned pulled a face

And stopped all that In no time. "How? what's here?

Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!

Faces, arms, legs and bodies like the true

As much as pea and pea! it's devil's-game!

Your business is not to catch men with show,

With homage to the perishable clay,

But lift them over it, ignore it all,

Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.

Your business is to paint the souls of men—

Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke...no, it's not...

It's vapor done up like a new-born babe—

(In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth)

It's...well, what matters talking, it's the soul!

Give us no more of body than shows soul!

Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God,

That sets us praising,—why not stop with him?

Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head

With wonder at lines, colors, and what not?

Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!

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Rub all out, try at it a second time.

Oh, that white smallish female with the breasts,

She's just my niece...Herodias, I would say,—

Who went and danced and got men's heads cut off!

Have it all out!" Now, is this sense, I ask?

A fine way to paint soul, by painting body

So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go further

And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does for white

When what you put for yellow's simply black

And any sort of meaning looks intense

When all beside itself means and looks naught.

Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,

Left foot and right foot, go a double step,

Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,

Both in their order? Take the prettiest face,

The Prior's niece.patron-saint—is it so pretty

You can't discover if it means hope, fear,

Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with these?

Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,

Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,

And then add soul and heighten them three-fold?

Or say there's beauty with no soul at all—

(I never saw it—put the case the same—)

If you get simple beauty and naught else,

You get about the best thing God invents:

That's somewhat: and you'll find the soul you have missed,

Within yourself, when you return him thanks.

"Rub all out!" Well, well, there's my life, in short,

And so the thing has gone on ever since.

I'm grown a man no doubt, I've broken bounds:

You should not take a fellow eight years old

And make him swear to never kiss the girls.

I'm my own master, paint now as I please—

Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-house!

Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in front—

Those great rings serve more purposes than just

To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse!

And yet the old schooling sticks, the old grave eyes

Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,

The heads shake still—"It's art's decline, my son!

You're not of the true painters, great and old;

Brother Angelico's the man, you'll fine;

Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer:

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Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the third!" Flower o' the pine,

You keep your mistr...manners, and I'll stick to mine! I'm not the third, then: bless us, they must know! Don't you think they're the likeliest to know, They with their Latin? So, I swallow my rage, Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint To please them—sometimes do and sometimes don't; For, doing most, there's pretty sure to come A turn, some warm eve finds me at my saints— A laugh, a cry, the business of the world— (Flower o' the peach,

Death for us all, and his own life for each!) And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs over, The world and life's too big to pass for a dream, And I do these wild things in sheer despite, And play the fooleries you catch me at, In pure rage! The old mill-horse, out at grass After hard years, throws up his stiff heels so, Although the miller does not preach to him The only good of grass is to make chaff. What would men have? Do they like grass or no— May they or mayn't they? all I want's the thing Settled forever one way. As it is, You tell too many lies and hurt yourself: You don't like what you only like too much, You do like what, if given you at your word, You find abundantly detestable. For me, I think I speak as I was taught; I always see the garden and God there A-making man's wife: and, my less learned, The value and significance of flesh, I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards.

You understand me: I'm a beast, I know. But see, now—why, I see as certainly As that the morning-star's about to shine, What will hap some day. We've a youngster here Comes to our convent, studies what I do, Slouches and stares and lets no atom drop: His name is Guidi—he'll not mind the monks— They call him Hulking Tom, he lets them talk— He picks my practice up—he'll paint apace,

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I hope so—though I never live so long,

I know what's sure to follow. You be judge!

You speak no Latin more than I, belike;

However, you're my man, you've seen the world

—The beauty and the wonder and the power,

The shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades,

Changes, surprises—and God made it all!

—For what? Do you feel thankful, ay or no,

For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,

The mountain round it and the sky above,

Much more the figures of man, woman, child,

These are the frame to? What's it all about?

To be passed over, despised? or dwelt upon,

Wondered at? oh, this last of course!—you say.

But why not do as well as say,—paint it these

Just as they are, careless what comes of it?

God's works—paint any one, and count it crime

To let a truth slip. Don't object, "His works

Are here already; nature is complete:

Suppose you reproduce her—(which you can't)

There's no advantage! You must beat her, then."

For, don't you mark? we're made so that we love

First when we see them painted, things we have passed

Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;

And so they are better, painted—better to us,

Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;

God uses us to help each other so,

Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now,

Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of chalk,

And trust me but you should, though! How much more,

If I drew higher things with the same truth!

That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place,

Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh,

It makes me mad to see what men shall do

And we in our graves! This world's no blot for us,

Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good:

To find its meaning is my meat and drink.

"Ay, but you don't so instigate to prayer!"

Strikes in the Prior: "when your meaning's plain

It does not say to folk—remember matins,

Or, mind you fast next Friday!" Why, for this

What need of art at all? A skull and bones,

Two bits of stick nailed crosswise, or, what's best,

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A bell to chime the hour with, does as well.

I painted a Saint Laurence six months since

At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine style:

"How looks my painting, now the scaffold's down?"

I ask a brother: "Hugely," he returns—

"Already not one phiz of your three slaves

Who turn the Deacon off his toasted side,

But's scratched and prodded to our heart's content,

The pious people have so eased their own

With coming to say prayers there in a rage:

We get on fast to see the bricks beneath.

Expect another job this time next year,

For pity and religion grow i' the crowd—

Your painting serves its purpose!" Hang the fools!

—That is—you'll not mistake an idle word Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, God wot, Tasting the air this spicy night which turns The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine! Oh, the church knows! don't misreport me, now! It's natural a poor monk out of bounds Should have his apt word to excuse himself: And hearken how I plot to make amends. I have bethought me: I shall paint a piece ...There's for you! Give me six months, then go, see Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless the nuns! They want a cast o' my office. I shall paint God in the midst, Madonna and her babe, Ringed by a bowery flowery angel-brood, Lilies and vestments and white faces, sweet As puff on puff of grated orris-root When ladies crowd to Church at midsummer. And when i' the front, of course a saint or two— Saint John, because he saves the Florentines, Saint Ambrose, who puts down in black and white The convent's friends and gives them a long day, And Job, I must have him there past mistake, The man of Uz (and Us without the z, Painters who need his patience). Well, all these Secured at their devotion, up shall come Out of a corner when you least expect, As one by a dark stair into a great light, Music and talking, who but Lippo! I!—

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Mazed, motionless and moonstruck—I'm the man!

Back I shrink—what is this I see and hear?

I, caught up with my monk's-things by mistake,

My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,

I, in this presence, this pure company!

Where's a hole, where's a corner for escape?

Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing

Forward, puts out a soft palm—"Not so fast!"

—Addresses the celestial presence, "nay—

He made you and devised you, after all,

Though he's none of you! Could Saint John there draw—

His camel-hair make up a painting-brush?

We come to brother Lippo for all that,

Iste perfecit opus!" So, all smile—

I shuffle sideways with my blushing face

Under the cover of a hundred wings

Thrown like a spread of kirtles when you're gay

And play hot cockles, all the doors being shut,

Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops

The hothead husband! Thus I scuttle off

To home safe bench behind, not letting go

The palm of her, the little lily thing

That spoke the good word for me in the nick,

Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint Lucy, I would say.

And so all's saved for me, and for the church

A pretty picture gained. Go, six months hence!

Your hand, sir, and good-bye: no lights, no lights!

The street's hushed, and I know my own way back,

Don't fear me! There's the gray beginning. Zooks!

### 2.6.8 "Andrea del Sarto"

(called "The Faultless Painter")

But do not let us quarrel any more, No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once: Sit down and all shall happen as you wish. You turn your face, but does it bring your heart? I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear, Treat his own subject after his own way, Fix his own time, accept too his own price, And shut the money into this small hand When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly? Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love!

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I often am much wearier than you think,

This evening more than usual, and it seems

As if—forgive now—should you let me sit

Here by the window with your hand in mine

And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,

Both of one mind, as married people use,

Quietly, quietly the evening through,

I might get up to-morrow to my work

Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.

To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this!

Your soft hand is a woman of itself,

And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.

Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve

For each of the five pictures we require:

It saves a model. So! keep looking so—

My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!

—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,

Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—

My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,

Which everybody looks on and calls his,

And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,

While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.

You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,

There's what we painters call our harmony!

A common greyness silvers everything,—

All in a twilight, you and I alike

—You, at the point of your first pride in me

(That's gone you know),—but I, at every point;

My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down

To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.

There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;

That length of convent-wall across the way

Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;

The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,

And autumn grows, autumn in everything.

Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape

As if I saw alike my work and self

And all that I was born to be and do,

A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.

How strange now, looks the life he makes us lead;

So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!

I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!

This chamber for example—turn your head—

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All that's behind us! You don't understand

Nor care to understand about my art,

But you can hear at least when people speak:

And that cartoon, the second from the door

—It is the thing, Love! so such things should be—

Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.

I can do with my pencil what I know,

What I see, what at bottom of my heart

I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—

Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,

I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,

Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,

And just as much they used to say in France.

At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!

No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:

I do what many dream of, all their lives,

—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,

And fail in doing. I could count twenty such

On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,

Who strive—you don't know how the others strive

To paint a little thing like that you smeared

Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—

Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,

(I know his name, no matter)—so much less!

Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.

There burns a truer light of God in them,

In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,

Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt

This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.

Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,

Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,

Enter and take their place there sure enough,

Though they come back and cannot tell the world.

My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.

The sudden blood of these men! at a word—

Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.

I, painting from myself and to myself,

Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame

Or their praise either. Somebody remarks

Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,

His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,

Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?

Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?

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Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,

Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-grey,

Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!

I know both what I want and what might gain,

And yet how profitless to know, to sigh

"Had I been two, another and myself,

"Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.

Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth

The Urbinate who died five years ago.

('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)

Well, I can fancy how he did it all,

Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,

Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,

Above and through his art—for it gives way;

That arm is wrongly put—and there again—

A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,

Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,

He means right—that, a child may understand.

Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:

But all the play, the insight and the stretch—

(Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?

Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,

We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!

Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—

More than I merit, yes, by many times.

But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,

And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,

And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird

The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—

Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!

Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged

"God and the glory! never care for gain.

"The present by the future, what is that?

"Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!

"Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"

I might have done it for you. So it seems:

Perhaps not. All is as God over-rules.

Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;

The rest avail not. Why do I need you?

What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?

In this world, who can do a thing, will not;

And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:

Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—

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And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,

God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.

'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,

That I am something underrated here,

Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.

I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,

For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.

The best is when they pass and look aside;

But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.

Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,

And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!

I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,

Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,

In that humane great monarch's golden look,—

One finger in his beard or twisted curl

Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,

One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,

The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,

I painting proudly with his breath on me,

All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,

Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls

Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—

And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,

This in the background, waiting on my work,

To crown the issue with a last reward!

A good time, was it not, my kingly days?

And had you not grown restless . . . but I know—

'Tis done and past: 'twas right, my instinct said:

Too live the life grew, golden and not grey,

And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt

Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.

How could it end in any other way?

You called me, and I came home to your heart.

The triumph was—to reach and stay there; since

I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?

Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,

You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!

"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;

"The Roman's is the better when you pray,

"But still the other's Virgin was his wife—"

Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge

Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows

My better fortune, I resolve to think.

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For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,

Said one day Agnolo, his very self,

To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .

(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts

Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,

Too lifted up in heart because of it)

"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub

"Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,

"Who, were he set to plan and execute

"As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,

"Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"

To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.

I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,

Give the chalk here—quick, thus, the line should go!

Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!

Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,

(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?

Do you forget already words like those?)

If really there was such a chance, so lost,—

Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased.

Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!

This hour has been an hour! Another smile?

If you would sit thus by me every night

I should work better, do you comprehend?

I mean that I should earn more, give you more.

See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;

Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,

The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.

Come from the window, love,—come in, at last,

Inside the melancholy little house

We built to be so gay with. God is just.

King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights

When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,

The walls become illumined, brick from brick

Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,

That gold of his I did cement them with!

Let us but love each other. Must you go?

That Cousin here again? he waits outside?

Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans?

More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?

Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?

While hand and eye and something of a heart

Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?

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I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit

The grey remainder of the evening out,

Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly

How I could paint, were I but back in France,

One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,

Not yours this time! I want you at my side

To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—

Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.

Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.

I take the subjects for his corridor,

Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,

And throw him in another thing or two

If he demurs; the whole should prove enough

To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,

What's better and what's all I care about,

Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!

Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,

The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.

I regret little, I would change still less.

Since there my past life lies, why alter it?

The very wrong to Francis!—it is true

I took his coin, was tempted and complied,

And built this house and sinned, and all is said.

My father and my mother died of want.

Well, had I riches of my own? you see

How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.

They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:

And I have laboured somewhat in my time

And not been paid profusely. Some good son

Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!

No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,

You loved me quite enough. it seems to-night.

This must suffice me here. What would one have?

In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—

Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,

Meted on each side by the angel's reed,

For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me

To cover—the three first without a wife,

While I have mine! So—still they overcome

Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love

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### 2.6.9 "Caliban Upon Setebos"

Or, Natural Theology in the Island

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself."

(David, Psalms 50.21)

['Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is best, Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire, With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin. And, while he kicks both feet in the cool slush, And feels about his spine small eft-things course, Run in and out each arm, and make him laugh: And while above his head a pompion-plant, Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye, Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard, And now a flower drops with a bee inside, And now a fruit to snap at, catch and crunch,— He looks out o'er yon sea which sunbeams cross And recross till they weave a spider-web (Meshes of fire, some great fish breaks at times) And talks to his own self, howe'er he please, Touching that other, whom his dam called God. Because to talk about Him, vexes—ha, Could He but know! and time to vex is now, When talk is safer than in winter-time. Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep In confidence he drudges at their task, And it is good to cheat the pair, and gibe, Letting the rank tongue blossom into speech.]

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!

'Thinketh, He dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match, But not the stars; the stars came otherwise; Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as that: Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon, And snaky sea which rounds and ends the same.

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease:

He hated that He cannot change His cold,

Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy fish

That longed to 'scape the rock-stream where she lived,

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And thaw herself within the lukewarm brine O' the lazy sea her stream thrusts far amid, A crystal spike 'twixt two warm walls of wave; Only, she ever sickened, found repulse At the other kind of water, not her life, (Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred o' the sun) Flounced back from bliss she was not born to breathe, And in her old bounds buried her despair, Hating and loving warmth alike: so He.

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this isle,

Trees and the fowls here, beast and creeping thing.

Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a leech;

Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,

That floats and feeds; a certain badger brown

He hath watched hunt with that slant white-wedge eye

By moonlight; and the pie with the long tongue

That pricks deep into oak warts for a worm,

And says a plain word when she finds her prize,

But will not eat the ants; the ants themselves

That build a wall of seeds and settled stalks

About their hole—He made all these and more,

Made all we see, and us, in spite: how else?

He could not, Himself, make a second self

To be His mate; as well have made Himself:

He would not make what He mislikes or slights,

An eyesore to Him, or not worth His pains:

But did, in envy, listlessness or sport,

Make what Himself would fain, in a manner, be—

Weaker in most points, stronger in a few,

Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the while,

Things He admires and mocks too,—that is it.

Because, so brave, so better though they be,

It nothing skills if He begin to plague.

Look, now, I melt a gourd-fruit into mash,

Add honeycomb and pods, I have perceived,

Which bite like finches when they bill and kiss,—

Then, when froth rises bladdery, drink up all,

Quick, quick, till maggots scamper through my brain;

Last, throw me on my back i' the seeded thyme,

And wanton, wishing I were born a bird.

Put case, unable to be what I wish,

I yet could make a live bird out of clay:

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Would not I take clay, pinch my Caliban Able to fly?—for, there, see, he hath wings, And great comb like the hoopoe's to admire, And there, a sting to do his foes offence, There, and I will that he begin to live, Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the horns Of grigs high up that make the merry din, Saucy through their veined wings, and mind me not. In which feat, if his leg snapped, brittle clay, And he lay stupid-like,—why, I should laugh; And if he, spying me, should fall to weep, Beseech me to be good, repair his wrong, Bid his poor leg smart less or grow again,— Well, as the chance were, this might take or else Not take my fancy: I might hear his cry, And give the mankin three sound legs for one, Or pluck the other off, leave him like an egg And lessoned he was mine and merely clay. Were this no pleasure, lying in the thyme, Drinking the mash, with brain become alive, Making and marring clay at will? So He. 'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor wrong in Him, Nor kind, nor cruel: He is strong and Lord. 'Am strong myself compared to yonder crabs That march now from the mountain to the sea; 'Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-first, Loving not, hating not, just choosing so. 'Say, the first straggler that boasts purple spots Shall join the file, one pincer twisted off; 'Say, this bruised fellow shall receive a worm, And two worms he whose nippers end in red; As it likes me each time, I do: so He.

Well then, 'supposeth He is good i' the main,

Placable if His mind and ways were guessed,

But rougher than His handiwork, be sure!

Oh, He hath made things worthier than Himself,

And envieth that, so helped, such things do more

Than He who made them! What consoles but this?

That they, unless through Him, do nought at all,

And must submit: what other use in things?

'Hath cut a pipe of pithless elder-joint

That, blown through, gives exact the scream o' the jay

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When from her wing you twitch the feathers blue:

Sound this, and little birds that hate the jay

Flock within stone's throw, glad their foe is hurt:

Put case such pipe could prattle and boast forsooth

"I catch the birds, I am the crafty thing,

I make the cry my maker cannot make

With his great round mouth; he must blow through mine!'

Would not I smash it with my foot? So He.

But wherefore rough, why cold and ill at ease?

Aha, that is a question! Ask, for that,

What knows,—the something over Setebos

That made Him, or He, may be, found and fought,

Worsted, drove off and did to nothing, perchance.

There may be something quiet o'er His head,

Out of His reach, that feels nor joy nor grief,

Since both derive from weakness in some way.

I joy because the quails come; would not joy

Could I bring quails here when I have a mind:

This Quiet, all it hath a mind to, doth.

'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its couch,

But never spends much thought nor care that way.

It may look up, work up,—the worse for those

It works on! 'Careth but for Setebos

The many-handed as a cuttle-fish,

Who, making Himself feared through what He does,

Looks up, first, and perceives he cannot soar

To what is quiet and hath happy life;

Next looks down here, and out of very spite

Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon real,

These good things to match those as hips do grapes.

'Tis solace making baubles, ay, and sport.

Himself peeped late, eyed Prosper at his books

Careless and lofty, lord now of the isle:

Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad leaves, arrow-shaped,

Wrote thereon, he knows what, prodigious words;

Has peeled a wand and called it by a name;

Weareth at whiles for an enchanter's robe

The eyed skin of a supple oncelot;

And hath an ounce sleeker than youngling mole,

A four-legged serpent he makes cower and couch,

Now snarl, now hold its breath and mind his eye,

And saith she is Miranda and my wife:

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'Keeps for his Ariel a tall pouch-bill crane

He bids go wade for fish and straight disgorge;

Also a sea-beast, lumpish, which he snared,

Blinded the eyes of, and brought somewhat tame,

And split its toe-webs, and now pens the drudge

In a hole o' the rock and calls him Caliban;

A bitter heart that bides its time and bites.

'Plays thus at being Prosper in a way,

Taketh his mirth with make-believes: so He.

His dam held that the Quiet made all things

Which Setebos vexed only: 'holds not so.

Who made them weak, meant weakness He might vex.

Had He meant other, while His hand was in,

Why not make horny eyes no thorn could prick,

Or plate my scalp with bone against the snow,

Or overscale my flesh 'neath joint and joint

Like an orc's armour? Ay,—so spoil His sport!

He is the One now: only He doth all.

'Saith, He may like, perchance, what profits Him.

Ay, himself loves what does him good; but why?

'Gets good no otherwise. This blinded beast

Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his nose,

But, had he eyes, would want no help, but hate

Or love, just as it liked him: He hath eyes.

Also it pleaseth Setebos to work,

Use all His hands, and exercise much craft,

By no means for the love of what is worked.

'Tasteth, himself, no finer good i' the world

When all goes right, in this safe summer-time,

And he wants little, hungers, aches not much,

Than trying what to do with wit and strength.

'Falls to make something: 'piled yon pile of turfs,

And squared and stuck there squares of soft white chalk,

And, with a fish-tooth, scratched a moon on each,

And set up endwise certain spikes of tree,

And crowned the whole with a sloth's skull a-top,

Found dead i' the woods, too hard for one to kill.

No use at all i' the work, for work's sole sake;

'Shall some day knock it down again: so He.

'Saith He is terrible: watch His feats in proof! One hurricane will spoil six good months' hope.

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He hath a spite against me, that I know,

Just as He favours Prosper, who knows why?

So it is, all the same, as well I find.

'Wove wattles half the winter, fenced them firm

With stone and stake to stop she-tortoises

Crawling to lay their eggs here: well, one wave,

Feeling the foot of Him upon its neck,

Gaped as a snake does, lolled out its large tongue,

And licked the whole labour flat: so much for spite.

'Saw a ball flame down late (yonder it lies)

Where, half an hour before, I slept i' the shade:

Often they scatter sparkles: there is force!

'Dug up a newt He may have envied once

And turned to stone, shut up Inside a stone.

Please Him and hinder this?—What Prosper does?

Aha, if He would tell me how! Not He!

There is the sport: discover how or die!

All need not die, for of the things o' the isle

Some flee afar, some dive, some run up trees;

Those at His mercy,—why, they please Him most

When . . . when . . . well, never try the same way twice!

Repeat what act has pleased, He may grow wroth.

You must not know His ways, and play Him off,

Sure of the issue. 'Doth the like himself:

'Spareth a squirrel that it nothing fears

But steals the nut from underneath my thumb,

And when I threat, bites stoutly in defence:

'Spareth an urchin that contrariwise,

Curls up into a ball, pretending death

For fright at my approach: the two ways please.

But what would move my choler more than this,

That either creature counted on its life

To-morrow and next day and all days to come,

Saying, forsooth, in the inmost of its heart,

"Because he did so yesterday with me,

And otherwise with such another brute,

So must he do henceforth and always."—Ay?

Would teach the reasoning couple what "must" means!

'Doth as he likes, or wherefore Lord? So He.

'Conceiveth all things will continue thus,

And we shall have to live in fear of Him

So long as He lives, keeps His strength: no change,

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If He have done His best, make no new world To please Him more, so leave off watching this,— If He surprise not even the Quiet's self Some strange day,—or, suppose, grow into it As grubs grow butterflies: else, here are we, And there is He, and nowhere help at all. 'Believeth with the life, the pain shall stop. His dam held different, that after death He both plagued enemies and feasted friends: Idly! He doth His worst in this our life, Giving just respite lest we die through pain, Saving last pain for worst,—with which, an end. Meanwhile, the best way to escape His ire Is, not to seem too happy. 'Sees, himself, Yonder two flies, with purple films and pink, Bask on the pompion-bell above: kills both. 'Sees two black painful beetles roll their ball On head and tail as if to save their lives: Moves them the stick away they strive to clear.

Even so, 'would have Him misconceive, suppose

This Caliban strives hard and ails no less,

And always, above all else, envies Him;

Wherefore he mainly dances on dark nights,

Moans in the sun, gets under holes to laugh,

And never speaks his mind save housed as now:

Outside, 'groans, curses. If He caught me here,

O'erheard this speech, and asked "What chucklest at?"

'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger off,

Or of my three kid yearlings burn the best,

Or let the toothsome apples rot on tree,

Or push my tame beast for the orc to taste:

While myself lit a fire, and made a song

And sung it, "What I hate, be consecrate

To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no mate

For Thee; what see for envy in poor me?"

Hoping the while, since evils sometimes mend,

Warts rub away and sores are cured with slime,

That some strange day, will either the Quiet catch

And conquer Setebos, or likelier He

Decrepit may doze, doze, as good as die.

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[What, what? A curtain o'er the world at once!

Crickets stop hissing: not a bird—or, yes,

There scuds His raven that has told Him all!

It was fool's play, this prattling! Ha! The wind

Shoulders the pillared dust, death's house o' the move,

And fast invading fires begin! White blaze—

A tree's head snaps—and there, there, there, there, there,

His thunder follows! Fool to gibe at Him!

Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos!

'Maketh his teeth meet through his upper lip,

Will let those quails fly, will not eat this month

One little mess of whelks, so he may 'scape!]

### 2.6.10 Reading and Review Questions

1. How, if at all, does Browning evoke sympathy for his speakers, and why? What are the possible dangers of such sympathy? What are the possible strengths?

2. The Romantics suggested that "heaven" could be reached through the senses. Does Browning's use of concrete details, details evoking the senses, appeal solely to the senses? Why, or why not?

3. Why, and to what effect, does Browning use actual figures from the historical past? Why would readers be interested in figures who lived at least 100 years before their own time? How, if at all, does Browning make these figures relevant, and why?

4. How moral are the speakers in his dramatic monologues? How do you know? What's the effect of their morality, or lack thereof?

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## 2.7 EMILY BRONTE

(1818-1848)

Image 2.15 | Portrait of Emily Bronte

Artist | Unknown

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Charlotte, Emily, and Anne, the three surviving of the five daughters born to the Reverend Patrick Bronte and Maria Branwell, were early on inspired to climb to Olympian heights as poets and writers. The family's economic ambitions centered on Branwell, the only son, who took advantage of the privileges given to Victorian males. Yet he recognized and shared in his sisters' imaginative power and ambitions.

Branwell's collection of tin soldiers and figurines of Turkish musicians and Indians led to their all creating, peopling, and chronicling the imaginary kingdoms of Angria and Gondol. Emily's writings associated with these kingdoms, especially Gondol, are rife with contemporary figures drawn from newspapers and magazines such as Blackwell's, as well as Romantic and Byronic figures drawn from histories, novels, and romances found in their father's library. All of the Bronte sisters incorporated Romanticism into their poems and novels. Yet their work also displays Victorian concerns. Emily's especially deal with the Victorian Crisis of Faith with her original and self-actuating—almost supernatural—spiritual vision. And her sharp focus on the natural environment is heightened by the Industrial Revolution's depredations.

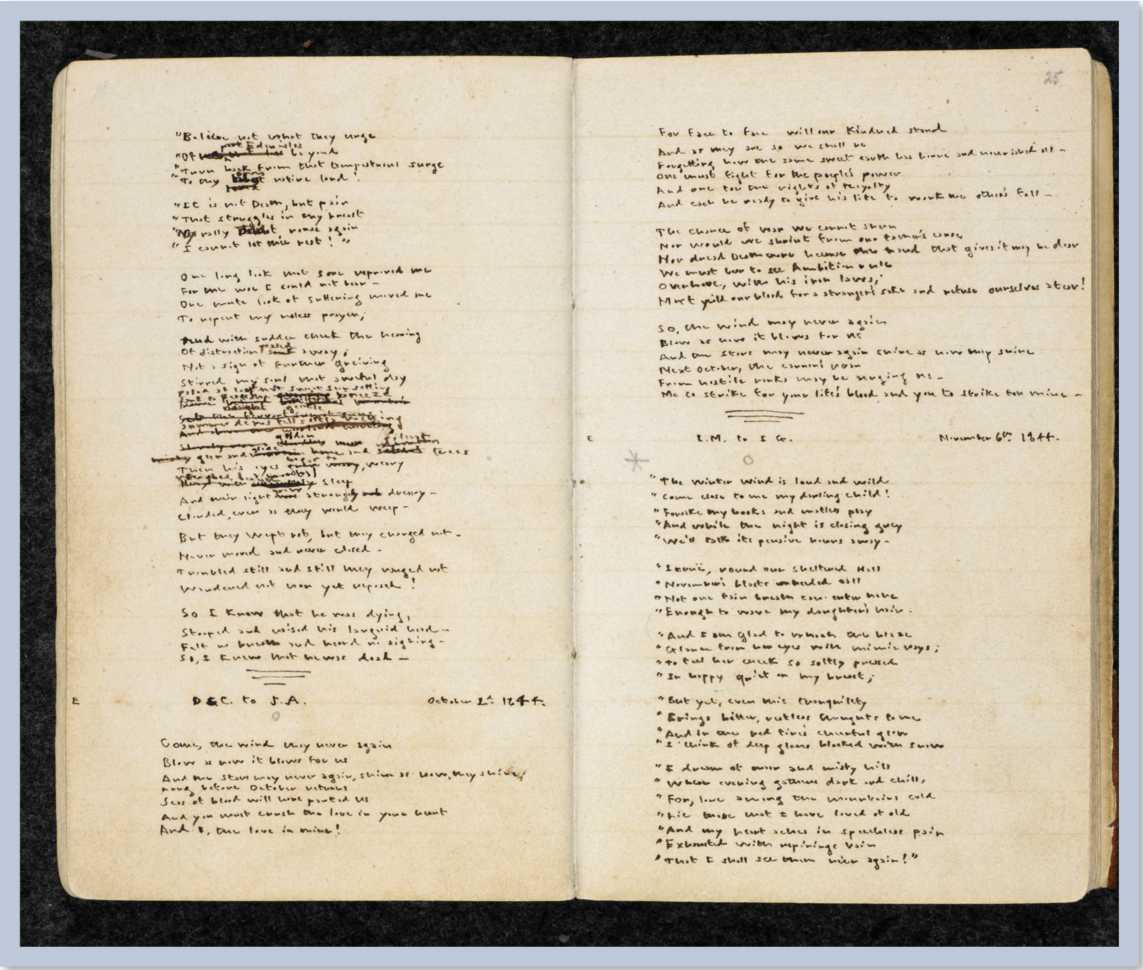
In 1845, Charlotte discovered a notebook of Emily's poems and convinced Emily to publish them. Charlotte, Emily, and Ann collected their poems and published them at their own expense in Poems (1846). They used the gender-neutral pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. It was followed a year later by Wuthering Heights, published by Thomas Newby. The novel's affinities with Emily's poems are clear in its tone of yearning, nature imagery, and titanic characterizations.

In 1848, Emily died of tuberculosis, having seen the mixed success of her work. To bolster its sales, Newby deliberately confused Wuthering Heights with Jane Eyre (1847). Possibly affected by the negative reception of some aspects of Jane Eyre, including what was deemed as its irreligious attack on the clergy in her depiction of Brocklehurst at Lowood School, Charlotte later mythologized her sister to some extent, smoothing her "coarseness" and censoring her revolutionary spiritual vision.

Nevertheless, Emily's distinctive, lyrical, and powerful voice speaks out for itself.

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Image 2.16 | Emily Bronte's writing from notebook of the Gondal Poems Author | Emily Bronte Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



### 2.7.1 "The Prisoner: A Fragment"

In the dungeon-crypts idly did I stray, Reckless of the lives wasting there away; 'Draw the ponderous bars! open, Warder stern!' He dared not say me nay—the hinges harshly turn.

'Our guests are darkly lodged,' I whisper'd, gazing through The vault, whose grated eye showed heaven more gray than blue; (This was when glad Spring laughed in awaking pride); 'Ay, darkly lodged enough!' returned my sullen guide.

Then, God forgive my youth; forgive my careless tongue; I scoffed, as the chill chains on the damp flagstones rung: 'Confined in triple walls, art thou so much to fear, That we must bind thee down and clench thy fetters here?'

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The captive raised her face; it was as soft and mild

As sculptured marble saint, or slumbering unwean'd child;

It was so soft and mild, it was so sweet and fair,

Pain could not trace a line, nor grief a shadow there!

The captive raised her hand and pressed it to her brow; 'I have been struck,' she said, 'and I am suffering now; Yet these are little worth, your bolts and irons strong; And, were they forged in steel, they could not hold me long.'

Hoarse laughed the jailor grim: 'Shall I be won to hear;

Dost think, fond, dreaming wretch, that I shall grant thy prayer?

Or, better still, wilt melt my master's heart with groans?

Ah! sooner might the sun thaw down these granite stones.

'My master's voice is low, his aspect bland and kind, But hard as hardest flint the soul that lurks behind; And I am rough and rude, yet not more rough to see Than is the hidden ghost that has its home in me.'

About her lips there played a smile of almost scorn. 'My friend,' she gently said, 'you have not heard me mourn; When you my kindred's lives, my lost life, can restore, Then may I weep and sue,—but never, friend, before!

'Still, let my tyrants know, I am not doomed to wear Year after year in gloom, and desolate despair; A messenger of Hope comes every night to me, And offers for short life, eternal liberty.

'He comes with western winds, with evening's wandering airs, With that clear dusk of heaven that brings the thickest stars. Winds take a pensive tone, and stars a tender fire, And visions rise, and change, that kill me with desire.

'Desire for nothing known in my maturer years,

When Joy grew mad with awe, at counting future tears.

When, if my spirit's sky was full of flashes warm,

I knew not whence they came, from sun or thunder-storm.

'But, first, a hush of peace—a soundless calm descends; The struggle of distress, and fierce impatience ends; Mute music soothes my breast—unuttered harmony, That I could never dream, till Earth was lost to me.

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'Then dawns the Invisible; the Unseen its truth reveals; My outward sense is gone, my inward essence feels: Its wings are almost free—its home, its harbour found, Measuring the gulph, it stoops and dares the final bound.

'Oh! dreadful is the check—intense the agony— When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to see; When the pulse begins to throb, the brain to think again; The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the chain.

'Yet I would lose no sting, would wish no torture less; The more that anguish racks, the earlier it will bless; And robed in fires of hell, or bright with heavenly shine, If it but herald death, the vision is divine!'

She ceased to speak, and we, unanswering, turned to go— We had no further power to work the captive woe: Her cheek, her gleaming eye, declared that man had given A sentence, unapproved, and overruled by Heaven.

### 2.7.2 "To Imagination"

When weary with the long day's care, And earthly change from pain to pain, And lost, and ready to despair, Thy kind voice calls me back again, Oh, my true friend! I am not lone, While then canst speak with such a tone!

So hopeless is the world without;

The world within I doubly prize;

Thy world, where guile, and hate, and doubt,

And cold suspicion never rise;

Where thou, and I, and Liberty,

Have undisputed sovereignty.

What matters it, that all around Danger, and guilt, and darkness lie, If but within our bosom's bound We hold a bright, untroubled sky, Warm with ten thousand mingled rays Of suns that know no winter days?

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Reason, indeed, may oft complain For Nature's sad reality, And tell the suffering heart how vain Its cherished dreams must always be; And Truth may rudely trample down The flowers of Fancy, newly-blown:

But thou art ever there, to bring The hovering vision back, and breathe New glories o'er the blighted spring, And call a lovelier Life from Death. And whisper, with a voice divine, Of real worlds, as bright as thine.

I trust not to thy phantom bliss,

Yet, still, in evening's quiet hour,

With never-failing thankfulness,

I welcome thee, Benignant Power;

Sure solacer of human cares,

And sweeter hope, when hope despairs!

### 2.7.3 "The Visionary"

Silent is the house: all are laid asleep:

One alone looks out o'er the snow-wreaths deep,

Watching every cloud, dreading every breeze

That whirls the wildering drift, and bends the groaning trees.

Cheerful is the hearth, soft the matted floor;

Not one shivering gust creeps through pane or door;

The little lamp burns straight, its rays shoot strong and far:

I trim it well, to be the wanderer's guiding-star.

Frown, my haughty sire! chide, my angry dame; Set your slaves to spy; threaten me with shame: But neither sire nor dame, nor prying serf shall know, What angel nightly tracks that waste of frozen snow.

What I love shall come like visitant of air, Safe in secret power from lurking human snare; What loves me, no word of mine shall e'er betray, Though for faith unstained my life must forfeit pay.

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Burn, then, little lamp; glimmer straight and clear—

Hush! a rustling wing stirs, methinks, the air:

He for whom I wait, thus ever comes to me;

Strange Power! I trust thy might; trust thou my constancy.

### 2.7.4 "No Coward Soul is Mine"

No coward soul is mine,

No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:

I see Heaven's glories shine,

And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,

Almighty, ever-present Deity!

Life—that in me has rest,

As I—undying Life—have power in Thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds

That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;

Worthless as withered weeds,

Or idle froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one Holding so fast by Thine infinity; So surely anchored on The stedfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love

Thy spirit animates eternal years,

Pervades and broods above,

Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,

And suns and universes ceased to be,

And Thou were left alone,

Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,

Nor atom that his might could render void:

Thou—Thou art Being and Breath,

And what Thou art may never be destroyed.

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### 2.7.5 "I'm Happiest When Most Away"

I'm happiest now when most away I can tear my soul from its mould of clay, On a windy night when the moon is bright, And my eye can wander through worlds of light.

When I am not, and none beside, Nor earth, nor sea, nor cloudless sky, But only spirit wandering wide Through infinite immensity.

### 2.7.6 Reading and Review Questions

1. Are Bronte's poems moral, amoral, or immoral? How do you know?

2. What is the effect, if any, of Bronte's female characters having qualities of the Byronic Hero? How, if at all, does their gender affect your understanding of their heroism?

3. Why do you think that Bronte's poems use imprisonment or exclusion as themes?

4. What religious features, if any, do Bronte's poems possess, and why?

## 2.8 GEORGE ELIOT

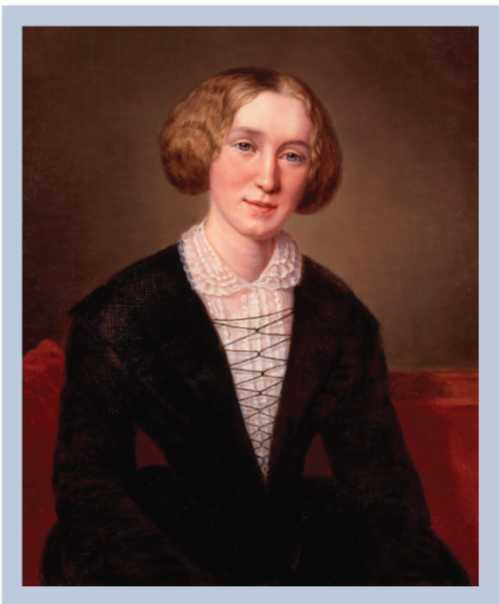
(1819-1880)

Mary Ann Evans's (who used the pseudonym George Eliot) father was an estate agent for the Newdigate family in Warwickshire. She was brought up in the evangelical tradition and educated at a local school then a boarding school in Coventry. After her mother's death, George Eliot became her father's care-giver, ending her formal education. She continued her studies independently, focusing particularly on rationalist works.

Like many Victorians, George Eliot began to doubt the validity of Christian faith. Her reading and her intellectual discussions with friends such as Charles and Cara Bray and Sara Hennell drew her increasingly towards Christian humanism. Starting in 1844, she translated David Friedrich Strauss's (1808-1874) Das Leben Jesu,

Image 2.17 | Portrait of George Eliot

Artist | Alexandre-Louis-Francois d'Albert-Durade Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



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kritisch bearbeitet (The Life of Christ, Critically Examined), a work that read New Testament miracles—though not Christ—in mythical terms.

After her father died in 1849, George Eliot began to work with John Chapman, editor of the Westminster Review, one of the most prestigious intellectual and philosophical journals of its time. George Eliot functioned as the journal's assistant editor, without having that official position due to her gender. She took a prominent place amongst Victorian intellectuals, including John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), social theorist Harriet Martineau (1802-1876), and George Henry Lewes (1817-1878). Philosopher, biologist, literary critic, and playwright, Lewes' personal life was compromised by his having acknowledged and accepted his wife's adultery and effectively adopting the children from her affairs. His having done so closed off any possibility of their divorcing, as he had sanctioned the adultery that would have been grounds for their divorce.

George Eliot and George Henry Lewes consequently became common-law husband and wife, a radical public act—particularly for George Eliot—in a society that preferred its "vices" to occur behind closed doors. They remained together for the rest of his life, during which time George Eliot began writing novels in addition to reviews and translations. Her first published book, Scenes from Clerical Life (1858), collected three already-published stories. She wrote first-hand of rural life and in Adam Bede promoted a realist agenda in the novel as genre—realism actuated by affection and sympathy. Writing of the homely dignity of coarse peasants—with warts—of the "beloved dirt" of the countryside, the novelist would open reader's eyes and hearts to great truths of human nature, truths insufficiently reflected in facts.

George Eliot elevated the intellectual and moral purpose of the novel genre as well as honed its artistry. Her novels consider infanticide, familial betrayal, prejudice, and self-sacrifice with depth of psychological insight combined with moral purpose, a desire to motivate social change. Middlemarch (1871-1872) exemplifies the greatness to which she brought the novel form. Its intersecting stories and range of characters hoist the conventional marriage plot to the level of lived life, particularly of women whose husbands determine (use and sometimes abuse) their intellectual and physical activities. Its subtle and multivalent diction and imagery—of river, movement, light—almost perfectly unite theme, character, and action with the larger philosophical and moral meaning of interdependency (a source of happiness that George Eliot thought truer than religion). George Eliot's writing prepared the way for the leaner experimental novels of the twentieth century.

In 1878, Georgie Henry Lewes died, after which George Eliot devoted her writing activities to readying his Life and Mind for publication. In 1880, she married a long-term friend, John Cross, a marriage that ended that same year, when she died in December.

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### 2.8.1 From Adam Bede

Chapter XVII: In Which the Story Pauses a Little

"THIS Rector of Broxton is little better than a pagan!" I hear one of my readers exclaim. "How much more edifying it would have been if you had made him give Arthur some truly spiritual advice! You might have put into his mouth the most beautiful things—quite as good as reading a sermon."

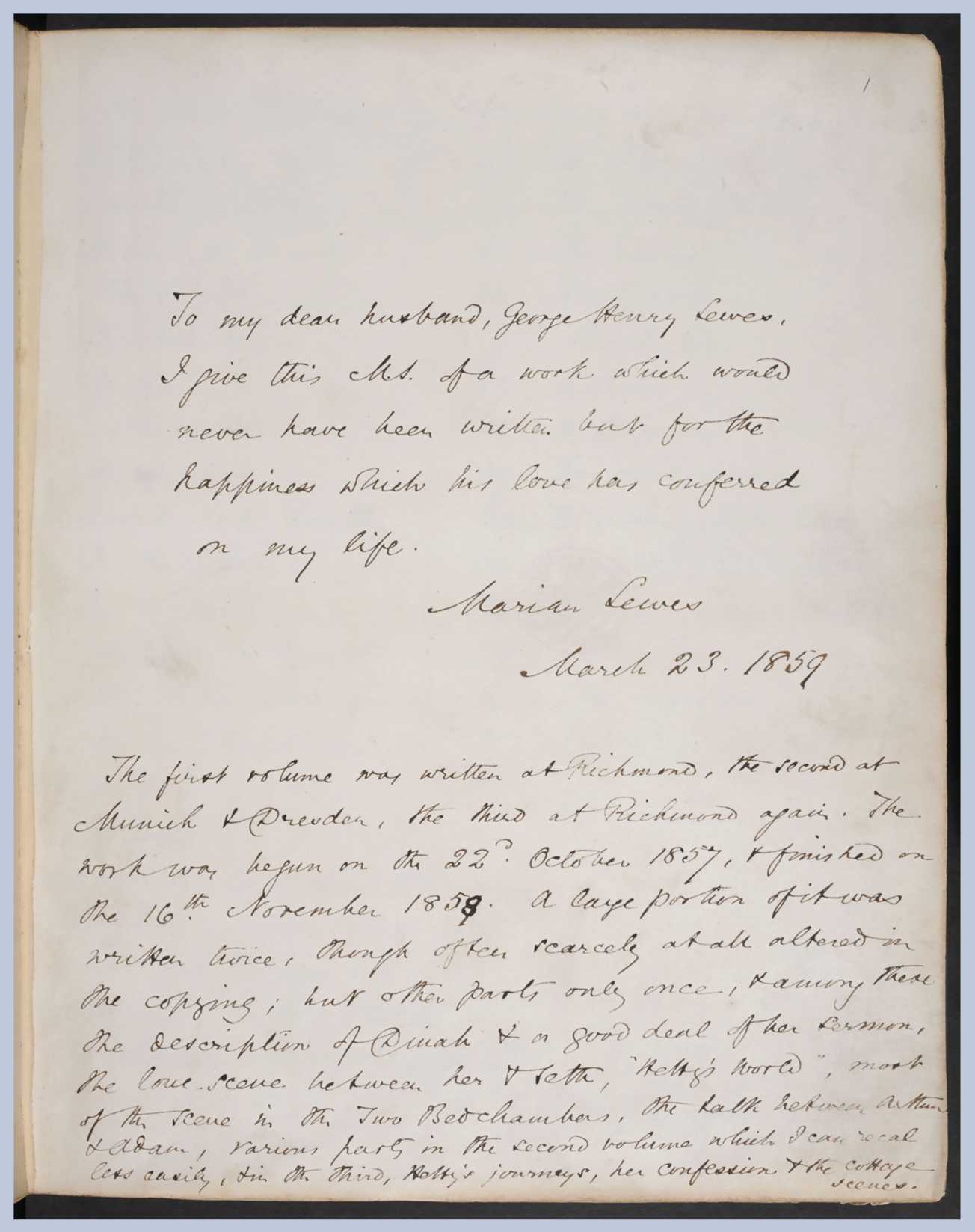
Certainly I could, if I held it the highest vocation of the novelist to represent things as they never have been and never will be. Then, of course, I might refashion life and character entirely after my own liking; I might select the most unexceptionable type of clergyman and put my own admirable opinions into his mouth on all occasions. But it happens, on the contrary, that my strongest effort is to avoid any such arbitrary picture, and to give a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in my mind. The mirror is doubtless defective, the outlines will sometimes be disturbed, the reflection faint or confused; but I feel as much bound to tell you as precisely as I can what that reflection is, as if I were in the witness-box, narrating my experience on oath.

Sixty years ago—it is a long time, so no wonder things have changed—all clergymen were not zealous; indeed, there is reason to believe that the number of zealous clergymen was small, and it is probable that if one among the small minority had owned the livings of Broxton and Hayslope in the year 1799, you would have liked him no better than you like Mr. Irwine. Ten to one, you would have thought him a tasteless, indiscreet, methodistical man. It is so very rarely that facts hit that nice medium required by our own enlightened opinions and refined taste! Perhaps you will say, "Do improve the facts a little, then; make them more accordant with those correct views which it is our privilege to possess. The world is not just what we like; do touch it up with a tasteful pencil, and make believe it is not quite such a mixed entangled affair. Let all people who hold unexceptionable opinions act unexceptionably. Let your most faulty characters always be on the wrong side, and your virtuous ones on the right. Then we shall see at a glance whom we are to condemn and whom we are to approve. Then we shall be able to admire, without the slightest disturbance of our prepossessions: we shall hate and despise with that true ruminant relish which belongs to undoubting confidence."

But, my good friend, what will you do then with your fellow-parishioner who opposes your husband in the vestry? With your newly appointed vicar, whose style of preaching you find painfully below that of his regretted predecessor? With the honest servant who worries your soul with her one failing? With your neighbour, Mrs. Green, who was really kind to you in your last illness, but has said several ill-natured things about you since your convalescence? Nay, with your excellent husband himself, who has other irritating habits besides that of not wiping his shoes? These fellow-mortals, every one, must be accepted as they are: you can neither straighten their noses, nor brighten their wit, nor rectify their dispositions; and it is these people—amongst whom your life is passed—that it is needful you

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Image 2.18 | Original manuscript of Adam Bede Author | George Eliot Source | British Library License | Public Domain



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should tolerate, pity, and love: it is these more or less ugly, stupid, inconsistent people whose movements of goodness you should be able to admire—for whom you should cherish all possible hopes, all possible patience. And I would not, even if I had the choice, be the clever novelist who could create a world so much better than this, in which we get up in the morning to do our daily work, that you would be likely to turn a harder, colder eye on the dusty streets and the common green fields—on the real breathing men and women, who can be chilled by your indifference or injured by your prejudice; who can be cheered and helped onward by your fellow-feeling, your forbearance, your outspoken, brave justice.

So I am content to tell my simple story, without trying to make things seem better than they were; dreading nothing, indeed, but falsity, which, in spite of one's best efforts, there is reason to dread. Falsehood is so easy, truth so difficult. The pencil is conscious of a delightful facility in drawing a griffin—the longer the claws, and the larger the wings, the better; but that marvellous facility which we mistook for genius is apt to forsake us when we want to draw a real unexaggerated lion. Examine your words well, and you will find that even when you have no motive to be false, it is a very hard thing to say the exact truth, even about your own immediate feelings— much harder than to say something fine about them which is NOT the exact truth.

It is for this rare, precious quality of truthfulness that I delight in many Dutch paintings, which lofty-minded people despise. I find a source of delicious sympathy in these faithful pictures of a monotonous homely existence, which has been the fate of so many more among my fellow-mortals than a life of pomp or of absolute indigence, of tragic suffering or of world-stirring actions. I turn, without shrinking, from cloud-borne angels, from prophets, sibyls, and heroic warriors, to an old woman bending over her flower-pot, or eating her solitary dinner, while the noonday light, softened perhaps by a screen of leaves, falls on her mob-cap, and just touches the rim of her spinning-wheel, and her stone jug, and all those cheap common things which are the precious necessaries of life to her—or I turn to that village wedding, kept between four brown walls, where an awkward bridegroom opens the dance with a high-shouldered, broad-faced bride, while elderly and middle-aged friends look on, with very irregular noses and lips, and probably with quart-pots in their hands, but with an expression of unmistakable contentment and goodwill. "Foh!" says my idealistic friend, "what vulgar details! What good is there in taking all these pains to give an exact likeness of old women and clowns? What a low phase of life! What clumsy, ugly people!"

But bless us, things may be lovable that are not altogether handsome, I hope? I am not at all sure that the majority of the human race have not been ugly, and even among those "lords of their kind," the British, squat figures, ill-shapen nostrils, and dingy complexions are not startling exceptions. Yet there is a great deal of family love amongst us. I have a friend or two whose class of features is such that the Apollo curl on the summit of their brows would be decidedly trying; yet to my certain knowledge tender hearts have beaten for them, and their miniatures— flattering, but still not lovely—are kissed in secret by motherly lips. I have seen

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many an excellent matron, who could have never in her best days have been handsome, and yet she had a packet of yellow love-letters in a private drawer, and sweet children showered kisses on her sallow cheeks. And I believe there have been plenty of young heroes, of middle stature and feeble beards, who have felt quite sure they could never love anything more insignificant than a Diana, and yet have found themselves in middle life happily settled with a wife who waddles. Yes! Thank God; human feeling is like the mighty rivers that bless the earth: it does not wait for beauty—it flows with resistless force and brings beauty with it.

All honour and reverence to the divine beauty of form! Let us cultivate it to the utmost in men, women, and children—in our gardens and in our houses. But let us love that other beauty too, which lies in no secret of proportion, but in the secret of deep human sympathy. Paint us an angel, if you can, with a floating violet robe, and a face paled by the celestial light; paint us yet oftener a Madonna, turning her mild face upward and opening her arms to welcome the divine glory; but do not impose on us any aesthetic rules which shall banish from the region of Art those old women scraping carrots with their work-worn hands, those heavy clowns taking holiday in a dingy pot-house, those rounded backs and stupid weather-beaten faces that have bent over the spade and done the rough work of the world—those homes with their tin pans, their brown pitchers, their rough curs, and their clusters of onions. In this world there are so many of these common coarse people, who have no picturesque sentimental wretchedness! It is so needful we should remember their existence, else we may happen to leave them quite out of our religion and philosophy and frame lofty theories which only fit a world of extremes. Therefore, let Art always remind us of them; therefore let us always have men ready to give the loving pains of a life to the faithful representing of commonplace things—men who see beauty in these commonplace things, and delight in showing how kindly the light of heaven falls on them. There are few prophets in the world; few sublimely beautiful women; few heroes. I can't afford to give all my love and reverence to such rarities: I want a great deal of those feelings for my every-day fellow-men, especially for the few in the foreground of the great multitude, whose faces I know, whose hands I touch, for whom I have to make way with kindly courtesy. Neither are picturesque lazzaroni or romantic criminals half so frequent as your common labourer, who gets his own bread and eats it vulgarly but creditably with his own pocket-knife. It is more needful that I should have a fibre of sympathy connecting me with that vulgar citizen who weighs out my sugar in a vilely assorted cravat and waistcoat, than with the handsomest rascal in red scarf and green feathers—more needful that my heart should swell with loving admiration at some trait of gentle goodness in the faulty people who sit at the same hearth with me, or in the clergyman of my own parish, who is perhaps rather too corpulent and in other respects is not an Oberlin or a Tillotson, than at the deeds of heroes whom I shall never know except by hearsay, or at the sublimest abstract of all clerical graces that was ever conceived by an able novelist.

And so I come back to Mr. Irwine, with whom I desire you to be in perfect charity, far as he may be from satisfying your demands on the clerical character.

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Perhaps you think he was not—as he ought to have been—a living demonstration of the benefits attached to a national church? But I am not sure of that; at least I know that the people in Broxton and Hayslope would have been very sorry to part with their clergyman, and that most faces brightened at his approach; and until it can be proved that hatred is a better thing for the soul than love, I must believe that Mr. Irwine's influence in his parish was a more wholesome one than that of the zealous Mr. Ryde, who came there twenty years afterwards, when Mr. Irwine had been gathered to his fathers. It is true, Mr. Ryde insisted strongly on the doctrines of the Reformation, visited his flock a great deal in their own homes, and was severe in rebuking the aberrations of the flesh—put a stop, indeed, to the Christmas rounds of the church singers, as promoting drunkenness and too light a handling of sacred things. But I gathered from Adam Bede, to whom I talked of these matters in his old age, that few clergymen could be less successful in winning the hearts of their parishioners than Mr. Ryde. They learned a great many notions about doctrine from him, so that almost every church-goer under fifty began to distinguish as well between the genuine gospel and what did not come precisely up to that standard, as if he had been born and bred a Dissenter; and for some time after his arrival there seemed to be quite a religious movement in that quiet rural district. "But," said Adam, "I've seen pretty clear, ever since I was a young un, as religion's something else besides notions. It isn't notions sets people doing the right thing— it's feelings. It's the same with the notions in religion as it is with math'matics—a man may be able to work problems straight off in's head as he sits by the fire and smokes his pipe, but if he has to make a machine or a building, he must have a will and a resolution and love something else better than his own ease. Somehow, the congregation began to fall off, and people began to speak light o' Mr. Ryde. I believe he meant right at bottom; but, you see, he was sourish-tempered, and was for beating down prices with the people as worked for him; and his preaching wouldn't go down well with that sauce. And he wanted to be like my lord judge i' the parish, punishing folks for doing wrong; and he scolded 'em from the pulpit as if he'd been a Ranter, and yet he couldn't abide the Dissenters, and was a deal more set against 'em than Mr. Irwine was. And then he didn't keep within his income, for he seemed to think at first go-off that six hundred a-year was to make him as big a man as Mr. Donnithorne. That's a sore mischief I've often seen with the poor curates jumping into a bit of a living all of a sudden. Mr. Ryde was a deal thought on at a distance, I believe, and he wrote books, but as for math'matics and the natur o' things, he was as ignorant as a woman. He was very knowing about doctrines, and used to call 'em the bulwarks of the Reformation; but I've always mistrusted that sort o' learning as leaves folks foolish and unreasonable about business. Now Mester Irwine was as different as could be: as quick!—he understood what you meant in a minute, and he knew all about building, and could see when you'd made a good job. And he behaved as much like a gentleman to the farmers, and th' old women, and the labourers, as he did to the gentry. You never saw HIM interfering and scolding, and trying to play th' emperor. Ah, he was a fine man as ever you

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set eyes on; and so kind to's mother and sisters. That poor sickly Miss Anne—he seemed to think more of her than of anybody else in the world. There wasn't a soul in the parish had a word to say against him; and his servants stayed with him till they were so old and pottering, he had to hire other folks to do their work."

"Well," I said, "that was an excellent way of preaching in the weekdays; but I daresay, if your old friend Mr. Irwine were to come to life again, and get into the pulpit next Sunday, you would be rather ashamed that he didn't preach better after all your praise of him."

"Nay, nay," said Adam, broadening his chest and throwing himself back in his chair, as if he were ready to meet all inferences, "nobody has ever heard me say Mr. Irwine was much of a preacher. He didn't go into deep speritial experience; and I know there s a deal in a man's inward life as you can't measure by the square, and say, 'Do this and that 'll follow,' and, 'Do that and this 'll follow.' There's things go on in the soul, and times when feelings come into you like a rushing mighty wind, as the Scripture says, and part your life in two a'most, so you look back on yourself as if you was somebody else. Those are things as you can't bottle up in a 'do this' and 'do that'; and I'll go so far with the strongest Methodist ever you'll find. That shows me there's deep speritial things in religion. You can't make much out wi' talking about it, but you feel it. Mr. Irwine didn't go into those things—he preached short moral sermons, and that was all. But then he acted pretty much up to what he said; he didn't set up for being so different from other folks one day, and then be as like 'em as two peas the next. And he made folks love him and respect him, and that was better nor stirring up their gall wi' being overbusy. Mrs. Poyser used to say—you know she would have her word about everything—she said, Mr. Irwine was like a good meal o' victual, you were the better for him without thinking on it, and Mr. Ryde was like a dose o' physic, he gripped you and worreted you, and after all he left you much the same."

"But didn't Mr. Ryde preach a great deal more about that spiritual part of religion that you talk of, Adam? Couldn't you get more out of his sermons than out of Mr. Irwine's?"

"Eh, I knowna. He preached a deal about doctrines. But I've seen pretty clear, ever since I was a young un, as religion's something else besides doctrines and notions. I look at it as if the doctrines was like finding names for your feelings, so as you can talk of 'em when you've never known 'em, just as a man may talk o' tools when he knows their names, though he's never so much as seen 'em, still less handled 'em. I've heard a deal o' doctrine i' my time, for I used to go after the Dissenting preachers along wi' Seth, when I was a lad o' seventeen, and got puzzling myself a deal about th' Arminians and the Calvinists. The Wesleyans, you know, are strong Arminians; and Seth, who could never abide anything harsh and was always for hoping the best, held fast by the Wesleyans from the very first; but I thought I could pick a hole or two in their notions, and I got disputing wi' one o' the class leaders down at Treddles'on, and harassed him so, first o' this side and then o' that, till at last he said, 'Young man, it's the devil making use o' your pride and conceit as a

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weapon to war against the simplicity o' the truth.' I couldn't help laughing then, but as I was going home, I thought the man wasn't far wrong. I began to see as all this weighing and sifting what this text means and that text means, and whether folks are saved all by God's grace, or whether there goes an ounce o' their own will to't, was no part o' real religion at all. You may talk o' these things for hours on end, and you'll only be all the more coxy and conceited for't. So I took to going nowhere but to church, and hearing nobody but Mr. Irwine, for he said nothing but what was good and what you'd be the wiser for remembering. And I found it better for my soul to be humble before the mysteries o' God's dealings, and not be making a clatter about what I could never understand. And they're poor foolish questions after all; for what have we got either inside or outside of us but what comes from God? If we've got a resolution to do right, He gave it us, I reckon, first or last; but I see plain enough we shall never do it without a resolution, and that's enough for me."

Adam, you perceive, was a warm admirer, perhaps a partial judge, of Mr. Irwine, as, happily, some of us still are of the people we have known familiarly. Doubtless it will be despised as a weakness by that lofty order of minds who pant after the ideal, and are oppressed by a general sense that their emotions are of too exquisite a character to find fit objects among their everyday fellowmen. I have often been favoured with the confidence of these select natures, and find them to concur in the experience that great men are overestimated and small men are insupportable; that if you would love a woman without ever looking back on your love as a folly, she must die while you are courting her; and if you would maintain the slightest belief in human heroism, you must never make a pilgrimage to see the hero. I confess I have often meanly shrunk from confessing to these accomplished and acute gentlemen what my own experience has been. I am afraid I have often smiled with hypocritical assent, and gratified them with an epigram on the fleeting nature of our illusions, which any one moderately acquainted with French literature can command at a moment's notice. Human converse, I think some wise man has remarked, is not rigidly sincere. But I herewith discharge my conscience, and declare that I have had quite enthusiastic movements of admiration towards old gentlemen who spoke the worst English, who were occasionally fretful in their temper, and who had never moved in a higher sphere of influence than that of parish overseer; and that the way in which I have come to the conclusion that human nature is lovable—the way I have learnt something of its deep pathos, its sublime mysteries—has been by living a great deal among people more or less commonplace and vulgar, of whom you would perhaps hear nothing very surprising if you were to inquire about them in the neighbourhoods where they dwelt. Ten to one most of the small shopkeepers in their vicinity saw nothing at all in them. For I have observed this remarkable coincidence, that the select natures who pant after the ideal, and find nothing in pantaloons or petticoats great enough to command their reverence and love, are curiously in unison with the narrowest and pettiest. For example, I have often heard Mr. Gedge, the landlord of the Royal Oak, who used to turn a bloodshot eye on his neighbours in the village of Shepperton, sum up his opinion of the people in his own

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parish—and they were all the people he knew—in these emphatic words: "Aye, sir, I've said it often, and I'll say it again, they're a poor lot i' this parish—a poor lot, sir, big and little." I think he had a dim idea that if he could migrate to a distant parish, he might find neighbours worthy of him; and indeed he did subsequently transfer himself to the Saracen's Head, which was doing a thriving business in the back street of a neighbouring market-town. But, oddly enough, he has found the people up that back street of precisely the same stamp as the inhabitants of Shepperton—"a poor lot, sir, big and little, and them as comes for a go o' gin are no better than them as comes for a pint o' twopenny—a poor lot."

### 2.8.2 The Lifted Veil

Give me no light, great Heaven, but such as turns To energy of human fellowship; No powers beyond the growing heritage That makes completer manhood.

Chapter I

The time of my end approaches. I have lately been subject to attacks of angina pectoris; and in the ordinary course of things, my physician tells me, I may fairly hope that my life will not be protracted many months. Unless, then, I am cursed with an exceptional physical constitution, as I am cursed with an exceptional mental character, I shall not much longer groan under the wearisome burthen of this earthly existence. If it were to be otherwise—if I were to live on to the age most men desire and provide for—I should for once have known whether the miseries of delusive expectation can outweigh the miseries of true provision. For I foresee when I shall die, and everything that will happen in my last moments.

Just a month from this day, on September 20, 1850, I shall be sitting in this chair, in this study, at ten o'clock at night, longing to die, weary of incessant insight and foresight, without delusions and without hope. Just as I am watching a tongue of blue flame rising in the fire, and my lamp is burning low, the horrible contraction will begin at my chest. I shall only have time to reach the bell, and pull it violently, before the sense of suffocation will come. No one will answer my bell. I know why. My two servants are lovers, and will have quarrelled. My housekeeper will have rushed out of the house in a fury, two hours before, hoping that Perry will believe she has gone to drown herself. Perry is alarmed at last, and is gone out after her. The little scullery-maid is asleep on a bench: she never answers the bell; it does not wake her. The sense of suffocation increases: my lamp goes out with a horrible stench: I make a great effort, and snatch at the bell again. I long for life, and there is no help. I thirsted for the unknown: the thirst is gone. O God, let me stay with the known, and be weary of it: I am content. Agony of pain and suffocation—and all the while the earth, the fields, the pebbly brook at the bottom of the rookery, the fresh scent after the rain, the light of the morning through

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my chamber-window, the warmth of the hearth after the frosty air—will darkness close over them for ever?

Darkness—darkness—no pain—nothing but darkness: but I am passing on and on through the darkness: my thought stays in the darkness, but always with a sense of moving onward . . .

Before that time comes, I wish to use my last hours of ease and strength in telling the strange story of my experience. I have never fully unbosomed myself to any human being; I have never been encouraged to trust much in the sympathy of my fellow-men. But we have all a chance of meeting with some pity, some tenderness, some charity, when we are dead: it is the living only who cannot be forgiven—the living only from whom men's indulgence and reverence are held off, like the rain by the hard east wind. While the heart beats, bruise it—it is your only opportunity; while the eye can still turn towards you with moist, timid entreaty, freeze it with an icy unanswering gaze; while the ear, that delicate messenger to the inmost sanctuary of the soul, can still take in the tones of kindness, put it off with hard civility, or sneering compliment, or envious affectation of indifference; while the creative brain can still throb with the sense of injustice, with the yearning for brotherly recognition—make haste—oppress it with your ill-considered judgements, your trivial comparisons, your careless misrepresentations. The heart will by and by be still—"ubi saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit"; the eye will cease to entreat; the ear will be deaf; the brain will have ceased from all wants as well as from all work. Then your charitable speeches may find vent; then you may remember and pity the toil and the struggle and the failure; then you may give due honour to the work achieved; then you may find extenuation for errors, and may consent to bury them.

That is a trivial schoolboy text; why do I dwell on it? It has little reference to me, for I shall leave no works behind me for men to honour. I have no near relatives who will make up, by weeping over my grave, for the wounds they inflicted on me when I was among them. It is only the story of my life that will perhaps win a little more sympathy from strangers when I am dead, than I ever believed it would obtain from my friends while I was living.

My childhood perhaps seems happier to me than it really was, by contrast with all the after-years. For then the curtain of the future was as impenetrable to me as to other children: I had all their delight in the present hour, their sweet indefinite hopes for the morrow; and I had a tender mother: even now, after the dreary lapse of long years, a slight trace of sensation accompanies the remembrance of her caress as she held me on her knee—her arms round my little body, her cheek pressed on mine. I had a complaint of the eyes that made me blind for a little while, and she kept me on her knee from morning till night. That unequalled love soon vanished out of my life, and even to my childish consciousness it was as if that life had become more chill I rode my little white pony with the groom by my side as before, but there were no loving eyes looking at me as I mounted, no glad arms opened to me when I came back. Perhaps I missed my mother's love more than most children of seven or

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eight would have done, to whom the other pleasures of life remained as before; for I was certainly a very sensitive child. I remember still the mingled trepidation and delicious excitement with which I was affected by the tramping of the horses on the pavement in the echoing stables, by the loud resonance of the groom's voices, by the booming bark of the dogs as my father's carriage thundered under the archway of the courtyard, by the din of the gong as it gave notice of luncheon and dinner. The measured tramp of soldiery which I sometimes heard—for my father's house lay near a county town where there were large barracks—made me sob and tremble; and yet when they were gone past, I longed for them to come back again.

I fancy my father thought me an odd child, and had little fondness for me; though he was very careful in fulfilling what he regarded as a parent's duties. But he was already past the middle of life, and I was not his only son. My mother had been his second wife, and he was five-and-forty when he married her. He was a firm, unbending, intensely orderly man, in root and stem a banker, but with a flourishing graft of the active landholder, aspiring to county influence: one of those people who are always like themselves from day to day, who are uninfluenced by the weather, and neither know melancholy nor high spirits. I held him in great awe, and appeared more timid and sensitive in his presence than at other times; a circumstance which, perhaps, helped to confirm him in the intention to educate me on a different plan from the prescriptive one with which he had complied in the case of my elder brother, already a tall youth at Eton. My brother was to be his representative and successor; he must go to Eton and Oxford, for the sake of making connexions, of course: my father was not a man to underrate the bearing of Latin satirists or Greek dramatists on the attainment of an aristocratic position. But, intrinsically, he had slight esteem for "those dead but sceptred spirits"; having qualified himself for forming an independent opinion by reading Potter's AEschylus, and dipping into Francis's Horace. To this negative view he added a positive one, derived from a recent connexion with mining speculations; namely, that a scientific education was the really useful training for a younger son. Moreover, it was clear that a shy, sensitive boy like me was not fit to encounter the rough experience of a public school. Mr. Letherall had said so very decidedly. Mr. Letherall was a large man in spectacles, who one day took my small head between his large hands, and pressed it here and there in an exploratory, auspicious manner—then placed each of his great thumbs on my temples, and pushed me a little way from him, and stared at me with glittering spectacles. The contemplation appeared to displease him, for he frowned sternly, and said to my father, drawing his thumbs across my eyebrows—

"The deficiency is there, sir—there; and here," he added, touching the upper sides of my head, "here is the excess. That must be brought out, sir, and this must be laid to sleep."

I was in a state of tremor, partly at the vague idea that I was the object of reprobation, partly in the agitation of my first hatred—hatred of this big, spectacled man, who pulled my head about as if he wanted to buy and cheapen it.

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I am not aware how much Mr. Letherall had to do with the system afterwards adopted towards me, but it was presently clear that private tutors, natural history, science, and the modern languages, were the appliances by which the defects of my organization were to be remedied. I was very stupid about machines, so I was to be greatly occupied with them; I had no memory for classification, so it was particularly necessary that I should study systematic zoology and botany; I was hungry for human deeds and humane motions, so I was to be plentifully crammed with the mechanical powers, the elementary bodies, and the phenomena of electricity and magnetism. A better-constituted boy would certainly have profited under my intelligent tutors, with their scientific apparatus; and would, doubtless, have found the phenomena of electricity and magnetism as fascinating as I was, every Thursday, assured they were. As it was, I could have paired off, for ignorance of whatever was taught me, with the worst Latin scholar that was ever turned out of a classical academy. I read Plutarch, and Shakespeare, and Don Quixote by the sly, and supplied myself in that way with wandering thoughts, while my tutor was assuring me that "an improved man, as distinguished from an ignorant one, was a man who knew the reason why water ran downhill." I had no desire to be this improved man; I was glad of the running water; I could watch it and listen to it gurgling among the pebbles, and bathing the bright green water-plants, by the hour together. I did not want to know why it ran; I had perfect confidence that there were good reasons for what was so very beautiful.

There is no need to dwell on this part of my life. I have said enough to indicate that my nature was of the sensitive, unpractical order, and that it grew up in an uncongenial medium, which could never foster it into happy, healthy development. When I was sixteen I was sent to Geneva to complete my course of education; and the change was a very happy one to me, for the first sight of the Alps, with the setting sun on them, as we descended the Jura, seemed to me like an entrance into heaven; and the three years of my life there were spent in a perpetual sense of exaltation, as if from a draught of delicious wine, at the presence of Nature in all her awful loveliness. You will think, perhaps, that I must have been a poet, from this early sensibility to Nature. But my lot was not so happy as that. A poet pours forth his song and believes in the listening ear and answering soul, to which his song will be floated sooner or later. But the poet's sensibility without his voice—the poet's sensibility that finds no vent but in silent tears on the sunny bank, when the noonday light sparkles on the water, or in an inward shudder at the sound of harsh human tones, the sight of a cold human eye—this dumb passion brings with it a fatal solitude of soul in the society of one's fellow-men. My least solitary moments were those in which I pushed off in my boat, at evening, towards the centre of the lake; it seemed to me that the sky, and the glowing mountain-tops, and the wide blue water, surrounded me with a cherishing love such as no human face had shed on me since my mother's love had vanished out of my life. I used to do as Jean Jacques did—lie down in my boat and let it glide where it would, while I looked up at the departing glow leaving one mountain-top after the other, as if the prophet's

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chariot of fire were passing over them on its way to the home of light. Then, when the white summits were all sad and corpse-like, I had to push homeward, for I was under careful surveillance, and was allowed no late wanderings. This disposition of mine was not favourable to the formation of intimate friendships among the numerous youths of my own age who are always to be found studying at Geneva. Yet I made one such friendship; and, singularly enough, it was with a youth whose intellectual tendencies were the very reverse of my own. I shall call him Charles Meunier; his real surname—an English one, for he was of English extraction—having since become celebrated. He was an orphan, who lived on a miserable pittance while he pursued the medical studies for which he had a special genius. Strange! that with my vague mind, susceptible and unobservant, hating inquiry and given up to contemplation, I should have been drawn towards a youth whose strongest passion was science. But the bond was not an intellectual one; it came from a source that can happily blend the stupid with the brilliant, the dreamy with the practical: it came from community of feeling. Charles was poor and ugly, derided by Genevese gamins, and not acceptable in drawing-rooms. I saw that he was isolated, as I was, though from a different cause, and, stimulated by a sympathetic resentment, I made timid advances towards him. It is enough to say that there sprang up as much comradeship between us as our different habits would allow; and in Charles's rare holidays we went up the Saleve together, or took the boat to Vevay, while I listened dreamily to the monologues in which he unfolded his bold conceptions of future experiment and discovery. I mingled them confusedly in my thought with glimpses of blue water and delicate floating cloud, with the notes of birds and the distant glitter of the glacier. He knew quite well that my mind was half absent, yet he liked to talk to me in this way; for don't we talk of our hopes and our projects even to dogs and birds, when they love us? I have mentioned this one friendship because of its connexion with a strange and terrible scene which I shall have to narrate in my subsequent life.

This happier life at Geneva was put an end to by a severe illness, which is partly a blank to me, partly a time of dimly-remembered suffering, with the presence of my father by my bed from time to time. Then came the languid monotony of convalescence, the days gradually breaking into variety and distinctness as my strength enabled me to take longer and longer drives. On one of these more vividly remembered days, my father said to me, as he sat beside my sofa—

"When you are quite well enough to travel, Latimer, I shall take you home with me. The journey will amuse you and do you good, for I shall go through the Tyrol and Austria, and you will see many new places. Our neighbours, the Filmores, are come; Alfred will join us at Basle, and we shall all go together to Vienna, and back by Prague" . . .

My father was called away before he had finished his sentence, and he left my mind resting on the word Prague, with a strange sense that a new and wondrous scene was breaking upon me: a city under the broad sunshine, that seemed to me as if it were the summer sunshine of a long- past century arrested in its course—

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unrefreshed for ages by dews of night, or the rushing rain-cloud; scorching the dusty, weary, time-eaten grandeur of a people doomed to live on in the stale repetition of memories, like deposed and superannuated kings in their regal gold-inwoven tatters. The city looked so thirsty that the broad river seemed to me a sheet of metal; and the blackened statues, as I passed under their blank gaze, along the unending bridge, with their ancient garments and their saintly crowns, seemed to me the real inhabitants and owners of this place, while the busy, trivial men and women, hurrying to and fro, were a swarm of ephemeral visitants infesting it for a day. It is such grim, stony beings as these, I thought, who are the fathers of ancient faded children, in those tanned time-fretted dwellings that crowd the steep before me; who pay their court in the worn and crumbling pomp of the palace which stretches its monotonous length on the height; who worship wearily in the stifling air of the churches, urged by no fear or hope, but compelled by their doom to be ever old and undying, to live on in the rigidity of habit, as they live on in perpetual midday, without the repose of night or the new birth of morning.

A stunning clang of metal suddenly thrilled through me, and I became conscious of the objects in my room again: one of the fire-irons had fallen as Pierre opened the door to bring me my draught. My heart was palpitating violently, and I begged Pierre to leave my draught beside me; I would take it presently.

As soon as I was alone again, I began to ask myself whether I had been sleeping. Was this a dream—this wonderfully distinct vision—minute in its distinctness down to a patch of rainbow light on the pavement, transmitted through a coloured lamp in the shape of a star—of a strange city, quite unfamiliar to my imagination? I had seen no picture of Prague: it lay in my mind as a mere name, with vaguely-remembered historical associations—ill-defined memories of imperial grandeur and religious wars.

Nothing of this sort had ever occurred in my dreaming experience before, for I had often been humiliated because my dreams were only saved from being utterly disjointed and commonplace by the frequent terrors of nightmare. But I could not believe that I had been asleep, for I remembered distinctly the gradual breaking-in of the vision upon me, like the new images in a dissolving view, or the growing distinctness of the landscape as the sun lifts up the veil of the morning mist. And while I was conscious of this incipient vision, I was also conscious that Pierre came to tell my father Mr. Filmore was waiting for him, and that my father hurried out of the room. No, it was not a dream; was it—the thought was full of tremulous exultation—was it the poet's nature in me, hitherto only a troubled yearning sensibility, now manifesting itself suddenly as spontaneous creation? Surely it was in this way that Homer saw the plain of Troy, that Dante saw the abodes of the departed, that Milton saw the earthward flight of the Tempter. Was it that my illness had wrought some happy change in my organization—given a firmer tension to my nerves—carried off some dull obstruction? I had often read of such effects—in works of fiction at least. Nay; in genuine biographies I had read of the

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subtilizing or exalting influence of some diseases on the mental powers. Did not Novalis feel his inspiration intensified under the progress of consumption?

When my mind had dwelt for some time on this blissful idea, it seemed to me that I might perhaps test it by an exertion of my will. The vision had begun when my father was speaking of our going to Prague. I did not for a moment believe it was really a representation of that city; I believed—I hoped it was a picture that my newly liberated genius had painted in fiery haste, with the colours snatched from lazy memory. Suppose I were to fix my mind on some other place—Venice, for example, which was far more familiar to my imagination than Prague: perhaps the same sort of result would follow. I concentrated my thoughts on Venice; I stimulated my imagination with poetic memories, and strove to feel myself present in Venice, as I had felt myself present in Prague. But in vain. I was only colouring the Canaletto engravings that hung in my old bedroom at home; the picture was a shifting one, my mind wandering uncertainly in search of more vivid images; I could see no accident of form or shadow without conscious labour after the necessary conditions. It was all prosaic effort, not rapt passivity, such as I had experienced half an hour before. I was discouraged; but I remembered that inspiration was fitful.

For several days I was in a state of excited expectation, watching for a recurrence of my new gift. I sent my thoughts ranging over my world of knowledge, in the hope that they would find some object which would send a reawakening vibration through my slumbering genius. But no; my world remained as dim as ever, and that flash of strange light refused to come again, though I watched for it with palpitating eagerness.

My father accompanied me every day in a drive, and a gradually lengthening walk as my powers of walking increased; and one evening he had agreed to come and fetch me at twelve the next day, that we might go together to select a musical box, and other purchases rigorously demanded of a rich Englishman visiting Geneva. He was one of the most punctual of men and bankers, and I was always nervously anxious to be quite ready for him at the appointed time. But, to my surprise, at a quarter past twelve he had not appeared. I felt all the impatience of a convalescent who has nothing particular to do, and who has just taken a tonic in the prospect of immediate exercise that would carry off the stimulus.

Unable to sit still and reserve my strength, I walked up and down the room, looking out on the current of the Rhone, just where it leaves the dark-blue lake; but thinking all the while of the possible causes that could detain my father.

Suddenly I was conscious that my father was in the room, but not alone: there were two persons with him. Strange! I had heard no footstep, I had not seen the door open; but I saw my father, and at his right hand our neighbour Mrs. Filmore, whom I remembered very well, though I had not seen her for five years. She was a commonplace middle-aged woman, in silk and cashmere; but the lady on the left of my father was not more than twenty, a tall, slim, willowy figure, with luxuriant blond hair, arranged in cunning braids and folds that looked almost too massive for the slight figure and the small-featured, thin-lipped face they crowned. But the

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face had not a girlish expression: the features were sharp, the pale grey eyes at once acute, restless, and sarcastic. They were fixed on me in half-smiling curiosity, and I felt a painful sensation as if a sharp wind were cutting me. The pale-green dress, and the green leaves that seemed to form a border about her pale blond hair, made me think of a Water-Nixie—for my mind was full of German lyrics, and this pale, fatal-eyed woman, with the green weeds, looked like a birth from some cold sedgy stream, the daughter of an aged river.

"Well, Latimer, you thought me long," my father said . . .

But while the last word was in my ears, the whole group vanished, and there was nothing between me and the Chinese printed folding-screen that stood before the door. I was cold and trembling; I could only totter forward and throw myself on the sofa. This strange new power had manifested itself again . . . But was it a power? Might it not rather be a disease—a sort of intermittent delirium, concentrating my energy of brain into moments of unhealthy activity, and leaving my saner hours all the more barren? I felt a dizzy sense of unreality in what my eye rested on; I grasped the bell convulsively, like one trying to free himself from nightmare, and rang it twice. Pierre came with a look of alarm in his face.

"Monsieur ne se trouve pas bien?" he said anxiously.

"I'm tired of waiting, Pierre," I said, as distinctly and emphatically as I could, like a man determined to be sober in spite of wine; "I'm afraid something has happened to my father—he's usually so punctual. Run to the Hotel des Bergues and see if he is there."

Pierre left the room at once, with a soothing "Bien, Monsieur"; and I felt the better for this scene of simple, waking prose. Seeking to calm myself still further, I went into my bedroom, adjoining the salon, and opened a case of eau-de-Cologne; took out a bottle; went through the process of taking out the cork very neatly, and then rubbed the reviving spirit over my hands and forehead, and under my nostrils, drawing a new delight from the scent because I had procured it by slow details of labour, and by no strange sudden madness. Already I had begun to taste something of the horror that belongs to the lot of a human being whose nature is not adjusted to simple human conditions.

Still enjoying the scent, I returned to the salon, but it was not unoccupied, as it had been before I left it. In front of the Chinese folding-screen there was my father, with Mrs. Filmore on his right hand, and on his left—the slim, blond-haired girl, with the keen face and the keen eyes fixed on me in half-smiling curiosity.

"Well, Latimer, you thought me long," my father said . . .

I heard no more, felt no more, till I became conscious that I was lying with my head low on the sofa, Pierre, and my father by my side. As soon as I was thoroughly revived, my father left the room, and presently returned, saying—

"I've been to tell the ladies how you are, Latimer. They were waiting in the next room. We shall put off our shopping expedition to-day."

Presently he said, "That young lady is Bertha Grant, Mrs. Filmore's orphan niece. Filmore has adopted her, and she lives with them, so you will have her for a

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neighbour when we go home—perhaps for a near relation; for there is a tenderness between her and Alfred, I suspect, and I should be gratified by the match, since Filmore means to provide for her in every way as if she were his daughter. It had not occurred to me that you knew nothing about her living with the Filmores."

He made no further allusion to the fact of my having fainted at the moment of seeing her, and I would not for the world have told him the reason: I shrank from the idea of disclosing to any one what might be regarded as a pitiable peculiarity, most of all from betraying it to my father, who would have suspected my sanity ever after.

I do not mean to dwell with particularity on the details of my experience. I have described these two cases at length, because they had definite, clearly traceable results in my after-lot.

Shortly after this last occurrence—I think the very next day—I began to be aware of a phase in my abnormal sensibility, to which, from the languid and slight nature of my intercourse with others since my illness, I had not been alive before. This was the obtrusion on my mind of the mental process going forward in first one person, and then another, with whom I happened to be in contact: the vagrant, frivolous ideas and emotions of some uninteresting acquaintance—Mrs. Filmore, for example—would force themselves on my consciousness like an importunate, ill-played musical instrument, or the loud activity of an imprisoned insect. But this unpleasant sensibility was fitful, and left me moments of rest, when the souls of my companions were once more shut out from me, and I felt a relief such as silence brings to wearied nerves. I might have believed this importunate insight to be merely a diseased activity of the imagination, but that my prevision of incalculable words and actions proved it to have a fixed relation to the mental process in other minds. But this superadded consciousness, wearying and annoying enough when it urged on me the trivial experience of indifferent people, became an intense pain and grief when it seemed to be opening to me the souls of those who were in a close relation to me—when the rational talk, the graceful attentions, the wittily-turned phrases, and the kindly deeds, which used to make the web of their characters, were seen as if thrust asunder by a microscopic vision, that showed all the intermediate frivolities, all the suppressed egoism, all the struggling chaos of puerilities, meanness, vague capricious memories, and indolent make-shift thoughts, from which human words and deeds emerge like leaflets covering a fermenting heap.

At Basle we were joined by my brother Alfred, now a handsome, self-confident man of six-and-twenty—a thorough contrast to my fragile, nervous, ineffectual self. I believe I was held to have a sort of half-womanish, half-ghostly beauty; for the portrait-painters, who are thick as weeds at Geneva, had often asked me to sit to them, and I had been the model of a dying minstrel in a fancy picture. But I thoroughly disliked my own physique and nothing but the belief that it was a condition of poetic genius would have reconciled me to it. That brief hope was quite fled, and I saw in my face now nothing but the stamp of a morbid organization, framed for passive suffering—too feeble for the sublime resistance of poetic production. Alfred, from whom I had been almost constantly separated,

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and who, in his present stage of character and appearance, came before me as a perfect stranger, was bent on being extremely friendly and brother-like to me. He had the superficial kindness of a good-humoured, self-satisfied nature, that fears no rivalry, and has encountered no contrarieties. I am not sure that my disposition was good enough for me to have been quite free from envy towards him, even if our desires had not clashed, and if I had been in the healthy human condition which admits of generous confidence and charitable construction. There must always have been an antipathy between our natures. As it was, he became in a few weeks an object of intense hatred to me; and when he entered the room, still more when he spoke, it was as if a sensation of grating metal had set my teeth on edge. My diseased consciousness was more intensely and continually occupied with his thoughts and emotions, than with those of any other person who came in my way. I was perpetually exasperated with the petty promptings of his conceit and his love of patronage, with his self-complacent belief in Bertha Grant's passion for him, with his half-pitying contempt for me—seen not in the ordinary indications of intonation and phrase and slight action, which an acute and suspicious mind is on the watch for, but in all their naked skinless complication.

For we were rivals, and our desires clashed, though he was not aware of it. I have said nothing yet of the effect Bertha Grant produced in me on a nearer acquaintance. That effect was chiefly determined by the fact that she made the only exception, among all the human beings about me, to my unhappy gift of insight. About Bertha I was always in a state of uncertainty: I could watch the expression of her face, and speculate on its meaning; I could ask for her opinion with the real interest of ignorance; I could listen for her words and watch for her smile with hope and fear: she had for me the fascination of an unravelled destiny. I say it was this fact that chiefly determined the strong effect she produced on me: for, in the abstract, no womanly character could seem to have less affinity for that of a shrinking, romantic, passionate youth than Bertha's. She was keen, sarcastic, unimaginative, prematurely cynical, remaining critical and unmoved in the most impressive scenes, inclined to dissect all my favourite poems, and especially contemptous towards the German lyrics which were my pet literature at that time. To this moment I am unable to define my feeling towards her: it was not ordinary boyish admiration, for she was the very opposite, even to the colour of her hair, of the ideal woman who still remained to me the type of loveliness; and she was without that enthusiasm for the great and good, which, even at the moment of her strongest dominion over me, I should have declared to be the highest element of character. But there is no tyranny more complete than that which a self-centred negative nature exercises over a morbidly sensitive nature perpetually craving sympathy and support. The most independent people feel the effect of a man's silence in heightening their value for his opinion—feel an additional triumph in conquering the reverence of a critic habitually captious and satirical: no wonder, then, that an enthusiastic self-distrusting youth should watch and wait before the closed secret of a sarcastic woman's face, as if it were the shrine of the doubtfully

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benignant deity who ruled his destiny. For a young enthusiast is unable to imagine the total negation in another mind of the emotions which are stirring his own: they may be feeble, latent, inactive, he thinks, but they are there—they may be called forth; sometimes, in moments of happy hallucination, he believes they may be there in all the greater strength because he sees no outward sign of them. And this effect, as I have intimated, was heightened to its utmost intensity in me, because Bertha was the only being who remained for me in the mysterious seclusion of soul that renders such youthful delusion possible. Doubtless there was another sort of fascination at work—that subtle physical attraction which delights in cheating our psychological predictions, and in compelling the men who paint sylphs, to fall in love with some bonne et brave femme, heavy-heeled and freckled.

Bertha's behaviour towards me was such as to encourage all my illusions, to heighten my boyish passion, and make me more and more dependent on her smiles. Looking back with my present wretched knowledge, I conclude that her vanity and love of power were intensely gratified by the belief that I had fainted on first seeing her purely from the strong impression her person had produced on me. The most prosaic woman likes to believe herself the object of a violent, a poetic passion; and without a grain of romance in her, Bertha had that spirit of intrigue which gave piquancy to the idea that the brother of the man she meant to marry was dying with love and jealousy for her sake. That she meant to marry my brother, was what at that time I did not believe; for though he was assiduous in his attentions to her, and I knew well enough that both he and my father had made up their minds to this result, there was not yet an understood engagement—there had been no explicit declaration; and Bertha habitually, while she flirted with my brother, and accepted his homage in a way that implied to him a thorough recognition of its intention, made me believe, by the subtlest looks and phrases—feminine nothings which could never be quoted against her—that he was really the object of her secret ridicule; that she thought him, as I did, a coxcomb, whom she would have pleasure in disappointing. Me she openly petted in my brother's presence, as if I were too young and sickly ever to be thought of as a lover; and that was the view he took of me. But I believe she must inwardly have delighted in the tremors into which she threw me by the coaxing way in which she patted my curls, while she laughed at my quotations. Such caresses were always given in the presence of our friends; for when we were alone together, she affected a much greater distance towards me, and now and then took the opportunity, by words or slight actions, to stimulate my foolish timid hope that she really preferred me. And why should she not follow her inclination? I was not in so advantageous a position as my brother, but I had fortune, I was not a year younger than she was, and she was an heiress, who would soon be of age to decide for herself.

The fluctuations of hope and fear, confined to this one channel, made each day in her presence a delicious torment. There was one deliberate act of hers which especially helped to intoxicate me. When we were at Vienna her twentieth birthday occurred, and as she was very fond of ornaments, we all took the opportunity of

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the splendid jewellers' shops in that Teutonic Paris to purchase her a birthday present of jewellery. Mine, naturally, was the least expensive; it was an opal ring— the opal was my favourite stone, because it seems to blush and turn pale as if it had a soul. I told Bertha so when I gave it her, and said that it was an emblem of the poetic nature, changing with the changing light of heaven and of woman's eyes. In the evening she appeared elegantly dressed, and wearing conspicuously all the birthday presents except mine. I looked eagerly at her fingers, but saw no opal. I had no opportunity of noticing this to her during the evening; but the next day, when I found her seated near the window alone, after breakfast, I said, "You scorn to wear my poor opal. I should have remembered that you despised poetic natures, and should have given you coral, or turquoise, or some other opaque unresponsive stone." "Do I despise it?" she answered, taking hold of a delicate gold chain which she always wore round her neck and drawing out the end from her bosom with my ring hanging to it; "it hurts me a little, I can tell you," she said, with her usual dubious smile, "to wear it in that secret place; and since your poetical nature is so stupid as to prefer a more public position, I shall not endure the pain any longer."

She took off the ring from the chain and put it on her finger, smiling still, while the blood rushed to my cheeks, and I could not trust myself to say a word of entreaty that she would keep the ring where it was before.

I was completely fooled by this, and for two days shut myself up in my own room whenever Bertha was absent, that I might intoxicate myself afresh with the thought of this scene and all it implied.

I should mention that during these two months—which seemed a long life to me from the novelty and intensity of the pleasures and pains I underwent—my diseased anticipation in other people's consciousness continued to torment me; now it was my father, and now my brother, now Mrs. Filmore or her husband, and now our German courier, whose stream of thought rushed upon me like a ringing in the ears not to be got rid of, though it allowed my own impulses and ideas to continue their uninterrupted course. It was like a preternaturally heightened sense of hearing, making audible to one a roar of sound where others find perfect stillness. The weariness and disgust of this involuntary intrusion into other souls was counteracted only by my ignorance of Bertha, and my growing passion for her; a passion enormously stimulated, if not produced, by that ignorance. She was my oasis of mystery in the dreary desert of knowledge. I had never allowed my diseased condition to betray itself, or to drive me into any unusual speech or action, except once, when, in a moment of peculiar bitterness against my brother, I had forestalled some words which I knew he was going to utter—a clever observation, which he had prepared beforehand. He had occasionally a slightly affected hesitation in his speech, and when he paused an instant after the second word, my impatience and jealousy impelled me to continue the speech for him, as if it were something we had both learned by rote. He coloured and looked astonished, as well as annoyed; and the words had no sooner escaped my lips than I felt a shock of alarm lest such an anticipation of words—very far from being words of course, easy to divine—

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should have betrayed me as an exceptional being, a sort of quiet energumen, whom every one, Bertha above all, would shudder at and avoid. But I magnified, as usual, the impression any word or deed of mine could produce on others; for no one gave any sign of having noticed my interruption as more than a rudeness, to be forgiven me on the score of my feeble nervous condition.

While this superadded consciousness of the actual was almost constant with me, I had never had a recurrence of that distinct prevision which I have described in relation to my first interview with Bertha; and I was waiting with eager curiosity to know whether or not my vision of Prague would prove to have been an instance of the same kind. A few days after the incident of the opal ring, we were paying one of our frequent visits to the Lichtenberg Palace. I could never look at many pictures in succession; for pictures, when they are at all powerful, affect me so strongly that one or two exhaust all my capability of contemplation. This morning I had been looking at Giorgione's picture of the cruel-eyed woman, said to be a likeness of Lucrezia Borgia. I had stood long alone before it, fascinated by the terrible reality of that cunning, relentless face, till I felt a strange poisoned sensation, as if I had long been inhaling a fatal odour, and was just beginning to be conscious of its effects. Perhaps even then I should not have moved away, if the rest of the party had not returned to this room, and announced that they were going to the Belvedere Gallery to settle a bet which had arisen between my brother and Mr. Filmore about a portrait. I followed them dreamily, and was hardly alive to what occurred till they had all gone up to the gallery, leaving me below; for I refused to come within sight of another picture that day. I made my way to the Grand Terrace, since it was agreed that we should saunter in the gardens when the dispute had been decided. I had been sitting here a short space, vaguely conscious of trim gardens, with a city and green hills in the distance, when, wishing to avoid the proximity of the sentinel, I rose and walked down the broad stone steps, intending to seat myself farther on in the gardens. Just as I reached the gravel-walk, I felt an arm slipped within mine, and a light hand gently pressing my wrist. In the same instant a strange intoxicating numbness passed over me, like the continuance or climax of the sensation I was still feeling from the gaze of Lucrezia Borgia. The gardens, the summer sky, the consciousness of Bertha's arm being within mine, all vanished, and I seemed to be suddenly in darkness, out of which there gradually broke a dim firelight, and I felt myself sitting in my father's leather chair in the library at home. I knew the fireplace—the dogs for the wood-fire—the black marble chimney-piece with the white marble medallion of the dying Cleopatra in the centre. Intense and hopeless misery was pressing on my soul; the light became stronger, for Bertha was entering with a candle in her hand—Bertha, my wife—with cruel eyes, with green jewels and green leaves on her white ball-dress; every hateful thought within her present to me . . . "Madman, idiot! why don't you kill yourself, then?" It was a moment of hell. I saw into her pitiless soul—saw its barren worldliness, its scorching hate—and felt it clothe me round like an air I was obliged to breathe. She came with her candle and stood over me with a bitter smile of contempt; I saw the great emerald brooch

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on her bosom, a studded serpent with diamond eyes. I shuddered—I despised this woman with the barren soul and mean thoughts; but I felt helpless before her, as if she clutched my bleeding heart, and would clutch it till the last drop of life-blood ebbed away. She was my wife, and we hated each other. Gradually the hearth, the dim library, the candle-light disappeared—seemed to melt away into a background of light, the green serpent with the diamond eyes remaining a dark image on the retina. Then I had a sense of my eyelids quivering, and the living daylight broke in upon me; I saw gardens, and heard voices; I was seated on the steps of the Belvedere Terrace, and my friends were round me.

The tumult of mind into which I was thrown by this hideous vision made me ill for several days, and prolonged our stay at Vienna. I shuddered with horror as the scene recurred to me; and it recurred constantly, with all its minutiae, as if they had been burnt into my memory; and yet, such is the madness of the human heart under the influence of its immediate desires, I felt a wild hell-braving joy that Bertha was to be mine; for the fulfilment of my former prevision concerning her first appearance before me, left me little hope that this last hideous glimpse of the future was the mere diseased play of my own mind, and had no relation to external realities. One thing alone I looked towards as a possible means of casting doubt on my terrible conviction—the discovery that my vision of Prague had been false—and Prague was the next city on our route.

Meanwhile, I was no sooner in Bertha's society again than I was as completely under her sway as before. What if I saw into the heart of Bertha, the matured woman—Bertha, my wife? Bertha, the girl, was a fascinating secret to me still: I trembled under her touch; I felt the witchery of her presence; I yearned to be assured of her love. The fear of poison is feeble against the sense of thirst. Nay, I was just as jealous of my brother as before—just as much irritated by his small patronizing ways; for my pride, my diseased sensibility, were there as they had always been, and winced as inevitably under every offence as my eye winced from an intruding mote. The future, even when brought within the compass of feeling by a vision that made me shudder, had still no more than the force of an idea, compared with the force of present emotion—of my love for Bertha, of my dislike and jealousy towards my brother.

It is an old story, that men sell themselves to the tempter, and sign a bond with their blood, because it is only to take effect at a distant day; then rush on to snatch the cup their souls thirst after with an impulse not the less savage because there is a dark shadow beside them for evermore. There is no short cut, no patent tram-road, to wisdom: after all the centuries of invention, the soul's path lies through the thorny wilderness which must be still trodden in solitude, with bleeding feet, with sobs for help, as it was trodden by them of old time.

My mind speculated eagerly on the means by which I should become my brother's successful rival, for I was still too timid, in my ignorance of Bertha's actual feeling, to venture on any step that would urge from her an avowal of it. I thought I should gain confidence even for this, if my vision of Prague proved

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to have been veracious; and yet, the horror of that certitude! Behind the slim girl Bertha, whose words and looks I watched for, whose touch was bliss, there stood continually that Bertha with the fuller form, the harder eyes, the more rigid mouth—with the barren, selfish soul laid bare; no longer a fascinating secret, but a measured fact, urging itself perpetually on my unwilling sight. Are you unable to give me your sympathy—you who react this? Are you unable to imagine this double consciousness at work within me, flowing on like two parallel streams which never mingle their waters and blend into a common hue? Yet you must have known something of the presentiments that spring from an insight at war with passion; and my visions were only like presentiments intensified to horror. You have known the powerlessness of ideas before the might of impulse; and my visions, when once they had passed into memory, were mere ideas—pale shadows that beckoned in vain, while my hand was grasped by the living and the loved.

In after-days I thought with bitter regret that if I had foreseen something more or something different—if instead of that hideous vision which poisoned the passion it could not destroy, or if even along with it I could have had a foreshadowing of that moment when I looked on my brother's face for the last time, some softening influence would have been shed over my feeling towards him: pride and hatred would surely have been subdued into pity, and the record of those hidden sins would have been shortened. But this is one of the vain thoughts with which we men flatter ourselves. We try to believe that the egoism within us would have easily been melted, and that it was only the narrowness of our knowledge which hemmed in our generosity, our awe, our human piety, and hindered them from submerging our hard indifference to the sensations and emotions of our fellows. Our tenderness and self-renunciation seem strong when our egoism has had its day—when, after our mean striving for a triumph that is to be another's loss, the triumph comes suddenly, and we shudder at it, because it is held out by the chill hand of death.

Our arrival in Prague happened at night, and I was glad of this, for it seemed like a deferring of a terribly decisive moment, to be in the city for hours without seeing it. As we were not to remain long in Prague, but to go on speedily to Dresden, it was proposed that we should drive out the next morning and take a general view of the place, as well as visit some of its specially interesting spots, before the heat became oppressive—for we were in August, and the season was hot and dry. But it happened that the ladies were rather late at their morning toilet, and to my father's politely-repressed but perceptible annoyance, we were not in the carriage till the morning was far advanced. I thought with a sense of relief, as we entered the Jews' quarter, where we were to visit the old synagogue, that we should be kept in this flat, shut-up part of the city, until we should all be too tired and too warm to go farther, and so we should return without seeing more than the streets through which we had already passed. That would give me another day's suspense—suspense, the only form in which a fearful spirit knows the solace of hope. But, as I stood under the blackened, groined arches of that old synagogue, made dimly visible by the seven thin candles in the sacred lamp,

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while our Jewish cicerone reached down the Book of the Law, and read to us in its ancient tongue—I felt a shuddering impression that this strange building, with its shrunken lights, this surviving withered remnant of medieval Judaism, was of a piece with my vision. Those darkened dusty Christian saints, with their loftier arches and their larger candles, needed the consolatory scorn with which they might point to a more shrivelled death-in-life than their own.

As I expected, when we left the Jews' quarter the elders of our party wished to return to the hotel. But now, instead of rejoicing in this, as I had done beforehand, I felt a sudden overpowering impulse to go on at once to the bridge, and put an end to the suspense I had been wishing to protract. I declared, with unusual decision, that I would get out of the carriage and walk on alone; they might return without me. My father, thinking this merely a sample of my usual "poetic nonsense," objected that I should only do myself harm by walking in the heat; but when I persisted, he said angrily that I might follow my own absurd devices, but that Schmidt (our courier) must go with me. I assented to this, and set off with Schmidt towards the bridge. I had no sooner passed from under the archway of the grand old gate leading an to the bridge, than a trembling seized me, and I turned cold under the midday sun; yet I went on; I was in search of something—a small detail which I remembered with special intensity as part of my vision. There it was—the patch of rainbow light on the pavement transmitted through a lamp in the shape of a star.

Chapter II

Before the autumn was at an end, and while the brown leaves still stood thick on the beeches in our park, my brother and Bertha were engaged to each other, and it was understood that their marriage was to take place early in the next spring. In spite of the certainty I had felt from that moment on the bridge at Prague, that Bertha would one day be my wife, my constitutional timidity and distrust had continued to benumb me, and the words in which I had sometimes premeditated a confession of my love, had died away unuttered. The same conflict had gone on within me as before—the longing for an assurance of love from Bertha's lips, the dread lest a word of contempt and denial should fall upon me like a corrosive acid. What was the conviction of a distant necessity to me? I trembled under a present glance, I hungered after a present joy, I was clogged and chilled by a present fear. And so the days passed on: I witnessed Bertha's engagement and heard her marriage discussed as if I were under a conscious nightmare—knowing it was a dream that would vanish, but feeling stifled under the grasp of hard-clutching fingers.

When I was not in Bertha's presence—and I was with her very often, for she continued to treat me with a playful patronage that wakened no jealousy in my brother—I spent my time chiefly in wandering, in strolling, or taking long rides while the daylight lasted, and then shutting myself up with my unread books; for books had lost the power of chaining my attention. My self-consciousness was heightened to that pitch of intensity in which our own emotions take the form of a drama which urges itself imperatively on our contemplation, and we begin to

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weep, less under the sense of our suffering than at the thought of it. I felt a sort of pitying anguish over the pathos of my own lot: the lot of a being finely organized for pain, but with hardly any fibres that responded to pleasure—to whom the idea of future evil robbed the present of its joy, and for whom the idea of future good did not still the uneasiness of a present yearning or a present dread. I went dumbly through that stage of the poet's suffering, in which he feels the delicious pang of utterance, and makes an image of his sorrows.

I was left entirely without remonstrance concerning this dreamy wayward life: I knew my father's thought about me: "That lad will never be good for anything in life: he may waste his years in an insignificant way on the income that falls to him: I shall not trouble myself about a career for him."

One mild morning in the beginning of November, it happened that I was standing outside the portico patting lazy old Caesar, a Newfoundland almost blind with age, the only dog that ever took any notice of me—for the very dogs shunned me, and fawned on the happier people about me—when the groom brought up my brother's horse which was to carry him to the hunt, and my brother himself appeared at the door, florid, broad-chested, and self-complacent, feeling what a good-natured fellow he was not to behave insolently to us all on the strength of his great advantages.

"Latimer, old boy," he said to me in a tone of compassionate cordiality, "what a pity it is you don't have a run with the hounds now and then! The finest thing in the world for low spirits!"

"Low spirits!" I thought bitterly, as he rode away; "that is the sort of phrase with which coarse, narrow natures like yours think to describe experience of which you can know no more than your horse knows. It is to such as you that the good of this world falls: ready dulness, healthy selfishness, good-tempered conceit—these are the keys to happiness."

The quick thought came, that my selfishness was even stronger than his—it was only a suffering selfishness instead of an enjoying one. But then, again, my exasperating insight into Alfred's self-complacent soul, his freedom from all the doubts and fears, the unsatisfied yearnings, the exquisite tortures of sensitiveness, that had made the web of my life, seemed to absolve me from all bonds towards him. This man needed no pity, no love; those fine influences would have been as little felt by him as the delicate white mist is felt by the rock it caresses. There was no evil in store for him: if he was not to marry Bertha, it would be because he had found a lot pleasanter to himself.

Mr. Filmore's house lay not more than half a mile beyond our own gates, and whenever I knew my brother was gone in another direction, I went there for the chance of finding Bertha at home. Later on in the day I walked thither. By a rare accident she was alone, and we walked out in the grounds together, for she seldom went on foot beyond the trimly-swept gravel-walks. I remember what a beautiful sylph she looked to me as the low November sun shone on her blond hair, and she tripped along teasing me with her usual light banter, to which I listened half

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fondly, half moodily; it was all the sign Bertha's mysterious inner self ever made to me. To-day perhaps, the moodiness predominated, for I had not yet shaken off the access of jealous hate which my brother had raised in me by his parting patronage. Suddenly I interrupted and startled her by saying, almost fiercely, "Bertha, how can you love Alfred?"

She looked at me with surprise for a moment, but soon her light smile came again, and she answered sarcastically, "Why do you suppose I love him?"

"How can you ask that, Bertha?"

"What! your wisdom thinks I must love the man I'm going to marry? The most unpleasant thing in the world. I should quarrel with him; I should be jealous of him; our menage would be conducted in a very ill-bred manner. A little quiet contempt contributes greatly to the elegance of life."

"Bertha, that is not your real feeling. Why do you delight in trying to deceive me by inventing such cynical speeches?"

"I need never take the trouble of invention in order to deceive you, my small Tasso"—(that was the mocking name she usually gave me). "The easiest way to deceive a poet is to tell him the truth."

She was testing the validity of her epigram in a daring way, and for a moment the shadow of my vision—the Bertha whose soul was no secret to me—passed between me and the radiant girl, the playful sylph whose feelings were a fascinating mystery. I suppose I must have shuddered, or betrayed in some other way my momentary chill of horror.

"Tasso!" she said, seizing my wrist, and peeping round into my face, "are you really beginning to discern what a heartless girl I am? Why, you are not half the poet I thought you were; you are actually capable of believing the truth about me."

The shadow passed from between us, and was no longer the object nearest to me. The girl whose light fingers grasped me, whose elfish charming face looked into mine—who, I thought, was betraying an interest in my feelings that she would not have directly avowed,—this warm breathing presence again possessed my senses and imagination like a returning siren melody which had been overpowered for an instant by the roar of threatening waves. It was a moment as delicious to me as the waking up to a consciousness of youth after a dream of middle age. I forgot everything but my passion, and said with swimming eyes—

"Bertha, shall you love me when we are first married? I wouldn't mind if you really loved me only for a little while."

Her look of astonishment, as she loosed my hand and started away from me, recalled me to a sense of my strange, my criminal indiscretion.

"Forgive me," I said, hurriedly, as soon as I could speak again; "I did not know what I was saying."

"Ah, Tasso's mad fit has come on, I see," she answered quietly, for she had recovered herself sooner than I had. "Let him go home and keep his head cool. I must go in, for the sun is setting."

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I left her—full of indignation against myself. I had let slip words which, if she reflected on them, might rouse in her a suspicion of my abnormal mental condition—a suspicion which of all things I dreaded. And besides that, I was ashamed of the apparent baseness I had committed in uttering them to my brother's betrothed wife. I wandered home slowly, entering our park through a private gate instead of by the lodges. As I approached the house, I saw a man dashing off at full speed from the stable-yard across the park. Had any accident happened at home? No; perhaps it was only one of my father's peremptory business errands that required this headlong haste.

Nevertheless I quickened my pace without any distinct motive, and was soon at the house. I will not dwell on the scene I found there. My brother was dead—had been pitched from his horse, and killed on the spot by a concussion of the brain.

I went up to the room where he lay, and where my father was seated beside him with a look of rigid despair. I had shunned my father more than any one since our return home, for the radical antipathy between our natures made my insight into his inner self a constant affliction to me. But now, as I went up to him, and stood beside him in sad silence, I felt the presence of a new element that blended us as we had never been blent before. My father had been one of the most successful men in the money-getting world: he had had no sentimental sufferings, no illness. The heaviest trouble that had befallen him was the death of his first wife. But he married my mother soon after; and I remember he seemed exactly the same, to my keen childish observation, the week after her death as before. But now, at last, a sorrow had come—the sorrow of old age, which suffers the more from the crushing of its pride and its hopes, in proportion as the pride and hope are narrow and prosaic. His son was to have been married soon—would probably have stood for the borough at the next election. That son's existence was the best motive that could be alleged for making new purchases of land every year to round off the estate. It is a dreary thing to live on doing the same things year after year, without knowing why we do them. Perhaps the tragedy of disappointed youth and passion is less piteous than the tragedy of disappointed age and worldliness.

As I saw into the desolation of my father's heart, I felt a movement of deep pity towards him, which was the beginning of a new affection—an affection that grew and strengthened in spite of the strange bitterness with which he regarded me in the first month or two after my brother's death. If it had not been for the softening influence of my compassion for him—the first deep compassion I had ever felt—I should have been stung by the perception that my father transferred the inheritance of an eldest son to me with a mortified sense that fate had compelled him to the unwelcome course of caring for me as an important being. It was only in spite of himself that he began to think of me with anxious regard. There is hardly any neglected child for whom death has made vacant a more favoured place, who will not understand what I mean.

Gradually, however, my new deference to his wishes, the effect of that patience which was born of my pity for him, won upon his affection, and he began to please

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himself with the endeavour to make me fill any brother's place as fully as my feebler personality would admit. I saw that the prospect which by and by presented itself of my becoming Bertha's husband was welcome to him, and he even contemplated in my case what he had not intended in my brother's—that his son and daughter-in-law should make one household with him. My softened feelings towards my father made this the happiest time I had known since childhood;—these last months in which I retained the delicious illusion of loving Bertha, of longing and doubting and hoping that she might love me. She behaved with a certain new consciousness and distance towards me after my brother's death; and I too was under a double constraint—that of delicacy towards my brother's memory and of anxiety as to the impression my abrupt words had left on her mind. But the additional screen this mutual reserve erected between us only brought me more completely under her power: no matter how empty the adytum, so that the veil be thick enough. So absolute is our soul's need of something hidden and uncertain for the maintenance of that doubt and hope and effort which are the breath of its life, that if the whole future were laid bare to us beyond to-day, the interest of all mankind would be bent on the hours that lie between; we should pant after the uncertainties of our one morning and our one afternoon; we should rush fiercely to the Exchange for our last possibility of speculation, of success, of disappointment: we should have a glut of political prophets foretelling a crisis or a no-crisis within the only twenty-four hours left open to prophecy. Conceive the condition of the human mind if all propositions whatsoever were self-evident except one, which was to become self-evident at the close of a summer's day, but in the meantime might be the subject of question, of hypothesis, of debate. Art and philosophy, literature and science, would fasten like bees on that one proposition which had the honey of probability in it, and be the more eager because their enjoyment would end with sunset. Our impulses, our spiritual activities, no more adjust themselves to the idea of their future nullity, than the beating of our heart, or the irritability of our muscles.

Bertha, the slim, fair-haired girl, whose present thoughts and emotions were an enigma to me amidst the fatiguing obviousness of the other minds around me, was as absorbing to me as a single unknown to-day—as a single hypothetic proposition to remain problematic till sunset; and all the cramped, hemmed-in belief and disbelief, trust and distrust, of my nature, welled out in this one narrow channel.

And she made me believe that she loved me. Without ever quitting her tone of badinage and playful superiority, she intoxicated me with the sense that I was necessary to her, that she was never at ease, unless I was near her, submitting to her playful tyranny. It costs a woman so little effort to beset us in this way! A half-repressed word, a moment's unexpected silence, even an easy fit of petulance on our account, will serve us as hashish for a long while. Out of the subtlest web of scarcely perceptible signs, she set me weaving the fancy that she had always unconsciously loved me better than Alfred, but that, with the ignorant fluttered sensibility of a young girl, she had been imposed on by the charm that lay for her in the distinction of being admired and chosen by a man who made so brilliant a

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figure in the world as my brother. She satirized herself in a very graceful way for her vanity and ambition. What was it to me that I had the light of my wretched provision on the fact that now it was I who possessed at least all but the personal part of my brother's advantages? Our sweet illusions are half of them conscious illusions, like effects of colour that we know to be made up of tinsel, broken glass, and rags.

We were married eighteen months after Alfred's death, one cold, clear morning in April, when there came hail and sunshine both together; and Bertha, in her white silk and pale-green leaves, and the pale hues of her hair and face, looked like the spirit of the morning. My father was happier than he had thought of being again: my marriage, he felt sure, would complete the desirable modification of my character, and make me practical and worldly enough to take my place in society among sane men. For he delighted in Bertha's tact and acuteness, and felt sure she would be mistress of me, and make me what she chose: I was only twenty-one, and madly in love with her. Poor father! He kept that hope a little while after our first year of marriage, and it was not quite extinct when paralysis came and saved him from utter disappointment.

I shall hurry through the rest of my story, not dwelling so much as I have hitherto done on my inward experience. When people are well known to each other, they talk rather of what befalls them externally, leaving their feelings and sentiments to be inferred.

We lived in a round of visits for some time after our return home, giving splendid dinner-parties, and making a sensation in our neighbourhood by the new lustre of our equipage, for my father had reserved this display of his increased wealth for the period of his son's marriage; and we gave our acquaintances liberal opportunity for remarking that it was a pity I made so poor a figure as an heir and a bridegroom. The nervous fatigue of this existence, the insincerities and platitudes which I had to live through twice over—through my inner and outward sense—would have been maddening to me, if I had not had that sort of intoxicated callousness which came from the delights of a first passion. A bride and bridegroom, surrounded by all the appliances of wealth, hurried through the day by the whirl of society, filling their solitary moments with hastily-snatched caresses, are prepared for their future life together as the novice is prepared for the cloister—by experiencing its utmost contrast.

Through all these crowded excited months, Bertha's inward self remained shrouded from me, and I still read her thoughts only through the language of her lips and demeanour: I had still the human interest of wondering whether what I did and said pleased her, of longing to hear a word of affection, of giving a delicious exaggeration of meaning to her smile. But I was conscious of a growing difference in her manner towards me; sometimes strong enough to be called haughty coldness, cutting and chilling me as the hail had done that came across the sunshine on our marriage morning; sometimes only perceptible in the dexterous avoidance of a tete-a-tete walk or dinner to which I had been looking forward. I had been deeply

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pained by this—had even felt a sort of crushing of the heart, from the sense that my brief day of happiness was near its setting; but still I remained dependent on Bertha, eager for the last rays of a bliss that would soon be gone for ever, hoping and watching for some after-glow more beautiful from the impending night.

I remember—how should I not remember?—the time when that dependence and hope utterly left me, when the sadness I had felt in Bertha's growing estrangement became a joy that I looked back upon with longing as a man might look back on the last pains in a paralysed limb. It was just after the close of my father's last illness, which had necessarily withdrawn us from society and thrown us more on each other. It was the evening of father's death. On that evening the veil which had shrouded Bertha's soul from me—had made me find in her alone among my fellow-beings the blessed possibility of mystery, and doubt, and expectation—was first withdrawn. Perhaps it was the first day since the beginning of my passion for her, in which that passion was completely neutralized by the presence of an absorbing feeling of another kind. I had been watching by my father's deathbed: I had been witnessing the last fitful yearning glance his soul had cast back on the spent inheritance of life—the last faint consciousness of love he had gathered from the pressure of my hand. What are all our personal loves when we have been sharing in that supreme agony? In the first moments when we come away from the presence of death, every other relation to the living is merged, to our feeling, in the great relation of a common nature and a common destiny.

In that state of mind I joined Bertha in her private sitting-room. She was seated in a leaning posture on a settee, with her back towards the door; the great rich coils of her pale blond hair surmounting her small neck, visible above the back of the settee. I remember, as I closed the door behind me, a cold tremulousness seizing me, and a vague sense of being hated and lonely—vague and strong, like a presentiment. I know how I looked at that moment, for I saw myself in Bertha's thought as she lifted her cutting grey eyes, and looked at me: a miserable ghost-seer, surrounded by phantoms in the noonday, trembling under a breeze when the leaves were still, without appetite for the common objects of human desires, but pining after the moon-beams. We were front to front with each other, and judged each other. The terrible moment of complete illumination had come to me, and I saw that the darkness had hidden no landscape from me, but only a blank prosaic wall: from that evening forth, through the sickening years which followed, I saw all round the narrow room of this woman's soul—saw petty artifice and mere negation where I had delighted to believe in coy sensibilities and in wit at war with latent feeling—saw the light floating vanities of the girl defining themselves into the systematic coquetry, the scheming selfishness, of the woman—saw repulsion and antipathy harden into cruel hatred, giving pain only for the sake of wreaking itself.

For Bertha too, after her kind, felt the bitterness of disillusion. She had believed that my wild poet's passion for her would make me her slave; and that, being her slave, I should execute her will in all things. With the essential shallowness of a negative, unimaginative nature, she was unable to conceive the fact that sensibilities

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were anything else than weaknesses. She had thought my weaknesses would put me in her power, and she found them unmanageable forces. Our positions were reversed. Before marriage she had completely mastered my imagination, for she was a secret to me; and I created the unknown thought before which I trembled as if it were hers. But now that her soul was laid open to me, now that I was compelled to share the privacy of her motives, to follow all the petty devices that preceded her words and acts, she found herself powerless with me, except to produce in me the chill shudder of repulsion—powerless, because I could be acted on by no lever within her reach. I was dead to worldly ambitions, to social vanities, to all the incentives within the compass of her narrow imagination, and I lived under influences utterly invisible to her.

She was really pitiable to have such a husband, and so all the world thought. A graceful, brilliant woman, like Bertha, who smiled on morning callers, made a figure in ball-rooms, and was capable of that light repartee which, from such a woman, is accepted as wit, was secure of carrying off all sympathy from a husband who was sickly, abstracted, and, as some suspected, crack-brained. Even the servants in our house gave her the balance of their regard and pity. For there were no audible quarrels between us; our alienation, our repulsion from each other, lay within the silence of our own hearts; and if the mistress went out a great deal, and seemed to dislike the master's society, was it not natural, poor thing? The master was odd. I was kind and just to my dependants, but I excited in them a shrinking, half-contemptuous pity; for this class of men and women are but slightly determined in their estimate of others by general considerations, or even experience, of character. They judge of persons as they judge of coins, and value those who pass current at a high rate.

After a time I interfered so little with Bertha's habits that it might seem wonderful how her hatred towards me could grow so intense and active as it did. But she had begun to suspect, by some involuntary betrayal of mine, that there was an abnormal power of penetration in me—that fitfully, at least, I was strangely cognizant of her thoughts and intentions, and she began to be haunted by a terror of me, which alternated every now and then with defiance. She meditated continually how the incubus could be shaken off her life—how she could be freed from this hateful bond to a being whom she at once despised as an imbecile, and dreaded as an inquisitor. For a long while she lived in the hope that my evident wretchedness would drive me to the commission of suicide; but suicide was not in my nature. I was too completely swayed by the sense that I was in the grasp of unknown forces, to believe in my power of self-release. Towards my own destiny I had become entirely passive; for my one ardent desire had spent itself, and impulse no longer predominated over knowledge. For this reason I never thought of taking any steps towards a complete separation, which would have made our alienation evident to the world. Why should I rush for help to a new course, when I was only suffering from the consequences of a deed which had been the act of my intensest will? That would have been the logic of one who had desires to gratify, and I had no desires. But Bertha and I lived more and more aloof from each other. The rich find it easy to live married and apart.

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That course of our life which I have indicated in a few sentences filled the space of years. So much misery—so slow and hideous a growth of hatred and sin, may be compressed into a sentence! And men judge of each other's lives through this summary medium. They epitomize the experience of their fellow-mortal, and pronounce judgment on him in neat syntax, and feel themselves wise and virtuous— conquerors over the temptations they define in well-selected predicates. Seven years of wretchedness glide glibly over the lips of the man who has never counted them out in moments of chill disappointment, of head and heart throbbings, of dread and vain wrestling, of remorse and despair. We learn words by rote, but not their meaning; that must be paid for with our life-blood, and printed in the subtle fibres of our nerves.

But I will hasten to finish my story. Brevity is justified at once to those who readily understand, and to those who will never understand.

Some years after my father's death, I was sitting by the dim firelight in my library one January evening—sitting in the leather chair that used to be my father's—when Bertha appeared at the door, with a candle in her hand, and advanced towards me. I knew the ball-dress she had on—the white ball-dress, with the green jewels, shone upon by the light of the wax candle which lit up the medallion of the dying Cleopatra on the mantelpiece. Why did she come to me before going out? I had not seen her in the library, which was my habitual place for months. Why did she stand before me with the candle in her hand, with her cruel contemptuous eyes fixed on me, and the glittering serpent, like a familiar demon, on her breast? For a moment I thought this fulfilment of my vision at Vienna marked some dreadful crisis in my fate, but I saw nothing in Bertha's mind, as she stood before me, except scorn for the look of overwhelming misery with which I sat before her . . . "Fool, idiot, why don't you kill yourself, then?"—that was her thought. But at length her thoughts reverted to her errand, and she spoke aloud. The apparently indifferent nature of the errand seemed to make a ridiculous anticlimax to my prevision and my agitation.

"I have had to hire a new maid. Fletcher is going to be married, and she wants me to ask you to let her husband have the public-house and farm at Molton. I wish him to have it. You must give the promise now, because Fletcher is going tomorrow morning—and quickly, because I'm in a hurry."

"Very well; you may promise her," I said, indifferently, and Bertha swept out of the library again.

I always shrank from the sight of a new person, and all the more when it was a person whose mental life was likely to weary my reluctant insight with worldly ignorant trivialities. But I shrank especially from the sight of this new maid, because her advent had been announced to me at a moment to which I could not cease to attach some fatality: I had a vague dread that I should find her mixed up with the dreary drama of my life—that some new sickening vision would reveal her to me as an evil genius. When at last I did unavoidably meet her, the vague dread was changed into definite disgust. She was a tall, wiry, dark-eyed woman, this Mrs. Archer, with a face handsome enough to give her coarse hard nature the odious

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finish of bold, self-confident coquetry. That was enough to make me avoid her, quite apart from the contemptuous feeling with which she contemplated me. I seldom saw her; but I perceived that she rapidly became a favourite with her mistress, and, after the lapse of eight or nine months, I began to be aware that there had arisen in Bertha's mind towards this woman a mingled feeling of fear and dependence, and that this feeling was associated with ill-defined images of candle-light scenes in her dressing-room, and the locking-up of something in Bertha's cabinet. My interviews with my wife had become so brief and so rarely solitary, that I had no opportunity of perceiving these images in her mind with more definiteness. The recollections of the past become contracted in the rapidity of thought till they sometimes bear hardly a more distinct resemblance to the external reality than the forms of an oriental alphabet to the objects that suggested them.

Besides, for the last year or more a modification had been going forward in my mental condition, and was growing more and more marked. My insight into the minds of those around me was becoming dimmer and more fitful, and the ideas that crowded my double consciousness became less and less dependent on any personal contact. All that was personal in me seemed to be suffering a gradual death, so that I was losing the organ through which the personal agitations and projects of others could affect me. But along with this relief from wearisome insight, there was a new development of what I concluded—as I have since found rightly—to be a provision of external scenes. It was as if the relation between me and my fellow-men was more and more deadened, and my relation to what we call the inanimate was quickened into new life. The more I lived apart from society, and in proportion as my wretchedness subsided from the violent throb of agonized passion into the dulness of habitual pain, the more frequent and vivid became such visions as that I had had of Prague—of strange cities, of sandy plains, of gigantic ruins, of midnight skies with strange bright constellations, of mountain-passes, of grassy nooks flecked with the afternoon sunshine through the boughs: I was in the midst of such scenes, and in all of them one presence seemed to weigh on me in all these mighty shapes—the presence of something unknown and pitiless. For continual suffering had annihilated religious faith within me: to the utterly miserable—the unloving and the unloved—there is no religion possible, no worship but a worship of devils. And beyond all these, and continually recurring, was the vision of my death—the pangs, the suffocation, the last struggle, when life would be grasped at in vain.

Things were in this state near the end of the seventh year. I had become entirely free from insight, from my abnormal cognizance of any other consciousness than my own, and instead of intruding involuntarily into the world of other minds, was living continually in my own solitary future. Bertha was aware that I was greatly changed. To my surprise she had of late seemed to seek opportunities of remaining in my society, and had cultivated that kind of distant yet familiar talk which is customary between a husband and wife who live in polite and irrevocable alienation. I bore this with languid submission, and without feeling enough interest in her motives to be roused into keen observation; yet I could not help

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perceiving something triumphant and excited in her carriage and the expression of her face—something too subtle to express itself in words or tones, but giving one the idea that she lived in a state of expectation or hopeful suspense. My chief feeling was satisfaction that her inner self was once more shut out from me; and I almost revelled for the moment in the absent melancholy that made me answer her at cross purposes, and betray utter ignorance of what she had been saying. I remember well the look and the smile with which she one day said, after a mistake of this kind on my part: "I used to think you were a clairvoyant, and that was the reason why you were so bitter against other clairvoyants, wanting to keep your monopoly; but I see now you have become rather duller than the rest of the world."

I said nothing in reply. It occurred to me that her recent obtrusion of herself upon me might have been prompted by the wish to test my power of detecting some of her secrets; but I let the thought drop again at once: her motives and her deeds had no interest for me, and whatever pleasures she might be seeking, I had no wish to baulk her. There was still pity in my soul for every living thing, and Bertha was living—was surrounded with possibilities of misery.

Just at this time there occurred an event which roused me somewhat from my inertia, and gave me an interest in the passing moment that I had thought impossible for me. It was a visit from Charles Meunier, who had written me word that he was coming to England for relaxation from too strenuous labour, and would like too see me. Meunier had now a European reputation; but his letter to me expressed that keen remembrance of an early regard, an early debt of sympathy, which is inseparable from nobility of character: and I too felt as if his presence would be to me like a transient resurrection into a happier pre-existence.

He came, and as far as possible, I renewed our old pleasure of making tete-a-tete excursions, though, instead of mountains and glaciers and the wide blue lake, we had to content ourselves with mere slopes and ponds and artificial plantations. The years had changed us both, but with what different result! Meunier was now a brilliant figure in society, to whom elegant women pretended to listen, and whose acquaintance was boasted of by noblemen ambitious of brains. He repressed with the utmost delicacy all betrayal of the shock which I am sure he must have received from our meeting, or of a desire to penetrate into my condition and circumstances, and sought by the utmost exertion of his charming social powers to make our reunion agreeable. Bertha was much struck by the unexpected fascinations of a visitor whom she had expected to find presentable only on the score of his celebrity, and put forth all her coquetries and accomplishments. Apparently she succeeded in attracting his admiration, for his manner towards her was attentive and flattering. The effect of his presence on me was so benignant, especially in those renewals of our old tete-a-tete wanderings, when he poured forth to me wonderful narratives of his professional experience, that more than once, when his talk turned on the psychological relations of disease, the thought crossed my mind that, if his stay with me were long enough, I might possibly bring myself to tell this man the secrets of my lot. Might there not lie some remedy for me, too, in his science? Might there not at least lie some

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comprehension and sympathy ready for me in his large and susceptible mind? But the thought only flickered feebly now and then, and died out before it could become a wish. The horror I had of again breaking in on the privacy of another soul, made me, by an irrational instinct, draw the shroud of concealment more closely around my own, as we automatically perform the gesture we feel to be wanting in another.

When Meunier's visit was approaching its conclusion, there happened an event which caused some excitement in our household, owing to the surprisingly strong effect it appeared to produce on Bertha—on Bertha, the self-possessed, who usually seemed inaccessible to feminine agitations, and did even her hate in a self-restrained hygienic manner. This event was the sudden severe illness of her maid, Mrs. Archer. I have reserved to this moment the mention of a circumstance which had forced itself on my notice shortly before Meunier's arrival, namely, that there had been some quarrel between Bertha and this maid, apparently during a visit to a distant family, in which she had accompanied her mistress. I had overheard Archer speaking in a tone of bitter insolence, which I should have thought an adequate reason for immediate dismissal. No dismissal followed; on the contrary, Bertha seemed to be silently putting up with personal inconveniences from the exhibitions of this woman's temper. I was the more astonished to observe that her illness seemed a cause of strong solicitude to Bertha; that she was at the bedside night and day, and would allow no one else to officiate as head- nurse. It happened that our family doctor was out on a holiday, an accident which made Meunier's presence in the house doubly welcome, and he apparently entered into the case with an interest which seemed so much stronger than the ordinary professional feeling, that one day when he had fallen into a long fit of silence after visiting her, I said to him—

"Is this a very peculiar case of disease, Meunier?"

"No," he answered, "it is an attack of peritonitis, which will be fatal, but which does not differ physically from many other cases that have come under my observation. But I'll tell you what I have on my mind. I want to make an experiment on this woman, if you will give me permission. It can do her no harm—will give her no pain—for I shall not make it until life is extinct to all purposes of sensation. I want to try the effect of transfusing blood into her arteries after the heart has ceased to beat for some minutes. I have tried the experiment again and again with animals that have died of this disease, with astounding results, and I want to try it on a human subject. I have the small tubes necessary, in a case I have with me, and the rest of the apparatus could be prepared readily. I should use my own blood—take it from my own arm. This woman won't live through the night, I'm convinced, and I want you to promise me your assistance in making the experiment. I can't do without another hand, but it would perhaps not be well to call in a medical assistant from among your provincial doctors. A disagreeable foolish version of the thing might get abroad."

"Have you spoken to my wife on the subject?" I said, "because she appears to be peculiarly sensitive about this woman: she has been a favourite maid."

"To tell you the truth," said Meunier, "I don't want her to know about it. There are always insuperable difficulties with women in these matters, and the effect on

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the supposed dead body may be startling. You and I will sit up together, and be in readiness. When certain symptoms appear I shall take you in, and at the right moment we must manage to get every one else out of the room."

I need not give our farther conversation on the subject. He entered very fully into the details, and overcame my repulsion from them, by exciting in me a mingled awe and curiosity concerning the possible results of his experiment.

We prepared everything, and he instructed me in my part as assistant. He had not told Bertha of his absolute conviction that Archer would not survive through the night, and endeavoured to persuade her to leave the patient and take a night's rest. But she was obstinate, suspecting the fact that death was at hand, and supposing that he wished merely to save her nerves. She refused to leave the sickroom. Meunier and I sat up together in the library, he making frequent visits to the sick-room, and returning with the information that the case was taking precisely the course he expected. Once he said to me, "Can you imagine any cause of ill-feeling this woman has against her mistress, who is so devoted to her?"

"I think there was some misunderstanding between them before her illness. Why do you ask?"

"Because I have observed for the last five or six hours—since, I fancy, she has lost all hope of recovery—there seems a strange prompting in her to say something which pain and failing strength forbid her to utter; and there is a look of hideous meaning in her eyes, which she turns continually towards her mistress. In this disease the mind often remains singularly clear to the last."

"I am not surprised at an indication of malevolent feeling in her," I said. "She is a woman who has always inspired me with distrust and dislike, but she managed to insinuate herself into her mistress's favour." He was silent after this, looking at the fire with an air of absorption, till he went upstairs again. He stayed away longer than usual, and on returning, said to me quietly, "Come now."

I followed him to the chamber where death was hovering. The dark hangings of the large bed made a background that gave a strong relief to Bertha's pale face as I entered. She started forward as she saw me enter, and then looked at Meunier with an expression of angry inquiry; but he lifted up his hand as it to impose silence, while he fixed his glance on the dying woman and felt her pulse. The face was pinched and ghastly, a cold perspiration was on the forehead, and the eyelids were lowered so as to conceal the large dark eyes. After a minute or two, Meunier walked round to the other side of the bed where Bertha stood, and with his usual air of gentle politeness towards her begged her to leave the patient under our care— everything should be done for her—she was no longer in a state to be conscious of an affectionate presence. Bertha was hesitating, apparently almost willing to believe his assurance and to comply. She looked round at the ghastly dying face, as if to read the confirmation of that assurance, when for a moment the lowered eyelids were raised again, and it seemed as if the eyes were looking towards Bertha, but blankly. A shudder passed through Bertha's frame, and she returned to her station near the pillow, tacitly implying that she would not leave the room.

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The eyelids were lifted no more. Once I looked at Bertha as she watched the face of the dying one. She wore a rich peignoir, and her blond hair was half covered by a lace cap: in her attire she was, as always, an elegant woman, fit to figure in a picture of modern aristocratic life: but I asked myself how that face of hers could ever have seemed to me the face of a woman born of woman, with memories of childhood, capable of pain, needing to be fondled? The features at that moment seemed so preternaturally sharp, the eyes were so hard and eager—she looked like a cruel immortal, finding her spiritual feast in the agonies of a dying race. For across those hard features there came something like a flash when the last hour had been breathed out, and we all felt that the dark veil had completely fallen. What secret was there between Bertha and this woman? I turned my eyes from her with a horrible dread lest my insight should return, and I should be obliged to see what had been breeding about two unloving women's hearts. I felt that Bertha had been watching for the moment of death as the sealing of her secret: I thanked Heaven it could remain sealed for me.

Meunier said quietly, "She is gone." He then gave his arm to Bertha, and she submitted to be led out of the room.

I suppose it was at her order that two female attendants came into the room, and dismissed the younger one who had been present before. When they entered, Meunier had already opened the artery in the long thin neck that lay rigid on the pillow, and I dismissed them, ordering them to remain at a distance till we rang: the doctor, I said, had an operation to perform—he was not sure about the death. For the next twenty minutes I forgot everything but Meunier and the experiment in which he was so absorbed, that I think his senses would have been closed against all sounds or sights which had no relation to it. It was my task at first to keep up the artificial respiration in the body after the transfusion had been effected, but presently Meunier relieved me, and I could see the wondrous slow return of life; the breast began to heave, the inspirations became stronger, the eyelids quivered, and the soul seemed to have returned beneath them. The artificial respiration was withdrawn: still the breathing continued, and there was a movement of the lips.

Just then I heard the handle of the door moving: I suppose Bertha had heard from the women that they had been dismissed: probably a vague fear had arisen in her mind, for she entered with a look of alarm. She came to the foot of the bed and gave a stifled cry.

The dead woman's eyes were wide open, and met hers in full recognition—the recognition of hate. With a sudden strong effort, the hand that Bertha had thought for ever still was pointed towards her, and the haggard face moved. The gasping eager voice said—

"You mean to poison your husband . . . the poison is in the black cabinet . . . I got it for you . . . you laughed at me, and told lies about me behind my back, to make me disgusting . . . because you were jealous . . . are you sorry . . . now?"

The lips continued to murmur, but the sounds were no longer distinct. Soon there was no sound—only a slight movement: the flame had leaped out, and was

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being extinguished the faster. The wretched woman's heart-strings had been set to hatred and vengeance; the spirit of life had swept the chords for an instant, and was gone again for ever. Great God! Is this what it is to live again . . . to wake up with our unstilled thirst upon us, with our unuttered curses rising to our lips, with our muscles ready to act out their half-committed sins?

Bertha stood pale at the foot of the bed, quivering and helpless, despairing of devices, like a cunning animal whose hiding-places are surrounded by swift-advancing flame. Even Meunier looked paralysed; life for that moment ceased to be a scientific problem to him. As for me, this scene seemed of one texture with the rest of my existence: horror was my familiar, and this new revelation was only like

an old pain recurring with new circumstances.

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Since then Bertha and I have lived apart—she in her own neighbourhood, the mistress of half our wealth, I as a wanderer in foreign countries, until I came to this Devonshire nest to die. Bertha lives pitied and admired; for what had I against that charming woman, whom every one but myself could have been happy with? There had been no witness of the scene in the dying room except Meunier, and while Meunier lived his lips were sealed by a promise to me.

Once or twice, weary of wandering, I rested in a favourite spot, and my heart went out towards the men and women and children whose faces were becoming familiar to me; but I was driven away again in terror at the approach of my old insight—driven away to live continually with the one Unknown Presence revealed and yet hidden by the moving curtain of the earth and sky. Till at last disease took hold of me and forced me to rest here—forced me to live in dependence on my servants. And then the curse of insight—of my double consciousness, came again, and has never left me. I know all their narrow thoughts, their feeble regard, their half-wearied pity.

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It is the 20th of September, 1850. I know these figures I have just written, as if they were a long familiar inscription. I have seen them on this page in my desk unnumbered times, when the scene of my dying struggle has opened upon me . . .

### 2.8.3 Reading and Review Questions

1. In an essay on John Ruskin, George Eliot defined realism as "the doctrine that all truth and beauty are to be attained by a humble and faithful study of nature." How, if at all, does this definition rely upon or refute Romanticism, and why?

2. Why does George Eliot think that "commonplace things" are suitable subjects for Art?

3. How does the narrator's intrusiveness affect your response to the Adam Bede excerpt, and why?

4. How, if at all, do the supernatural elements of The Lifted Veil reconcile with George Eliot's views on realism in the novel?

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## 2.9 MATTHEW ARNOLD

(1822-1888)

The son of Thomas Arnold (1795-1842) and Mary Penrose, Matthew Arnold was born into a prominent family. Thomas, known as Dr. Arnold, was a famous and much-loved educator and headmaster of Rugby School. Lytton Strachey in his Eminent Victorians (1918) considered Dr. Arnold to be a typical Victorian in his energy and determination, his earnestness, and his always having the best intentions. At Rugby, Dr. Arnold emphasized moral training by institutionalizing prefects (older boys) and sports. He was an imposing figure who demanded a great deal from his students and from his son.

At first, Arnold resisted his father's influence by aspiring to dandyism and refusing to take academics seriously. After Dr. Arnold died in 1842, when Arnold was only twenty, Arnold further separated himself from his father's legacy by becoming a poet. In his poetry, Arnold worked through both private and public preoccupations, particularly with the desire for genuine communication and relationships, uncertainty over authentic identity, and despair in the face of a Crisis of Faith. In 1857, he became the Chair of Poetry at Oxford.

He ultimately moved away from his own poetry, which he saw as lacking in system and too emotional and subjective. He believed that, without a system, you needed to learn of and about other people and cultures.

As he reached middle age, Arnold turned exclusively to prose, particularly essays that offered curative methods for the ills of his society. He advocated for an educated public, well-versed in the classics, and open to culture. Relying on a free play of the mind, Arnold criticized Britain's lack of perspective on itself, particularly its tendency to activity and work at the expense of intellectuality and rationality. A thorough knowledge of the best thinking and writing of the world would counteract such tendencies through touchstones that would offer objective means to measure progress. He defended great literature as a way to develop character and promoted culture as a positive force that could lead to true equality for all parts of society, eradicating separate classes.

In 1883 and 1886, Arnold toured America and Canada, giving lectures on education. He died of heart failure in 1888.

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### 2.9.1 "Isolation. To Marguerite"

We were apart: yet, day by day,

I bade my heart more constant be.

I bade it keep the world away,

And grow a home for only thee;

Nor feared but thy love likewise grew,

Like mine, each day, more tried, more true.

The fault was grave! I might have known, What far too soon, alas! I learned,— The heart can bind itself alone, And faith may oft be unreturned. Self-swayed our feelings ebb and swell. Thou lov'st no more. Farewell! Farewell!

Farewell!—And thou, thou lonely heart, Which never yet without remorse Even for a moment didst depart From thy remote and sphered course To haunt the place where passions reign,— Back to thy solitude again!

Back! with the conscious thrill of shame Which Luna felt, that summer-night, Flash through her pure immortal frame, When she forsook the starry height To hang o'er Endymion's sleep Upon the pine-grown Latmian steep. Yet she, chaste queen, had never proved How vain a thing is mortal love, Wandering in heaven, far removed; But thou hast long had place to prove This truth,—to prove, and make thine own: "Thou hast been, shalt be, art, alone."

Or, if not quite alone, yet they Which touch thee are unmating things,— Ocean and clouds and night and day; Lorn autumns and triumphant springs; And life, and others' joy and pain, And love, if love, of happier men.

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Of happier men; for they, at least,

Have dreamed two human hearts might blend

In one, and were through faith released

From isolation without end

Prolonged; nor knew, although not less

Alone than thou, their loneliness.

### 2.9.2 "To Marguerite—Continued"

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,

With echoing straits between us thrown,

Dotting the shoreless watery wild,

We mortal millions live alone.

The islands feel the enclasping flow,

And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights, And they are swept by balms of spring, And in their glens, on starry nights, The nightingales divinely sing; And lovely notes, from shore to shore, Across the sounds and channels pour,—

Oh! then a longing like despair

Is to their farthest caverns sent;

For surely once, they feel, we were

Parts of a single continent!

Now round us spreads the watery plain:

Oh, might our marges meet again!

Who ordered that their longing's fire Should be, as soon as kindled, cooled? Who renders vain their deep desire?— A God, a God their severance ruled! And bade betwixt their shores to be The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

### 2.9.3 "The Buried Life"

Light flows our war of mocking words; and yet Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet! I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll. Yes, yes, we know that we can jest, We know, we know that we can smile!

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But there's a something in this breast, To which thy light words bring no rest, And thy gay smiles no anodyne; Give me thy hand, and hush awhile, And turn those limpid eyes on mine, And let me read there, love! thy inmost soul.

Alas! is even love too weak

To unlock the heart, and let it speak?

Are even lovers powerless to reveal

To one another what indeed they feel?

I knew the mass of men concealed

Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed

They would by other men be met

With blank indifference, or with blame reproved;

I knew they lived and moved

Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest

Of men, and alien to themselves—and yet

The same heart beats in every human breast!

But we, my love! doth a like spell benumb Our hearts, our voices? must we too be dumb?

Ah! well for us, if even we,

Even for a moment, can get free

Our heart, and have our lips unchained;

For that which seals them hath been deep-ordained!

Fate, which foresaw

How frivolous a baby man would be,—

By what distractions he would be possessed,

How he would pour himself in every strife,

And well-nigh change his own identity,—

That it might keep from his capricious play

His genuine self, and force him to obey

Even in his own despite his being's law,

Bade through the deep recesses of our breast

The unregarded river of our life

Pursue with indiscernible flow its way;

And that we should not see

The buried stream, and seem to be

Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,

Though driving on with it eternally.

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But often, in the world's most crowded streets, But often, in the din of strife, There rises an unspeakable desire After the knowledge of our buried life; A thirst to spend our fire and restless force In tracking out our true, original course; A longing to inquire

Into the mystery of this heart which beats

So wild, so deep in us,—to know

Whence our lives come, and where they go.

And many a man in his own breast then delves,

But deep enough, alas! none ever mines.

And we have been on many thousand lines,

And we have shown, on each, spirit and power;

But hardly have we, for one little hour,

Been on our own line, have we been ourselves,—

Hardly had skill to utter one of all

The nameless feelings that course through our breast,

But they course on forever unexpressed.

And long we try in vain to speak and act

Our hidden self, and what we say and do

Is eloquent, is well—but 'tis not true!

And then we will no more be racked

With inward striving, and demand

Of all the thousand nothings of the hour

Their stupefying power;

Ah, yes, and they benumb us at our call!

Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,

From the soul's subterranean depth upborne

As from an infinitely distant land,

Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey

A melancholy into all our day.

Only—but this is rare—

When a beloved hand is laid in ours,

When, jaded with the rush and glare

Of the interminable hours,

Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,

When our world-deafened ear

Is by the tones of a loved voice caressed,—

A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,

And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.

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The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,

And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.

A man becomes aware of his life's flow, And hears its winding murmur, and he sees The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.

And there arrives a lull in the hot race Wherein he doth forever chase The flying and elusive shadow, rest. An air of coolness plays upon his face. And an unwonted calm pervades his breast; And then he thinks he knows The hills where his life rose, And the sea where it goes.

### 2.9.4 "Memorial Verses"

April, 1850.

Goethe in Weimar sleeps; and Greece, Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease. But one such death remained to come: The last poetic voice is dumb,— We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.

When Byron's eyes were shut in death, We bowed our head, and held our breath. He taught us little, but our soul Had felt him like the thunder's roll. With shivering heart the strife we saw Of passion with eternal law; And yet with reverential awe We watched the fount of fiery life Which served for that Titanic strife.

When Goethe's death was told, we said,— Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head. Physician of the iron age, Goethe has done his pilgrimage. He took the suffering human race, He read each wound, each weakness clear; And struck his finger on the place, And said, Thou ailest here, and here!

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He looked on Europe's dying hour

Of fitful dream and feverish power;

His eye plunged down the weltering strife,

The turmoil of expiring life:

He said, The end is everywhere,

Art still has truth, take refuge there!

And he was happy, if to know

Causes of things, and far below

His feet to see the lurid flow

Of terror, and insane distress,

And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth! Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice! For never has such soothing voice Been to your shadowy world conveyed, Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade Heard the clear song of Orpheus come Through Hades and the mournful gloom. Wordsworth has gone from us; and ye, Ah, may ye feel his voice as we! He too upon a wintry clime Had fallen,—on this iron time Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears. He found us when the age had bound Our souls in its benumbing round; He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears. He laid us as we lay at birth On the cool flowery lap of earth: Smiles broke from us, and we had ease; The hills were round us, and the breeze Went o'er the sunlit fields again; Our foreheads felt the wind and rain. Our youth returned; for there was shed On spirits that had long been dead, Spirits dried up and closely furled, The freshness of the early world.

Ah! since dark days still bring to light Man's prudence and man's fiery might, Time may restore us in his course Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force; But where will Europe's latter hour Again find Wordsworth's healing power?

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Others will teach us how to dare, And against fear our breast to steel: Others will strengthen us to bear— But who, ah! who will make us feel? The cloud of mortal destiny, Others will front it fearlessly; But who, like him, will put it by? Keep fresh the grass upon his grave, O Rotha, with thy living wave! Sing him thy best! for few or none Hear thy voice right, now he is gone.

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### 2.9.5 "Dover Beach"

The sea is calm to-night.

The tide is full, the moon lies fair

Upon the straits; on the French coast, the light

Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,

Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.

Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!

Only, from the long line of spray

Where the sea meets the moon-blanched sand,

Listen! you hear the grating roar

Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,

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At their return, up the high strand, Begin and cease, and then again begin, With tremulous cadence slow, and bring The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago

Heard it on the ^Egean, and it brought Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow Of human misery: we Find also in the sound a thought, Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore

Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.

But now I only hear

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,

Retreating, to the breath

Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear

And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true

To one another! for the world, which seems

To lie before us like a land of dreams,

So various, so beautiful, so new,

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,

Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;

And we are here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,

Where ignorant armies clash by night.

### 2.9.6 "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse"

Through Alpine meadows soft-suffused With rain, where thick the crocus blows, Past the dark forges long disused, The mule-track from Saint Laurent goes. The bridge is crossed, and slow we ride, Through forest, up the mountain side.

The autumnal evening darkens round, The wind is up, and drives the rain; While, hark! far down, with strangled sound Doth the Dead Guier's stream complain,

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Where that wet smoke, among the woods, Over his boiling caldron broods.

Swift rush the spectral vapors white Past limestone scars with ragged pines, Showing—then blotting from our sight!— Halt—through the cloud-drift something shines! High in the valley, wet and drear, The huts of Courrerie appear.

Strike leftward! cries our guide; and higher

Mounts up the stony forest-way.

At last the encircling trees retire;

Look! through the showery twilight gray,

What pointed roofs are these advance?

A palace of the kings of France?

Approach, for what we seek is here! Alight, and sparely sup, and wait For rest in this outbuilding near; Then cross the sward, and reach that gate; Knock; pass the wicket. Thou art come To the Carthusians' world-famed home.

The silent courts, where night and day

Into their stone-carved basins cold

The splashing icy fountains play,

The humid corridors behold,

Where, ghost-like in the deepening night,

Cowled forms brush by in gleaming white!

The chapel, where no organ's peal Invests the stern and naked prayer! With penitential cries they kneel And wrestle; rising then, with bare And white uplifted faces stand, Passing the Host from hand to hand;

Each takes, and then his visage wan Is buried in his cowl once more. The cells!—the suffering Son of man Upon the wall; the knee-worn floor; And where they sleep, that wooden bed, Which shall their coffin be when dead!

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The library, where tract and tome Not to feed priestly pride are there, To hymn the conquering march of Rome, Nor yet to amuse, as ours are: They paint of souls the inner strife, Their drops of blood, their death in life.

The garden, overgrown—yet mild, See, fragrant herbs are flowering there: Strong children of the Alpine wild Whose culture is the brethren's care; Of human tasks their only one, And cheerful works beneath the sun.

Those halls, too, destined to contain Each its own pilgrim-host of old, From England, Germany, or Spain,— All are before me! I behold The house, the brotherhood austere. And what am I, that I am here?

For rigorous teachers seized my youth, And purged its faith, and trimmed its fire, Showed me the high, white star of Truth, There bade me gaze, and there aspire. Even now their whispers pierce the gloom: What dost thou in this living tomb?

Forgive me, masters of the mind!

At whose behest I long ago

So much unlearned, so much resigned:

I come not here to be your foe!

I seek these anchorites, not in ruth,

To curse and to deny your truth;

Not as their friend, or child, I speak! But as, on some far northern strand, Thinking of his own gods, a Greek In pity and mournful awe might stand Before some fallen Runic stone; For both were faiths, and both are gone.

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Wandering between two worlds, one dead, The other powerless to be born, With nowhere yet to rest my head, Like these, on earth I wait forlorn. Their faith, my tears, the world deride: I come to shed them at their side.

Oh, hide me in your gloom profound,

Ye solemn seats of holy pain!

Take me, cowled forms, and fence me round,

Till I possess my soul again;

Till free my thoughts before me roll,

Not chafed by hourly false control!

For the world cries, your faith is now

But a dead time's exploded dream;

My melancholy, sciolists say,

Is a passed mode, an outworn theme.—

As if the world had ever had

A faith, or sciolists been sad!

Ah! if it be passed, take away, At least, the restlessness, the pain! Be man henceforth no more a prey To these out-dated stings again! The nobleness of grief is gone: Ah, leave us not the fret alone!

But,—if you cannot give us ease,— Last of the race of them who grieve, Here leave us to die out with these Last of the people who believe! Silent, while years engrave the brow; Silent—the best are silent now.

Achilles ponders in his tent, The kings of modern thought are dumb; Silent they are, though not content, And wait to see the future come. They have the grief men had of yore, But they contend and cry no more.

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Our fathers watered with their tears This sea of time whereon we sail; Their voices were in all men's ears Who passed within their puissant hail. Still the same ocean round us raves, But we stand mute, and watch the waves.

For what availed it, all the noise And outcry of the former men? Say, have their sons achieved more joys? Say, is life lighter now than then? The sufferers died, they left their pain; The pangs which tortured them remain.

What helps it now, that Byron bore,

With haughty scorn which mocked the smart,

Through Europe to the AEtolian shore

The pageant of his bleeding heart?

That thousands counted every groan,

And Europe made his woe her own?

What boots it, Shelley! that the breeze

Carried thy lovely wail away,

Musical through Italian trees

Which fringe thy soft blue Spezzian bay?

Inheritors of thy distress,

Have restless hearts one throb the less?

Or are we easier, to have read, O Obermann! the sad, stern page, Which tells us how thou hidd'st thy head From the fierce tempest of thine age In the lone brakes of Fontainebleau, Or chalets near the Alpine snow?

Ye slumber in your silent grave!— The world, which for an idle day Grace to your mood of sadness gave, Long since hath flung her weeds away. The eternal trifler breaks your spell; But we—we learnt your lore too well!

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Years hence, perhaps, may dawn an age, More fortunate, alas! than we, Which without hardness will be sage, And gay without frivolity. Sons of the world, oh! speed those years; But, while we wait, allow our tears!

Allow them! We admire with awe The exulting thunder of your race; You give the universe your law, You triumph over time and space: Your pride of life, your tireless powers, We praise them, but they are not ours.

We are like children reared in shade

Beneath some old-world abbey wall,

Forgotten in a forest-glade,

And secret from the eyes of all.

Deep, deep the greenwood round them waves,

Their abbey, and its close of graves!

But, where the road runs near the stream, Oft through the trees they catch a glance Of passing troops in the sun's beam,— Pennon, and plume, and flashing lance; Forth to the world those soldiers fare, To life, to cities, and to war.

And through the woods, another way, Faint bugle-notes from far are borne, Where hunters gather, staghounds bay, Round some old forest-lodge at morn. Gay dames are there, in sylvan green; Laughter and cries—those notes between!

The banners flashing through the trees Make their blood dance, and chain their eyes; That bugle-music on the breeze Arrests them with a charmed surprise. Banner by turns and bugle woo: Ye shy recluses, follow too!

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O children, what do ye reply? "Action and pleasure, will ye roam Through these secluded dells to cry And call us? but too late ye come! Too late for us your call ye blow, Whose bent was taken long ago.

"Long since we pace this shadowed nave; We watch those yellow tapers shine, Emblems of hope over the grave, In the high altar's depth divine. The organ carries to our ear Its accents of another sphere.

"Fenced early in this cloistral round Of revery, of shade, of prayer, How should we grow in other ground? How can we flower in foreign air? —Pass, banners, pass, and bugles, cease; And leave our desert to its peace!"

### 2.9.7 From Culture and Anarchy

In one of his speeches a year or two ago, that fine speaker and famous Liberal, Mr. Bright, took occasion to have a fling at the friends and preachers of culture. "People who talk about what they call culture!" said he contemptuously; "by which they mean a smattering of the two dead languages of Greek and Latin." And he went on to remark, in a strain with which modern speakers and writers have made us very familiar, how poor a thing this culture is, how little good it can do to the world, and how absurd it is for its possessors to set much store by it. And the other day a younger Liberal than Mr. Bright, one of a school whose mission it is to bring into order and system that body of truth of which the earlier Liberals merely touched the outside, a member of the University of Oxford, and a very clever writer, Mr. Frederic Harrison, developed, in the systematic and stringent manner of his school, the thesis which Mr. Bright had propounded in only general terms. "Perhaps the very silliest cant of the day," said Mr. Frederic Harrison, "is the cant about culture. Culture is a desirable quality in a critic of new books, and sits well on a possessor of belles lettres; but as applied to politics, it means simply a turn for small fault-finding, love of selfish ease, and indecision in action. The man of culture is in politics one of the poorest mortals alive. For simple pedantry and want of good sense no man is his equal. No assumption is too unreal, no end is too unpractical for him. But the active exercise of politics requires common sense, sympathy, trust, resolution and enthusiasm, qualities which your man of culture has carefully rooted up, lest they damage the delicacy of his critical olfactories.

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Perhaps they are the only class of responsible beings in the community who cannot with safety be entrusted with power."

Now for my part I do not wish to see men of culture asking to be entrusted with power; and, indeed, I have freely said, that in my opinion the speech most proper, at present, for a man of culture to make to a body of his fellow-countrymen who get him into a committee-room, is Socrates's: Know thyself! and this is not a speech to be made by men wanting to be entrusted with power. For this very indifference to direct political action I have been taken to task by the Daily Telegraph, coupled, by a strange perversity of fate, with just that very one of the Hebrew prophets whose style I admire the least, and called "an elegant Jeremiah." It is because I say (to use the words which the Daily Telegraph puts in my mouth):—"You mustn't make a fuss because you have no vote,—that is vulgarity; you mustn't hold big meetings to agitate for reform bills and to repeal corn laws,—that is the very height of vulgarity,"—it is for this reason that I am called, sometimes an elegant Jeremiah, sometimes a spurious Jeremiah, a Jeremiah about the reality of whose mission the writer in the Daily Telegraph has his doubts. It is evident, therefore, that I have so taken my line as not to be exposed to the whole brunt of Mr. Frederic Harrison's censure. Still, I have often spoken in praise of culture; I have striven to make all my works and ways serve the interests of culture; I take culture to be something a great deal more than what Mr. Frederic Harrison and others call it: "a desirable quality in a critic of new books." Nay, even though to a certain extent I am disposed to agree with Mr. Frederic Harrison, that men of culture are just the class of responsible beings in this community of ours who cannot properly, at present, be entrusted with power, I am not sure that I do not think this the fault of our community rather than of the men of culture. In short, although, like Mr. Bright and Mr. Frederic Harrison, and the editor of the Daily Telegraph, and a large body of valued friends of mine, I am a liberal, yet I am a liberal tempered by experience, reflection, and renouncement, and I am, above all, a believer in culture. Therefore I propose now to try and enquire, in the simple unsystematic way which best suits both my taste and my powers, what culture really is, what good it can do, what is our own special need of it; and I shall seek to find some plain grounds on which a faith in culture— both my own faith in it and the faith of others,—may rest securely.

CHAPTER I

The disparagers of culture make its motive curiosity; sometimes, indeed, they make its motive mere exclusiveness and vanity. The culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begotten by nothing so intellectual as curiosity; it is valued either out of sheer vanity and ignorance, or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. No serious man would call this culture, or attach any value to it, as culture, at all. To find the real ground for the very differing estimate which serious people will set upon culture, we must find some motive for culture in the terms of which may lie a real ambiguity; and

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such a motive the word curiosity gives us. I have before now pointed out that in English we do not, like the foreigners, use this word in a good sense as well as in a bad sense; with us the word is always used in a somewhat disapproving sense; a liberal and intelligent eagerness about the things of the mind may be meant by a foreigner when he speaks of curiosity, but with us the word always conveys a certain notion of frivolous and unedifying activity. In the Quarterly Review, some little time ago, was an estimate of the celebrated French critic, Monsieur Sainte-Beuve, and a very inadequate estimate it, in my judgment, was. And its inadequacy consisted chiefly in this: that in our English way it left out of sight the double sense really involved in the word curiosity, thinking enough was said to stamp Monsieur Sainte-Beuve with blame if it was said that he was impelled in his operations as a critic by curiosity, and omitting either to perceive that Monsieur Sainte-Beuve himself, and many other people with him, would consider that this was praiseworthy and not blameworthy, or to point out why it ought really to be accounted worthy of blame and not of praise. For as there is a curiosity about intellectual matters which is futile, and merely a disease, so there is certainly a curiosity,—a desire after the things of the mind simply for their own sakes and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are,—which is, in an intelligent being, natural and laudable. Nay, and the very desire to see things as they are implies a balance and regulation of mind which is not often attained without fruitful effort, and which is the very opposite of the blind and diseased impulse of mind which is what we mean to blame when we blame curiosity. Montesquieu says:—"The first motive which ought to impel us to study is the desire to augment the excellence of our nature, and to render an intelligent being yet more intelligent." This is the true ground to assign for the genuine scientific passion, however manifested, and for culture, viewed simply as a fruit of this passion; and it is a worthy ground, even though we let the term curiosity stand to describe it.

But there is of culture another view, in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligent being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for stopping human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing the sum of human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it,—motives eminently such as are called social,—come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part. Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is a study of perfection. It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. As, in the first view of it, we took for its worthy motto Montesquieu's words: "To render an intelligent being yet more intelligent!" so, in the second view of it, there is no better motto which it can have than these words of Bishop Wilson: "To make reason and the will of God prevail!" Only, whereas the passion for doing good is apt to be overhasty in determining what reason and the will of God say, because its turn is for acting rather than thinking, and it wants to be beginning to act; and whereas it

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is apt to take its own conceptions, which proceed from its own state of development and share in all the imperfections and immaturities of this, for a basis of action; what distinguishes culture is, that it is possessed by the scientific passion, as well as by the passion of doing good; that it has worthy notions of reason and the will of God, and does not readily suffer its own crude conceptions to substitute themselves for them; and that, knowing that no action or institution can be salutary and stable which are not based on reason and the will of God, it is not so bent on acting and instituting, even with the great aim of diminishing human error and misery ever before its thoughts, but that it can remember that acting and instituting are of little use, unless we know how and what we ought to act and to institute.

This culture is more interesting and more far-reaching than that other, which is founded solely on the scientific passion for knowing. But it needs times of faith and ardour, times when the intellectual horizon is opening and widening all round us, to flourish in. And is not the close and bounded intellectual horizon within which we have long lived and moved now lifting up, and are not new lights finding free passage to shine in upon us? For a long time there was no passage for them to make their way in upon us, and then it was of no use to think of adapting the world's action to them. Where was the hope of making reason and the will of God prevail among people who had a routine which they had christened reason and the will of God, in which they were inextricably bound, and beyond which they had no power of looking? But now the iron force of adhesion to the old routine,— social, political, religious,—has wonderfully yielded; the iron force of exclusion of all which is new has wonderfully yielded; the danger now is, not that people should obstinately refuse to allow anything but their old routine to pass for reason and the will of God, but either that they should allow some novelty or other to pass for these too easily, or else that they should underrate the importance of them altogether, and think it enough to follow action for its own sake, without troubling themselves to make reason and the will of God prevail therein. Now, then, is the moment for culture to be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the will of God prevail, believes in perfection, is the study and pursuit of perfection, and is no longer debarred, by a rigid invincible exclusion of whatever is new, from getting acceptance for its ideas, simply because they are new.

The moment this view of culture is seized, the moment it is regarded not solely as the endeavour to see things as they are, to draw towards a knowledge of the universal order which seems to be intended and aimed at in the world, and which it is a man's happiness to go along with or his misery to go counter to,—to learn, in short, the will of God,—the moment, I say, culture is considered not merely as the endeavour to see and learn this, but as the endeavour, also, to make it prevail, the moral, social, and beneficent character of culture becomes manifest. The mere endeavour to see and learn it for our own personal satisfaction is indeed a commencement for making it prevail, a preparing the way for this, which always serves this, and is wrongly, therefore, stamped with blame absolutely in itself, and not only in its caricature and degeneration. But perhaps it has got stamped with blame, and disparaged with the

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dubious title of curiosity, because in comparison with this wider endeavour of such great and plain utility it looks selfish, petty, and unprofitable.

And religion, the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself,—religion, that voice of the deepest human experience,—does not only enjoin and sanction the aim which is the great aim of culture, the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail; but also, in determining generally in what human perfection consists, religion comes to a conclusion identical with that which culture,—seeking the determination of this question through all the voices of human experience which have been heard upon it, art, science, poetry, philosophy, history, as well as religion, in order to give a greater fulness and certainty to its solution,—likewise reaches. Religion says: The kingdom of God is within you; and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an internal condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality, in the ever-increasing efficaciousness and in the general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature. As I have said on a former occasion: "It is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture." Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it; and here, too, it coincides with religion. And because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest, or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a general expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated: the individual is obliged, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward; and here, once more, it lays on us the same obligation as religion, which says, as Bishop Wilson has admirably put it, that "to promote the kingdom of God is to increase and hasten one's own happiness." Finally, perfection,—as culture, from a thorough disinterested study of human nature and human experience, learns to conceive it,—is an harmonious expansion of all the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest. Here it goes beyond religion, as religion is generally conceived by us.

If culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances,—it is clear that culture, instead of being the frivolous and useless thing which Mr. Bright, and Mr. Frederic Harrison, and many other

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liberals are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil for mankind. And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilisation is, to a much greater degree than the civilisation of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilisation tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent degree. Indeed nearly all the characters of perfection, as culture teaches us to fix them, meet in this country with some powerful tendency which thwarts them and sets them at defiance. The idea of perfection as an inward condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilisation in esteem with us, and nowhere, as I have said, so much in esteem as with us. The idea of perfection as a general expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism, our hatred of all limits to the unrestrained swing of the individual's personality, our maxim of "every man for himself." The idea of perfection as an harmonious expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility, with our inaptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country, and its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious Jeremiahs, than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they persevere; and meanwhile, the mode of action they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, should be made quite clear to every one who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve; but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery? what is population but machinery? what is coal but machinery? what are railroads but machinery? what is wealth but machinery? what are religious organisations but machinery? Now almost every voice in England is accustomed to speak of these things as if they were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them. I have once before noticed Mr. Roebuck's stock argument for proving the greatness and happiness of England as she is, and for quite stopping the mouths of all gainsayers. Mr. Roebuck is never weary of reiterating this argument of his, so I do not know why I should be weary of noticing it. "May not every man in England say what he likes?"—Mr. Roebuck perpetually asks; and that, he thinks, is quite sufficient, and when every man may say what he likes, our aspirations ought to be satisfied. But the aspirations of culture, which is the study of perfection, are not satisfied, unless what men say, when they may say what they like, is worth saying,— has good in it, and more good than bad. In the same way The Times, replying to some foreign strictures on the dress, looks, and behaviour of the English abroad, urges that the English ideal is that every one should be free to do and to look just as

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he likes. But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like, the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that. And in the same way with respect to railroads and coal. Every one must have observed the strange language current during the late discussions as to the possible failure of our supplies of coal. Our coal, thousands of people were saying, is the real basis of our national greatness; if our coal runs short, there is an end of the greatness of England. But what is greatness?— culture makes us ask. Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration; and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love, interest, and admiration. If England were swallowed up by the sea to-morrow, which of the two, a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of mankind,—would most, therefore, show the evidences of having possessed greatness,—the England of the last twenty years, or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spiritual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depending on coal, were very little developed? Well then, what an unsound habit of mind it must be which makes us talk of things like coal or iron as constituting the greatness of England, and how salutary a friend is culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and thus dissipating delusions of this kind and fixing standards of perfection that are real!

Wealth, again, that end to which our prodigious works for material advantage are directed,—the commonest of commonplaces tells us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end in itself; and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard it as they are in England at the present time. Never did people believe anything more firmly, than nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so very rich. Now, the use of culture is that it helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, and not only to say as a matter of words that we regard wealth as but machinery, but really to perceive and feel that it is so. If it were not for this purging effect wrought upon our minds by culture, the whole world, the future as well as the present, would inevitably belong to the Philistines. The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich, and who most give their lives and thoughts to becoming rich, are just the very people whom we call the Philistines. Culture says: "Consider these people, then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds; would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?" And thus culture begets a dissatisfaction which is of the highest possible value in stemming the common tide of men's thoughts in a wealthy and industrial community, and which saves the future, as one may hope, from being vulgarised, even if it cannot save the present.

Population, again, and bodily health and vigour, are things which are nowhere treated in such an unintelligent, misleading, exaggerated way as in England. Both

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are really machinery; yet how many people all around us do we see rest in them and fail to look beyond them! Why, I have heard people, fresh from reading certain articles of The Times on the Registrar-General's returns of marriages and births in this country, who would talk of large families in quite a solemn strain, as if they had something in itself beautiful, elevating, and meritorious in them; as if the British Philistine would have only to present himself before the Great Judge with his twelve children, in order to be received among the sheep as a matter of right! But bodily health and vigour, it may be said, are not to be classed with wealth and population as mere machinery; they have a more real and essential value. True; but only as they are more intimately connected with a perfect spiritual condition than wealth or population are. The moment we disjoin them from the idea of a perfect spiritual condition, and pursue them, as we do pursue them, for their own sake and as ends in themselves, our worship of them becomes as mere worship of machinery, as our worship of wealth or population, and as unintelligent and vulgarising a worship as that is. Every one with anything like an adequate idea of human perfection has distinctly marked this subordination to higher and spiritual ends of the cultivation of bodily vigour and activity.

1 Original Note: aphuia.

2 Original Note: aphuia, euphuia.

3 Original Note: euphyes. Liddell and Scott definition: "well-grown, shapely, goodly: graceful. II. of good natural parts: clever, witty; also 'of good disposition.'"

4 Original Note: aphyes. Liddell and Scott definition: "without natural talent, dull."

"Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things," says the author of the Epistle to Timothy. And the utilitarian Franklin says just as explicitly:—"Eat and drink such an exact quantity as suits the constitution of thy body, in reference to the services of the mind." But the point of view of culture, keeping the mark of human perfection simply and broadly in view, and not assigning to this perfection, as religion or utilitarianism assign to it, a special and limited character,—this point of view, I say, of culture is best given by these words of Epictetus:—"It is a sign of aphuia"1 says he,—that is, of a nature not finely tempered,—"to give yourselves up to things which relate to the body; to make, for instance, a great fuss about exercise, a great fuss about eating, a great fuss about drinking, a great fuss about walking, a great fuss about riding. All these things ought to be done merely by the way: the formation of the spirit and character must be our real concern." This is admirable; and, indeed, the Greek words aphuia, euphuia,2 a finely tempered nature, a coarsely tempered nature, give exactly the notion of perfection as culture brings us to conceive of it: a perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present, which unites "the two noblest of things,"—as Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too little, most happily calls them in his Battle of the Books,—"the two noblest of things, sweetness and light." The euphyes3 is the man who tends towards sweetness and light; the aphyes4 is precisely our Philistine. The immense spiritual significance of the Greeks is due to their having been inspired with this central and happy idea

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of the essential character of human perfection; and Mr. Bright's misconception of culture, as a smattering of Greek and Latin, conies itself, after all, from this wonderful significance of the Greeks having affected the very machinery of our education, and is in itself a kind of homage to it.

It is by thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, that culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry. I have called religion a more important manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a broader scale for perfection, and with greater masses of men. But the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides, which is the dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea, though it has not yet had the success that the idea of conquering the obvious faults of our animality, and of a human nature perfect on the moral side, which is the dominant idea of religion, has been enabled to have; and it is destined, adding to itself the religious idea of a devout energy, to transform and govern the other. The best art and poetry of the Greeks, in which religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy, and works in the strength of that, is on this account of such surpassing interest and instructiveness for us, though it was,—as, having regard to the human race in general, and, indeed, having regard to the Greeks themselves, we must own,—a premature attempt, an attempt which for success needed the moral and religious fibre in humanity to be more braced and developed than it had yet been. But Greece did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, so present and paramount; it is impossible to have this idea too present and paramount; only the moral fibre must be braced too. And we, because we have braced the moral fibre, are not on that account in the right way, if at the same time the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, is wanting or misapprehended amongst us; and evidently it is wanting or misapprehended at present. And when we rely as we do on our religious organisations, which in themselves do not and cannot give us this idea, and think we have done enough if we make them spread and prevail, then, I say, we fall into our common fault of overvaluing machinery.

Nothing is more common than for people to confound the inward peace and satisfaction which follows the subduing of the obvious faults of our animality with what I may call absolute inward peace and satisfaction,—the peace and satisfaction which are reached as we draw near to complete spiritual perfection, and not merely to moral perfection, or rather to relative moral perfection. No people in the world have done more and struggled more to attain this relative moral perfection than our English race has; for no people in the world has the command to resist the Devil, to overcome the Wicked One, in the nearest and most obvious sense of those words, had such a pressing force and reality. And we have had our reward, not only in the great worldly prosperity which our obedience to this command has brought us, but also, and far more, in great inward peace and satisfaction. But to me few things are more pathetic than to see people, on the strength of the inward peace

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and satisfaction which their rudimentary efforts towards perfection have brought them, use, concerning their incomplete perfection and the religious organisations within which they have found it, language which properly applies only to complete perfection, and is a far-off echo of the human soul's prophecy of it. Religion itself, I need hardly say, supplies in abundance this grand language, which is really the severest criticism of such an incomplete perfection as alone we have yet reached through our religious organisations.

The impulse of the English race towards moral development and self-conquest has nowhere so powerfully manifested itself as in Puritanism; nowhere has Puritanism found so adequate an expression as in the religious organisation of the Independents. The modern Independents have a newspaper, the Nonconformist, written with great sincerity and ability. The motto, the standard, the profession of faith which this organ of theirs carries aloft, is: "The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion." There is sweetness and light, and an ideal of complete harmonious human perfection! One need not go to culture and poetry to find language to judge it. Religion, with its instinct for perfection, supplies language to judge it: "Finally, be of one mind, united in feeling," says St. Peter. There is an ideal which judges the Puritan ideal,—"The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion!" And religious organisations like this are what people believe in, rest in, would give their lives for! Such, I say, is the wonderful virtue of even the beginnings of perfection, of having conquered even the plain faults of our animality, that the religious organisation which has helped us to do it can seem to us something precious, salutary, and to be propagated, even when it wears such a brand of imperfection on its forehead as this. And men have got such a habit of giving to the language of religion a special application, of making it a mere jargon, that for the condemnation which religion itself passes on the shortcomings of their religious organisations they have no ear; they are sure to cheat themselves and to explain this condemnation away. They can only be reached by the criticism which culture, like poetry, speaking a language not to be sophisticated, and resolutely testing these organisations by the ideal of a human perfection complete on all sides, applies to them.

But men of culture and poetry, it will be said, are again and again failing, and failing conspicuously, in the necessary first stage to perfection, in the subduing of the great obvious faults of our animality, which it is the glory of these religious organisations to have helped us to subdue. True, they do often so fail: they have often been without the virtues as well as the faults of the Puritan; it has been one of their dangers that they so felt the Puritan's faults that they too much neglected the practice of his virtues. I will not, however, exculpate them at the Puritan's expense; they have often failed in morality, and morality is indispensable; they have been punished for their failure, as the Puritan has been rewarded for his performance. They have been punished wherein they erred; but their ideal of beauty and sweetness and light, and a human nature complete on all its sides, remains the true ideal of perfection still; just as the Puritan's ideal of perfection remains narrow and inadequate, although for

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what he did well he has been richly rewarded. Notwithstanding the mighty results of the Pilgrim Fathers' voyage, they and their standard of perfection are rightly judged when we figure to ourselves Shakspeare or Virgil,—souls in whom sweetness and light, and all that in human nature is most humane, were eminent,—accompanying them on their voyage, and think what intolerable company Shakspeare and Virgil would have found them! In the same way let us judge the religious organisations which we see all around us. Do not let us deny the good and the happiness which they have accomplished; but do not let us fail to see clearly that their idea of human perfection is narrow and inadequate, and that the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion will never bring humanity to its true goal. As I said with regard to wealth,—let us look at the life of those who live in and for it;—so I say with regard to the religious organisations. Look at the life imaged in such a newspaper as the Nonconformist;—a life of jealousy of the Establishment, disputes, tea-meetings, openings of chapels, sermons; and then think of it as an ideal of a human life completing itself on all sides, and aspiring with all its organs after sweetness, light, and perfection!

5 Original Note: publice egestas, privatum opulentia. E-text editor's translation: public penury and private opulence.

Another newspaper, representing, like the Nonconformist, one of the religious organisations of this country, was a short time ago giving an account of the crowd at Epsom on the Derby day, and of all the vice and hideousness which was to be seen in that crowd; and then the writer turned suddenly round upon Professor Huxley, and asked him how he proposed to cure all this vice and hideousness without religion. I confess I felt disposed to ask the asker this question: And how do you propose to cure it with such a religion as yours? How is the ideal of a life so unlovely, so unattractive, so narrow, so far removed from a true and satisfying ideal of human perfection, as is the life of your religious organisation as you yourself image it, to conquer and transform all this vice and hideousness? Indeed, the strongest plea for the study of perfection as pursued by culture, the clearest proof of the actual inadequacy of the idea of perfection held by the religious organisations,—expressing, as I have said, the most wide-spread effort which the human race has yet made after perfection,—is to be found in the state of our life and society with these in possession of it, and having been in possession of it I know not how many hundred years. We are all of us included in some religious organisation or other; we all call ourselves, in the sublime and aspiring language of religion which I have before noticed, children of God. Children of God;—it is an immense pretension!—and how are we to justify it? By the works which we do, and the words which we speak. And the work which we collective children of God do, our grand centre of life, our city which we have builded for us to dwell in, is London! London, with its unutterable external hideousness, and with its internal canker of public egestas, privatim opulentia,5—to use the words which Sallust puts into Cato's mouth about Rome,—unequalled in the world! The word, again, which we children of God speak, the voice which most hits our collective thought, the newspaper with

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the largest circulation in England, nay, with the largest circulation in the whole world, is the Daily Telegraph! I say that when our religious organisations,—which I admit to express the most considerable effort after perfection that our race has yet made,—land us in no better result than this, it is high time to examine carefully their idea of perfection, to see whether it does not leave out of account sides and forces of human nature which we might turn to great use; whether it would not be more operative if it were more complete. And I say that the English reliance on our religious organisations and on their ideas of human perfection just as they stand, is like our reliance on freedom, on muscular Christianity, on population, on coal, on wealth,—mere belief in machinery, and unfruitful; and that it is wholesomely counteracted by culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and on drawing the human race onwards to a more complete perfection.

Culture, however, shows its single-minded love of perfection, its desire simply to make reason and the will of God prevail, its freedom from fanaticism, by its attitude towards all this machinery, even while it insists that it is machinery. Fanatics, seeing the mischief men do themselves by their blind belief in some machinery or other,—whether it is wealth and industrialism, or whether it is the cultivation of bodily strength and activity, or whether it is a political organisation, or whether it is a religious organisation,—oppose with might and main the tendency to this or that political and religious organisation, or to games and athletic exercises, or to wealth and industrialism, and try violently to stop it. But the flexibility which sweetness and light give, and which is one of the rewards of culture pursued in good faith, enables a man to see that a tendency may be necessary, and even, as a preparation for something in the future, salutary, and yet that the generations or individuals who obey this tendency are sacrificed to it, that they fall short of the hope of perfection by following it; and that its mischiefs are to be criticised, lest it should take too firm a hold and last after it has served its purpose. Mr. Gladstone well pointed out, in a speech at Paris,—and others have pointed out the same thing,—how necessary is the present great movement towards wealth and industrialism, in order to lay broad foundations of material well-being for the society of the future. The worst of these justifications is, that they are generally addressed to the very people engaged, body and soul, in the movement in question; at all events, that they are always seized with the greatest avidity by these people, and taken by them as quite justifying their life; and that thus they tend to harden them in their sins. Now, culture admits the necessity of the movement towards fortune-making and exaggerated industrialism, readily allows that the future may derive benefit from it; but insists, at the same time, that the passing generations of industrialists,—forming, for the most part, the stout main body of Philistinism,—are sacrificed to it. In the same way, the result of all the games and sports which occupy the passing generation of boys and young men may be the establishment of a better and sounder physical type for the future to work with. Culture does not set itself against the games and sports; it congratulates the future, and hopes it will make a good use of its improved physical basis; but it points out that our passing generation of boys and young men is, meantime,

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sacrificed. Puritanism was necessary to develop the moral fibre of the English race, Nonconformity to break the yoke of ecclesiastical domination over men's minds and to prepare the way for freedom of thought in the distant future; still, culture points out that the harmonious perfection of generations of Puritans and Nonconformists have been, in consequence, sacrificed. Freedom of speech is necessary for the society of the future, but the young lions of the Daily Telegraph in the meanwhile are sacrificed. A voice for every man in his country's government is necessary for the society of the future, but meanwhile Mr. Beales and Mr. Bradlaugh are sacrificed.

Oxford, the Oxford of the past, has many faults; and she has heavily paid for them in defeat, in isolation, in want of hold upon the modern world. Yet we in Oxford, brought up amidst the beauty and sweetness of that beautiful place, have not failed to seize one truth:—the truth that beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection. When I insist on this, I am all in the faith and tradition of Oxford. I say boldly that this our sentiment for beauty and sweetness, our sentiment against hideousness and rawness, has been at the bottom of our attachment to so many beaten causes, of our opposition to so many triumphant movements. And the sentiment is true, and has never been wholly defeated, and has shown its power even in its defeat. We have not won our political battles, we have not carried our main points, we have not stopped our adversaries' advance, we have not marched victoriously with the modern world; but we have told silently upon the mind of the country, we have prepared currents of feeling which sap our adversaries' position when it seems gained, we have kept up our own communications with the future. Look at the course of the great movement which shook Oxford to its centre some thirty years ago! It was directed, as any one who reads Dr. Newman's Apology may see, against what in one word maybe called "liberalism." Liberalism prevailed; it was the appointed force to do the work of the hour; it was necessary, it was inevitable that it should prevail. The Oxford movement was broken, it failed; our wrecks are scattered on every shore:—

6 Original Note: Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris? E-text editor's translation: Which part of the world is not filled with our sorrows? P. Vergilius Maro (Virgil), Aeneid, Book 1, Line 459.

Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?6

But what was it, this liberalism, as Dr. Newman saw it, and as it really broke the Oxford movement? It was the great middle-class liberalism, which had for the cardinal points of its belief the Reform Bill of 1832, and local self-government, in politics; in the social sphere, free-trade, unrestricted competition, and the making of large industrial fortunes; in the religious sphere, the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion. I do not say that other and more intelligent forces than this were not opposed to the Oxford movement: but this was the force which really beat it; this was the force which Dr. Newman felt himself fighting with; this was the force which till only the other day seemed to be the paramount force in this country, and to be in possession of the future; this was the force whose achievements fill Mr. Lowe with such inexpressible admiration, and whose rule he was so horror-struck to see threatened. And where is this great force of Philistinism now? It is

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thrust into the second rank, it is become a power of yesterday, it has lost the future. A new power has suddenly appeared, a power which it is impossible yet to judge fully, but which is certainly a wholly different force from middle-class liberalism; different in its cardinal points of belief, different in its tendencies in every sphere. It loves and admires neither the legislation of middle-class Parliaments, nor the local self-government of middle-class vestries, nor the unrestricted competition of middle-class industrialists, nor the dissidence of middle-class Dissent and the Protestantism of middle-class Protestant religion. I am not now praising this new force, or saying that its own ideals are better; all I say is, that they are wholly different. And who will estimate how much the currents of feeling created by Dr. Newman's movement, the keen desire for beauty and sweetness which it nourished, the deep aversion it manifested to the hardness and vulgarity of middle-class liberalism, the strong light it turned on the hideous and grotesque illusions of middle-class Protestantism,—who will estimate how much all these contributed to swell the tide of secret dissatisfaction which has mined the ground under the self-confident liberalism of the last thirty years, and has prepared the way for its sudden collapse and supersession? It is in this manner that the sentiment of Oxford for beauty and sweetness conquers, and in this manner long may it continue to conquer!

In this manner it works to the same end as culture, and there is plenty of work for it yet to do. I have said that the new and more democratic force which is now superseding our old middle-class liberalism cannot yet be rightly judged. It has its main tendencies still to form. We hear promises of its giving us administrative reform, law reform, reform of education, and I know not what; but those promises come rather from its advocates, wishing to make a good plea for it and to justify it for superseding middle-class liberalism, than from clear tendencies which it has itself yet developed. But meanwhile it has plenty of well-intentioned friends against whom culture may with advantage continue to uphold steadily its ideal of human perfection; that this is an inward spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy. Mr. Bright, who has a foot in both worlds, the world of middle-class liberalism and the world of democracy, but who brings most of his ideas from the world of middle-class liberalism in which he was bred, always inclines to inculcate that faith in machinery to which, as we have seen, Englishmen are so prone, and which has been the bane of middle-class liberalism. He complains with a sorrowful indignation of people who "appear to have no proper estimate of the value of the franchise;" he leads his disciples to believe,— what the Englishman is always too ready to believe, —that the having a vote, like the having a large family, or a large business, or large muscles, has in itself some edifying and perfecting effect upon human nature. Or else he cries out to the democracy,—"the men," as he calls them, "upon whose shoulders the greatness of England rests,"—he cries out to them: "See what you have done! I look over this country and see the cities you have built, the railroads you have made, the manufactures you have produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen! I see that you have converted by your labours what was once a wilderness,

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these islands, into a fruitful garden; I know that you have created this wealth, and are a nation whose name is a word of power throughout all the world." Why, this is just the very style of laudation with which Mr. Roebuck or Mr. Lowe debauch the minds of the middle classes, and make such Philistines of them. It is the same fashion of teaching a man to value himself not on what he is, not on his progress in sweetness and light, but on the number of the railroads he has constructed, or the bigness of the Tabernacle he has built. Only the middle classes are told they have done it all with their energy, self-reliance, and capital, and the democracy are told they have done it all with their hands and sinews. But teaching the democracy to put its trust in achievements of this kind is merely training them to be Philistines to take the place of the Philistines whom they are superseding; and they too, like the middle class, will be encouraged to sit down at the banquet of the future without having on a wedding garment, and nothing excellent can then come from them. Those who know their besetting faults, those who have watched them and listened to them, or those who will read the instructive account recently given of them by one of themselves, the Journeyman Engineer, will agree that the idea which culture sets before us of perfection,—an increased spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy,—is an idea which the new democracy needs far more than the idea of the blessedness of the franchise, or the wonderfulness of their own industrial performances.

Other well-meaning friends of this new power are for leading it, not in the old ruts of middle-class Philistinism, but in ways which are naturally alluring to the feet of democracy, though in this country they are novel and untried ways. I may call them the ways of Jacobinism. Violent indignation with the past, abstract systems of renovation applied wholesale, a new doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the very smallest details a rational society for the future,—these are the ways of Jacobinism. Mr. Frederic Harrison and other disciples of Comte,— one of them, Mr. Congreve, is an old acquaintance of mine, and I am glad to have an opportunity of publicly expressing my respect for his talents and character,— are among the friends of democracy who are for leading it in paths of this kind. Mr. Frederic Harrison is very hostile to culture, and from a natural enough motive; for culture is the eternal opponent of the two things which are the signal marks of Jacobinism,—its fierceness, and its addiction to an abstract system. Culture is always assigning to system-makers and systems a smaller share in the bent of human destiny than their friends like. A current in people's minds sets towards new ideas; people are dissatisfied with their old narrow stock of Philistine ideas, Anglo-Saxon ideas, or any other; and some man, some Bentham or Comte, who has the real merit of having early and strongly felt and helped the new current, but who brings plenty of narrownesses and mistakes of his own into his feeling and help of it, is credited with being the author of the whole current, the fit person to be entrusted with its regulation and to guide the human race. The excellent German historian of the mythology of Rome, Preller, relating the introduction at Rome under the Tarquins of the worship of Apollo, the god of light, healing, and reconciliation, observes that it

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was not so much the Tarquins who brought to Rome the new worship of Apollo, as a current in the mind of the Roman people which set powerfully at that time towards a new worship of this kind, and away from the old run of Latin and Sabine religious ideas. In a similar way, culture directs our attention to the current in human affairs, and to its continual working, and will not let us rivet our faith upon any one man and his doings. It makes us see, not only his good side, but also how much in him was of necessity limited and transient; nay, it even feels a pleasure, a sense of an increased freedom and of an ampler future, in so doing. I remember, when I was under the influence of a mind to which I feel the greatest obligations, the mind of a man who was the very incarnation of sanity and clear sense, a man the most considerable, it seems to me, whom America has yet produced,—Benjamin Franklin,—I remember the relief with which, after long feeling the sway of Franklin's imperturbable common-sense, I came upon a project of his for a new version of the Book of Job, to replace the old version, the style of which, says Franklin, has become obsolete, and thence less agreeable. "I give," he continues, "a few verses, which may serve as a sample of the kind of version I would recommend." We all recollect the famous verse in our translation: "Then Satan answered the Lord and said: 'Doth Job fear God for nought?'" Franklin makes this: "Does Your Majesty imagine that Job's good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?" I well remember how when first I read that, I drew a deep breath of relief, and said to myself: "After all, there is a stretch of humanity beyond Franklin's victorious good sense!" So, after hearing Bentham cried loudly up as the renovator of modern society, and Bentham's mind and ideas proposed as the rulers of our future, I open the Deontology. There I read: "While Xenophon was writing his history and Euclid teaching geometry, Socrates and Plato were talking nonsense under pretence of talking wisdom and morality. This morality of theirs consisted in words; this wisdom of theirs was the denial of matters known to every man's experience." From the moment of reading that, I am delivered from the bondage of Bentham! the fanaticism of his adherents can touch me no longer; I feel the inadequacy of his mind and ideas for being the rule of human society, for perfection. Culture tends always thus to deal with the men of a system, of disciples, of a school; with men like Comte, or the late Mr. Buckle, or Mr. Mill. However much it may find to admire in these personages, or in some of them, it nevertheless remembers the text: "Be not ye called Rabbi!" and it soon passes on from any Rabbi. But Jacobinism loves a Rabbi; it does not want to pass on from its Rabbi in pursuit of a future and still unreached perfection; it wants its Rabbi and his ideas to stand for perfection, that they may with the more authority recast the world; and for Jacobinism, therefore, culture,—eternally passing onwards and seeking,—is an impertinence and an offence. But culture, just because it resists this tendency of Jacobinism to impose on us a man with limitations and errors of his own along with the true ideas of which he is the organ, really does the world and Jacobinism itself a service.

So, too, Jacobinism, in its fierce hatred of the past and of those whom it makes liable for the sins of the past, cannot away with culture,—culture with its

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inexhaustible indulgence, its consideration of circumstances, its severe judgment of actions joined to its merciful judgment of persons. "The man of culture is in politics," cries Mr. Frederic Harrison, "one of the poorest mortals alive!" Mr. Frederic Harrison wants to be doing business, and he complains that the man of culture stops him with a "turn for small fault-finding, love of selfish ease, and indecision in action." Of what use is culture, he asks, except for "a critic of new books or a professor of belles lettres?" Why, it is of use because, in presence of the fierce exasperation which breathes, or rather, I may say, hisses, through the whole production in which Mr. Frederic Harrison asks that question, it reminds us that the perfection of human nature is sweetness and light. It is of use because, like religion,—that other effort after perfection,—it testifies that, where bitter envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work.

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness works in the end for light also; he who works for light works in the end for sweetness also. But he who works for sweetness and light united, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has but one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. Yes, it has one yet greater!—the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied till we all come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. If I have not shrunk from saying that we must work for sweetness and light, so neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible. Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the marking epochs of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a national glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive. Only it must be real thought and real beauty; real sweetness and real light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organisations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither way; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make all live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, and use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely,—to be nourished and not bound by them.

This is the social idea; and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the

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best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanise it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the best knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light. Such a man was Abelard in the Middle Ages, in spite of all his imperfections; and thence the boundless emotion and enthusiasm which Abelard excited. Such were Lessing and Herder in Germany, at the end of the last century; and their services to Germany were in this way inestimably precious. Generations will pass, and literary monuments will accumulate, and works far more perfect than the works of Lessing and Herder will be produced in Germany; and yet the names of these two men will fill a German with a reverence and enthusiasm such as the names of the most gifted masters will hardly awaken. Because they humanised knowledge; because they broadened the basis of life and intelligence; because they worked powerfully to diffuse sweetness and light, to make reason and the will of God prevail. With Saint Augustine they said: "Let us not leave Thee alone to make in the secret of thy knowledge, as thou didst before the creation of the firmament, the division of light from darkness; let the children of thy spirit, placed in their firmament, make their light shine upon the earth, mark the division of night and day, and announce the revolution of the times; for the old order is passed, and the new arises; the night is spent, the day is come forth; and thou shalt crown the year with thy blessing, when thou shalt send forth labourers into thy harvest sown by other hands than theirs; when thou shalt send forth new labourers to new seedtimes, whereof the harvest shall be not yet."

CHAPTER II

I have been trying to show that culture is, or ought to be, the study and pursuit of perfection; and that of perfection as pursued by culture, beauty and intelligence, or, in other words, sweetness and light, are the main characters. But hitherto I have been insisting chiefly on beauty, or sweetness, as a character of perfection. To complete rightly my design, it evidently remains to speak also of intelligence, or light, as a character of perfection. First, however, I ought perhaps to notice that, both here and on the other side of the Atlantic, all sorts of objections are raised against the "religion of culture," as the objectors mockingly call it, which I am supposed to be promulgating. It is said to be a religion proposing parmaceti, or some scented salve or other, as a cure for human miseries; a religion breathing a spirit of cultivated inaction, making its believer refuse to lend a hand at uprooting the definite evils on all sides of us, and filling him with antipathy against the reforms and reformers which try to extirpate them. In general, it is summed up as being not practical, or,—as some critics more familiarly put it,—all moonshine. That Alcibiades, the editor of the Morning Star, taunts me, as its promulgator, with living out of the world and knowing nothing of life and men. That great austere toiler, the editor of the Daily Telegraph, upbraids me,—but kindly, and more in sorrow than in anger,—for trifling with aesthetics and poetical fancies, while he

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himself, in that arsenal of his in Fleet Street, is bearing the burden and heat of the day. An intelligent American newspaper, the Nation, says that it is very easy to sit in one's study and find fault with the course of modern society, but the thing is to propose practical improvements for it. While, finally, Mr. Frederic Harrison, in a very good-tempered and witty satire, which makes me quite understand his having apparently achieved such a conquest of my young Prussian friend, Arminius, at last gets moved to an almost stern moral impatience, to behold, as he says, "Death, sin, cruelty stalk among us, filling their maws with innocence and youth," and me, in the midst of the general tribulation, handing out my pouncet-box.

It is impossible that all these remonstrances and reproofs should not affect me, and I shall try my very best, in completing my design and in speaking of light as one of the characters of perfection, and of culture as giving us light, to profit by the objections I have heard and read, and to drive at practice as much as I can, by showing the communications and passages into practical life from the doctrine which I am inculcating.

It is said that a man with my theories of sweetness and light is full of antipathy against the rougher or coarser movements going on around him, that he will not lend a hand to the humble operation of uprooting evil by their means, and that therefore the believers in action grow impatient with them. But what if rough and coarse action, ill-calculated action, action with insufficient light, is, and has for a long time been, our bane? What if our urgent want now is, not to act at any price, but rather to lay in a stock of light for our difficulties? In that case, to refuse to lend a hand to the rougher and coarser movements going on round us, to make the primary need, both for oneself and others, to consist in enlightening ourselves and qualifying ourselves to act less at random, is surely the best, and in real truth the most practical line, our endeavours can take. So that if I can show what my opponents call rough or coarse action, but what I would rather call random and ill- regulated action,—action with insufficient light, action pursued because we like to be doing something and doing it as we please, and do not like the trouble of thinking, and the severe constraint of any kind of rule,—if I can show this to be, at the present moment, a practical mischief and danger to us, then I have found a practical use for light in correcting this state of things, and have only to exemplify how, in cases which fall under everybody's observation, it may deal with it.

When I began to speak of culture, I insisted on our bondage to machinery, on our proneness to value machinery as an end in itself, without looking beyond it to the end for which alone, in truth, it is valuable. Freedom, I said, was one of those things which we thus worshipped in itself, without enough regarding the ends for which freedom is to be desired. In our common notions and talk about freedom, we eminently show our idolatry of machinery. Our prevalent notion is,—and I quoted a number of instances to prove it,— that it is a most happy and important thing for a man merely to be able to do as he likes. On what he is to do when he is thus free to do as he likes, we do not lay so much stress. Our familiar praise of the British Constitution under which we live, is that it is a system of checks,—a system which

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stops and paralyses any power in interfering with the free action of individuals. To this effect Mr. Bright, who loves to walk in the old ways of the Constitution, said forcibly in one of his great speeches, what many other people are every day saying less forcibly, that the central idea of English life and politics is the assertion of personal liberty. Evidently this is so; but evidently, also, as feudalism, which with its ideas and habits of subordination was for many centuries silently behind the British Constitution, dies out, and we are left with nothing but our system of checks, and our notion of its being the great right and happiness of an Englishman to do as far as possible what he likes, we are in danger of drifting towards anarchy. We have not the notion, so familiar on the Continent and to antiquity, of the State—the nation, in its collective and corporate character, entrusted with stringent powers for the general advantage, and controlling individual wills in the name of an interest wider than that of individuals. We say, what is very true, that this notion is often made instrumental to tyranny; we say that a State is in reality made up of the individuals who compose it, and that every individual is the best judge of his own interests. Our leading class is an aristocracy, and no aristocracy likes the notion of a State-authority greater than itself, with a stringent administrative machinery superseding the decorative inutilities of lord-lieutenancy, deputy- lieutenancy, and the posse comitates,7 which are all in its own hands. Our middle-class, the great representative of trade and Dissent, with its maxims of every man for himself in business, every man for himself in religion, dreads a powerful administration which might somehow interfere with it; and besides, it has its own decorative inutilities of vestrymanship and guardianship, which are to this class what lord-lieutenancy and the county magistracy are to the aristocratic class, and a stringent administration might either take these functions out of its hands, or prevent its exercising them in its own comfortable, independent manner, as at present.

7 Original Note: posse comitatus. Arnold's phrase refers to the medieval institution of the "power of the county." It originally consisted of a county's able-bodied males over fifteen, and the local authorities might call upon it to preserve order. Later, the posse became an instrument of the church parish.

Then as to our working-class. This class, pressed constantly by the hard daily compulsion of material wants, is naturally the very centre and stronghold of our national idea, that it is man's ideal right and felicity to do as he likes. I think I have somewhere related how Monsieur Michelet said to me of the people of France, that it was "a nation of barbarians civilised by the conscription." He meant that through their military service the idea of public duty and of discipline was brought to the mind of these masses, in other respects so raw and uncultivated. Our masses are quite as raw and uncultivated as the French; and, so far from their having the idea of public duty and of discipline, superior to the individual's self- will, brought to their mind by a universal obligation of military service, such as that of the conscription,—so far from their having this, the very idea of a conscription is so at variance with our English notion of the prime right and blessedness of doing as one likes, that I remember the manager of the Clay Cross works in Derbyshire told me during the Crimean war, when our want of soldiers was much felt and some

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people were talking of a conscription, that sooner than submit to a conscription the population of that district would flee to the mines, and lead a sort of Robin Hood life under ground.

For a long time, as I have said, the strong feudal habits of subordination and deference continued to tell upon the working-class. The modern spirit has now almost entirely dissolved those habits, and the anarchical tendency of our worship of freedom in and for itself, of our superstitious faith, as I say, in machinery, is becoming very manifest. More and more, because of this our blind faith in machinery, because of our want of light to enable us to look beyond machinery to the end for which machinery is valuable, this and that man, and this and that body of men, all over the country, are beginning to assert and put in practice an Englishman's right to do what he likes; his right to march where he likes, meet where he likes, enter where he likes, hoot as he likes, threaten as he likes, smash as he likes. All this, I say, tends to anarchy; and though a number of excellent people, and particularly my friends of the liberal or progressive party, as they call themselves, are kind enough to reassure us by saying that these are trifles, that a few transient outbreaks of rowdyism signify nothing, that our system of liberty is one which itself cures all the evils which it works, that the educated and intelligent classes stand in overwhelming strength and majestic repose, ready, like our military force in riots, to act at a moment's notice,—yet one finds that one's liberal friends generally say this because they have such faith in themselves and their nostrums, when they shall return, as the public welfare requires, to place and power. But this faith of theirs one cannot exactly share, when one has so long had them and their nostrums at work, and sees that they have not prevented our coming to our present embarrassed condition; and one finds, also, that the outbreaks of rowdyism tend to become less and less of trifles, to become more frequent rather than less frequent; and that meanwhile our educated and intelligent classes remain in their majestic repose, and somehow or other, whatever happens, their overwhelming strength, like our military force in riots, never does act.

How, indeed, should their overwhelming strength act, when the man who gives an inflammatory lecture, or breaks down the Park railings, or invades a Secretary of State's office, is only following an Englishman's impulse to do as he likes; and our own conscience tells us that we ourselves have always regarded this impulse as something primary and sacred? Mr. Murphy lectures at Birmingham, and showers on the Catholic population of that town "words," says Mr. Hardy, "only fit to be addressed to thieves or murderers." What then? Mr. Murphy has his own reasons of several kinds. He suspects the Roman Catholic Church of designs upon Mrs. Murphy; and he says, if mayors and magistrates do not care for their wives and daughters, he does. But, above all, he is doing as he likes, or, in worthier language, asserting his personal liberty. "I will carry out my lectures if they walk over my body as a dead corpse; and I say to the Mayor of Birmingham that he is my servant while I am in Birmingham, and as my servant he must do his duty and protect me." Touching and beautiful words, which find a sympathetic chord in every British

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bosom! The moment it is plainly put before us that a man is asserting his personal liberty, we are half disarmed; because we are believers in freedom, and not in some dream of a right reason to which the assertion of our freedom is to be subordinated. Accordingly, the Secretary of State had to say that although the lecturer's language was "only fit to be addressed to thieves or murderers," yet, "I do not think he is to be deprived, I do not think that anything I have said could justify the inference that he is to be deprived, of the right of protection in a place built by him for the purpose of these lectures; because the language was not language which afforded grounds for a criminal prosecution." No, nor to be silenced by Mayor, or Home Secretary, or any administrative authority on earth, simply on their notion of what is discreet and reasonable! This is in perfect consonance with our public opinion, and with our national love for the assertion of personal liberty.

In quite another department of affairs, an experienced and distinguished Chancery Judge relates an incident which is just to the same effect as this of Mr. Murphy. A testator bequeathed 300£. a year, to be for ever applied as a pension to some person who had been unsuccessful in literature, and whose duty should be to support and diffuse, by his writings, the testator's own views, as enforced in the testator's publications. This bequest was appealed against in the Court of Chancery, on the ground of its absurdity; but, being only absurd, it was upheld, and the so-called charity was established. Having, I say, at the bottom of our English hearts a very strong belief in freedom, and a very weak belief in right reason, we are soon silenced when a man pleads the prime right to do as he likes, because this is the prime right for ourselves too; and even if we attempt now and then to mumble something about reason, yet we have ourselves thought so little about this and so much about liberty, that we are in conscience forced, when our brother Philistine with whom we are meddling turns boldly round upon us and asks: Have you any light?—to shake our heads ruefully, and to let him go his own way after all.

There are many things to be said on behalf of this exclusive attention of ours to liberty, and of the relaxed habits of government which it has engendered. It is very easy to mistake or to exaggerate the sort of anarchy from which we are in danger through them. We are not in danger from Fenianism, fierce and turbulent as it may show itself; for against this our conscience is free enough to let us act resolutely and put forth our overwhelming strength the moment there is any real need for it. In the first place, it never was any part of our creed that the great right and blessedness of an Irishman, or, indeed, of anybody on earth except an Englishman, is to do as he likes; and we can have no scruple at all about abridging, if necessary, a non-Englishman's assertion of personal liberty. The British Constitution, its checks, and its prime virtues, are for Englishmen. We may extend them to others out of love and kindness; but we find no real divine law written on our hearts constraining us so to extend them. And then the difference between an Irish Fenian and an English rough is so immense, and the case, in dealing with the Fenian, so much more clear! He is so evidently desperate and dangerous, a man of a conquered race, a Papist, with centuries of ill-usage to inflame him against us, with an alien

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religion established in his country by us at his expense, with no admiration of our institutions, no love of our virtues, no talents for our business, no turn for our comfort! Show him our symbolical Truss Manufactory on the finest site in Europe, and tell him that British industrialism and individualism can bring a man to that, and he remains cold! Evidently, if we deal tenderly with a sentimentalist like this, it is out of pure philanthropy. But with the Hyde Park rioter how different!8 He is our own flesh and blood; he is a Protestant; he is framed by nature to do as we do, hate what we hate, love what we love; he is capable of feeling the symbolical force of the Truss Manufactory; the question of questions, for him, is a wages' question. That beautiful sentence Sir Daniel Gooch quoted to the Swindon workmen, and which I treasure as Mrs. Gooch's Golden Rule, or the Divine Injunction "Be ye Perfect" done into British,—the sentence Sir Daniel Gooch's mother repeated to him every morning when he was a boy going to work: "Ever remember, my dear Dan, that you should look forward to being some day manager of that concern!"—this fruitful maxim is perfectly fitted to shine forth in the heart of the Hyde Park rough also, and to be his guiding-star through life. He has no visionary schemes of revolution and transformation, though of course he would like his class to rule, as the aristocratic class like their class to rule, and the middle-class theirs. Meanwhile, our social machine is a little out of order; there are a good many people in our paradisiacal centres of industrialism and individualism taking the bread out of one another's mouths; the rioter has not yet quite found his groove and settled down to his work, and so he is just asserting his personal liberty a little, going where he likes, assembling where he likes, bawling as he likes, hustling as he likes. Just as the rest of us,—as the country squires in the aristocratic class, as the political dissenters in the middle-class,—he has no idea of a State, of the nation in its collective and corporate character controlling, as government, the free swing of this or that one of its members in the name of the higher reason of all of them, his own as well as that of others. He sees the rich, the aristocratic class, in occupation of the executive government, and so if he is stopped from making Hyde Park a bear-garden or the streets impassable, he says he is being butchered by the aristocracy.

8 Original Note: London's Hyde Park riots occurred in 1866. Reform Leaguers bent on assembling to promote universal suffrage broke through the iron rails encompassing the Park.

His apparition is somewhat embarrassing, because too many cooks spoil the broth; because, while the aristocratic and middle classes have long been doing as they like with great vigour, he has been too undeveloped and submissive hitherto to join in the game; and now, when he does come, he comes in immense numbers, and is rather raw and rough. But he does not break many laws, or not many at one time; and, as our laws were made for very different circumstances from our present (but always with an eye to Englishmen doing as they like), and as the clear letter of the law must be against our Englishman who does as he likes and not only the spirit of the law and public policy, and as Government must neither have any discretionary power nor act resolutely on its own interpretation of the law if any one disputes it, it is evident our laws give our playful giant, in doing as he likes,

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considerable advantage. Besides, even if he can be clearly proved to commit an illegality in doing as he likes, there is always the resource of not putting the law in force, or of abolishing it. So he has his way, and if he has his way he is soon satisfied for the time; however, he falls into the habit of taking it oftener and oftener, and at last begins to create by his operations a confusion of which mischievous people can take advantage, and which at any rate, by troubling the common course of business throughout the country, tends to cause distress, and so to increase the sort of anarchy and social disintegration which had previously commenced. And thus that profound sense of settled order and security, without which a society like ours cannot live and grow at all, is beginning to threaten us with taking its departure.

Now, if culture, which simply means trying to perfect oneself, and one's mind as part of oneself, brings us light, and if light shows us that there is nothing so very blessed in merely doing as one likes, that the worship of the mere freedom to do as one likes is worship of machinery, that the really blessed thing is to like what right reason ordains, and to follow her authority, then we have got a practical benefit out of culture. We have got a much wanted principle, a principle of authority, to counteract the tendency to anarchy which seems to be threatening us.

But how to organise this authority, or to what hands to entrust the wielding of it? How to get your State, summing up the right reason of the community, and giving effect to it, as circumstances may require, with vigour? And here I think I see my enemies waiting for me with a hungry joy in their eyes. But I shall elude them.

The State, the power most representing the right reason of the nation, and most worthy, therefore, of ruling,—of exercising, when circumstances require it, authority over us all,—is for Mr. Carlyle the aristocracy. For Mr. Lowe, it is the middle-class with its incomparable Parliament. For the Reform League, it is the working-class, with its "brightest powers of sympathy and readiest powers of action." Now, culture, with its disinterested pursuit of perfection, culture, simply trying to see things as they are, in order to seize on the best and to make it prevail, is surely well fitted to help us to judge rightly, by all the aids of observing, reading, and thinking, the qualifications and titles to our confidence of these three candidates for authority, and can thus render us a practical service of no mean value.

So when Mr. Carlyle, a man of genius to whom we have all at one time or other been indebted for refreshment and stimulus, says we should give rule to the aristocracy, mainly because of its dignity and politeness, surely culture is useful in reminding us, that in our idea of perfection the characters of beauty and intelligence are both of them present, and sweetness and light, the two noblest of things, are united. Allowing, therefore, with Mr. Carlyle, the aristocratic class to possess sweetness, culture insists on the necessity of light also, and shows us that aristocracies, being by the very nature of things inaccessible to ideas, unapt to see how the world is going, must be somewhat wanting in light, and must therefore be, at a moment when light is our great requisite, inadequate to our needs. Aristocracies, those children of the established fact, are for epochs of concentration. In epochs of expansion, epochs such as that in which we now live, epochs when always the warning voice

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is again heard: Now is the judgment of this world—in such epochs aristocracies, with their natural clinging to the established fact, their want of sense for the flux of things, for the inevitable transitoriness of all human institutions, are bewildered and helpless. Their serenity, their high spirit, their power of haughty resistance,— the great qualities of an aristocracy, and the secret of its distinguished manners and dignity,—these very qualities, in an epoch of expansion, turn against their possessors. Again and again I have said how the refinement of an aristocracy may be precious and educative to a raw nation as a kind of shadow of true refinement; how its serenity and dignified freedom from petty cares may serve as a useful foil to set off the vulgarity and hideousness of that type of life which a hard middle-class tends to establish, and to help people to see this vulgarity and hideousness in their true colours. From such an ignoble spectacle as that of poor Mrs. Lincoln,—a spectacle to vulgarise a whole nation,—aristocracies undoubtedly preserve us. But the true grace and serenity is that of which Greece and Greek art suggest the admirable ideals of perfection,—a serenity which comes from having made order among ideas and harmonised them; whereas the serenity of aristocracies, at least the peculiar serenity of aristocracies of Teutonic origin, appears to come from their never having had any ideas to trouble them. And so, in a time of expansion like the present, a time for ideas, one gets, perhaps, in regarding an aristocracy, even more than the idea of serenity, the idea of futility and sterility. One has often wondered whether upon the whole earth there is anything so unintelligent, so unapt to perceive how the world is really going, as an ordinary young Englishman of our upper class. Ideas he has not, and neither has he that seriousness of our middle-class, which is, as I have often said, the great strength of this class, and may become its salvation. Why, a man may hear a young Dives of the aristocratic class, when the whim takes him to sing the praises of wealth and material comfort, sing them with a cynicism from which the conscience of the veriest Philistine of our industrial middle-class would recoil in affright. And when, with the natural sympathy of aristocracies for firm dealing with the multitude, and his uneasiness at our feeble dealing with it at home, an unvarnished young Englishman of our aristocratic class applauds the absolute rulers on the Continent, he in general manages completely to miss the grounds of reason and intelligence which alone can give any colour of justification, any possibility of existence, to those rulers, and applauds them on grounds which it would make their own hair stand on end to listen to.

And all this time, we are in an epoch of expansion; and the essence of an epoch of expansion is a movement of ideas, and the one salvation of an epoch of expansion is a harmony of ideas. The very principle of the authority which we are seeking as a defence against anarchy is right reason, ideas, light. The more, therefore, an aristocracy calls to its aid its innate forces,—its impenetrability, its high spirit, its power of haughty resistance,—to deal with an epoch of expansion, the graver is the danger, the greater the certainty of explosion, the surer the aristocracy's defeat; for it is trying to do violence to nature instead of working along with it. The best powers shown by the best men of an aristocracy at such an epoch are, it will be

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observed, non-aristocratical powers, powers of industry, powers of intelligence; and these powers, thus exhibited, tend really not to strengthen the aristocracy, but to take their owners out of it, to expose them to the dissolving agencies of thought and change, to make them men of the modern spirit and of the future. If, as sometimes happens, they add to their non-aristocratical qualities of labour and thought, a strong dose of aristocratical qualities also,—of pride, defiance, turn for resistance—this truly aristocratical side of them, so far from adding any strength to them really neutralises their force and makes them impracticable and ineffective.

Knowing myself to be indeed sadly to seek, as one of my many critics says, in "a philosophy with coherent, interdependent, subordinate and derivative principles," I continually have recourse to a plain man's expedient of trying to make what few simple notions I have, clearer, and more intelligible to myself, by means of example and illustration. And having been brought up at Oxford in the bad old times, when we were stuffed with Greek and Aristotle, and thought nothing of preparing ourselves,—as after Mr. Lowe's great speech at Edinburgh we shall do,—to fight the battle of life with the German waiters, my head is still full of a lumber of phrases we learnt at Oxford from Aristotle, about virtue being in a mean, and about excess and defect, and so on. Once when I had had the advantage of listening to the Reform debates in the House of Commons, having heard a number of interesting speakers, and among them Lord Elcho and Sir Thomas Bateson, I remember it struck me, applying Aristotle's machinery of the mean to my ideas about our aristocracy, that Lord Elcho was exactly the perfection, or happy mean, or virtue, of aristocracy, and Sir Thomas Bateson the excess; and I fancied that by observing these two we might see both the inadequacy of aristocracy to supply the principle of authority needful for our present wants, and the danger of its trying to supply it when it was not really competent for the business. On the one hand, in Lord Elcho, showing plenty of high spirit, but remarkable, far above and beyond his gift of high spirit, for the fine tempering of his high spirit, for ease, serenity, politeness,—the great virtues, as Mr. Carlyle says, of aristocracy,—in this beautiful and virtuous mean, there seemed evidently some insufficiency of light; while, on the other hand, Sir Thomas Bateson, in whom the high spirit of aristocracy, its impenetrability, defiant courage, and pride of resistance, were developed even in excess, was manifestly capable, if he had his way given him, of causing us great danger, and, indeed, of throwing the whole commonwealth into confusion. Then I reverted to that old fundamental notion of mine about the grand merit of our race being really our honesty; and the very helplessness of our aristocratic or governing class in dealing with our perturbed social state gave me a sort of pride and satisfaction, because I saw they were, as a whole, too honest to try and manage a business for which they did not feel themselves capable.

Surely, now, it is no inconsiderable boon culture confers upon us, if in embarrassed times like the present it enables us to look at the ins and the outs of things in this way, without hatred and without partiality, and with a disposition to see the good in everybody all round. And I try to follow just the same course with

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our middle- class as with our aristocracy. Mr. Lowe talks to us of this strong middle part of the nation, of the unrivalled deeds of our liberal middle-class Parliament, of the noble, the heroic work it has performed in the last thirty years; and I begin to ask myself if we shall not, then, find in our middle-class the principle of authority we want, and if we had not better take administration as well as legislation away from the weak extreme which now administers for us, and commit both to the strong middle part. I observe, too, that the heroes of middle-class liberalism, such as we have hitherto known it, speak with a kind of prophetic anticipation of the great destiny which awaits them, and as if the future was clearly theirs. The advanced party, the progressive party, the party in alliance with the future, are the names they like to give themselves. "The principles which will obtain recognition in the future," says Mr. Miall, a personage of deserved eminence among the political Dissenters, as they are called, who have been the backbone of middle-class liberalism—"the principles which will obtain recognition in the future are the principles for which I have long and zealously laboured. I qualified myself for joining in the work of harvest by doing to the best of my ability the duties of seed-time." These duties, if one is to gather them from the works of the great liberal party in the last thirty years, are, as I have elsewhere summed them up, the advocacy of free-trade, of parliamentary reform, of abolition of church-rates, of voluntaryism in religion and education, of non- interference of the State between employers and employed, and of marriage with one's deceased wife's sister.

Now I know, when I object that all this is machinery, the great liberal middle-class has by this time grown cunning enough to answer, that it always meant more by these things than meets the eye; that it has had that within which passes show, and that we are soon going to see, in a Free Church and all manner of good things, what it was. But I have learned from Bishop Wilson (if Mr. Frederic Harrison will forgive my again quoting that poor old hierophant of a decayed superstition): "If we would really know our heart let us impartially view our actions;" and I cannot help thinking that if our liberals had had so much sweetness and light in their inner minds as they allege, more of it must have come out in their sayings and doings. An American friend of the English liberals says, indeed, that their Dissidence of Dissent has been a mere instrument of the political Dissenters for making reason and the will of God prevail (and no doubt he would say the same of marriage with one's deceased wife's sister); and that the abolition of a State Church is merely the Dissenter's means to this end, just as culture is mine. Another American defender of theirs says just the same of their industrialism and free-trade; indeed, this gentleman, taking the bull by the horns, proposes that we should for the future call industrialism culture, and the industrialists the men of culture, and then of course there can be no longer any misapprehension about their true character; and besides the pleasure of being wealthy and comfortable, they will have authentic recognition as vessels of sweetness and light. All this is undoubtedly specious; but I must remark that the culture of which I talked was an endeavour to come at reason and the will of God by means of reading, observing, and thinking; and that whoever

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calls anything else culture, may, indeed, call it so if he likes, but then he talks of something quite different from what I talked of. And, again, as culture's way of working for reason and the will of God is by directly trying to know more about them, while the Dissidence of Dissent is evidently in itself no effort of this kind, nor is its Free Church, in fact, a church with worthier conceptions of God and the ordering of the world than the State Church professes, but with mainly the same conceptions of these as the State Church has, only that every man is to comport himself as he likes in professing them,—this being so, I cannot at once accept the Nonconformity any more than the industrialism and the other great works of our liberal middle-class as proof positive that this class is in possession of light, and that here is the true seat of authority for which we are in search; but I must try a little further, and seek for other indications which may enable me to make up my mind.

Why should we not do with the middle-class as we have done with the aristocratic class,—find in it some representative men who may stand for the virtuous mean of this class, for the perfection of its present qualities and mode of being, and also for the excess of them. Such men must clearly not be men of genius like Mr. Bright; for, as I have formerly said, so far as a man has genius he tends to take himself out of the category of class altogether, and to become simply a man. Mr. Bright's brother, Mr. Jacob Bright, would, perhaps, be more to the purpose; he seems to sum up very well in himself, without disturbing influences, the general liberal force of the middle-class, the force by which it has done its great works of free-trade, parliamentary reform, voluntaryism, and so on, and the spirit in which it has done them. Now it is clear, from what has been already said, that there has been at least an apparent want of light in the force and spirit through which these great works have been done, and that the works have worn in consequence too much a look of machinery. But this will be clearer still if we take, as the happy mean of the middle-class, not Mr. Jacob Bright, but his colleague in the representation of Manchester, Mr. Bazley. Mr. Bazley sums up for us, in general, the middle-class, its spirit and its works, at least as well as Mr. Jacob Bright; and he has given us, moreover, a famous sentence, which bears directly on the resolution of our present question,—whether there is light enough in our middle-class to make it the proper seat of the authority we wish to establish. When there was a talk some little while ago about the state of middle-class education, Mr. Bazley, as the representative of that class, spoke some memorable words:—"There had been a cry that middle-class education ought to receive more attention. He confessed himself very much surprised by the clamour that was raised. He did not think that class need excite the sympathy either of the legislature or the public." Now this satisfaction of Mr. Bazley with the mental state of the middle-class was truly representative, and enhances his claim (if that were necessary) to stand as the beautiful and virtuous mean of that class. But it is obviously at variance with our definition of culture, or the pursuit of light and perfection, which made light and perfection consist, not in resting and being, but in growing and becoming, in a perpetual advance in beauty and wisdom. So the middle-class is by its essence, as one may say, by its incomparable self-satisfaction

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decisively expressed through its beautiful and virtuous mean, self-excluded from wielding an authority of which light is to be the very soul.

Clear as this is, it will be made clearer still if we take some representative man as the excess of the middle-class, and remember that the middle-class, in general, is to be conceived as a body swaying between the qualities of its mean and of its excess, and on the whole, of course, as human nature is constituted, inclining rather towards the excess than the mean. Of its excess no better representative can possibly be imagined than the Rev. W. Cattle, a Dissenting minister from Walsall, who came before the public in connection with the proceedings at Birmingham of Mr. Murphy, already mentioned. Speaking in the midst of an irritated population of Catholics, the Rev. W. Cattle exclaimed:—'! say, then, away with the mass! It is from the bottomless pit; and in the bottomless pit shall all liars have their part, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." And again: "When all the praties were black in Ireland, why didn't the priests say the hocus-pocus over them, and make them all good again?" He shared, too, Mr. Murphy's fears of some invasion of his domestic happiness: "What I wish to say to you as Protestant husbands is, Take care of your wives!" And, finally, in the true vein of an Englishman doing as he likes, a vein of which I have at some length pointed out the present dangers, he recommended for imitation the example of some churchwardens at Dublin, among whom, said he, "there was a Luther and also a Melancthon," who had made very short work with some ritualist or other, handed him down from his pulpit, and kicked him out of church. Now it is manifest, as I said in the case of Sir Thomas Bateson, that if we let this excess of the sturdy English middle-class, this conscientious Protestant Dissenter, so strong, so self-reliant, so fully persuaded in his own mind, have his way, he would be capable, with his want of light—or, to use the language of the religious world, with his zeal without knowledge—of stirring up strife which neither he nor any one else could easily compose.

And then comes in, as it did also with the aristocracy, the honesty of our race, and by the voice of another middle-class man, Alderman Wilson, Alderman of the City of London and Colonel of the City of London Militia, proclaims that it has twinges of conscience, and that it will not attempt to cope with our social disorders, and to deal with a business which it feels to be too high for it. Every one remembers how this virtuous Alderman-Colonel, or Colonel-Alderman, led his militia through the London streets; how the bystanders gathered to see him pass; how the London roughs, asserting an Englishman's best and most blissful right of doing what he likes, robbed and beat the bystanders; and how the blameless warrior-magistrate refused to let his troops interfere. "The crowd," he touchingly said afterwards, "was mostly composed of fine healthy strong men, bent on mischief; if he had allowed his soldiers to interfere they might have been overpowered, their rifles taken from them and used against them by the mob; a riot, in fact, might have ensued, and been attended with bloodshed, compared with which the assaults and loss of property that actually occurred would have been as nothing." Honest and affecting testimony of the English middle-class to its own inadequacy for the authoritative part one's

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admiration would sometimes incline one to assign to it! "Who are we," they say by the voice of their Alderman-Colonel, "that we should not be overpowered if we attempt to cope with social anarchy, our rifles taken from us and used against us by the mob, and we, perhaps, robbed and beaten ourselves? Or what light have we, beyond a free-born Englishman's impulse to do as he likes, which could justify us in preventing, at the cost of bloodshed, other free-born Englishmen from doing as they like, and robbing and beating us as much as they please?"

This distrust of themselves as an adequate centre of authority does not mark the working-class, as was shown by their readiness the other day in Hyde Park to take upon themselves all the functions of government. But this comes from the working-class being, as I have often said, still an embryo, of which no one can yet quite foresee the final development; and from its not having the same experience and self-knowledge as the aristocratic and middle classes. Honesty it no doubt has, just like the other classes of Englishmen, but honesty in an inchoate and untrained state; and meanwhile its powers of action, which are, as Mr. Frederic Harrison says, exceedingly ready, easily run away with it. That it cannot at present have a sufficiency of light which comes by culture,—that is, by reading, observing, and thinking,—is clear from the very nature of its condition; and, indeed, we saw that Mr. Frederic Harrison, in seeking to make a free stage for its bright powers of sympathy and ready powers of action, had to begin by throwing overboard culture, and flouting it as only fit for a professor of belles lettres. Still, to make it perfectly manifest that no more in the working-class than in the aristocratic and middle classes can one find an adequate centre of authority,—that is, as culture teaches us to conceive our required authority, of light,—let us again follow, with this class, the method we have followed with the aristocratic and middle classes, and try to bring before our minds representative men, who may figure to us its virtue and its excess. We must not take, of course, Colonel Dickson or Mr. Beales; because Colonel Dickson, by his martial profession and dashing exterior, seems to belong properly, like Julius Caesar and Mirabeau and other great popular leaders, to the aristocratic class, and to be carried into the popular ranks only by his ambition or his genius; while Mr. Beales belongs to our solid middle-class, and, perhaps, if he had not been a great popular leader, would have been a Philistine. But Mr. Odger, whose speeches we have all read, and of whom his friends relate, besides, much that is favourable, may very well stand for the beautiful and virtuous mean of our present working-class; and I think everybody will admit that in Mr. Odger, as in Lord Elcho, there is manifestly, with all his good points, some insufficiency of light. The excess of the working-class, in its present state of development, is perhaps best shown in Mr. Bradlaugh, the iconoclast, who seems to be almost for baptizing us all in blood and fire into his new social dispensation, and to whose reflections, now that I have once been set going on Bishop Wilson's track, I cannot forbear commending this maxim of the good old man: "Intemperance in talk makes a dreadful havoc in the heart." Mr. Bradlaugh, like Sir Thomas Bateson and the Rev. W. Cattle, is evidently capable, if he had his head given him, of running us all into

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great dangers and confusion. I conclude, therefore,—what, indeed, few of those who do me the honour to read this disquisition are likely to dispute,—that we can as little find in the working-class as in the aristocratic or in the middle class our much-wanted source of authority, as culture suggests it to us.

Well, then, what if we tried to rise above the idea of class to the idea of the whole community, the State, and to find our centre of light and authority there? Every one of us has the idea of country, as a sentiment; hardly any one of us has the idea of the State, as a working power. And why? Because we habitually live in our ordinary selves, which do not carry us beyond the ideas and wishes of the class to which we happen to belong. And we are all afraid of giving to the State too much power, because we only conceive of the State as something equivalent to the class in occupation of the executive government, and are afraid of that class abusing power to its own purposes. If we strengthen the State with the aristocratic class in occupation of the executive government, we imagine we are delivering ourselves up captive to the ideas and wishes of Sir Thomas Bateson; if with the middle-class in occupation of the executive government, to those of the Rev. W. Cattle; if with the working-class, to those of Mr. Bradlaugh. And with much justice; owing to the exaggerated notion which we English, as I have said, entertain of the right and blessedness of the mere doing as one likes, of the affirming oneself, and oneself just as it is. People of the aristocratic class want to affirm their ordinary selves, their likings and dislikings; people of the middle-class the same, people of the working-class the same. By our everyday selves, however, we are separate, personal, at war; we are only safe from one another's tyranny when no one has any power; and this safety, in its turn, cannot save us from anarchy. And when, therefore, anarchy presents itself as a danger to us, we know not where to turn.

But by our best self we are united, impersonal, at harmony. We are in no peril from giving authority to this, because it is the truest friend we all of us can have; and when anarchy is a danger to us, to this authority we may turn with sure trust. Well, and this is the very self which culture, or the study of perfection, seeks to develop in us; at the expense of our old untransformed self, taking pleasure only in doing what it likes or is used to do, and exposing us to the risk of clashing with every one else who is doing the same! So that our poor culture, which is flouted as so unpractical, leads us to the very ideas capable of meeting the great want of our present embarrassed times! We want an authority, and we find nothing but jealous classes, checks, and a dead-lock; culture suggests the idea of the State. We find no basis for a firm State-power in our ordinary selves; culture suggests one to us in our best self.

It cannot but acutely try a tender conscience to be accused, in a practical country like ours, of keeping aloof from the work and hope of a multitude of earnest-hearted men, and of merely toying with poetry and aesthetics. So it is with no little sense of relief that I find myself thus in the position of one who makes a contribution in aid of the practical necessities of our times. The great thing, it will be observed, is to find our best self, and to seek to affirm nothing but that; not,—as we English with our over- value for merely being free and busy have been

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so accustomed to do,— resting satisfied with a self which comes uppermost long before our best self, and affirming that with blind energy. In short,—to go back yet once more to Bishop Wilson,—of these two excellent rules of Bishop Wilson's for a man's guidance: "Firstly, never go against the best light you have; secondly, take care that your light be not darkness," we English have followed with praiseworthy zeal the first rule, but we have not given so much heed to the second. We have gone manfully, the Rev. W. Cattle and the rest of us, according to the best light we have; but we have not taken enough care that this should be really the best light possible for us, that it should not be darkness. And, our honesty being very great, conscience has whispered to us that the light we were following, our ordinary self, was, indeed, perhaps, only an inferior self, only darkness; and that it would not do to impose this seriously on all the world.

But our best self inspires faith, and is capable of affording a serious principle of authority. For example. We are on our way to what the late Duke of Wellington, with his strong sagacity, foresaw and admirably described as "a revolution by due course of law." This is undoubtedly,—if we are still to live and grow, and this famous nation is not to stagnate and dwindle away on the one hand, or, on the other, to perish miserably in mere anarchy and confusion,—what we are on the way to. Great changes there must be, for a revolution cannot accomplish itself without great changes; yet order there must be, for without order a revolution cannot accomplish itself by due course of law. So whatever brings risk of tumult and disorder, multitudinous processions in the streets of our crowded towns, multitudinous meetings in their public places and parks,—demonstrations perfectly unnecessary in the present course of our affairs,—our best self, or right reason, plainly enjoins us to set our faces against. It enjoins us to encourage and uphold the occupants of the executive power, whoever they may be, in firmly prohibiting them. But it does this clearly and resolutely, and is thus a real principle of authority, because it does it with a free conscience; because in thus provisionally strengthening the executive power, it knows that it is not doing this merely to enable Sir Thomas Bateson to affirm himself as against Mr. Bradlaugh, or the Rev. W. Cattle to affirm himself as against both. It knows that it is stablishing the State, or organ of our collective best self, of our national right reason; and it has the testimony of conscience that it is stablishing the State on behalf of whatever great changes are needed, just as much as on behalf of order; stablishing it to deal just as stringently, when the time comes, with Sir Thomas Bateson's Protestant ascendency, or with the Rev. W. Cattle's sorry education of his children, as it deals with Mr. Bradlaugh's street-processions.

CHAPTER V

The matter here opened is so large, and the trains of thought to which it gives rise are so manifold, that we must be careful to limit ourselves scrupulously to what has a direct bearing upon our actual discussion. We have found that at the bottom of our present unsettled state, so full of the seeds of trouble, lies the notion

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of its being the prime right and happiness, for each of us, to affirm himself, and his ordinary self; to be doing, and to be doing freely and as he likes. We have found at the bottom of it the disbelief in right reason as a lawful authority. It was easy to show from our practice and current history that this is so; but it was impossible to show why it is so without taking a somewhat wider sweep and going into things a little more deeply. Why, in fact, should good, well-meaning, energetic, sensible people, like the bulk of our countrymen, come to have such light belief in right reason, and such an exaggerated value for their own independent doing, however crude? The answer is: because of an exclusive and excessive development in them, without due allowance for time, place, and circumstance, of that side of human nature, and that group of human forces, to which we have given the general name of Hebraism. Because they have thought their real and only important homage was owed to a power concerned with their obedience rather than with their intelligence, a power interested in the moral side of their nature almost exclusively. Thus they have been led to regard in themselves, as the one thing needful, strictness of conscience, the staunch adherence to some fixed law of doing we have got already, instead of spontaneity of consciousness, which tends continually to enlarge our whole law of doing. They have fancied themselves to have in their religion a sufficient basis for the whole of their life fixed and certain for ever, a full law of conduct and a full law of thought, so far as thought is needed, as well; whereas what they really have is a law of conduct, a law of unexampled power for enabling them to war against the law of sin in their members and not to serve it in the lusts thereof. The book which contains this invaluable law they call the Word of God, and attribute to it, as I have said, and as, indeed, is perfectly well known, a reach and sufficiency co-extensive with all the wants of human nature. This might, no doubt, be so, if humanity were not the composite thing it is, if it had only, or in quite overpowering eminence, a moral side, and the group of instincts and powers which we call moral. But it has besides, and in notable eminence, an intellectual side, and the group of instincts and powers which we call intellectual. No doubt, mankind makes in general its progress in a fashion which gives at one time full swing to one of these groups of instincts, at another time to the other; and man's faculties are so intertwined, that when his moral side, and the current of force which we call Hebraism, is uppermost, this side will manage somehow to provide, or appear to provide, satisfaction for his intellectual needs; and when his intellectual side, and the current of force which we call Hellenism, is uppermost, this, again, will provide, or appear to provide, satisfaction for men's moral needs. But sooner or later it becomes manifest that when the two sides of humanity proceed in this fashion of alternate preponderance, and not of mutual understanding and balance, the side which is uppermost does not really provide in a satisfactory manner for the needs of the side which is undermost, and a state of confusion is, sooner or later, the result. The Hellenic half of our nature, bearing rule, makes a sort of provision for the Hebrew half, but it turns out to be an inadequate provision; and again the Hebrew half of our nature bearing rule makes a sort of provision for the Hellenic half, but this, too,

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turns out to be an inadequate provision. The true and smooth order of humanity's development is not reached in either way. And therefore, while we willingly admit with the Christian apostle that the world by wisdom,—that is, by the isolated preponderance of its intellectual impulses,—knew not God, or the true order of things, it is yet necessary, also, to set up a sort of converse to this proposition, and to say likewise (what is equally true) that the world by Puritanism knew not God. And it is on this converse of the apostle's proposition that it is particularly needful to insist in our own country just at present.

Here, indeed, is the answer to many criticisms which have been addressed to all that we have said in praise of sweetness and light. Sweetness and light evidently have to do with the bent or side in humanity which we call Hellenic. Greek intelligence has obviously for its essence the instinct for what Plato calls the true, firm, intelligible law of things; the love of light, of seeing things as they are. Even in the natural sciences, where the Greeks had not time and means adequately to apply this instinct, and where we have gone a great deal further than they did, it is this instinct which is the root of the whole matter and the ground of all our success; and this instinct the world has mainly learnt of the Greeks, inasmuch as they are humanity's most signal manifestation of it. Greek art, again, Greek beauty, have their root in the same impulse to see things as they really are, inasmuch as Greek art and beauty rest on fidelity to nature,—the best nature,—and on a delicate discrimination of what this best nature is. To say we work for sweetness and light, then, is only another way of saying that we work for Hellenism. But, oh! cry many people, sweetness and light are not enough; you must put strength or energy along with them, and make a kind of trinity of strength, sweetness and light, and then, perhaps, you may do some good. That is to say, we are to join Hebraism, strictness of the moral conscience, and manful walking by the best light we have, together with Hellenism, inculcate both, and rehearse the praises of both.

Or, rather, we may praise both in conjunction, but we must be careful to praise Hebraism most. "Culture," says an acute, though somewhat rigid critic, Mr. Sidgwick, "diffuses sweetness and light. I do not undervalue these blessings, but religion gives fire and strength, and the world wants fire and strength even more than sweetness and light." By religion, let me explain, Mr. Sidgwick here means particularly that Puritanism on the insufficiency of which I have been commenting and to which he says I am unfair. Now, no doubt, it is possible to be a fanatical partisan of light and the instincts which push us to it, a fanatical enemy of strictness of moral conscience and the instincts which push us to it. A fanaticism of this sort deforms and vulgarises the well-known work, in some respects so remarkable, of the late Mr. Buckle. Such a fanaticism carries its own mark with it, in lacking sweetness; and its own penalty, in that, lacking sweetness, it comes in the end to lack light too. And the Greeks,—the great exponents of humanity's bent for sweetness and light united, of its perception that the truth of things must be at the same time beauty,—singularly escaped the fanaticism which we moderns, whether we Hellenise or whether we Hebraise, are so apt to show, and arrived,—though

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failing, as has been said, to give adequate practical satisfaction to the claims of man's moral side,—at the idea of a comprehensive adjustment of the claims of both the sides in man, the moral as well as the intellectual, of a full estimate of both, and of a reconciliation of both; an idea which is philosophically of the greatest value, and the best of lessons for us moderns. So we ought to have no difficulty in conceding to Mr. Sidgwick that manful walking by the best light one has,—fire and strength as he calls it,—has its high value as well as culture, the endeavour to see things in their truth and beauty, the pursuit of sweetness and light. But whether at this or that time, and to this or that set of persons, one ought to insist most on the praises of fire and strength, or on the praises of sweetness and light, must depend, one would think, on the circumstances and needs of that particular time and those particular persons. And all that we have been saying, and indeed any glance at the world around us, shows that with us, with the most respectable and strongest part of us, the ruling force is now, and long has been, a Puritan force, the care for fire and strength, strictness of conscience, Hebraism, rather than the care for sweetness and light, spontaneity of consciousness, Hellenism.

9 Original Note: unum necessarium or one thing needful. Arnold refers here, and in his subsequent chapter title, Porro Unum est Necessarium, to Luke 10:42. Here is the context, 10:38-42. "[Jesus] . . . entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. / And she had a sister called Mary . . . . / But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. / And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: / But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." King James Bible.

Well, then, what is the good of our now rehearsing the praises of fire and strength to ourselves, who dwell too exclusively on them already? When Mr. Sidgwick says so broadly, that the world wants fire and strength even more than sweetness and light, is he not carried away by a turn for powerful generalisation? does he not forget that the world is not all of one piece, and every piece with the same needs at the same time? It may be true that the Roman world at the beginning of our era, or Leo the Tenth's Court at the time of the Reformation, or French society in the eighteenth century, needed fire and strength even more than sweetness and light. But can it be said that the Barbarians who overran the empire, needed fire and strength even more than sweetness and light; or that the Puritans needed them more; or that Mr. Murphy, the Birmingham lecturer, and the Rev. W. Cattle and his friends, need them more?

The Puritan's great danger is that he imagines himself in possession of a rule telling him the unum necessarium, or one thing needful,9 and that he then remains satisfied with a very crude conception of what this rule really is and what it tells him, thinks he has now knowledge and henceforth needs only to act, and, in this dangerous state of assurance and self-satisfaction, proceeds to give full swing to a number of the instincts of his ordinary self. Some of the instincts of his ordinary self he has, by the help of his rule of life, conquered; but others which he has not conquered by this help

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he is so far from perceiving to need subjugation, and to be instincts of an inferior self, that he even fancies it to be his right and duty, in virtue of having conquered a limited part of himself, to give unchecked swing to the remainder. He is, I say, a victim of Hebraism, of the tendency to cultivate strictness of conscience rather than spontaneity of consciousness. And what he wants is a larger conception of human nature, showing him the number of other points at which his nature must come to its best, besides the points which he himself knows and thinks of. There is no unum necessarium, or one thing needful, which can free human nature from the obligation of trying to come to its best at all these points. The real unum necessarium for us is to come to our best at all points. Instead of our "one thing needful," justifying in us vulgarity, hideousness, ignorance, violence,—our vulgarity, hideousness, ignorance, violence, are really so many touchstones which try our one thing needful, and which prove that in the state, at any rate, in which we ourselves have it, it is not all we want. And as the force which encourages us to stand staunch and fast by the rule and ground we have is Hebraism, so the force which encourages us to go back upon this rule, and to try the very ground on which we appear to stand, is Hellenism,—a turn for giving our consciousness free play and enlarging its range. And what I say is, not that Hellenism is always for everybody more wanted than Hebraism, but that for the Rev. W. Cattle at this particular moment, and for the great majority of us his fellow-countrymen, it is more wanted.

10 Original Note: Romans 11:34. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" King James Bible.

Nothing is more striking than to observe in how many ways a limited conception of human nature, the notion of a one thing needful, a one side in us to be made uppermost, the disregard of a full and harmonious development of ourselves, tells injuriously on our thinking and acting. In the first place, our hold upon the rule or standard to which we look for our one thing needful, tends to become less and less near and vital, our conception of it more and more mechanical, and unlike the thing itself as it was conceived in the mind where it originated. The dealings of Puritanism with the writings of St. Paul afford a noteworthy illustration of this. Nowhere so much as in the writings of St. Paul, and in that great apostle's greatest work, the Epistle to the Romans, has Puritanism found what seemed to furnish it with the one thing needful, and to give it canons of truth absolute and final. Now all writings, as has been already said, even the most precious writings and the most fruitful, must inevitably, from the very nature of things, be but contributions to human thought and human development, which extend wider than they do. Indeed, St. Paul, in the very Epistle of which we are speaking, shows, when he asks, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?"10—who hath known, that is, the true and divine order of things in its entirety,—that he himself acknowledges this fully. And we have already pointed out in another Epistle of St. Paul a great and vital idea of the human spirit,—the idea of the immortality of the soul,—transcending and overlapping, so to speak, the expositor's power to give it adequate definition and expression. But quite distinct from the question whether St. Paul's expression, or any man's

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expression, can be a perfect and final expression of truth, comes the question whether we rightly seize and understand his expression as it exists. Now, perfectly to seize another man's meaning, as it stood in his own mind, is not easy; especially when the man is separated from us by such differences of race, training, time, and circumstances as St. Paul. But there are degrees of nearness in getting at a man's meaning; and though we cannot arrive quite at what St. Paul had in his mind, yet we may come near it. And who, that comes thus near it, must not feel how terms which St. Paul employs in trying to follow, with his analysis of such profound power and originality, some of the most delicate, intricate, obscure, and contradictory workings and states of the human spirit, are detached and employed by Puritanism, not in the connected and fluid way in which St. Paul employs them, and for which alone words are really meant, but in an isolated, fixed, mechanical way, as if they were talismans; and how all trace and sense of St. Paul's true movement of ideas, and sustained masterly analysis, is thus lost? Who, I say, that has watched Puritanism,—the force which so strongly Hebraises, which so takes St. Paul's writings as something absolute and final, containing the one thing needful,—handle such terms as grace, faith, election, righteousness, but must feel, not only that these terms have for the mind of Puritanism a sense false and misleading, but also that this sense is the most monstrous and grotesque caricature of the sense of St. Paul, and that his true meaning is by these worshippers of his words altogether lost?

Or to take another eminent example, in which not Puritanism only, but, one may say, the whole religious world, by their mechanical use of St. Paul's writings, can be shown to miss or change his real meaning. The whole religious world, one may say, use now the word resurrection,—a word which is so often in their thoughts and on their lips, and which they find so often in St. Paul's writings,—in one sense only. They use it to mean a rising again after the physical death of the body. Now it is quite true that St. Paul speaks of resurrection in this sense, that he tries to describe and explain it, and that he condemns those who doubt and deny it. But it is true, also, that in nine cases out of ten where St. Paul thinks and speaks of resurrection, he thinks and speaks of it in a sense different from this; in the sense of a rising to a new life before the physical death of the body, and not after it. The idea on which we have already touched, the profound idea of being baptized into the death of the great exemplar of self-devotion and self-annulment, of repeating in our own person, by virtue of identification with our exemplar, his course of self-devotion and self-annulment, and of thus coming, within the limits of our present life, to a new life, in which, as in the death going before it, we are identified with our exemplar,—this is the fruitful and original conception of being risen with Christ which possesses the mind of St. Paul, and this is the central point round which, with such incomparable emotion and eloquence, all his teaching moves. For him, the life after our physical death is really in the main but a consequence and continuation of the inexhaustible energy of the new life thus originated on this side the grave. This grand Pauline idea of Christian resurrection is worthily rehearsed in one of the noblest collects of the Prayer-Book, and is destined, no doubt, to fill

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a more and more important place in the Christianity of the future; but almost as signal as is the essentialness of this characteristic idea in St. Paul's teaching, is the completeness with which the worshippers of St. Paul's words, as an absolute final expression of saving truth, have lost it, and have substituted for the apostle's living and near conception of a resurrection now, their mechanical and remote conception of a resurrection hereafter!

In short, so fatal is the notion of possessing, even in the most precious words or standards, the one thing needful, of having in them, once for all, a full and sufficient measure of light to guide us, and of there being no duty left for us except to make our practice square exactly with them,—so fatal, I say, is this notion to the right knowledge and comprehension of the very words or standards we thus adopt, and to such strange distortions and perversions of them does it inevitably lead, that whenever we hear that commonplace which Hebraism, if we venture to inquire what a man knows, is so apt to bring out against us in disparagement of what we call culture, and in praise of a man's sticking to the one thing needful,—he knows, says Hebraism, his Bible!—whenever we hear this said, we may, without any elaborate defence of culture, content ourselves with answering simply: "No man, who knows nothing else, knows even his Bible."

Now the force which we have so much neglected, Hellenism, may be liable to fail in moral force and earnestness, but by the law of its nature,—the very same law which makes it sometimes deficient in intensity when intensity is required,—it opposes itself to the notion of cutting our being in two, of attributing to one part the dignity of dealing with the one thing needful, and leaving the other part to take its chance, which is the bane of Hebraism. Essential in Hellenism is the impulse to the development of the whole man, to connecting and harmonising all parts of him, perfecting all, leaving none to take their chance; because the characteristic bent of Hellenism, as has been said, is to find the intelligible law of things, and there is no intelligible law of things, things cannot really appear intelligible, unless they are also beautiful. The body is not intelligible, is not seen in its true nature and as it really is, unless it is seen as beautiful; behaviour is not intelligible, does not account for itself to the mind and show the reason for its existing, unless it is beautiful. The same with discourse, the same with song, the same with worship, the same with all the modes in which man proves his activity and expresses himself. To think that when one shows what is mean, or vulgar, or hideous, one can be permitted to plead that one has that within which passes show; to suppose that the possession of what benefits and satisfies one part of our being can make allowable either discourse like Mr. Murphy's and the Rev. W. Cattle's, or poetry like the hymns we all hear, or places of worship like the chapels we all see,—this it is abhorrent to the nature of Hellenism to concede. And to be, like our honoured and justly honoured Faraday, a great natural philosopher with one side of his being and a Sandemanian with the other, would to Archimedes have been impossible. It is evident to what a many-sided perfecting of man's powers and activities this demand of Hellenism for satisfaction to be given to the mind by everything which we do, is calculated to

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impel our race. It has its dangers, as has been fully granted; the notion of this sort of equipollency in man's modes of activity may lead to moral relaxation, what we do not make our one thing needful we may come to treat not enough as if it were needful, though it is indeed very needful and at the same time very hard. Still, what side in us has not its dangers, and which of our impulses can be a talisman to give us perfection outright, and not merely a help to bring us towards it? Has not Hebraism, as we have shown, its dangers as well as Hellenism; and have we used so excessively the tendencies in ourselves to which Hellenism makes appeal, that we are now suffering from it? Are we not, on the contrary, now suffering because we have not enough used these tendencies as a help towards perfection?

For we see whither it has brought us, the long exclusive predominance of Hebraism,—the insisting on perfection in one part of our nature and not in all; the singling out the moral side, the side of obedience and action, for such intent regard; making strictness of the moral conscience so far the principal thing, and putting off for hereafter and for another world the care for being complete at all points, the full and harmonious development of our humanity. Instead of watching and following on its ways the desire which, as Plato says, "for ever through all the universe tends towards that which is lovely," we think that the world has settled its accounts with this desire, knows what this desire wants of it, and that all the impulses of our ordinary self which do not conflict with the terms of this settlement, in our narrow view of it, we may follow unrestrainedly, under the sanction of some such text as "Not slothful in business," or, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might," or something else of the same kind. And to any of these impulses we soon come to give that same character of a mechanical, absolute law, which we give to our religion; we regard it, as we do our religion, as an object for strictness of conscience, not for spontaneity of consciousness; for unremitting adherence on its own account, not for going back upon, viewing in its connection with other things, and adjusting to a number of changing circumstances; we treat it, in short, just as we treat our religion,—as machinery. It is in this way that the Barbarians treat their bodily exercises, the Philistines their business, Mr. Spurgeon his voluntaryism, Mr. Bright the assertion of personal liberty, Mr. Beales the right of meeting in Hyde Park. In all those cases what is needed is a freer play of consciousness upon the object of pursuit; and in all of them Hebraism, the valuing staunchness and earnestness more than this free play, the entire subordination of thinking to doing, has led to a mistaken and misleading treatment of things.

The newspapers a short time ago contained an account of the suicide of a Mr. Smith, secretary to some insurance company, who, it was said, "laboured under the apprehension that he would come to poverty, and that he was eternally lost." And when I read these words, it occurred to me that the poor man who came to such a mournful end was, in truth, a kind of type, by the selection of his two grand objects of concern, by their isolation from everything else, and their juxtaposition to one another, of all the strongest, most respectable, and most representative part of our nation. "He laboured under the apprehension that he would come to poverty, and

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that he was eternally lost." The whole middle-class have a conception of things,—a conception which makes us call them Philistines,—just like that of this poor man; though we are seldom, of course, shocked by seeing it take the distressing, violently morbid, and fatal turn, which it took with him. But how generally, with how many of us, are the main concerns of life limited to these two,—the concern for making money, and the concern for saving our souls! And how entirely does the narrow and mechanical conception of our secular business proceed from a narrow and mechanical conception of our religious business! What havoc do the united conceptions make of our lives! It is because the second-named of these two master-concerns presents to us the one thing needful in so fixed, narrow, and mechanical a way, that so ignoble a fellow master-concern to it as the first-named becomes possible; and, having been once admitted, takes the same rigid and absolute character as the other. Poor Mr. Smith had sincerely the nobler master-concern as well as the meaner,—the concern for saving his soul (according to the narrow and mechanical conception which Puritanism has of what the salvation of the soul is), and the concern for making money. But let us remark how many people there are, especially outside the limits of the serious and conscientious middle-class to which Mr. Smith belonged, who take up with a meaner master-concern,—whether it be pleasure, or field-sports, or bodily exercises, or business, or popular agitation,— who take up with one of these exclusively, and neglect Mr. Smith's nobler master-concern, because of the mechanical form which Hebraism has given to this nobler master-concern, making it stand, as we have said, as something talismanic, isolated, and all-sufficient, justifying our giving our ordinary selves free play in amusement, or business, or popular agitation, if we have made our accounts square with this master-concern; and, if we have not, rendering other things indifferent, and our ordinary self all we have to follow, and to follow with all the energy that is in us, till we do. Whereas the idea of perfection at all points, the encouraging in ourselves spontaneity of consciousness, the letting a free play of thought live and flow around all our activity, the indisposition to allow one side of our activity to stand as so all-important and all-sufficing that it makes other sides indifferent,— this bent of mind in us may not only check us in following unreservedly a mean master-concern of any kind, but may even, also, bring new life and movement into that side of us with which alone Hebraism concerns itself, and awaken a healthier and less mechanical activity there. Hellenism may thus actually serve to further the designs of Hebraism.

Undoubtedly it thus served in the first days of Christianity. Christianity, as has been said, occupied itself, like Hebraism, with the moral side of man exclusively, with his moral affections and moral conduct; and so far it was but a continuation of Hebraism. But it transformed and renewed Hebraism by going back upon a fixed rule, which had become mechanical, and had thus lost its vital motive-power; by letting the thought play freely around this old rule, and perceive its inadequacy; by developing a new motive-power, which men's moral consciousness could take living hold of, and could move in sympathy with. What was this but an importation

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of Hellenism, as we have defined it, into Hebraism? And as St. Paul used the contradiction between the Jew's profession and practice, his shortcomings on that very side of moral affection and moral conduct which the Jew and St. Paul, both of them, regarded as all in all—("Thou that sayest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?")11—for a proof of the inadequacy of the old rule of life, in the Jew's mechanical conception of it, and tried to rescue him by making his consciousness play freely around this rule,—that is, by a, so far, Hellenic treatment of it,—even so, when we hear so much said of the growth of commercial immorality in our serious middle-class, of the melting away of habits of strict probity before the temptation to get quickly rich and to cut a figure in the world; when we see, at any rate, so much confusion of thought and of practice in this great representative class of our nation, may we not be disposed to say that this confusion shows that his new motive-power of grace and imputed righteousness has become to the Puritan as mechanical, and with as ineffective a hold upon his practice, as the old motive-power of the law was to the Jew? and that the remedy is the same as that which St. Paul employed,—an importation of what we have called Hellenism into his Hebraism, a making his consciousness flow freely round his petrified rule of life and renew it? Only with this difference: that whereas St. Paul imported Hellenism within the limits of our moral part only, this part being still treated by him as all in all; and whereas he exhausted, one may say, and used to the very uttermost, the possibilities of fruitfully importing it on that side exclusively; we ought to try and import it,—guiding ourselves by the ideal of a human nature harmoniously perfect at all points,—into all the lines of our activity, and only by so doing can we rightly quicken, refresh, and renew those very instincts, now so much baffled, to which Hebraism makes appeal.

11 Original Note: Romans 2:21-22. "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? / Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" King James Bible.

But if we will not be warned by the confusion visible enough at present in our thinking and acting, that we are in a false line in having developed our Hebrew side so exclusively, and our Hellenic side so feebly and at random, in loving fixed rules of action so much more than the intelligible law of things, let us listen to a remarkable testimony which the opinion of the world around us offers. All the world now sets great and increasing value on three objects which have long been very dear to us, and pursues them in its own way, or tries to pursue them. These three objects are industrial enterprise, bodily exercises, and freedom. Certainly we have, before and beyond our neighbours, given ourselves to these three things with ardent passion and with high success. And this our neighbours cannot but acknowledge; and they must needs, when they themselves turn to these things, have an eye to our example, and take something of our practice. Now, generally, when people are interested in an object of pursuit, they cannot help feeling an

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enthusiasm for those who have already laboured successfully at it, and for their success; not only do they study them, they also love and admire them. In this way a man who is interested in the art of war not only acquaints himself with the performance of great generals, but he has an admiration and enthusiasm for them. So, too, one who wants to be a painter or a poet cannot help loving and admiring the great painters or poets who have gone before him and shown him the way. But it is strange with how little of love, admiration, or enthusiasm, the world regards us and our freedom, our bodily exercises, and our industrial prowess, much as these things themselves are beginning to interest it. And is not the reason because we follow each of these things in a mechanical manner, as an end in and for itself, and not in reference to a general end of human perfection? and this makes our pursuit of them uninteresting to humanity, and not what the world truly wants? It seems to them mere machinery that we can, knowingly, teach them to worship,—a mere fetish. British freedom, British industry, British muscularity, we work for each of these three things blindly, with no notion of giving each its due proportion and prominence, because we have no ideal of harmonious human perfection before our minds, to set our work in motion, and to guide it. So the rest of the world, desiring industry, or freedom, or bodily strength, yet desiring these not, as we do, absolutely, but as means to something else, imitate, indeed, of our practice what seems useful for them, but us, whose practice they imitate, they seem to entertain neither love nor admiration for. Let us observe, on the other hand, the love and enthusiasm excited by others who have laboured for these very things. Perhaps of what we call industrial enterprise it is not easy to find examples in former times; but let us consider how Greek freedom and Greek gymnastics have attracted the love and praise of mankind, who give so little love and praise to ours. And what can be the reason of this difference? Surely because the Greeks pursued freedom and pursued gymnastics not mechanically, but with constant reference to some ideal of complete human perfection and happiness. And therefore, in spite of faults and failures, they interest and delight by their pursuit of them all the rest of mankind, who instinctively feel that only as things are pursued with reference to this ideal are they valuable.

Here again, therefore, as in the confusion into which the thought and action of even the steadiest class amongst us is beginning to fall, we seem to have an admonition that we have fostered our Hebraising instincts, our preference of earnestness of doing to delicacy and flexibility of thinking, too exclusively, and have been landed by them in a mechanical and unfruitful routine. And again we seem taught that the development of our Hellenising instincts, seeking skilfully the intelligible law of things, and making a stream of fresh thought play freely about our stock notions and habits, is what is most wanted by us at present.

Well, then, from all sides, the more we go into the matter, the currents seem to converge, and together to bear us along towards culture. If we look at the world outside us we find a disquieting absence of sure authority; we discover that only in right reason can we get a source of sure authority, and culture brings us towards

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right reason. If we look at our own inner world, we find all manner of confusion arising out of the habits of unintelligent routine and one-sided growth, to which a too exclusive worship of fire, strength, earnestness, and action has brought us. What we want is a fuller harmonious development of our humanity, a free play of thought upon our routine notions, spontaneity of consciousness, sweetness and light; and these are just what culture generates and fosters. Proceeding from this idea of the harmonious perfection of our humanity, and seeking to help itself up towards this perfection by knowing and spreading the best which has been reached in the world—an object not to be gained without books and reading—culture has got its name touched, in the fancies of men, with a sort of air of bookishness and pedantry, cast upon it from the follies of the many bookmen who forget the end in the means, and use their books with no real aim at perfection. We will not stickle for a name, and the name of culture one might easily give up, if only those who decry the frivolous and pedantic sort of culture, but wish at bottom for the same things as we do, would be careful on their part, not, in disparaging and discrediting the false culture, to unwittingly disparage and discredit, among a people with little natural reverence for it, the true also. But what we are concerned for is the thing, not the name; and the thing, call it by what name we will, is simply the enabling ourselves, whether by reading, observing, or thinking, to come as near as we can to the firm intelligible law of things, and thus to get a basis for a less confused action and a more complete perfection than we have at present.

And now, therefore, when we are accused of preaching up a spirit of cultivated inaction, of provoking the earnest lovers of action, of refusing to lend a hand at uprooting certain definite evils, of despairing to find any lasting truth to minister to the diseased spirit of our time, we shall not be so much confounded and embarrassed what to answer for ourselves. We shall say boldly that we do not at all despair of finding some lasting truth to minister to the diseased spirit of our time; but that we have discovered the best way of finding this to be, not so much by lending a hand to our friends and countrymen in their actual operations for the removal of certain definite evils, but rather in getting our friends and countrymen to seek culture, to let their consciousness play freely round their present operations and the stock notions on which they are founded, show what these are like, and how related to the intelligible law of things, and auxiliary to true human perfection.

2.9.8 Reading and Review Questions

1. To what degree, if any, do you think that Arnold generalizes his own reserve or reticence or ego-protectiveness into the human condition?

2. According to Arnold, what prevents people from being able to love? How, if at all, can one overcome barriers to love?

3. How can culture or literature replace (or reform) religion in Arnold's view, and why?

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4. How does Arnold compare himself (and other Victorians) to the Romantics, and why? What, if any, qualities of the Romantics does Arnold envy, and why? What qualities does he reject, and why?

## 2.10 CHARLES DICKENS

Image 2.21 | Portrait of Charles Dickens

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(1812-1870)

Charles Dickens was born in a working-class family. His father John Dickens, a naval clerk, and his mother Elizabeth Barrow, an aspiring teacher, never managed to achieve economic security, despite their high ambitions for themselves and their eight children. John's spendthrift habits led to his being imprisoned for debt in 1824. To earn support for his family, Dickens was forced to leave school to work in Warren's Blacking Factory. This experience left Dickens with a long-term sense of shame and abandonment. Though a legacy allowed him to pay off his debts, John continued to need financial support, which Dickens provided by working as an office boy.

Although he attended a London academy, Dickens never managed a formal education. He did learn short hand and obtained work as a court reporter. Around this time, he fell in love with Maria Beadnell, whose father was a banker. After four years, they broke off their connection. Energetic and ambitious, Dickens continued with his work. Habitual nocturnal walks and an avid, eager mind fed him ample material for his freelance reporting that he extended to fictionalized sketches by "Boz."

His Sketches by Boz (1836) followed by The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club (1836) soon won Dickens an avid following. That same year, he married Catherine Hogarth, whose father was a journalist. Dickens turned his professional activities to writing serial novels and publishing magazines, including Bentley's Miscellany, Household Words, and All the Year Round that often served as publishing platforms for his novels. These character-driven serial novels—that he produced at an astonishing rate—reflected the social ills and inequalities of his age. His characters were rarely rounded; also, they often revealed the biases of his age, particularly the gender biases for and against the virtuous woman. Nevertheless, his characters, with their memorable quirks and tags, have the ring of authenticity. His later popular public readings of his novels demonstrated the recognizability and range of his characters.

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Within that range, Dickens often focused on children to reveal his society's ethics. The orphan Oliver Twist exposed the cruelty and fundamental lack of charity in the Victorian workhouse. Nicholas Nickleby exposed almost institutionalized parental neglect through Dotheboys Hall. The crossing sweeper Jo's [of Bleak House (1853)] dying from the complications of small pox and passing that disease on to other characters revealed the fundamental connection of people among the classes, despite the so-called superiority of aristocrats and the upper class. The ethical ambiguity of the legal system, the injustice of classical economics, and the misery of the poor are just a few of the ills Dickens attacked. He leavened the incisive observations in his novels with humor and humanity and complicated their sometimes-surface sentimentality with symbolism and narrative nuance. With masterful prose, he indicted the age's prevailing hypocrisy, brutality, indifference, and selfishness that tried but often failed to overlook the humanity common among all classes.

His writing brought Dickens great fame and wealth that he increased through tours of America and public readings. His private life faced challenges: His marriage to Catherine Hogarth was compromised by an affair with the actress Ellen Ternan that led to marital separation.

At the age of 58, Dickens died of a stroke. He was buried in Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey.

### 2.10.1 from Hard Times

2.10.1.1 from "Book the First: Sowing"

Chapter I: The One Thing Needful

"NOW, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!"

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school-room, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders,—nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was,—all helped the emphasis.

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"In this life, we want nothing but Facts, sir; nothing but Facts!"

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.

Chapter II: Murdering the Innocents

THOMAS GRADGRIND, sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir—peremptorily Thomas—Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic. You might hope to get some other nonsensical belief into the head of George Gradgrind, or Augustus Gradgrind, or John Gradgrind, or Joseph Gradgrind (all supposititious, non-existent persons), but into the head of Thomas Gradgrind—no, sir!

In such terms Mr. Gradgrind always mentally introduced himself, whether to his private circle of acquaintance, or to the public in general. In such terms, no doubt, substituting the words 'boys and girls,' for 'sir,' Thomas Gradgrind now presented Thomas Gradgrind to the little pitchers before him, who were to be filled so full of facts.

Indeed, as he eagerly sparkled at them from the cellarage before mentioned, he seemed a kind of cannon loaded to the muzzle with facts, and prepared to blow them clean out of the regions of childhood at one discharge. He seemed a galvanizing apparatus, too, charged with a grim mechanical substitute for the tender young imaginations that were to be stormed away.

'Girl number twenty,' said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, 'I don't know that girl. Who is that girl?'

'Sissy Jupe, sir,' explained number twenty, blushing, standing up, and curtseying.

'Sissy is not a name,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia.'

'It's father as calls me Sissy, sir,' returned the young girl in a trembling voice, and with another curtsey.

'Then he has no business to do it,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'Tell him he mustn't. Cecilia Jupe. Let me see. What is your father?'

'He belongs to the horse-riding, if you please, sir.'

Mr. Gradgrind frowned, and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand.

'We don't want to know anything about that, here. You mustn't tell us about that, here. Your father breaks horses, don't he?'

'If you please, sir, when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir.'

'You mustn't tell us about the ring, here. Very well, then. Describe your father as a horsebreaker. He doctors sick horses, I dare say?'

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'Oh yes, sir.'

'Very well, then. He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier, and horsebreaker. Give me your definition of a horse.'

(Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand.)

'Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!' said Mr. Gradgrind, for the general behoof of all the little pitchers. 'Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals! Some boy's definition of a horse. Bitzer, yours.'

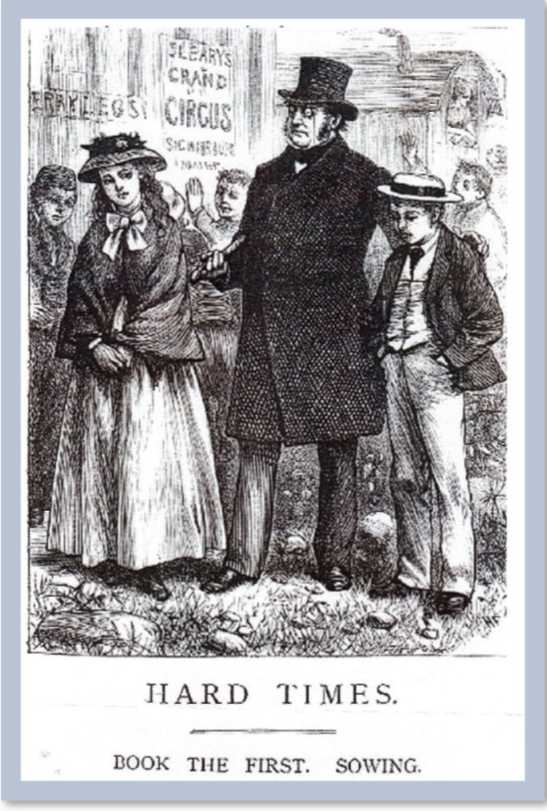
The square finger, moving here and there, lighted suddenly on Bitzer, perhaps because he chanced to sit in the same ray of sunlight which, darting in at one of the bare windows of the intensely white-washed room, irradiated Sissy. For, the boys and girls sat on the face of the inclined plane in two compact bodies, divided up the centre by a narrow interval; and Sissy, being at the corner of a row on the sunny side, came in for the beginning of a sunbeam, of which Bitzer, being at the corner of a row on the other side, a few rows in advance, caught the end. But, whereas the girl was so dark-eyed and dark-haired, that she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun, when it shone upon her, the boy was so light-eyed and light-haired that the self-same rays appeared to draw out of him what little colour he ever possessed. His cold eyes would hardly have been eyes, but for the short ends of lashes which, by bringing them into immediate contrast with something paler than themselves, expressed their form. His short-cropped hair might have been a mere continuation of the sandy freckles on his forehead and face. His skin was so unwholesomely deficient in the natural tinge, that he looked as though, if he were cut, he would bleed white.

'Bitzer,' said Thomas Gradgrind. 'Your definition of a horse.'

'Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.' Thus (and much more) Bitzer.

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'Now girl number twenty,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'You know what a horse is.'

She curtseyed again, and would have blushed deeper, if she could have blushed deeper than she had blushed all this time. Bitzer, after rapidly blinking at Thomas Gradgrind with both eyes at once, and so catching the light upon his quivering

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ends of lashes that they looked like the antennae of busy insects, put his knuckles to his freckled forehead, and sat down again.

The third gentleman now stepped forth. A mighty man at cutting and drying, he was; a government officer; in his way (and in most other people's too), a professed pugilist; always in training, always with a system to force down the general throat like a bolus, always to be heard of at the bar of his little Public-office, ready to fight all England. To continue in fistic phraseology, he had a genius for coming up to the scratch, wherever and whatever it was, and proving himself an ugly customer. He would go in and damage any subject whatever with his right, follow up with his left, stop, exchange, counter, bore his opponent (he always fought All England) to the ropes, and fall upon him neatly. He was certain to knock the wind out of common sense, and render that unlucky adversary deaf to the call of time. And he had it in charge from high authority to bring about the great public-office Millennium, when Commissioners should reign upon earth.

'Very well,' said this gentleman, briskly smiling, and folding his arms. 'That's a horse. Now, let me ask you girls and boys, Would you paper a room with representations of horses?'

After a pause, one half of the children cried in chorus, 'Yes, sir!' Upon which the other half, seeing in the gentleman's face that Yes was wrong, cried out in chorus, 'No, sir!'—as the custom is, in these examinations.

'Of course, No. Why wouldn't you?'

A pause. One corpulent slow boy, with a wheezy manner of breathing, ventured the answer, Because he wouldn't paper a room at all, but would paint it. 'You must paper it,' said the gentleman, rather warmly.

'You must paper it,' said Thomas Gradgrind, 'whether you like it or not. Don't tell us you wouldn't paper it. What do you mean, boy?'

'I'll explain to you, then,' said the gentleman, after another and a dismal pause, 'why you wouldn't paper a room with representations of horses. Do you ever see horses walking up and down the sides of rooms in reality—in fact? Do you?'

'Yes, sir!' from one half. 'No, sir!' from the other.

'Of course no,' said the gentleman, with an indignant look at the wrong half. 'Why, then, you are not to see anywhere, what you don't see in fact; you are not to have anywhere, what you don't have in fact. What is called Taste, is only another name for Fact.' Thomas Gradgrind nodded his approbation.

'This is a new principle, a discovery, a great discovery,' said the gentleman. 'Now, I'll try you again. Suppose you were going to carpet a room. Would you use a carpet having a representation of flowers upon it?'

There being a general conviction by this time that 'No, sir!' was always the right answer to this gentleman, the chorus of no was very strong. Only a few feeble stragglers said Yes: among them Sissy Jupe.

'Girl number twenty,' said the gentleman, smiling in the calm strength of knowledge.

Sissy blushed, and stood up.

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'So you would carpet your room—or your husband's room, if you were a grown woman, and had a husband—with representations of flowers, would you?' said the gentleman. 'Why would you?'

'If you please, sir, I am very fond of flowers,' returned the girl.

'And is that why you would put tables and chairs upon them, and have people walking over them with heavy boots?'

'It wouldn't hurt them, sir. They wouldn't crush and wither, if you please, sir. They would be the pictures of what was very pretty and pleasant, and I would fancy—'

'Ay, ay, ay! But you mustn't fancy,' cried the gentleman, quite elated by coming so happily to his point. 'That's it! You are never to fancy.'

'You are not, Cecilia Jupe,' Thomas Gradgrind solemnly repeated, 'to do anything of that kind.'

'Fact, fact, fact!' said the gentleman. And 'Fact, fact, fact!' repeated Thomas Gradgrind.

'You are to be in all things regulated and governed,' said the gentleman, 'by fact. We hope to have, before long, a board of fact, composed of commissioners of fact, who will force the people to be a people of fact, and of nothing but fact. You must discard the word Fancy altogether. You have nothing to do with it. You are not to have, in any object of use or ornament, what would be a contradiction in fact. You don't walk upon flowers in fact; you cannot be allowed to walk upon flowers in carpets. You don't find that foreign birds and butterflies come and perch upon your crockery; you cannot be permitted to paint foreign birds and butterflies upon your crockery. You never meet with quadrupeds going up and down walls; you must not have quadrupeds represented upon walls. You must use,' said the gentleman, 'for all these purposes, combinations and modifications (in primary colours) of mathematical figures which are susceptible of proof and demonstration. This is the new discovery. This is fact. This is taste.'

The girl curtseyed, and sat down. She was very young, and she looked as if she were frightened by the matter-of-fact prospect the world afforded.

'Now, if Mr. M'Choakumchild,' said the gentleman, 'will proceed to give his first lesson here, Mr. Gradgrind, I shall be happy, at your request, to observe his mode of procedure.'

Mr. Gradgrind was much obliged. 'Mr. M'Choakumchild, we only wait for you.'

So, Mr. M'Choakumchild began in his best manner. He and some one hundred and forty other schoolmasters, had been lately turned at the same time, in the same factory, on the same principles, like so many pianoforte legs. He had been put through an immense variety of paces, and had answered volumes of head-breaking questions. Orthography, etymology, syntax, and prosody, biography, astronomy, geography, and general cosmography, the sciences of compound proportion, algebra, land-surveying and levelling, vocal music, and drawing from models, were all at the ends of his ten chilled fingers. He had worked his stony way into Her Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council's Schedule B, and had taken

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the bloom off the higher branches of mathematics and physical science, French, German, Latin, and Greek. He knew all about all the Water Sheds of all the world (whatever they are), and all the histories of all the peoples, and all the names of all the rivers and mountains, and all the productions, manners, and customs of all the countries, and all their boundaries and bearings on the two and thirty points of the compass. Ah, rather overdone, M'Choakumchild. If he had only learnt a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more!

He went to work in this preparatory lesson, not unlike Morgiana in the Forty Thieves: looking into all the vessels ranged before him, one after another, to see what they contained. Say, good M'Choakumchild. When from thy boiling store, thou shalt fill each jar brim full by-and-by, dost thou think that thou wilt always kill outright the robber Fancy lurking within—or sometimes only maim him and distort him!

Grandgrind discovers his children, Tom and Louisa, watching the circus. He chastises them, invoking the disapproval of Mr. Bounderby. Deciding that the children have been negatively influenced by Sissy Jupe, Grandgrind and Bounderby decide to kick her out of the school.

Chapter V: The Keynote

COKETOWN, to which Mr's. Bounderby and Gradgrind now walked, was a triumph of fact; it had no greater taint of fancy in it than Mrs. Gradgrind herself. Let us strike the key-note, Coketown, before pursuing our tune.

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and to-morrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

These attributes of Coketown were in the main inseparable from the work by which it was sustained; against them were to be set off, comforts of life which found their way all over the world, and elegancies of life which made, we will not ask how much of the fine lady, who could scarcely bear to hear the place mentioned. The rest of its features were voluntary, and they were these.

You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful. If the members of a religious persuasion built a chapel there—as the members of eighteen religious

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persuasions had done—they made it a pious warehouse of red brick, with sometimes (but this is only in highly ornamental examples) a bell in a birdcage on the top of it. The solitary exception was the New Church; a stuccoed edifice with a square steeple over the door, terminating in four short pinnacles like florid wooden legs. All the public inscriptions in the town were painted alike, in severe characters of black and white. The jail might have been the infirmary, the infirmary might have been the jail, the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything that appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction. Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial. The M'Choakumchild school was all fact, and the school of design was all fact, and the relations between master and man were all fact, and everything was fact between the lying-in hospital and the cemetery, and what you couldn't state in figures, or show to be purchaseable in the cheapest market and saleable in the dearest, was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen.

A town so sacred to fact, and so triumphant in its assertion, of course got on well? Why no, not quite well. No? Dear me!

No. Coketown did not come out of its own furnaces, in all respects like gold that had stood the fire. First, the perplexing mystery of the place was, Who belonged to the eighteen denominations? Because, whoever did, the labouring people did not. It was very strange to walk through the streets on a Sunday morning, and note how few of them the barbarous jangling of bells that was driving the sick and nervous mad, called away from their own quarter, from their own close rooms, from the corners of their own streets, where they lounged listlessly, gazing at all the church and chapel going, as at a thing with which they had no manner of concern. Nor was it merely the stranger who noticed this, because there was a native organization in Coketown itself, whose members were to be heard of in the House of Commons every session, indignantly petitioning for acts of parliament that should make these people religious by main force. Then came the Teetotal Society, who complained that these same people would get drunk, and showed in tabular statements that they did get drunk, and proved at tea parties that no inducement, human or Divine (except a medal), would induce them to forego their custom of getting drunk. Then came the chemist and druggist, with other tabular statements, showing that when they didn't get drunk, they took opium. Then came the experienced chaplain of the jail, with more tabular statements, outdoing all the previous tabular statements, and showing that the same people would resort to low haunts, hidden from the public eye, where they heard low singing and saw low dancing, and mayhap joined in it; and where A. B., aged twenty-four next birthday, and committed for eighteen months' solitary, had himself said (not that he had ever shown himself particularly worthy of belief) his ruin began, as he was perfectly sure and confident that otherwise he would have been a tip-top moral specimen. Then came Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby, the two gentlemen at this present moment walking through Coketown, and both eminently practical, who could, on occasion, furnish more tabular statements derived from their own personal experience, and illustrated by

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cases they had known and seen, from which it clearly appeared—in short, it was the only clear thing in the case—that these same people were a bad lot altogether, gentlemen; that do what you would for them they were never thankful for it, gentlemen; that they were restless, gentlemen; that they never knew what they wanted; that they lived upon the best, and bought fresh butter; and insisted on Mocha coffee, and rejected all but prime parts of meat, and yet were eternally dissatisfied and unmanageable. In short, it was the moral of the old nursery fable:

There was an old woman, and what do you think? She lived upon nothing but victuals and drink; Victuals and drink were the whole of her diet, And yet this old woman would never be quiet.

Is it possible, I wonder, that there was any analogy between the case of the Coketown population and the case of the little Gradgrinds? Surely, none of us in our sober senses and acquainted with figures, are to be told at this time of day, that one of the foremost elements in the existence of the Coketown working-people had been for scores of years, deliberately set at nought? That there was any Fancy in them demanding to be brought into healthy existence instead of struggling on in convulsions? That exactly in the ratio as they worked long and monotonously, the craving grew within them for some physical relief—some relaxation, encouraging good humour and good spirits, and giving them a vent—some recognized holiday, though it were but for an honest dance to a stirring band of music—some occasional light pie in which even M'Choakumchild had no finger—which craving must and would be satisfied aright, or must and would inevitably go wrong, until the laws of the Creation were repealed?

'This man lives at Pod's End, and I don't quite know Pod's End,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'Which is it, Bounderby?'

Mr. Bounderby knew it was somewhere down town, but knew no more respecting it. So they stopped for a moment, looking about.

Almost as they did so, there came running round the corner of the street at a quick pace and with a frightened look, a girl whom Mr. Gradgrind recognized. 'Halloa!' said he. 'Stop! Where are you going! Stop!' Girl number twenty stopped then, palpitating, and made him a curtsey.

'Why are you tearing about the streets,' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'in this improper manner?'

'I was—I was run after, sir,' the girl panted, 'and I wanted to get away.'

'Run after?' repeated Mr. Gradgrind. 'Who would run after you?'

The question was unexpectedly and suddenly answered for her, by the colourless boy, Bitzer, who came round the corner with such blind speed and so little anticipating a stoppage on the pavement, that he brought himself up against Mr. Gradgrind's waistcoat and rebounded into the road.

'What do you mean, boy?' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'What are you doing? How dare you dash against—everybody—in this manner?' Bitzer picked up his cap, which

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the concussion had knocked off; and backing, and knuckling his forehead, pleaded that it was an accident.

'Was this boy running after you, Jupe?' asked Mr. Gradgrind.

'Yes, sir,' said the girl reluctantly.

'No, I wasn't, sir!' cried Bitzer. 'Not till she run away from me. But the horse-riders never mind what they say, sir; they're famous for it. You know the horse-riders are famous for never minding what they say,' addressing Sissy. 'It's as well known in the town as—please, sir, as the multiplication table isn't known to the horse-riders.' Bitzer tried Mr. Bounderby with this.

'He frightened me so,' said the girl, 'with his cruel faces!'

'Oh!' cried Bitzer. 'Oh! An't you one of the rest! An't you a horse-rider! I never looked at her, sir. I asked her if she would know how to define a horse to-morrow, and offered to tell her again, and she ran away, and I ran after her, sir, that she might know how to answer when she was asked. You wouldn't have thought of saying such mischief if you hadn't been a horse-rider?'

'Her calling seems to be pretty well known among 'em,' observed Mr. Bounderby. 'You'd have had the whole school peeping in a row, in a week.'

'Truly, I think so,' returned his friend. 'Bitzer, turn you about and take yourself home. Jupe, stay here a moment. Let me hear of your running in this manner any more, boy, and you will hear of me through the master of the school. You understand what I mean. Go along.'

The boy stopped in his rapid blinking, knuckled his forehead again, glanced at Sissy, turned about, and retreated.

'Now, girl,' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'take this gentleman and me to your father's; we are going there. What have you got in that bottle you are carrying?'

'Gin,' said Mr. Bounderby.

'Dear, no, sir! It's the nine oils.'

'The what?' cried Mr. Bounderby.

'The nine oils, sir, to rub father with.'

'Then,' said Mr. Bounderby, with a loud short laugh, 'what the devil do you rub your father with nine oils for?'

'It's what our people aways use, sir, when they get any hurts in the ring,' replied the girl, looking over her shoulder, to assure herself that her pursuer was gone. 'They bruise themselves very bad sometimes.'

'Serve 'em right,' said Mr. Bounderby, 'for being idle.' She glanced up at his face, with mingled astonishment and dread.

'By George!' said Mr. Bounderby, 'when I was four or five years younger than you, I had worse bruises upon me than ten oils, twenty oils, forty oils, would have rubbed off. I didn't get 'em by posture-making, but by being banged about. There was no rope- dancing for me; I danced on the bare ground and was larruped with the rope.'

Mr. Gradgrind, though hard enough, was by no means so rough a man as Mr. Bounderby. His character was not unkind, all things considered; it might have been

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a very kind one indeed, if he had only made some round mistake in the arithmetic that balanced it, years ago. He said, in what he meant for a reassuring tone, as they turned down a narrow road, 'And this is Pod's End; is it, Jupe?'

'This is it, sir, and—if you wouldn't mind, sir—this is the house.'

She stopped, at twilight, at the door of a mean little public- house, with dim red lights in it. As haggard and as shabby, as if, for want of custom, it had itself taken to drinking, and had gone the way all drunkards go, and was very near the end of it.

'It's only crossing the bar, sir, and up the stairs, if you wouldn't mind, and waiting there for a moment till I get a candle. If you shoul d hear a dog, sir, it's only Merrylegs, and he only barks.'

'Merrylegs and nine oils, eh!' said Mr. Bounderby, entering last with his metallic laugh. 'Pretty well this, for a self-made man!'

Chapter VI: Sleary's Horsemanship

THE name of the public-house was the Pegasus's Arms. The Pegasus's legs might have been more to the purpose; but, underneath the winged horse upon the sign-board, the Pegasus's Arms was inscribed in Roman letters. Beneath that inscription again, in a flowing scroll, the painter had touched off the lines:

Good malt makes good beer, Walk in, and they'll draw it here; Good wine makes good brandy, Give us a call, and you'll find it handy.

Framed and glazed upon the wall behind the dingy little bar, was another Pegasus—a theatrical one—with real gauze let in for his wings, golden stars stuck on all over him, and his ethereal harness made of red silk.

As it had grown too dusky without, to see the sign, and as it had not grown light enough within to see the picture, Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby received no offence from these idealities. They followed the girl up some steep corner-stairs without meeting any one, and stopped in the dark while she went on for a candle. They expected every moment to hear Merrylegs give tongue, but the highly trained performing dog had not barked when the girl and the candle appeared together.

'Father is not in our room, sir,' she said, with a face of great surprise. 'If you wouldn't mind walking in, I'll find him directly.' They walked in; and Sissy, having set two chairs for them, sped away with a quick light step. It was a mean, shabbily furnished room, with a bed in it. The white night-cap, embellished with two peacock's feathers and a pigtail bolt upright, in which Signor Jupe had that very afternoon enlivened the varied performances with his chaste Shaksperean quips and retorts, hung upon a nail; but no other portion of his wardrobe, or other token of himself or his pursuits, was to be seen anywhere. As to Merrylegs, that respectable ancestor of the highly trained animal who went aboard the ark, might have been accidentally shut out of it, for any sign of a dog that was manifest to eye or ear in the Pegasus's Arms.

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They heard the doors of rooms above, opening and shutting as Sissy went from one to another in quest of her father; and presently they heard voices expressing surprise. She came bounding down again in a great hurry, opened a battered and mangy old hair trunk, found it empty, and looked round with her hands clasped and her face full of terror.

'Father must have gone down to the Booth, sir. I don't know why he should go there, but he must be there; I'll bring him in a minute!' She was gone directly, without her bonnet; with her long, dark, childish hair streaming behind her.

'What does she mean!' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'Back in a minute? It's more than a mile off.'

Before Mr. Bounderby could reply, a young man appeared at the door, and introducing himself with the words, 'By your leaves, gentlemen!' walked in with his hands in his pockets. His face, close-shaven, thin, and sallow, was shaded by a great quantity of dark hair, brushed into a roll all round his head, and parted up the centre. His legs were very robust, but shorter than legs of good proportions should have been. His chest and back were as much too broad, as his legs were too short. He was dressed in a Newmarket coat and tight-fitting trousers; wore a shawl round his neck; smelt of lamp-oil, straw, orange-peel, horses' provender, and sawdust; and looked a most remarkable sort of Centaur, compounded of the stable and the play-house. Where the one began, and the other ended, nobody could have told with any precision. This gentleman was mentioned in the bills of the day as Mr. E. W. B. Childers, so justly celebrated for his daring vaulting act as the Wild Huntsman of the North American Prairies; in which popular performance, a diminutive boy with an old face, who now accompanied him, assisted as his infant son: being carried upside down over his father's shoulder, by one foot, and held by the crown of his head, heels upwards, in the palm of his father's hand, according to the violent paternal manner in which wild huntsmen may be observed to fondle their offspring. Made up with curls, wreaths, wings, white bismuth, and carmine, this hopeful young person soared into so pleasing a Cupid as to constitute the chief delight of the maternal part of the spectators; but in private, where his characteristics were a precocious cutaway coat and an extremely gruff voice, he became of the Turf, turfy.

'By your leaves, gentlemen,' said Mr. E. W. B. Childers, glancing round the room. 'It was you, I believe, that were wishing to see Jupe!'

'It was,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'His daughter has gone to fetch him, but I can't wait; therefore, if you please, I will leave a message for him with you.'

'You see, my friend,' Mr. Bounderby put in, 'we are the kind of people who know the value of time, and you are the kind of people who don't know the value of time.'

'I have not,' retorted Mr. Childers, after surveying him from head to foot, 'the honour of knowing you,—but if you mean that you can make more money of your time than I can of mine, I should judge from your appearance, that you are about right.'

'And when you have made it, you can keep it too, I should think,' said Cupid.

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'Kidderminster, stow that!' said Mr. Childers. (Master Kidderminster was Cupid's mortal name.)

'What does he come here cheeking us for, then?' cried Master Kidderminster, showing a very irascible temperament. 'If you want to cheek us, pay your ochre at the doors and take it out.'

'Kidderminster,' said Mr. Childers, raising his voice, 'stow that!—Sir,' to Mr. Gradgrind, 'I was addressing myself to you. You may or you may not be aware (for perhaps you have not been much in the audience), that Jupe has missed his tip very often, lately.'

'Has—what has he missed?' asked Mr. Gradgrind, glancing at the potent Bounderby for assistance. 'Missed his tip.'

'Offered at the Garters four times last night, and never done 'em once,' said Master Kidderminster. 'Missed his tip at the banners, too, and was loose in his

ponging.'

'Didn't do what he ought to do. Was short in his leaps and bad in his tumbling,' Mr. Childers interpreted.

'Oh!' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'that is tip, is it?'

'In a general way that's missing his tip,' Mr. E. W. B. Childers answered.

'Nine oils, Merrylegs, missing tips, garters, banners, and Ponging, eh!' ejaculated Bounderby, with his laugh of laughs. 'Queer sort of company, too, for a man who has raised himself!'

'Lower yourself, then,' retorted Cupid. 'Oh Lord! if you've raised yourself so high as all that comes to, let yourself down a bit.'

'This is a very obtrusive lad!' said Mr. Gradgrind, turning, and knitting his brows on him.

'We'd have had a young gentleman to meet you, if we had known you were coming,' retorted Master Kidderminster, nothing abashed. 'It's a pity you don't have a bespeak, being so particular. You're on the Tight-Jeff, ain't you?'

'What does this unmannerly boy mean,' asked Mr. Gradgrind, eyeing him in a sort of desperation, 'by Tight-Jeff?'

'There! Get out, get out!' said Mr. Childers, thrusting his young friend from the room, rather in the prairie manner. 'Tight-Jeff or Slack-Jeff, it don't much signify: it's only tight-rope and slack- rope. You were going to give me a message for Jupe?'

'Yes, I was.'

'Then,' continued Mr. Childers, quickly, 'my opinion is, he will never receive it. Do you know much of him?'

'I never saw the man in my life.'

'I doubt if you ever will see him now. It's pretty plain to me, he's off.' 'Do you mean that he has deserted his daughter?'

'Ay! I mean,' said Mr. Childers, with a nod, 'that he has cut. He was goosed last night, he was goosed the night before last, he was goosed to-day. He has lately got in the way of being always goosed, and he can't stand it.'

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'Why has he been—so very much—Goosed?' asked Mr. Gradgrind, forcing the word out of himself, with great solemnity and reluctance.

'His joints are turning stiff, and he is getting used up,' said Childers. 'He has his points as a Cackler still, but he can't get a living out of them.'

'A Cackler!' Bounderby repeated. 'Here we go again!'

'A speaker, if the gentleman likes it better,' said Mr. E. W. B. Childers, superciliously throwing the interpretation over his shoulder, and accompanying it with a shake of his long hair—which all shook at once. 'Now, it's a remarkable fact, sir, that it cut that man deeper, to know that his daughter knew of his being goosed, than to go through with it.'

'Good!' interrupted Mr. Bounderby. 'This is good, Gradgrind! A man so fond of his daughter, that he runs away from her! This is devilish good! Ha! ha! Now, I'll tell you what, young man. I haven't always occupied my present station of life. I know what these things are. You may be astonished to hear it, but my mother—ran away from me.'

E. W. B. Childers replied pointedly, that he was not at all astonished to hear it.

'Very well,' said Bounderby. 'I was born in a ditch, and my mother ran away from me. Do I excuse her for it? No. Have I ever excused her for it? Not I. What do I call her for it? I call her probably the very worst woman that ever lived in the world, except my drunken grandmother. There's no family pride about me, there's no imaginative sentimental humbug about me. I call a spade a spade; and I call the mother of Josiah Bounderby of Coketown, without any fear or any favour, what I should call her if she had been the mother of Dick Jones of Wapping. So, with this man. He is a runaway rogue and a vagabond, that's what he is, in English.'

'It's all the same to me what he is or what he is not, whether in English or whether in French,' retorted Mr. E. W. B. Childers, facing about. 'I am telling your friend what's the fact; if you don't like to hear it, you can avail yourself of the open air. You give it mouth enough, you do; but give it mouth in your own building at least,' remonstrated E. W. B. with stern irony. 'Don't give it mouth in this building, till you're called upon. You have got some building of your own I dare say, now?'

'Perhaps so,' replied Mr. Bounderby, rattling his money and laughing.

'Then give it mouth in your own building, will you, if you please?' said Childers. 'Because this isn't a strong building, and too much of you might bring it down!'

Eyeing Mr. Bounderby from head to foot again, he turned from him, as from a man finally disposed of, to Mr. Gradgrind.

'Jupe sent his daughter out on an errand not an hour ago, and then was seen to slip out himself, with his hat over his eyes, and a bundle tied up in a handkerchief under his arm. She will never believe it of him, but he has cut away and left her.'

'Pray,' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'why will she never believe it of him?'

'Because those two were one. Because they were never asunder. Because, up to this time, he seemed to dote upon her,' said Childers, taking a step or two to look into the empty trunk. Both Mr. Childers and Master Kidderminster walked in a curious manner; with their legs wider apart than the general run of men, and with

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a very knowing assumption of being stiff in the knees. This walk was common to all the male members of Sleary's company, and was understood to express, that they were always on horseback.

'Poor Sissy! He had better have apprenticed her,' said Childers, giving his hair another shake, as he looked up from the empty box. 'Now, he leaves her without anything to take to.'

'It is creditable to you, who have never been apprenticed, to express that opinion,' returned Mr. Gradgrind, approvingly.

'I never apprenticed? I was apprenticed when I was seven year old.'

'Oh! Indeed?' said Mr. Gradgrind, rather resentfully, as having been defrauded of his good opinion. 'I was not aware of its being the custom to apprentice young persons to—'

'Idleness,' Mr. Bounderby put in with a loud laugh. 'No, by the Lord Harry! Nor

I!'

'Her father always had it in his head,' resumed Childers, feigning unconsciousness of Mr. Bounderby's existence, 'that she was to be taught the deuce-and-all of education. How it got into his head, I can't say; I can only say that it never got out. He has been picking up a bit of reading for her, here—and a bit of writing for her, there—and a bit of ciphering for her, somewhere else—these seven years.'

Mr. E. W. B. Childers took one of his hands out of his pockets, stroked his face and chin, and looked, with a good deal of doubt and a little hope, at Mr. Gradgrind. From the first he had sought to conciliate that gentleman, for the sake of the deserted girl.

'When Sissy got into the school here,' he pursued, 'her father was as pleased as Punch. I couldn't altogether make out why, myself, as we were not stationary here, being but comers and goers anywhere. I suppose, however, he had this move in his mind—he was always half-cracked—and then considered her provided for. If you should happen to have looked in to-night, for the purpose of telling him that you were going to do her any little service,' said Mr. Childers, stroking his face again, and repeating his look, 'it would be very fortunate and well-timed; very fortunate and well-timed.'

'On the contrary,' returned Mr. Gradgrind. 'I came to tell him that her connections made her not an object for the school, and that she must not attend any more. Still, if her father really has left her, without any connivance on her part—Bounderby, let me have a word with you.'

Upon this, Mr. Childers politely betook himself, with his equestrian walk, to the landing outside the door, and there stood stroking his face, and softly whistling. While thus engaged, he overheard such phrases in Mr. Bounderby's voice as 'No. I say no. I advise you not. I say by no means.' While, from Mr. Gradgrind, he heard in his much lower tone the words, 'But even as an example to Louisa, of what this pursuit which has been the subject of a vulgar curiosity, leads to and ends in. Think of it, Bounderby, in that point of view.'

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Meanwhile, the various members of Sleary's company gradually gathered together from the upper regions, where they were quartered, and, from standing about, talking in low voices to one another and to Mr. Childers, gradually insinuated themselves and him into the room. There were two or three handsome young women among them, with their two or three husbands, and their two or three mothers, and their eight or nine little children, who did the fairy business when required. The father of one of the families was in the habit of balancing the father of another of the families on the top of a great pole; the father of a third family often made a pyramid of both those fathers, with Master Kidderminster for the apex, and himself for the base; all the fathers could dance upon rolling casks, stand upon bottles, catch knives and balls, twirl hand-basins, ride upon anything, jump over everything, and stick at nothing. All the mothers could (and did) dance, upon the slack wire and the tight-rope, and perform rapid acts on bare-backed steeds; none of them were at all particular in respect of showing their legs; and one of them, alone in a Greek chariot, drove six in hand into every town they came to. They all assumed to be mighty rakish and knowing, they were not very tidy in their private dresses, they were not at all orderly in their domestic arrangements, and the combined literature of the whole company would have produced but a poor letter on any subject. Yet there was a remarkable gentleness and childishness about these people, a special inaptitude for any kind of sharp practice, and an untiring readiness to help and pity one another, deserving often of as much respect, and always of as much generous construction, as the every-day virtues of any class of people in the world.

Last of all appeared Mr. Sleary: a stout man as already mentioned, with one fixed eye, and one loose eye, a voice (if it can be called so) like the efforts of a broken old pair of bellows, a flabby surface, and a muddled head which was never sober and never drunk.

'Thquire!' said Mr. Sleary, who was troubled with asthma, and whose breath came far too thick and heavy for the letter s, Your thervant! Thith ith a bad piethe of bithnith, thith ith. You've heard of my Clown and hith dog being thuppothed to have morrithed?'

He addressed Mr. Gradgrind, who answered 'Yes.'

'Well, Thquire,' he returned, taking off his hat, and rubbing the lining with his pocket-handkerchief, which he kept inside for the purpose. 'Ith it your intenthion to do anything for the poor girl, Thquire?'

'I shall have something to propose to her when she comes back,' said Mr. Gradgrind.

'Glad to hear it, Thquire. Not that I want to get rid of the child, any more than I want to thtand in her way. I'm willing to take her prentith, though at her age ith late. My voithe ith a little huthky, Thquire, and not eathy heard by them ath don't know me; but if you'd been chilled and heated, heated and chilled, chilled and heated in the ring when you wath young, ath often ath I have been, your voithe wouldn't have lathted out, Thquire, no more than mine.'

'I dare say not,' said Mr. Gradgrind.

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'What thall it be, Thquire, while you wait? Thall it be Therry? Give it a name, Thquire!' said Mr. Sleary, with hospitable ease.

'Nothing for me, I thank you,' said Mr. Gradgrind.

'Don't thay nothing, Thquire. What doth your friend thay? If you haven't took your feed yet, have a glath of bitterth.'

Here his daughter Josephine—a pretty fair-haired girl of eighteen, who had been tied on a horse at two years old, and had made a will at twelve, which she always carried about with her, expressive of her dying desire to be drawn to the grave by the two piebald ponies—cried, 'Father, hush! she has come back!' Then came Sissy Jupe, running into the room as she had run out of it. And when she saw them all assembled, and saw their looks, and saw no father there, she broke into a most deplorable cry, and took refuge on the bosom of the most accomplished tightrope lady (herself in the family-way), who knelt down on the floor to nurse her, and to weep over her.

'Ith an internal thame, upon my thoul it ith,' said Sleary.

'O my dear father, my good kind father, where are you gone? You are gone to try to do me some good, I know! You are gone away for my sake, I am sure! And how miserable and helpless you will be without me, poor, poor father, until you come back!' It was so pathetic to hear her saying many things of this kind, with her face turned upward, and her arms stretched out as if she were trying to stop his departing shadow and embrace it, that no one spoke a word until Mr. Bounderby (growing impatient) took the case in hand.

'Now, good people all,' said he, 'this is wanton waste of time. Let the girl understand the fact. Let her take it from me, if you like, who have been run away from, myself. Here, what's your name! Your father has absconded—deserted you— and you mustn't expect to see him again as long as you live.'

They cared so little for plain Fact, these people, and were in that advanced state of degeneracy on the subject, that instead of being impressed by the speaker's strong common sense, they took it in extraordinary dudgeon. The men muttered 'Shame!' and the women 'Brute!' and Sleary, in some haste, communicated the following hint, apart to Mr. Bounderby.

'I tell you what, Thquire. To thpeak plain to you, my opinion ith that you had better cut it thort, and drop it. They're a very good natur'd people, my people, but they're accuthtomed to be quick in their movementh; and if you don't act upon my advithe, I'm damned if I don't believe they'll pith you out o' winder.'

Mr. Bounderby being restrained by this mild suggestion, Mr. Gradgrind found an opening for his eminently practical exposition of the subject.

'It is of no moment,' said he, 'whether this person is to be expected back at any time, or the contrary. He is gone away, and there is no present expectation of his return. That, I believe, is agreed on all hands.'

'Thath agreed, Thquire. Thick to that!' From Sleary.

'Well then. I, who came here to inform the father of the poor girl, Jupe, that she could not be received at the school any more, in consequence of there being

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practical objections, into which I need not enter, to the reception there of the children of persons so employed, am prepared in these altered circumstances to make a proposal. I am willing to take charge of you, Jupe, and to educate you, and provide for you. The only condition (over and above your good behaviour) I make is, that you decide now, at once, whether to accompany me or remain here. Also, that if you accompany me now, it is understood that you communicate no more with any of your friends who are here present. These observations comprise the whole of the case.' 'At the thame time,' said Sleary, 'I mutht put in my word, Thquire, tho that both thides of the banner may be equally theen. If you like, Thethilia, to be prentitht, you know the natur of the work and you know your companionth. Emma Gordon, in whothe lap you're a lying at prethent, would be a mother to you, and Joth'phine would be a thithter to you. I don't pretend to be of the angel breed myself, and I don't thay but what, when you mith'd your tip, you'd find me cut up rough, and thwear an oath or two at you. But what I thay, Thquire, ith, that good tempered or bad tempered, I never did a horthe a injury yet, no more than thwearing at him went, and that I don't expect I thall begin otherwithe at my time of life, with a rider. I never wath much of a Cackler, Thquire, and I have thed my thay.'

The latter part of this speech was addressed to Mr. Gradgrind, who received it with a grave inclination of his head, and then remarked:

'The only observation I will make to you, Jupe, in the way of influencing your decision, is, that it is highly desirable to have a sound practical education, and that even your father himself (from what I understand) appears, on your behalf, to have known and felt that much.'

The last words had a visible effect upon her. She stopped in her wild crying, a little detached herself from Emma Gordon, and turned her face full upon her patron. The whole company perceived the force of the change, and drew a long breath together, that plainly said, 'she will go!'

'Be sure you know your own mind, Jupe,' Mr. Gradgrind cautioned her; 'I say no more. Be sure you know your own mind!'

'When father comes back,' cried the girl, bursting into tears again after a minute's silence, 'how will he ever find me if I go away!'

'You may be quite at ease,' said Mr. Gradgrind, calmly; he worked out the whole matter like a sum: 'you may be quite at ease, Jupe, on that score. In such a case, your father, I apprehend, must find out Mr.—'

'Thleary. Thath my name, Thquire. Not athamed of it. Known all over England, and alwayth paythe ith way.'

'Must find out Mr. Sleary, who would then let him know where you went. I should have no power of keeping you against his wish, and he would have no difficulty, at any time, in finding Mr. Thomas Gradgrind of Coketown. I am well known.'

'Well known,' assented Mr. Sleary, rolling his loose eye. 'You're one of the thort, Thquire, that keepth a prethiouth thight of money out of the houthe. But never mind that at prethent.'

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There was another silence; and then she exclaimed, sobbing with her hands before her face, 'Oh, give me my clothes, give me my clothes, and let me go away before I break my heart!'

The women sadly bestirred themselves to get the clothes together—it was soon done, for they were not many—and to pack them in a basket which had often travelled with them. Sissy sat all the time upon the ground, still sobbing, and covering her eyes. Mr. Gradgrind and his friend Bounderby stood near the door, ready to take her away. Mr. Sleary stood in the middle of the room, with the male members of the company about him, exactly as he would have stood in the centre of the ring during his daughter Josephine's performance. He wanted nothing but his whip.

The basket packed in silence, they brought her bonnet to her, and smoothed her disordered hair, and put it on. Then they pressed about her, and bent over her in very natural attitudes, kissing and embracing her: and brought the children to take leave of her; and were a tender-hearted, simple, foolish set of women altogether.

'Now, Jupe,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'If you are quite determined, come!'

But she had to take her farewell of the male part of the company yet, and every one of them had to unfold his arms (for they all assumed the professional attitude when they found themselves near Sleary), and give her a parting kiss—Master Kidderminster excepted, in whose young nature there was an original flavour of the misanthrope, who was also known to have harboured matrimonial views, and who moodily withdrew. Mr. Sleary was reserved until the last. Opening his arms wide he took her by both her hands, and would have sprung her up and down, after the riding-master manner of congratulating young ladies on their dismounting from a rapid act; but there was no rebound in Sissy, and she only stood before him crying.

'Good-bye, my dear!' said Sleary. 'You'll make your fortun, I hope, and none of our poor folkth will ever trouble you, I'll pound it. I with your father hadn't taken hith dog with him; ith a ill-conwenienth to have the dog out of the billth. But on thecond thoughth, he wouldn't have performed without hith mathter, tho ith ath broad ath ith long!'

With that he regarded her attentively with his fixed eye, surveyed his company with his loose one, kissed her, shook his head, and handed her to Mr. Gradgrind as to a horse.

'There the ith, Thquire,' he said, sweeping her with a professional glance as if she were being adjusted in her seat, 'and the'll do you juthtithe. Good-bye, Thethilia!'

'Good-bye, Cecilia!' 'Good-bye, Sissy!' 'God bless you, dear!' In a variety of voices from all the room.

But the riding-master eye had observed the bottle of the nine oils in her bosom, and he now interposed with 'Leave the bottle, my dear; ith large to carry; it will be of no uthe to you now. Give it to me!'

'No, no!' she said, in another burst of tears. 'Oh, no! Pray let me keep it for father till he comes back! He will want it when he comes back. He had never thought of going away, when he sent me for it. I must keep it for him, if you please!'

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'Tho be it, my dear. (You thee how it ith, Thquire!) Farewell, Thethilia! My latht wordth to you ith thith, Thtick to the termth of your engagement, be obedient to the Thquire, and forget uth. But if, when you're grown up and married and well off, you come upon any horthe-riding ever, don't be hard upon it, don't be croth with it, give it a Bethpeak if you can, and think you might do wurth. People mutht be amuthed, Thquire, thomehow,' continued Sleary, rendered more pursy than ever, by so much talking; 'they can't be alwayth a working, nor yet they can't be alwayth a learning. Make the betht of uth; not the wurtht. I've got my living out of the horthe-riding all my life, I know; but I conthider that I lay down the philothophy of the thubject when I thay to you, Thquire, make the betht of uth: not the wurtht!'

The Sleary philosophy was propounded as they went downstairs and the fixed eye of Philosophy—and its rolling eye, too—soon lost the three figures and the basket in the darkness of the street.

Bounderby's housekeeper Mrs Sparsit dwells on her aristocratic family connections. Louisa Grandgrind describes her feelings of meaninglessness and moral vacuity to her brother.

Chapter IX: Sissy's Progress

SISSY JUPE had not an easy time of it, between Mr. M'Choakumchild and Mrs. Gradgrind, and was not without strong impulses, in the first months of her probation, to run away. It hailed facts all day long so very hard, and life in general was opened to her as such a closely ruled ciphering-book, that assuredly she would have run away, but for only one restraint.

It is lamentable to think of; but this restraint was the result of no arithmetical process, was self-imposed in defiance of all calculation, and went dead against any table of probabilities that any Actuary would have drawn up from the premises. The girl believed that her father had not deserted her; she lived in the hope that he would come back, and in the faith that he would be made the happier by her remaining where she was.

The wretched ignorance with which Jupe clung to this consolation, rejecting the superior comfort of knowing, on a sound arithmetical basis, that her father was an unnatural vagabond, filled Mr. Gradgrind with pity. Yet, what was to be done? M'Choakumchild reported that she had a very dense head for figures; that, once possessed with a general idea of the globe, she took the smallest conceivable interest in its exact measurements; that she was extremely slow in the acquisition of dates, unless some pitiful incident happened to be connected therewith; that she would burst into tears on being required (by the mental process) immediately to name the cost of two hundred and forty-seven muslin caps at fourteen-pence halfpenny; that she was as low down, in the school, as low could be; that after eight weeks of induction into the elements of Political Economy, she had only yesterday been set right by a prattler three feet high, for returning to the question, 'What is the first principle of this science?' the absurd answer, 'To do unto others as I would that they should do unto me.'

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Mr. Gradgrind observed, shaking his head, that all this was very bad; that it showed the necessity of infinite grinding at the mill of knowledge, as per system, schedule, blue book, report, and tabular statements A to Z; and that Jupe 'must be kept to it.' So Jupe was kept to it, and became low-spirited, but no wiser.

'It would be a fine thing to be you, Miss Louisa!' she said, one night, when Louisa had endeavoured to make her perplexities for next day something clearer to her.

'Do you think so?'

'I should know so much, Miss Louisa. All that is difficult to me now, would be so easy then.'

'You might not be the better for it, Sissy.'

Sissy submitted, after a little hesitation, 'I should not be the worse, Miss Louisa.' To which Miss Louisa answered, 'I don't know that.'

There had been so little communication between these two—both because life at Stone Lodge went monotonously round like a piece of machinery which discouraged human interference, and because of the prohibition relative to Sissy's past career—that they were still almost strangers. Sissy, with her dark eyes wonderingly directed to Louisa's face, was uncertain whether to say more or to remain silent.

'You are more useful to my mother, and more pleasant with her than I can ever be,' Louisa resumed. 'You are pleasanter to yourself, than I am to myself.'

'But, if you please, Miss Louisa,' Sissy pleaded, 'I am—O so stupid!'

Louisa, with a brighter laugh than usual, told her she would be wiser by-and-by.

'You don't know,' said Sissy, half crying, 'what a stupid girl I am. All through school hours I make mistakes. Mr. and Mrs. M'Choakumchild call me up, over and over again, regularly to make mistakes. I can't help them. They seem to come natural to me.'

'Mr. and Mrs. M'Choakumchild never make any mistakes themselves, I suppose, Sissy?'

'O no!' she eagerly returned. 'They know everything.' 'Tell me some of your mistakes.'

'I am almost ashamed,' said Sissy, with reluctance. 'But to-day, for instance, Mr. M'Choakumchild was explaining to us about Natural Prosperity.' 'National, I think it must have been,' observed Louisa. 'Yes, it was.—But isn't it the same?' she timidly asked.

'You had better say, National, as he said so,' returned Louisa, with her dry reserve.

'National Prosperity. And he said, Now, this schoolroom is a Nation. And in this nation, there are fifty millions of money. Isn't this a prosperous nation? Girl number twenty, isn't this a prosperous nation, and a'n't you in a thriving state?'

'What did you say?' asked Louisa.

'Miss Louisa, I said I didn't know. I thought I couldn't know whether it was a prosperous nation or not, and whether I was in a thriving state or not, unless

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I knew who had got the money, and whether any of it was mine. But that had nothing to do with it. It was not in the figures at all,' said Sissy, wiping her eyes. 'That was a great mistake of yours,' observed Louisa.

'Yes, Miss Louisa, I know it was, now. Then Mr. M'Choakumchild said he would try me again. And he said, This schoolroom is an immense town, and in it there are a million of inhabitants, and only five-and-twenty are starved to death in the streets, in the course of a year. What is your remark on that proportion? And my remark was—for I couldn't think of a better one—that I thought it must be just as hard upon those who were starved, whether the others were a million, or a million million. And that was wrong, too.'

'Of course it was.'

'Then Mr. M'Choakumchild said he would try me once more. And he said, Here are the stutterings—'

'Statistics,' said Louisa.

'Yes, Miss Louisa—they always remind me of stutterings, and that's another of my mistakes—of accidents upon the sea. And I find (Mr. M'Choakumchild said) that in a given time a hundred thousand persons went to sea on long voyages, and only five hundred of them were drowned or burnt to death. What is the percentage? And I said, Miss;' here Sissy fairly sobbed as confessing with extreme contrition to her greatest error; 'I said it was nothing.'

'Nothing, Sissy?'

'Nothing, Miss—to the relations and friends of the people who were killed. I shall never learn,' said Sissy. 'And the worst of all is, that although my poor father wished me so much to learn, and although I am so anxious to learn, because he wished me to, I am afraid I don't like it.'

Louisa stood looking at the pretty modest head, as it drooped abashed before her, until it was raised again to glance at her face. Then she asked:

'Did your father know so much himself, that he wished you to be well taught too, Sissy?'

Sissy hesitated before replying, and so plainly showed her sense that they were entering on forbidden ground, that Louisa added, 'No one hears us; and if any one did, I am sure no harm could be found in such an innocent question.'

'No, Miss Louisa,' answered Sissy, upon this encouragement, shaking her head; 'father knows very little indeed. It's as much as he can do to write; and it's more than people in general can do to read his writing. Though it's plain to me.'

'Your mother!'

'Father says she was quite a scholar. She died when I was born. She was;' Sissy made the terrible communication nervously; 'she was a dancer.'

'Did your father love her?' Louisa asked these questions with a strong, wild, wandering interest peculiar to her; an interest gone astray like a banished creature, and hiding in solitary places.

'O yes! As dearly as he loves me. Father loved me, first, for her sake. He carried me about with him when I was quite a baby. We have never been asunder from that time.'

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'Yet he leaves you now, Sissy?'

'Only for my good. Nobody understands him as I do; nobody knows him as I do. When he left me for my good—he never would have left me for his own—I know he was almost broken-hearted with the trial. He will not be happy for a single minute, till he comes back.'

'Tell me more about him,' said Louisa, 'I will never ask you again. Where did you live?'

'We travelled about the country, and had no fixed place to live in. Father's a;' Sissy whispered the awful word, 'a clown.'

'To make the people laugh?' said Louisa, with a nod of intelligence.

'Yes. But they wouldn't laugh sometimes, and then father cried. Lately, they very often wouldn't laugh, and he used to come home despairing. Father's not like most. Those who didn't know him as well as I do, and didn't love him as dearly as I do, might believe he was not quite right. Sometimes they played tricks upon him; but they never knew how he felt them, and shrunk up, when he was alone with me. He was far, far timider than they thought!'

'And you were his comfort through everything?'

She nodded, with the tears rolling down her face. 'I hope so, and father said I was. It was because he grew so scared and trembling, and because he felt himself to be a poor, weak, ignorant, helpless man (those used to be his words), that he wanted me so much to know a great deal, and be different from him. I used to read to him to cheer his courage, and he was very fond of that. They were wrong books—I am never to speak of them here—but we didn't know there was any harm in them.'

'And he liked them?' said Louisa, with a searching gaze on Sissy all this time.

'O very much! They kept him, many times, from what did him real harm. And often and often of a night, he used to forget all his troubles in wondering whether the Sultan would let the lady go on with the story, or would have her head cut off before it was finished.'

'And your father was always kind? To the last?' asked Louisa contravening the great principle, and wondering very much.

'Always, always!' returned Sissy, clasping her hands. 'Kinder and kinder than I can tell. He was angry only one night, and that was not to me, but Merrylegs. Merrylegs;' she whispered the awful fact; 'is his performing dog.'

'Why was he angry with the dog?' Louisa demanded.

'Father, soon after they came home from performing, told Merrylegs to jump up on the backs of the two chairs and stand across them—which is one of his tricks. He looked at father, and didn't do it at once. Everything of father's had gone wrong that night, and he hadn't pleased the public at all. He cried out that the very dog knew he was failing, and had no compassion on him. Then he beat the dog, and I was frightened, and said, "Father, father! Pray don't hurt the creature who is so fond of you! O Heaven forgive you, father, stop!" And he stopped, and the dog was bloody, and father lay down crying on the floor with the dog in his arms, and the dog licked his face.'

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Louisa saw that she was sobbing; and going to her, kissed her, took her hand, and sat down beside her.

'Finish by telling me how your father left you, Sissy. Now that I have asked you so much, tell me the end. The blame, if there is any blame, is mine, not yours.'

'Dear Miss Louisa,' said Sissy, covering her eyes, and sobbing yet; 'I came home from the school that afternoon, and found poor father just come home too, from the booth. And he sat rocking himself over the fire, as if he was in pain. And I said, "Have you hurt yourself, father?" (as he did sometimes, like they all did), and he said, "A little, my darling." And when I came to stoop down and look up at his face, I saw that he was crying. The more I spoke to him, the more he hid his face; and at first he shook all over, and said nothing but "My darling;" and "My love!"'

Here Tom came lounging in, and stared at the two with a coolness not particularly savouring of interest in anything but himself, and not much of that at present.

'I am asking Sissy a few questions, Tom,' observed his sister. 'You have no occasion to go away; but don't interrupt us for a moment, Tom dear.'

'Oh! very well!' returned Tom. 'Only father has brought old Bounderby home, and I want you to come into the drawing-room. Because if you come, there's a good chance of old Bounderby's asking me to dinner; and if you don't, there's none.'

'I'll come directly.'

'I'll wait for you,' said Tom, 'to make sure.'

Sissy resumed in a lower voice. 'At last poor father said that he had given no satisfaction again, and never did give any satisfaction now, and that he was a shame and disgrace, and I should have done better without him all along. I said all the affectionate things to him that came into my heart, and presently he was quiet and I sat down by him, and told him all about the school and everything that had been said and done there. When I had no more left to tell, he put his arms round my neck, and kissed me a great many times. Then he asked me to fetch some of the stuff he used, for the little hurt he had had, and to get it at the best place, which was at the other end of town from there; and then, after kissing me again, he let me go. When I had gone down-stairs, I turned back that I might be a little bit more company to him yet, and looked in at the door, and said, "Father dear, shall I take Merrylegs?" Father shook his head and said, "No, Sissy, no; take nothing that's known to be mine, my darling;" and I left him sitting by the fire. Then the thought must have come upon him, poor, poor father! of going away to try something for my sake; for when I came back, he was gone.'

'I say! Look sharp for old Bounderby, Loo!' Tom remonstrated.

'There's no more to tell, Miss Louisa. I keep the nine oils ready for him, and I know he will come back. Every letter that I see in Mr. Gradgrind's hand takes my breath away and blinds my eyes, for I think it comes from father, or from Mr. Sleary about father. Mr. Sleary promised to write as soon as ever father should be heard of, and I trust to him to keep his word.'

'Do look sharp for old Bounderby, Loo!' said Tom, with an impatient whistle. 'He'll be off if you don't look sharp!'

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After this, whenever Sissy dropped a curtsey to Mr. Gradgrind in the presence of his family, and said in a faltering way, 'I beg your pardon, sir, for being troublesome—but—have you had any letter yet about me?' Louisa would suspend the occupation of the moment, whatever it was, and look for the reply as earnestly as Sissy did. And when Mr. Gradgrind regularly answered, 'No, Jupe, nothing of the sort,' the trembling of Sissy's lip would be repeated in Louisa's face, and her eyes would follow Sissy with compassion to the door. Mr. Gradgrind usually improved these occasions by remarking, when she was gone, that if Jupe had been properly trained from an early age she would have remonstrated to herself on sound principles the baselessness of these fantastic hopes. Yet it did seem (though not to him, for he saw nothing of it) as if fantastic hope could take as strong a hold as Fact.

This observation must be limited exclusively to his daughter. As to Tom, he was becoming that not unprecedented triumph of calculation which is usually at work on number one. As to Mrs. Gradgrind, if she said anything on the subject, she would come a little way out of her wrappers, like a feminine dormouse, and say:

'Good gracious bless me, how my poor head is vexed and worried by that girl Jupe's so perseveringly asking, over and over again, about her tiresome letters! Upon my word and honour I seem to be fated, and destined, and ordained, to live in the midst of things that I am never to hear the last of. It really is a most extraordinary circumstance that it appears as if I never was to hear the last of anything!'

At about this point, Mr. Gradgrind's eye would fall upon her; and under the influence of that wintry piece of fact, she would become torpid again.

Chapter X: Stephen Blackpool

I ENTERTAIN a weak idea that the English people are as hard-worked as any people upon whom the sun shines. I acknowledge to this ridiculous idiosyncrasy, as a reason why I would give them a little more play.

In the hardest working part of Coketown; in the innermost fortifications of that ugly citadel, where Nature was as strongly bricked out as killing airs and gases were bricked in; at the heart of the labyrinth of narrow courts upon courts, and close streets upon streets, which had come into existence piecemeal, every piece in a violent hurry for some one man's purpose, and the whole an unnatural family, shouldering, and trampling, and pressing one another to death; in the last close nook of this great exhausted receiver, where the chimneys, for want of air to make a draught, were built in an immense variety of stunted and crooked shapes, as though every house put out a sign of the kind of people who might be expected to be born in it; among the multitude of Coketown, generically called 'the Hands,'—a race who would have found more favour with some people, if Providence had seen fit to make them only hands, or, like the lower creatures of the seashore, only hands and stomachs—lived a certain Stephen Blackpool, forty years of age.

Stephen looked older, but he had had a hard life. It is said that every life has its roses and thorns; there seemed, however, to have been a misadventure or mistake

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in Stephen's case, whereby somebody else had become possessed of his roses, and he had become possessed of the same somebody else's thorns in addition to his own. He had known, to use his words, a peck of trouble. He was usually called Old Stephen, in a kind of rough homage to the fact.

A rather stooping man, with a knitted brow, a pondering expression of face, and a hard-looking head sufficiently capacious, on which his iron-grey hair lay long and thin, Old Stephen might have passed for a particularly intelligent man in his condition. Yet he was not. He took no place among those remarkable 'Hands,' who, piecing together their broken intervals of leisure through many years, had mastered difficult sciences, and acquired a knowledge of most unlikely things. He held no station among the Hands who could make speeches and carry on debates. Thousands of his compeers could talk much better than he, at any time. He was a good power-loom weaver, and a man of perfect integrity. What more he was, or what else he had in him, if anything, let him show for himself.

The lights in the great factories, which looked, when they were illuminated, like Fairy palaces—or the travellers by express-train said so—were all extinguished; and the bells had rung for knocking off for the night, and had ceased again; and the Hands, men and women, boy and girl, were clattering home. Old Stephen was standing in the street, with the old sensation upon him which the stoppage of the machinery always produced—the sensation of its having worked and stopped in his own head.

'Yet I don't see Rachael, still!' said he.

It was a wet night, and many groups of young women passed him, with their shawls drawn over their bare heads and held close under their chins to keep the rain out. He knew Rachael well, for a glance at any one of these groups was sufficient to show him that she was not there. At last, there were no more to come; and then he turned away, saying in a tone of disappointment, 'Why, then, ha' missed her!'

But, he had not gone the length of three streets, when he saw another of the shawled figures in advance of him, at which he looked so keenly that perhaps its mere shadow indistinctly reflected on the wet pavement—if he could have seen it without the figure itself moving along from lamp to lamp, brightening and fading as it went—would have been enough to tell him who was there. Making his pace at once much quicker and much softer, he darted on until he was very near this figure, then fell into his former walk, and called 'Rachael!'

She turned, being then in the brightness of a lamp; and raising her hood a little, showed a quiet oval face, dark and rather delicate, irradiated by a pair of very gentle eyes, and further set off by the perfect order of her shining black hair. It was not a face in its first bloom; she was a woman five and thirty years of age.

'Ah, lad! 'Tis thou?' When she had said this, with a smile which would have been quite expressed, though nothing of her had been seen but her pleasant eyes, she replaced her hood again, and they went on together.

'I thought thou wast ahind me, Rachael?'

'No.'

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'Early t'night, lass?'

''Times I'm a little early, Stephen! 'times a little late. I'm never to be counted on, going home.'

'Nor going t'other way, neither, 't seems to me, Rachael?'

'No, Stephen.'

He looked at her with some disappointment in his face, but with a respectful and patient conviction that she must be right in whatever she did. The expression was not lost upon her; she laid her hand lightly on his arm a moment as if to thank him for it.

'We are such true friends, lad, and such old friends, and getting to be such old folk, now.'

'No, Rachael, thou'rt as young as ever thou wast.'

'One of us would be puzzled how to get old, Stephen, without 't other getting so too, both being alive,' she answered, laughing; 'but, anyways, we're such old friends, and t' hide a word of honest truth fro' one another would be a sin and a pity. 'Tis better not to walk too much together. 'Times, yes! 'Twould be hard, indeed, if 'twas not to be at all,' she said, with a cheerfulness she sought to communicate to him.

''Tis hard, anyways, Rachael.'

'Try to think not; and 'twill seem better.'

'I've tried a long time, and 'ta'nt got better. But thou'rt right; 't might mak fok talk, even of thee. Thou hast been that to me, Rachael, through so many year: thou hast done me so much good, and heartened of me in that cheering way, that thy word is a law to me. Ah, lass, and a bright good law! Better than some real ones.'

'Never fret about them, Stephen,' she answered quickly, and not without an anxious glance at his face. 'Let the laws be.'

'Yes,' he said, with a slow nod or two. 'Let 'em be. Let everything be. Let all sorts alone. 'Tis a muddle, and that's aw.'

'Always a muddle?' said Rachael, with another gentle touch upon his arm, as if to recall him out of the thoughtfulness, in which he was biting the long ends of his loose neckerchief as he walked along. The touch had its instantaneous effect. He let them fall, turned a smiling face upon her, and said, as he broke into a good-humoured laugh, 'Ay, Rachael, lass, awlus a muddle. That's where I stick. I come to the muddle many times and agen, and I never get beyond it.'

They had walked some distance, and were near their own homes. The woman's was the first reached. It was in one of the many small streets for which the favourite undertaker (who turned a handsome sum out of the one poor ghastly pomp of the neighbourhood) kept a black ladder, in order that those who had done their daily groping up and down the narrow stairs might slide out of this working world by the windows. She stopped at the corner, and putting her hand in his, wished him good night.

'Good night, dear lass; good night!'

She went, with her neat figure and her sober womanly step, down the dark street, and he stood looking after her until she turned into one of the small houses.

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There was not a flutter of her coarse shawl, perhaps, but had its interest in this man's eyes; not a tone of her voice but had its echo in his innermost heart.

When she was lost to his view, he pursued his homeward way, glancing up sometimes at the sky, where the clouds were sailing fast and wildly. But, they were broken now, and the rain had ceased, and the moon shone,—looking down the high chimneys of Coketown on the deep furnaces below, and casting Titanic shadows of the steam-engines at rest, upon the walls where they were lodged. The man seemed to have brightened with the night, as he went on.

His home, in such another street as the first, saving that it was narrower, was over a little shop. How it came to pass that any people found it worth their while to sell or buy the wretched little toys, mixed up in its window with cheap newspapers and pork (there was a leg to be raffled for to-morrow-night), matters not here. He took his end of candle from a shelf, lighted it at another end of candle on the counter, without disturbing the mistress of the shop who was asleep in her little room, and went upstairs into his lodging.

It was a room, not unacquainted with the black ladder under various tenants; but as neat, at present, as such a room could be. A few books and writings were on an old bureau in a corner, the furniture was decent and sufficient, and, though the atmosphere was tainted, the room was clean.

Going to the hearth to set the candle down upon a round three- legged table standing there, he stumbled against something. As he recoiled, looking down at it, it raised itself up into the form of a woman in a sitting attitude.

'Heaven's mercy, woman!' he cried, falling farther off from the figure. 'Hast thou come back again!'

Such a woman! A disabled, drunken creature, barely able to preserve her sitting posture by steadying herself with one begrimed hand on the floor, while the other was so purposeless in trying to push away her tangled hair from her face, that it only blinded her the more with the dirt upon it. A creature so foul to look at, in her tatters, stains and splashes, but so much fouler than that in her moral infamy, that it was a shameful thing even to see her.

After an impatient oath or two, and some stupid clawing of herself with the hand not necessary to her support, she got her hair away from her eyes sufficiently to obtain a sight of him. Then she sat swaying her body to and fro, and making gestures with her unnerved arm, which seemed intended as the accompaniment to a fit of laughter, though her face was stolid and drowsy.

'Eigh, lad? What, yo'r there?' Some hoarse sounds meant for this, came mockingly out of her at last; and her head dropped forward on her breast.

'Back agen?' she screeched, after some minutes, as if he had that moment said it. 'Yes! And back agen. Back agen ever and ever so often. Back? Yes, back. Why not?'

Roused by the unmeaning violence with which she cried it out, she scrambled up, and stood supporting herself with her shoulders against the wall; dangling in one hand by the string, a dunghill-fragment of a bonnet, and trying to look scornfully at him.

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'I'll sell thee off again, and I'll sell thee off again, and I'll sell thee off a score of times!' she cried, with something between a furious menace and an effort at a defiant dance. 'Come awa' from th' bed!' He was sitting on the side of it, with his face hidden in his hands. 'Come awa! from 't. 'Tis mine, and I've a right to t'!'

As she staggered to it, he avoided her with a shudder, and passed—his face still hidden—to the opposite end of the room. She threw herself upon the bed heavily, and soon was snoring hard. He sunk into a chair, and moved but once all that night. It was to throw a covering over her; as if his hands were not enough to hide her, even in the darkness.

Blackpool, in hopes of divorcing his wife, goes to Bounderby to ask for his aid and advice. Bounderby expresses shock at what he describes as Blackpool's immorality.

Chapter XII: The Old Woman

OLD STEPHEN descended the two white steps, shutting the black door with the brazen door-plate, by the aid of the brazen full-stop, to which he gave a parting polish with the sleeve of his coat, observing that his hot hand clouded it. He crossed the street with his eyes bent upon the ground, and thus was walking sorrowfully away, when he felt a touch upon his arm.

It was not the touch he needed most at such a moment—the touch that could calm the wild waters of his soul, as the uplifted hand of the sublimest love and patience could abate the raging of the sea—yet it was a woman's hand too. It was an old woman, tall and shapely still, though withered by time, on whom his eyes fell when he stopped and turned. She was very cleanly and plainly dressed, had country mud upon her shoes, and was newly come from a journey. The flutter of her manner, in the unwonted noise of the streets; the spare shawl, carried unfolded on her arm; the heavy umbrella, and little basket; the loose long-fingered gloves, to which her hands were unused; all bespoke an old woman from the country, in her plain holiday clothes, come into Coketown on an expedition of rare occurrence. Remarking this at a glance, with the quick observation of his class, Stephen Blackpool bent his attentive face—his face, which, like the faces of many of his order, by dint of long working with eyes and hands in the midst of a prodigious noise, had acquired the concentrated look with which we are familiar in the countenances of the deaf—the better to hear what she asked him.

'Pray, sir,' said the old woman, 'didn't I see you come out of that gentleman's house?' pointing back to Mr. Bounderby's. 'I believe it was you, unless I have had the bad luck to mistake the person in following?'

'Yes, missus,' returned Stephen, 'it were me.'

'Have you—you'll excuse an old woman's curiosity—have you seen the gentleman?' 'Yes, missus.'

'And how did he look, sir? Was he portly, bold, outspoken, and hearty?' As she straightened her own figure, and held up her head in adapting her action to her

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words, the idea crossed Stephen that he had seen this old woman before, and had not quite liked her.

'O yes,' he returned, observing her more attentively, 'he were all that.'

'And healthy,' said the old woman, 'as the fresh wind?'

'Yes,' returned Stephen. 'He were ett'n and drinking—as large and as loud as a Hummobee.'

'Thank you!' said the old woman, with infinite content. 'Thank you!'

He certainly never had seen this old woman before. Yet there was a vague remembrance in his mind, as if he had more than once dreamed of some old woman like her.

She walked along at his side, and, gently accommodating himself to her humour, he said Coketown was a busy place, was it not? To which she answered 'Eigh sure! Dreadful busy!' Then he said, she came from the country, he saw? To which she answered in the affirmative.

'By Parliamentary, this morning. I came forty mile by Parliamentary this morning, and I'm going back the same forty mile this afternoon. I walked nine mile to the station this morning, and if I find nobody on the road to give me a lift, I shall walk the nine mile back to-night. That's pretty well, sir, at my age!' said the chatty old woman, her eye brightening with exultation.

''Deed 'tis. Don't do't too often, missus.'

'No, no. Once a year,' she answered, shaking her head. 'I spend my savings so, once every year. I come regular, to tramp about the streets, and see the gentlemen.' 'Only to see 'em?' returned Stephen.

'That's enough for me,' she replied, with great earnestness and interest of manner. 'I ask no more! I have been standing about, on this side of the way, to see that gentleman,' turning her head back towards Mr. Bounderby's again, 'come out. But, he's late this year, and I have not seen him. You came out instead. Now, if I am obliged to go back without a glimpse of him—I only want a glimpse—well! I have seen you, and you have seen him, and I must make that do.' Saying this, she looked at Stephen as if to fix his features in her mind, and her eye was not so bright as it had been.

With a large allowance for difference of tastes, and with all submission to the patricians of Coketown, this seemed so extraordinary a source of interest to take so much trouble about, that it perplexed him. But they were passing the church now, and as his eye caught the clock, he quickened his pace.

He was going to his work? the old woman said, quickening hers, too, quite easily. Yes, time was nearly out. On his telling her where he worked, the old woman became a more singular old woman than before.

'An't you happy?' she asked him.

'Why—there's awmost nobbody but has their troubles, missus.' He answered evasively, because the old woman appeared to take it for granted that he would be very happy indeed, and he had not the heart to disappoint her. He knew that there was trouble enough in the world; and if the old woman had lived so long, and could

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count upon his having so little, why so much the better for her, and none the worse for him.

'Ay, ay! You have your troubles at home, you mean?' she said. 'Times. Just now and then,' he answered, slightly.

'But, working under such a gentleman, they don't follow you to the Factory?'

No, no; they didn't follow him there, said Stephen. All correct there. Everything accordant there. (He did not go so far as to say, for her pleasure, that there was a sort of Divine Right there; but, I have heard claims almost as magnificent of late years.)

They were now in the black by-road near the place, and the Hands were crowding in. The bell was ringing, and the Serpent was a Serpent of many coils, and the Elephant was getting ready. The strange old woman was delighted with the very bell. It was the beautifullest bell she had ever heard, she said, and sounded grand!

She asked him, when he stopped good-naturedly to shake hands with her before going in, how long he had worked there?

'A dozen year,' he told her.

'I must kiss the hand,' said she, 'that has worked in this fine factory for a dozen year!' And she lifted it, though he would have prevented her, and put it to her lips. What harmony, besides her age and her simplicity, surrounded her, he did not know, but even in this fantastic action there was a something neither out of time nor place: a something which it seemed as if nobody else could have made as serious, or done with such a natural and touching air.

He had been at his loom full half an hour, thinking about this old woman, when, having occasion to move round the loom for its adjustment, he glanced through a window which was in his corner, and saw her still looking up at the pile of building, lost in admiration. Heedless of the smoke and mud and wet, and of her two long journeys, she was gazing at it, as if the heavy thrum that issued from its many stories were proud music to her.

She was gone by and by, and the day went after her, and the lights sprung up again, and the Express whirled in full sight of the Fairy Palace over the arches near: little felt amid the jarring of the machinery, and scarcely heard above its crash and rattle. Long before then his thoughts had gone back to the dreary room above the little shop, and to the shameful figure heavy on the bed, but heavier on his heart.

Machinery slackened; throbbing feebly like a fainting pulse; stopped. The bell again; the glare of light and heat dispelled; the factories, looming heavy in the black wet night—their tall chimneys rising up into the air like competing Towers

of Babel.

He had spoken to Rachael only last night, it was true, and had walked with her a little way; but he had his new misfortune on him, in which no one else could give him a moment's relief, and, for the sake of it, and because he knew himself to want that softening of his anger which no voice but hers could effect, he felt he might so far disregard what she had said as to wait for her again. He waited, but she had eluded him. She was gone. On no other night in the year could he so ill have spared her patient face.

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O! Better to have no home in which to lay his head, than to have a home and dread to go to it, through such a cause. He ate and drank, for he was exhausted— but he little knew or cared what; and he wandered about in the chill rain, thinking and thinking, and brooding and brooding.

No word of a new marriage had ever passed between them; but Rachael had taken great pity on him years ago, and to her alone he had opened his closed heart all this time, on the subject of his miseries; and he knew very well that if he were free to ask her, she would take him. He thought of the home he might at that moment have been seeking with pleasure and pride; of the different man he might have been that night; of the lightness then in his now heavy-laden breast; of the then restored honour, self-respect, and tranquillity all torn to pieces. He thought of the waste of the best part of his life, of the change it made in his character for the worse every day, of the dreadful nature of his existence, bound hand and foot, to a dead woman, and tormented by a demon in her shape. He thought of Rachael, how young when they were first brought together in these circumstances, how mature now, how soon to grow old. He thought of the number of girls and women she had seen marry, how many homes with children in them she had seen grow up around her, how she had contentedly pursued her own lone quiet path—for him—and how he had sometimes seen a shade of melancholy on her blessed face, that smote him with remorse and despair. He set the picture of her up, beside the infamous image of last night; and thought, Could it be, that the whole earthly course of one so gentle, good, and self-denying, was subjugate to such a wretch as that!

Filled with these thoughts—so filled that he had an unwholesome sense of growing larger, of being placed in some new and diseased relation towards the objects among which he passed, of seeing the iris round every misty light turn red—he went home for shelter.

Blackpool finds Rachel in his rooms caring for his wife. Rachel prevents Blackpool's wife from accidentally drinking poison. Blackpool, who had not intervened to save his wife, looks upon Rachel as an angel. Grandgrind allows Sissy to stay at Stone Lodge to care for his wife. Grandgrind rises in politics, becoming a Member of Parliament. Tom grows to be selfish and hedonistic. He deliberately plays upon Louisa's affection for him to encourage her to marry Bounderby.

Chapter XV: Father and Daughter

ALTHOUGH Mr. Gradgrind did not take after Blue Beard, his room was quite a blue chamber in its abundance of blue books. Whatever they could prove (which is usually anything you like), they proved there, in an army constantly strengthening by the arrival of new recruits. In that charmed apartment, the most complicated social questions were cast up, got into exact totals, and finally settled—if those concerned could only have been brought to know it. As if an astronomical observatory should be made without any windows, and the astronomer within should arrange the starry universe solely by pen, ink, and

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paper, so Mr. Gradgrind, in his Observatory (and there are many like it), had no need to cast an eye upon the teeming myriads of human beings around him, but could settle all their destinies on a slate, and wipe out all their tears with one dirty little bit of sponge.

To this Observatory, then: a stern room, with a deadly statistical clock in it, which measured every second with a beat like a rap upon a coffin-lid; Louisa repaired on the appointed morning. A window looked towards Coketown; and when she sat down near her father's table, she saw the high chimneys and the long tracts of smoke looming in the heavy distance gloomily.

'My dear Louisa,' said her father, 'I prepared you last night to give me your serious attention in the conversation we are now going to have together. You have been so well trained, and you do, I am happy to say, so much justice to the education you have received, that I have perfect confidence in your good sense. You are not impulsive, you are not romantic, you are accustomed to view everything from the strong dispassionate ground of reason and calculation. From that ground alone, I know you will view and consider what I am going to communicate.'

He waited, as if he would have been glad that she said something. But she said never a word.

'Louisa, my dear, you are the subject of a proposal of marriage that has been made to me.'

Again he waited, and again she answered not one word. This so far surprised him, as to induce him gently to repeat, 'a proposal of marriage, my dear.' To which she returned, without any visible emotion whatever:

'I hear you, father. I am attending, I assure you.'

'Well!' said Mr. Gradgrind, breaking into a smile, after being for the moment at a loss, 'you are even more dispassionate than I expected, Louisa. Or, perhaps, you are not unprepared for the announcement I have it in charge to make?'

'I cannot say that, father, until I hear it. Prepared or unprepared, I wish to hear it all from you. I wish to hear you state it to me, father.'

Strange to relate, Mr. Gradgrind was not so collected at this moment as his daughter was. He took a paper-knife in his hand, turned it over, laid it down, took it up again, and even then had to look along the blade of it, considering how to go on.

'What you say, my dear Louisa, is perfectly reasonable. I have undertaken then to let you know that—in short, that Mr. Bounderby has informed me that he has long watched your progress with particular interest and pleasure, and has long hoped that the time might ultimately arrive when he should offer you his hand in marriage. That time, to which he has so long, and certainly with great constancy, looked forward, is now come. Mr. Bounderby has made his proposal of marriage to me, and has entreated me to make it known to you, and to express his hope that you will take it into your favourable consideration.'

Silence between them. The deadly statistical clock very hollow. The distant smoke very black and heavy.

'Father,' said Louisa, 'do you think I love Mr. Bounderby?'

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Mr. Gradgrind was extremely discomfited by this unexpected question. 'Well, my child,' he returned, 'I—really—cannot take upon myself to say.'

'Father,' pursued Louisa in exactly the same voice as before, 'do you ask me to love Mr. Bounderby?'

'My dear Louisa, no. No. I ask nothing.'

'Father,' she still pursued, 'does Mr. Bounderby ask me to love him?' 'Really, my dear,' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'it is difficult to answer your question—' 'Difficult to answer it, Yes or No, father?

'Certainly, my dear. Because;' here was something to demonstrate, and it set him up again; 'because the reply depends so materially, Louisa, on the sense in which we use the expression. Now, Mr. Bounderby does not do you the injustice, and does not do himself the injustice, of pretending to anything fanciful, fantastic, or (I am using synonymous terms) sentimental. Mr. Bounderby would have seen you grow up under his eyes, to very little purpose, if he could so far forget what is due to your good sense, not to say to his, as to address you from any such ground. Therefore, perhaps the expression itself—I merely suggest this to you, my dear— may be a little misplaced.'

'What would you advise me to use in its stead, father?'

'Why, my dear Louisa,' said Mr. Gradgrind, completely recovered by this time, 'I would advise you (since you ask me) to consider this question, as you have been accustomed to consider every other question, simply as one of tangible Fact. The ignorant and the giddy may embarrass such subjects with irrelevant fancies, and other absurdities that have no existence, properly viewed—really no existence—but it is no compliment to you to say, that you know better. Now, what are the Facts of this case? You are, we will say in round numbers, twenty years of age; Mr. Bounderby is, we will say in round numbers, fifty. There is some disparity in your respective years, but in your means and positions there is none; on the contrary, there is a great suitability. Then the question arises, Is this one disparity sufficient to operate as a bar to such a marriage? In considering this question, it is not unimportant to take into account the statistics of marriage, so far as they have yet been obtained, in England and Wales. I find, on reference to the figures, that a large proportion of these marriages are contracted between parties of very unequal ages, and that the elder of these contracting parties is, in rather more than three-fourths of these instances, the bridegroom. It is remarkable as showing the wide prevalence of this law, that among the natives of the British possessions in India, also in a considerable part of China, and among the Calmucks of Tartary, the best means of computation yet furnished us by travellers, yield similar results. The disparity I have mentioned, therefore, almost ceases to be disparity, and (virtually) all but disappears.'

'What do you recommend, father,' asked Louisa, her reserved composure not in the least affected by these gratifying results, 'that I should substitute for the term I used just now? For the misplaced expression?'

'Louisa,' returned her father, 'it appears to me that nothing can be plainer. Confining yourself rigidly to Fact, the question of Fact you state to yourself is: Does

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Mr. Bounderby ask me to marry him? Yes, he does. The sole remaining question then is: Shall I marry him? I think nothing can be plainer than that?'

'Shall I marry him?' repeated Louisa, with great deliberation.

'Precisely. And it is satisfactory to me, as your father, my dear Louisa, to know that you do not come to the consideration of that question with the previous habits of mind, and habits of life, that belong to many young women.'

'No, father,' she returned, 'I do not.'

'I now leave you to judge for yourself,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'I have stated the case, as such cases are usually stated among practical minds; I have stated it, as the case of your mother and myself was stated in its time. The rest, my dear Louisa, is for you to decide.'

From the beginning, she had sat looking at him fixedly. As he now leaned back in his chair, and bent his deep-set eyes upon her in his turn, perhaps he might have seen one wavering moment in her, when she was impelled to throw herself upon his breast, and give him the pent-up confidences of her heart. But, to see it, he must have overleaped at a bound the artificial barriers he had for many years been erecting, between himself and all those subtle essences of humanity which will elude the utmost cunning of algebra until the last trumpet ever to be sounded shall blow even algebra to wreck. The barriers were too many and too high for such a leap. With his unbending, utilitarian, matter-of-fact face, he hardened her again; and the moment shot away into the plumbless depths of the past, to mingle with all the lost opportunities that are drowned there.

Removing her eyes from him, she sat so long looking silently towards the town, that he said, at length: 'Are you consulting the chimneys of the Coketown works, Louisa?'

'There seems to be nothing there but languid and monotonous smoke. Yet when the night comes, Fire bursts out, father!' she answered, turning quickly.

'Of course I know that, Louisa. I do not see the application of the remark.' To do him justice he did not, at all.

She passed it away with a slight motion of her hand, and concentrating her attention upon him again, said, 'Father, I have often thought that life is very short.'—This was so distinctly one of his subjects that he interposed.

'It is short, no doubt, my dear. Still, the average duration of human life is proved to have increased of late years. The calculations of various life assurance and annuity offices, among other figures which cannot go wrong, have established

the fact.'

'I speak of my own life, father.'

'O indeed? Still,' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'I need not point out to you, Louisa, that it is governed by the laws which govern lives in the aggregate.'

'While it lasts, I would wish to do the little I can, and the little I am fit for. What does it matter?'

Mr. Gradgrind seemed rather at a loss to understand the last four words; replying, 'How, matter? What matter, my dear?'

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'Mr. Bounderby,' she went on in a steady, straight way, without regarding this, 'asks me to marry him. The question I have to ask myself is, shall I marry him? That is so, father, is it not? You have told me so, father. Have you not?'

'Certainly, my dear.'

'Let it be so. Since Mr. Bounderby likes to take me thus, I am satisfied to accept his proposal. Tell him, father, as soon as you please, that this was my answer. Repeat it, word for word, if you can, because I should wish him to know what I said.'

'It is quite right, my dear,' retorted her father approvingly, 'to be exact. I will observe your very proper request. Have you any wish in reference to the period of your marriage, my child?'

'None, father. What does it matter!'

Mr. Gradgrind had drawn his chair a little nearer to her, and taken her hand. But, her repetition of these words seemed to strike with some little discord on his ear. He paused to look at her, and, still holding her hand, said:

'Louisa, I have not considered it essential to ask you one question, because the possibility implied in it appeared to me to be too remote. But perhaps I ought to do so. You have never entertained in secret any other proposal?'

'Father,' she returned, almost scornfully, 'what other proposal can have been made to me? Whom have I seen? Where have I been? What are my heart's experiences?'

'My dear Louisa,' returned Mr. Gradgrind, reassured and satisfied. 'You correct me justly. I merely wished to discharge my duty.'

'What do I know, father,' said Louisa in her quiet manner, 'of tastes and fancies; of aspirations and affections; of all that part of my nature in which such light things might have been nourished? What escape have I had from problems that could be demonstrated, and realities that could be grasped?' As she said it, she unconsciously closed her hand, as if upon a solid object, and slowly opened it as though she were releasing dust or ash.

'My dear,' assented her eminently practical parent, 'quite true, quite true.'

'Why, father,' she pursued, 'what a strange question to ask me! The baby-preference that even I have heard of as common among children, has never had its innocent resting-place in my breast. You have been so careful of me, that I never had a child's heart. You have trained me so well, that I never dreamed a child's dream. You have dealt so wisely with me, father, from my cradle to this hour, that I never had a child's belief or a child's fear.'

Mr. Gradgrind was quite moved by his success, and by this testimony to it. 'My dear Louisa,' said he, 'you abundantly repay my care. Kiss me, my dear girl.'

So, his daughter kissed him. Detaining her in his embrace, he said, 'I may assure you now, my favourite child, that I am made happy by the sound decision at which you have arrived. Mr. Bounderby is a very remarkable man; and what little disparity can be said to exist between you—if any—is more than counterbalanced by the tone your mind has acquired. It has always been my object so to educate you,

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as that you might, while still in your early youth, be (if I may so express myself) almost any age. Kiss me once more, Louisa. Now, let us go and find your mother.'

Accordingly, they went down to the drawing-room, where the esteemed lady with no nonsense about her, was recumbent as usual, while Sissy worked beside her. She gave some feeble signs of returning animation when they entered, and presently the faint transparency was presented in a sitting attitude.

'Mrs. Gradgrind,' said her husband, who had waited for the achievement of this feat with some impatience, 'allow me to present to you Mrs. Bounderby.'

'Oh!' said Mrs. Gradgrind, 'so you have settled it! Well, I'm sure I hope your health may be good, Louisa; for if your head begins to split as soon as you are married, which was the case with mine, I cannot consider that you are to be envied, though I have no doubt you think you are, as all girls do. However, I give you joy, my dear—and I hope you may now turn all your ological studies to good account, I am sure I do! I must give you a kiss of congratulation, Louisa; but don't touch my right shoulder, for there's something running down it all day long. And now you see,' whimpered Mrs. Gradgrind, adjusting her shawls after the affectionate ceremony, 'I shall be worrying myself, morning, noon, and night, to know what I am to call him!'

'Mrs. Gradgrind,' said her husband, solemnly, 'what do you mean?'

'Whatever I am to call him, Mr. Gradgrind, when he is married to Louisa! I must call him something. It's impossible,' said Mrs. Gradgrind, with a mingled sense of politeness and injury, 'to be constantly addressing him and never giving him a name. I cannot call him Josiah, for the name is insupportable to me. You yourself wouldn't hear of Joe, you very well know. Am I to call my own son-in-law, Mister! Not, I believe, unless the time has arrived when, as an invalid, I am to be trampled upon by my relations. Then, what am I to call him!'

Nobody present having any suggestion to offer in the remarkable emergency, Mrs. Gradgrind departed this life for the time being, after delivering the following codicil to her remarks already executed:

'As to the wedding, all I ask, Louisa, is,—and I ask it with a fluttering in my chest, which actually extends to the soles of my feet,—that it may take place soon. Otherwise, I know it is one of those subjects I shall never hear the last of.'

When Mr. Gradgrind had presented Mrs. Bounderby, Sissy had suddenly turned her head, and looked, in wonder, in pity, in sorrow, in doubt, in a multitude of emotions, towards Louisa. Louisa had known it, and seen it, without looking at her. From that moment she was impassive, proud and cold—held Sissy at a distance—changed to her altogether.

So as to prevent potential conflict at his home, Bounderby gives Mrs. Sparsit a position at his bank. There, she socializes with Bitzer; the two criticize Tom, who also works at the bank, as a spendthrift.

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2.10.1.2 from "Book the Second: Reaping"

Chapter II: Mr. James Harthouse

THE Gradgrind party wanted assistance in cutting the throats of the Graces. They went about recruiting; and where could they enlist recruits more hopefully, than among the fine gentlemen who, having found out everything to be worth nothing, were equally ready for anything?

Moreover, the healthy spirits who had mounted to this sublime height were attractive to many of the Gradgrind school. They liked fine gentlemen; they pretended that they did not, but they did. They became exhausted in imitation of them; and they yaw-yawed in their speech like them; and they served out, with an enervated air, the little mouldy rations of political economy, on which they regaled their disciples. There never before was seen on earth such a wonderful hybrid race as was thus produced.

Among the fine gentlemen not regularly belonging to the Gradgrind school, there was one of a good family and a better appearance, with a happy turn of humour which had told immensely with the House of Commons on the occasion of his entertaining it with his (and the Board of Directors) view of a railway accident, in which the most careful officers ever known, employed by the most liberal managers ever heard of, assisted by the finest mechanical contrivances ever devised, the whole in action on the best line ever constructed, had killed five people and wounded thirty-two, by a casualty without which the excellence of the whole system would have been positively incomplete. Among the slain was a cow, and among the scattered articles unowned, a widow's cap. And the honourable member had so tickled the House (which has a delicate sense of humour) by putting the cap on the cow, that it became impatient of any serious reference to the Coroner's Inquest, and brought the railway off with Cheers and Laughter.

Now, this gentleman had a younger brother of still better appearance than himself, who had tried life as a Cornet of Dragoons, and found it a bore; and had afterwards tried it in the train of an English minister abroad, and found it a bore; and had then strolled to Jerusalem, and got bored there; and had then gone yachting about the world, and got bored everywhere. To whom this honourable and jocular, member fraternally said one day, 'Jem, there's a good opening among the hard Fact fellows, and they want men. I wonder you don't go in for statistics.' Jem, rather taken by the novelty of the idea, and very hard up for a change, was as ready to 'go in' for statistics as for anything else. So, he went in. He coached himself up with a blue-book or two; and his brother put it about among the hard Fact fellows, and said, 'If you want to bring in, for any place, a handsome dog who can make you a devilish good speech, look after my brother Jem, for he's your man.' After a few dashes in the public meeting way, Mr. Gradgrind and a council of political sages approved of Jem, and it was resolved to send him down to Coketown, to become known there and in the neighbourhood. Hence the letter Jem had last night shown to Mrs. Sparsit, which Mr. Bounderby now held in his hand; superscribed, 'Josiah Bounderby, Esquire, Banker, Coketown. Specially to introduce James Harthouse, Esquire. Thomas Gradgrind.'

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Within an hour of the receipt of this dispatch and Mr. James Harthouse's card, Mr. Bounderby put on his hat and went down to the Hotel. There he found Mr. James Harthouse looking out of window, in a state of mind so disconsolate, that he was already half-disposed to 'go in' for something else.

'My name, sir,' said his visitor, 'is Josiah Bounderby, of Coketown.'

Mr. James Harthouse was very happy indeed (though he scarcely looked so) to have a pleasure he had long expected.

'Coketown, sir,' said Bounderby, obstinately taking a chair, 'is not the kind of place you have been accustomed to. Therefore, if you will allow me—or whether you will or not, for I am a plain man—I'll tell you something about it before we go any further.'

Mr. Harthouse would be charmed.

'Don't be too sure of that,' said Bounderby. 'I don't promise it. First of all, you see our smoke. That's meat and drink to us. It's the healthiest thing in the world in all respects, and particularly for the lungs. If you are one of those who want us to consume it, I differ from you. We are not going to wear the bottoms of our boilers out any faster than we wear 'em out now, for all the humbugging sentiment in Great Britain and Ireland.'

By way of 'going in' to the fullest extent, Mr. Harthouse rejoined, 'Mr. Bounderby, I assure you I am entirely and completely of your way of thinking. On conviction.'

'I am glad to hear it,' said Bounderby. 'Now, you have heard a lot of talk about the work in our mills, no doubt. You have? Very good. I'll state the fact of it to you. It's the pleasantest work there is, and it's the lightest work there is, and it's the best- paid work there is. More than that, we couldn't improve the mills themselves, unless we laid down Turkey carpets on the floors. Which we're not a-going to do.'

'Mr. Bounderby, perfectly right.'

'Lastly,' said Bounderby, 'as to our Hands. There's not a Hand in this town, sir, man, woman, or child, but has one ultimate object in life. That object is, to be fed on turtle soup and venison with a gold spoon. Now, they're not a-going—none of 'em—ever to be fed on turtle soup and venison with a gold spoon. And now you know the place.'

Mr. Harthouse professed himself in the highest degree instructed and refreshed, by this condensed epitome of the whole Coketown question.

'Why, you see,' replied Mr. Bounderby, 'it suits my disposition to have a full understanding with a man, particularly with a public man, when I make his acquaintance. I have only one thing more to say to you, Mr. Harthouse, before assuring you of the pleasure with which I shall respond, to the utmost of my poor ability, to my friend Tom Gradgrind's letter of introduction. You are a man of family. Don't you deceive yourself by supposing for a moment that I am a man of family. I am a bit of dirty riff-raff, and a genuine scrap of tag, rag, and bobtail.'

If anything could have exalted Jem's interest in Mr. Bounderby, it would have been this very circumstance. Or, so he told him.

'So now,' said Bounderby, 'we may shake hands on equal terms. I say, equal terms, because although I know what I am, and the exact depth of the gutter I have

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lifted myself out of, better than any man does, I am as proud as you are. I am just as proud as you are. Having now asserted my independence in a proper manner, I may come to how do you find yourself, and I hope you're pretty well.'

The better, Mr. Harthouse gave him to understand as they shook hands, for the salubrious air of Coketown. Mr. Bounderby received the answer with favour.

'Perhaps you know,' said he, 'or perhaps you don't know, I married Tom Gradgrind's daughter. If you have nothing better to do than to walk up town with me, I shall be glad to introduce you to Tom Gradgrind's daughter.'

'Mr. Bounderby,' said Jem, 'you anticipate my dearest wishes.'

They went out without further discourse; and Mr. Bounderby piloted the new acquaintance who so strongly contrasted with him, to the private red brick dwelling, with the black outside shutters, the green inside blinds, and the black street door up the two white steps. In the drawing-room of which mansion, there presently entered to them the most remarkable girl Mr. James Harthouse had ever seen. She was so constrained, and yet so careless; so reserved, and yet so watchful; so cold and proud, and yet so sensitively ashamed of her husband's braggart humility— from which she shrunk as if every example of it were a cut or a blow; that it was quite a new sensation to observe her. In face she was no less remarkable than in manner. Her features were handsome; but their natural play was so locked up, that it seemed impossible to guess at their genuine expression. Utterly indifferent, perfectly self- reliant, never at a loss, and yet never at her ease, with her figure in company with them there, and her mind apparently quite alone—it was of no use 'going in' yet awhile to comprehend this girl, for she baffled all penetration.

From the mistress of the house, the visitor glanced to the house itself. There was no mute sign of a woman in the room. No graceful little adornment, no fanciful little device, however trivial, anywhere expressed her influence. Cheerless and comfortless, boastfully and doggedly rich, there the room stared at its present occupants, unsoftened and unrelieved by the least trace of any womanly occupation. As Mr. Bounderby stood in the midst of his household gods, so those unrelenting divinities occupied their places around Mr. Bounderby, and they were worthy of one another, and well matched.

'This, sir,' said Bounderby, 'is my wife, Mrs. Bounderby: Tom Gradgrind's eldest daughter. Loo, Mr. James Harthouse. Mr. Harthouse has joined your father's muster-roll. If he is not Torn Gradgrind's colleague before long, I believe we shall at least hear of him in connexion with one of our neighbouring towns. You observe, Mr. Harthouse, that my wife is my junior. I don't know what she saw in me to marry me, but she saw something in me, I suppose, or she wouldn't have married me. She has lots of expensive knowledge, sir, political and otherwise. If you want to cram for anything, I should be troubled to recommend you to a better adviser than Loo Bounderby.'

To a more agreeable adviser, or one from whom he would be more likely to learn, Mr. Harthouse could never be recommended.

'Come!' said his host. 'If you're in the complimentary line, you'll get on here, for you'll meet with no competition. I have never been in the way of learning

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compliments myself, and I don't profess to understand the art of paying 'em. In fact, despise 'em. But, your bringing-up was different from mine; mine was a real thing, by George! You're a gentleman, and I don't pretend to be one. I am Josiah Bounderby of Coketown, and that's enough for me. However, though I am not influenced by manners and station, Loo Bounderby may be. She hadn't my advantages—disadvantages you would call 'em, but I call 'em advantages—so you'll not waste your power, I dare say.'

'Mr. Bounderby,' said Jem, turning with a smile to Louisa, 'is a noble animal in a comparatively natural state, quite free from the harness in which a conventional hack like myself works.'

'You respect Mr. Bounderby very much,' she quietly returned. 'It is natural that you should.'

He was disgracefully thrown out, for a gentleman who had seen so much of the world, and thought, 'Now, how am I to take this?'

'You are going to devote yourself, as I gather from what Mr. Bounderby has said, to the service of your country. You have made up your mind,' said Louisa, still standing before him where she had first stopped—in all the singular contrariety of her self- possession, and her being obviously very ill at ease—'to show the nation the way out of all its difficulties.'

'Mrs. Bounderby,' he returned, laughing, 'upon my honour, no. I will make no such pretence to you. I have seen a little, here and there, up and down; I have found it all to be very worthless, as everybody has, and as some confess they have, and some do not; and I am going in for your respected father's opinions—really because I have no choice of opinions, and may as well back them as anything else.'

'Have you none of your own?' asked Louisa.

'I have not so much as the slightest predilection left. I assure you I attach not the least importance to any opinions. The result of the varieties of boredom I have undergone, is a conviction (unless conviction is too industrious a word for the lazy sentiment I entertain on the subject), that any set of ideas will do just as much good as any other set, and just as much harm as any other set. There's an English family with a charming Italian motto. What will be, will be. It's the only truth going!'

This vicious assumption of honesty in dishonesty—a vice so dangerous, so deadly, and so common—seemed, he observed, a little to impress her in his favour. He followed up the advantage, by saying in his pleasantest manner: a manner to which she might attach as much or as little meaning as she pleased: 'The side that can prove anything in a line of units, tens, hundreds, and thousands, Mrs. Bounderby, seems to me to afford the most fun, and to give a man the best chance. I am quite as much attached to it as if I believed it. I am quite ready to go in for it, to the same extent as if I believed it. And what more could I possibly do, if I did believe it!'

'You are a singular politician,' said Louisa.

'Pardon me; I have not even that merit. We are the largest party in the state, I assure you, Mrs. Bounderby, if we all fell out of our adopted ranks and were reviewed together.'

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Mr. Bounderby, who had been in danger of bursting in silence, interposed here with a project for postponing the family dinner till half-past six, and taking Mr. James Harthouse in the meantime on a round of visits to the voting and interesting notabilities of Coketown and its vicinity. The round of visits was made; and Mr. James Harthouse, with a discreet use of his blue coaching, came off triumphantly, though with a considerable accession of boredom.

In the evening, he found the dinner-table laid for four, but they sat down only three. It was an appropriate occasion for Mr. Bounderby to discuss the flavour of the hap'orth of stewed eels he had purchased in the streets at eight years old; and also of the inferior water, specially used for laying the dust, with which he had washed down that repast. He likewise entertained his guest over the soup and fish, with the calculation that he (Bounderby) had eaten in his youth at least three horses under the guise of polonies and saveloys. These recitals, Jem, in a languid manner, received with 'charming!' every now and then; and they probably would have decided him to 'go in' for Jerusalem again to-morrow morning, had he been less curious respecting Louisa.

'Is there nothing,' he thought, glancing at her as she sat at the head of the table, where her youthful figure, small and slight, but very graceful, looked as pretty as it looked misplaced; 'is there nothing that will move that face?'

Yes! By Jupiter, there was something, and here it was, in an unexpected shape. Tom appeared. She changed as the door opened, and broke into a beaming smile.

A beautiful smile. Mr. James Harthouse might not have thought so much of it, but that he had wondered so long at her impassive face. She put out her hand—a pretty little soft hand; and her fingers closed upon her brother's, as if she would have carried them to her lips.

'Ay, ay?' thought the visitor. 'This whelp is the only creature she cares for. So, so!'

The whelp was presented, and took his chair. The appellation was not flattering, but not unmerited.

'When I was your age, young Tom,' said Bounderby, 'I was punctual, or I got no dinner!'

'When you were my age,' resumed Tom, 'you hadn't a wrong balance to get right, and hadn't to dress afterwards.'

'Never mind that now,' said Bounderby.

'Well, then,' grumbled Tom. 'Don't begin with me.'

'Mrs. Bounderby,' said Harthouse, perfectly hearing this under-strain as it went on; 'your brother's face is quite familiar to me. Can I have seen him abroad? Or at some public school, perhaps?'

'No,' she resumed, quite interested, 'he has never been abroad yet, and was educated here, at home. Tom, love, I am telling Mr. Harthouse that he never saw you abroad.'

'No such luck, sir,' said Tom.

There was little enough in him to brighten her face, for he was a sullen young fellow, and ungracious in his manner even to her. So much the greater must have

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been the solitude of her heart, and her need of some one on whom to bestow it. 'So much the more is this whelp the only creature she has ever cared for,' thought Mr. James Harthouse, turning it over and over. 'So much the more. So much the more.'

Both in his sister's presence, and after she had left the room, the whelp took no pains to hide his contempt for Mr. Bounderby, whenever he could indulge it without the observation of that independent man, by making wry faces, or shutting one eye. Without responding to these telegraphic communications, Mr. Harthouse encouraged him much in the course of the evening, and showed an unusual liking for him. At last, when he rose to return to his hotel, and was a little doubtful whether he knew the way by night, the whelp immediately proffered his services as guide, and turned out with him to escort him thither.

Chapter III: The Whelp

IT was very remarkable that a young gentleman who had been brought up under one continuous system of unnatural restraint, should be a hypocrite; but it was certainly the case with Tom. It was very strange that a young gentleman who had never been left to his own guidance for five consecutive minutes, should be incapable at last of governing himself; but so it was with Tom. It was altogether unaccountable that a young gentleman whose imagination had been strangled in his cradle, should be still inconvenienced by its ghost in the form of grovelling sensualities; but such a monster, beyond all doubt, was Tom.

'Do you smoke?' asked Mr. James Harthouse, when they came to the hotel.

'I believe you!' said Tom.

He could do no less than ask Tom up; and Tom could do no less than go up. What with a cooling drink adapted to the weather, but not so weak as cool; and what with a rarer tobacco than was to be bought in those parts; Tom was soon in a highly free and easy state at his end of the sofa, and more than ever disposed to admire his new friend at the other end.

Tom blew his smoke aside, after he had been smoking a little while, and took an observation of his friend. 'He don't seem to care about his dress,' thought Tom, 'and yet how capitally he does it. What an easy swell he is!'

Mr. James Harthouse, happening to catch Tom's eye, remarked that he drank nothing, and filled his glass with his own negligent hand.

'Thank'ee,' said Tom. 'Thank'ee. Well, Mr. Harthouse, I hope you have had about a dose of old Bounderby to-night.' Tom said this with one eye shut up again, and looking over his glass knowingly, at his entertainer.

'A very good fellow indeed!' returned Mr. James Harthouse.

'You think so, don't you?' said Tom. And shut up his eye again.

Mr. James Harthouse smiled; and rising from his end of the sofa, and lounging with his back against the chimney-piece, so that he stood before the empty firegrate as he smoked, in front of Tom and looking down at him, observed:

'What a comical brother-in-law you are!'

'What a comical brother-in-law old Bounderby is, I think you mean,' said Tom.

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'You are a piece of caustic, Tom,' retorted Mr. James Harthouse.

There was something so very agreeable in being so intimate with such a waistcoat; in being called Tom, in such an intimate way, by such a voice; in being on such off-hand terms so soon, with such a pair of whiskers; that Tom was uncommonly pleased with himself.

'Oh! I don't care for old Bounderby,' said he, 'if you mean that. I have always called old Bounderby by the same name when I have talked about him, and I have always thought of him in the same way. I am not going to begin to be polite now, about old Bounderby. It would be rather late in the day.'

'Don't mind me,' returned James; 'but take care when his wife is by, you know.'

'His wife?' said Tom. 'My sister Loo? O yes!' And he laughed, and took a little more of the cooling drink.

James Harthouse continued to lounge in the same place and attitude, smoking his cigar in his own easy way, and looking pleasantly at the whelp, as if he knew himself to be a kind of agreeable demon who had only to hover over him, and he must give up his whole soul if required. It certainly did seem that the whelp yielded to this influence. He looked at his companion sneakingly, he looked at him admiringly, he looked at him boldly, and put up one leg on the sofa.

'My sister Loo?' said Tom. 'She never cared for old Bounderby.'

'That's the past tense, Tom,' returned Mr. James Harthouse, striking the ash from his cigar with his little finger. 'We are in the present tense, now.'

'Verb neuter, not to care. Indicative mood, present tense. First person singular, I do not care; second person singular, thou dost not care; third person singular, she does not care,' returned Tom.

'Good! Very quaint!' said his friend. 'Though you don't mean it.'

'But I do mean it,' cried Tom. 'Upon my honour! Why, you won't tell me, Mr. Harthouse, that you really suppose my sister Loo does care for old Bounderby.'

'My dear fellow,' returned the other, 'what am I bound to suppose, when I find two married people living in harmony and happiness?'

Tom had by this time got both his legs on the sofa. If his second leg had not been already there when he was called a dear fellow, he would have put it up at that great stage of the conversation. Feeling it necessary to do something then, he stretched himself out at greater length, and, reclining with the back of his head on the end of the sofa, and smoking with an infinite assumption of negligence, turned his common face, and not too sober eyes, towards the face looking down upon him so carelessly yet so potently.

'You know our governor, Mr. Harthouse,' said Tom, 'and therefore, you needn't be surprised that Loo married old Bounderby. She never had a lover, and the governor proposed old Bounderby, and she took him.'

'Very dutiful in your interesting sister,' said Mr. James Harthouse.

'Yes, but she wouldn't have been as dutiful, and it would not have come off as easily,' returned the whelp, 'if it hadn't been for me.'

The tempter merely lifted his eyebrows; but the whelp was obliged to go on.

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'I persuaded her,' he said, with an edifying air of superiority. 'I was stuck into old Bounderby's bank (where I never wanted to be), and I knew I should get into scrapes there, if she put old Bounderby's pipe out; so I told her my wishes, and she came into them. She would do anything for me. It was very game of her, wasn't it?'

'It was charming, Tom!'

'Not that it was altogether so important to her as it was to me,' continued Tom coolly, 'because my liberty and comfort, and perhaps my getting on, depended on it; and she had no other lover, and staying at home was like staying in jail—especially when I was gone. It wasn't as if she gave up another lover for old Bounderby; but still it was a good thing in her.'

'Perfectly delightful. And she gets on so placidly.'

'Oh,' returned Tom, with contemptuous patronage, 'she's a regular girl. A girl can get on anywhere. She has settled down to the life, and she don't mind. It does just as well as another. Besides, though Loo is a girl, she's not a common sort of girl. She can shut herself up within herself, and think—as I have often known her sit and watch the fire—for an hour at a stretch.'

'Ay, ay? Has resources of her own,' said Harthouse, smoking quietly.

'Not so much of that as you may suppose,' returned Tom; 'for our governor had her crammed with all sorts of dry bones and sawdust. It's his system.'

'Formed his daughter on his own model?' suggested Harthouse.

'His daughter? Ah! and everybody else. Why, he formed Me that way!' said Tom.

'Impossible!'

'He did, though,' said Tom, shaking his head. 'I mean to say, Mr. Harthouse, that when I first left home and went to old Bounderby's, I was as flat as a warming-pan, and knew no more about life, than any oyster does.'

'Come, Tom! I can hardly believe that. A joke's a joke.'

'Upon my soul!' said the whelp. 'I am serious; I am indeed!' He smoked with great gravity and dignity for a little while, and then added, in a highly complacent tone, 'Oh! I have picked up a little since. I don't deny that. But I have done it myself; no thanks to the governor.'

'And your intelligent sister?'

'My intelligent sister is about where she was. She used to complain to me that she had nothing to fall back upon, that girls usually fall back upon; and I don't see how she is to have got over that since. But she don't mind,' he sagaciously added, puffing at his cigar again. 'Girls can always get on, somehow.'

'Calling at the Bank yesterday evening, for Mr. Bounderby's address, I found an ancient lady there, who seems to entertain great admiration for your sister,' observed Mr. James Harthouse, throwing away the last small remnant of the cigar he had now smoked out.

'Mother Sparsit!' said Tom. 'What! you have seen her already, have you?'

His friend nodded. Tom took his cigar out of his mouth, to shut up his eye (which had grown rather unmanageable) with the greater expression, and to tap his nose several times with his finger.

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'Mother Sparsit's feeling for Loo is more than admiration, I should think,' said Tom. 'Say affection and devotion. Mother Sparsit never set her cap at Bounderby when he was a bachelor. Oh no!'

These were the last words spoken by the whelp, before a giddy drowsiness came upon him, followed by complete oblivion. He was roused from the latter state by an uneasy dream of being stirred up with a boot, and also of a voice saying: 'Come, it's late. Be off!'

'Well!' he said, scrambling from the sofa. 'I must take my leave of you though. I say. Yours is very good tobacco. But it's too mild.' 'Yes, it's too mild,' returned his entertainer.

'It's—it's ridiculously mild,' said Tom. 'Where's the door! Good night!'

'He had another odd dream of being taken by a waiter through a mist, which, after giving him some trouble and difficulty, resolved itself into the main street, in which he stood alone. He then walked home pretty easily, though not yet free from an impression of the presence and influence of his new friend—as if he were lounging somewhere in the air, in the same negligent attitude, regarding him with the same look.

The whelp went home, and went to bed. If he had had any sense of what he had done that night, and had been less of a whelp and more of a brother, he might have turned short on the road, might have gone down to the ill-smelling river that was dyed black, might have gone to bed in it for good and all, and have curtained his head for ever with its filthy waters.

Mr. Slackbridge gives a speech urging Coketown workers to join his union against Bounderby. All the men except Blackpool decide to join the union. Although his fellow workers urge him to join, Blackpool refuses, for personal reasons. From that point on, his fellow workers shun Blackpool. Bounderby asks Blackpool to spy on the Coketown workers, but Blackpool refuses. Blackpool then denounces dangerous working conditions. Realizing that Blackpool has not refused to join the union out of loyalty to him, Bounderby fires Blackpool.

Chapter VI: Fading Away

'Twas falling dark when Stephen came out of Mr. Bounderby's house. The shadows of night had gathered so fast, that he did not look about him when he closed the door, but plodded straight along the street. Nothing was further from his thoughts than the curious old woman he had encountered on his previous visit to the same house, when he heard a step behind him that he knew, and turning, saw her in Rachael's company.

He saw Rachael first, as he had heard her only.

'Ah, Rachael, my dear! Missus, thou wi' her!'

'Well, and now you are surprised to be sure, and with reason I must say,' the old woman returned. 'Here I am again, you see.'

'But how wi' Rachael?' said Stephen, falling into their step, walking between them, and looking from the one to the other.

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'Why, I come to be with this good lass pretty much as I came to be with you,' said the old woman, cheerfully, taking the reply upon herself. 'My visiting time is later this year than usual, for I have been rather troubled with shortness of breath, and so put it off till the weather was fine and warm. For the same reason I don't make all my journey in one day, but divide it into two days, and get a bed to-night at the Travellers' Coffee House down by the railroad (a nice clean house), and go back Parliamentary, at six in the morning. Well, but what has this to do with this good lass, says you? I'm going to tell you. I have heard of Mr. Bounderby being married. I read it in the paper, where it looked grand—oh, it looked fine!' the old woman dwelt on it with strange enthusiasm: 'and I want to see his wife. I have never seen her yet. Now, if you'll believe me, she hasn't come out of that house since noon to- day. So not to give her up too easily, I was waiting about, a little last bit more, when I passed close to this good lass two or three times; and her face being so friendly I spoke to her, and she spoke to me. There!' said the old woman to Stephen, 'you can make all the rest out for yourself now, a deal shorter than I can, I dare say!'

Once again, Stephen had to conquer an instinctive propensity to dislike this old woman, though her manner was as honest and simple as a manner possibly could be. With a gentleness that was as natural to him as he knew it to be to Rachael, he pursued the subject that interested her in her old age.

'Well, missus,' said he, 'I ha seen the lady, and she were young and hansom. Wi' fine dark thinkin eyes, and a still way, Rachael, as I ha never seen the like on.'

'Young and handsome. Yes!' cried the old woman, quite delighted. 'As bonny as a rose! And what a happy wife!'

'Aye, missus, I suppose she be,' said Stephen. But with a doubtful glance at Rachael.

'Suppose she be? She must be. She's your master's wife,' returned the old woman.

Stephen nodded assent. 'Though as to master,' said he, glancing again at Rachael, 'not master onny more. That's aw enden 'twixt him and me.'

'Have you left his work, Stephen?' asked Rachael, anxiously and quickly.

'Why, Rachael,' he replied, 'whether I ha lef'n his work, or whether his work ha lef'n me, cooms t' th' same. His work and me are parted. 'Tis as weel so—better, I were thinkin when yo coom up wi' me. It would ha brought'n trouble upon trouble if I had stayed theer. Haply 'tis a kindness to monny that I go; haply 'tis a kindness to myseln; anyways it mun be done. I mun turn my face fro Coketown fur th' time, and seek a fort'n, dear, by beginnin fresh.'

'Where will you go, Stephen?'

'I donno t'night,' said he, lifting off his hat, and smoothing his thin hair with the flat of his hand. 'But I'm not goin t'night, Rachael, nor yet t'morrow. 'Tan't easy overmuch t' know wheer t' turn, but a good heart will coom to me.'

Herein, too, the sense of even thinking unselfishly aided him. Before he had so much as closed Mr. Bounderby's door, he had reflected that at least his being obliged to go away was good for her, as it would save her from the chance of being brought

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into question for not withdrawing from him. Though it would cost him a hard pang to leave her, and though he could think of no similar place in which his condemnation would not pursue him, perhaps it was almost a relief to be forced away from the endurance of the last four days, even to unknown difficulties and distresses.

So he said, with truth, 'I'm more leetsome, Rachael, under 't, than I could'n ha believed.' It was not her part to make his burden heavier. She answered with her comforting smile, and the three walked on together.

Age, especially when it strives to be self-reliant and cheerful, finds much consideration among the poor. The old woman was so decent and contented, and made so light of her infirmities, though they had increased upon her since her former interview with Stephen, that they both took an interest in her. She was too sprightly to allow of their walking at a slow pace on her account, but she was very grateful to be talked to, and very willing to talk to any extent: so, when they came to their part of the town, she was more brisk and vivacious than ever.

'Come to my poor place, missus,' said Stephen, 'and tak a coop o' tea. Rachael will coom then; and arterwards I'll see thee safe t' thy Travellers' lodgin. 'T may be long, Rachael, ere ever I ha th' chance o' thy coompany agen.'

They complied, and the three went on to the house where he lodged. When they turned into a narrow street, Stephen glanced at his window with a dread that always haunted his desolate home; but it was open, as he had left it, and no one was there. The evil spirit of his life had flitted away again, months ago, and he had heard no more of her since. The only evidence of her last return now, were the scantier moveables in his room, and the grayer hair upon his head.

He lighted a candle, set out his little tea-board, got hot water from below, and brought in small portions of tea and sugar, a loaf, and some butter from the nearest shop. The bread was new and crusty, the butter fresh, and the sugar lump, of course—in fulfilment of the standard testimony of the Coketown magnates, that these people lived like princes, sir. Rachael made the tea (so large a party necessitated the borrowing of a cup), and the visitor enjoyed it mightily. It was the first glimpse of sociality the host had had for many days. He too, with the world a wide heath before him, enjoyed the meal—again in corroboration of the magnates, as exemplifying the utter want of calculation on the part of these people, sir.

'I ha never thowt yet, missus,' said Stephen, 'o' askin thy name.' The old lady announced herself as 'Mrs. Pegler.' 'A widder, I think?' said Stephen.

'Oh, many long years!' Mrs. Pegler's husband (one of the best on record) was already dead, by Mrs. Pegler's calculation, when Stephen was born.

''Twere a bad job, too, to lose so good a one,' said Stephen. 'Onny children?'

Mrs. Pegler's cup, rattling against her saucer as she held it, denoted some nervousness on her part. 'No,' she said. 'Not now, not now.'

'Dead, Stephen,' Rachael softly hinted.

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'I'm sooary I ha spok'n on 't,' said Stephen, 'I ought t' hadn in my mind as I might touch a sore place. I—I blame myseln.'

While he excused himself, the old lady's cup rattled more and more. 'I had a son,' she said, curiously distressed, and not by any of the usual appearances of sorrow; 'and he did well, wonderfully well. But he is not to be spoken of if you please. He is—' Putting down her cup, she moved her hands as if she would have added, by her action, 'dead!' Then she said aloud, 'I have lost him.'

Stephen had not yet got the better of his having given the old lady pain, when his landlady came stumbling up the narrow stairs, and calling him to the door, whispered in his ear. Mrs. Pegler was by no means deaf, for she caught a word as it was uttered.

'Bounderby!' she cried, in a suppressed voice, starting up from the table. 'Oh hide me! Don't let me be seen for the world. Don't let him come up till I've got away. Pray, pray!' She trembled, and was excessively agitated; getting behind Rachael, when Rachael tried to reassure her; and not seeming to know what she was about.

'But hearken, missus, hearken,' said Stephen, astonished. "Tisn't Mr. Bounderby; 'tis his wife. Yo'r not fearfo' o' her. Yo was hey-go-mad about her, but an hour sin.'

'But are you sure it's the lady, and not the gentleman?' she asked, still trembling.

'Certain sure!'

'Well then, pray don't speak to me, nor yet take any notice of me,' said the old woman. 'Let me be quite to myself in this corner.'

Stephen nodded; looking to Rachael for an explanation, which she was quite unable to give him; took the candle, went downstairs, and in a few moments returned, lighting Louisa into the room. She was followed by the whelp.

Rachael had risen, and stood apart with her shawl and bonnet in her hand, when Stephen, himself profoundly astonished by this visit, put the candle on the table. Then he too stood, with his doubled hand upon the table near it, waiting to be addressed.

For the first time in her life Louisa had come into one of the dwellings of the Coketown Hands; for the first time in her life she was face to face with anything like individuality in connection with them. She knew of their existence by hundreds and by thousands. She knew what results in work a given number of them would produce in a given space of time. She knew them in crowds passing to and from their nests, like ants or beetles. But she knew from her reading infinitely more of the ways of toiling insects than of these toiling men and women.

Something to be worked so much and paid so much, and there ended; something to be infallibly settled by laws of supply and demand; something that blundered against those laws, and floundered into difficulty; something that was a little pinched when wheat was dear, and over-ate itself when wheat was cheap; something that increased at such a rate of percentage, and yielded such another percentage of crime, and such another percentage of pauperism; something wholesale, of which vast fortunes were made; something that occasionally rose like a sea, and did some harm and waste (chiefly to itself), and fell again; this she knew

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the Coketown Hands to be. But, she had scarcely thought more of separating them into units, than of separating the sea itself into its component drops.

She stood for some moments looking round the room. From the few chairs, the few books, the common prints, and the bed, she glanced to the two women, and to Stephen.

'I have come to speak to you, in consequence of what passed just now. I should like to be serviceable to you, if you will let me. Is this your wife?'

Rachael raised her eyes, and they sufficiently answered no, and dropped again.

'I remember,' said Louisa, reddening at her mistake; 'I recollect, now, to have heard your domestic misfortunes spoken of, though I was not attending to the particulars at the time. It was not my meaning to ask a question that would give pain to any one here. If I should ask any other question that may happen to have that result, give me credit, if you please, for being in ignorance how to speak to you as I ought.'

As Stephen had but a little while ago instinctively addressed himself to her, so she now instinctively addressed herself to Rachael. Her manner was short and abrupt, yet faltering and timid.

'He has told you what has passed between himself and my husband? You would be his first resource, I think.'

'I have heard the end of it, young lady,' said Rachael.

'Did I understand, that, being rejected by one employer, he would probably be rejected by all? I thought he said as much?'

'The chances are very small, young lady—next to nothing—for a man who gets a bad name among them.'

'What shall I understand that you mean by a bad name?'

'The name of being troublesome.'

'Then, by the prejudices of his own class, and by the prejudices of the other, he is sacrificed alike? Are the two so deeply separated in this town, that there is no place whatever for an honest workman between them?'

Rachael shook her head in silence.

'He fell into suspicion,' said Louisa, 'with his fellow-weavers, because—he had made a promise not to be one of them. I think it must have been to you that he made that promise. Might I ask you why he made it?'

Rachael burst into tears. 'I didn't seek it of him, poor lad. I prayed him to avoid trouble for his own good, little thinking he'd come to it through me. But I know he'd die a hundred deaths, ere ever he'd break his word. I know that of him well.'

Stephen had remained quietly attentive, in his usual thoughtful attitude, with his hand at his chin. He now spoke in a voice rather less steady than usual.

'No one, excepting myseln, can ever know what honour, an' what love, an' respect, I bear to Rachael, or wi' what cause. When I passed that promess, I towd her true, she were th' Angel o' my life. 'Twere a solemn promess. 'Tis gone fro' me, for ever.'

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Louisa turned her head to him, and bent it with a deference that was new in her. She looked from him to Rachael, and her features softened. 'What will you do?' she asked him. And her voice had softened too.

'Weel, ma'am,' said Stephen, making the best of it, with a smile; 'when I ha finished off, I mun quit this part, and try another. Fortnet or misfortnet, a man can but try; there's nowt to be done wi'out tryin'—cept laying down and dying.'

'How will you travel?'

'Afoot, my kind ledy, afoot.'

Louisa coloured, and a purse appeared in her hand. The rustling of a bank-note was audible, as she unfolded one and laid it on the table.

'Rachael, will you tell him—for you know how, without offence—that this is freely his, to help him on his way? Will you entreat him to take it?'

'I canna do that, young lady,' she answered, turning her head aside. 'Bless you for thinking o' the poor lad wi' such tenderness. But 'tis for him to know his heart, and what is right according to it.'

Louisa looked, in part incredulous, in part frightened, in part overcome with quick sympathy, when this man of so much self- command, who had been so plain and steady through the late interview, lost his composure in a moment, and now stood with his hand before his face. She stretched out hers, as if she would have touched him; then checked herself, and remained still.

'Not e'en Rachael,' said Stephen, when he stood again with his face uncovered, 'could mak sitch a kind offerin, by onny words, kinder. T' show that I'm not a man wi'out reason and gratitude, I'll tak two pound. I'll borrow 't for t' pay 't back. 'Twill be the sweetest work as ever I ha done, that puts it in my power t' acknowledge once more my lastin thankfulness for this present action.'

She was fain to take up the note again, and to substitute the much smaller sum he had named. He was neither courtly, nor handsome, nor picturesque, in any respect; and yet his manner of accepting it, and of expressing his thanks without more words, had a grace in it that Lord Chesterfield could not have taught his son in a century.

Tom had sat upon the bed, swinging one leg and sucking his walking-stick with sufficient unconcern, until the visit had attained this stage. Seeing his sister ready to depart, he got up, rather hurriedly, and put in a word.

'Just wait a moment, Loo! Before we go, I should like to speak to him a moment. Something comes into my head. If you'll step out on the stairs, Blackpool, I'll mention it. Never mind a light, man!' Tom was remarkably impatient of his moving towards the cupboard, to get one. 'It don't want a light.'

Stephen followed him out, and Tom closed the room door, and held the lock in his hand.

'I say!' he whispered. 'I think I can do you a good turn. Don't ask me what it is, because it may not come to anything. But there's no harm in my trying.'

His breath fell like a flame of fire on Stephen's ear, it was so hot.

'That was our light porter at the Bank,' said Tom, 'who brought you the message to-night. I call him our light porter, because I belong to the Bank too.'

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Stephen thought, 'What a hurry he is in!' He spoke so confusedly. 'Well!' said Tom. 'Now look here! When are you off?'

'T' day's Monday,' replied Stephen, considering. 'Why, sir, Friday or Saturday, nigh 'bout.'

'Friday or Saturday,' said Tom. 'Now look here! I am not sure that I can do you the good turn I want to do you—that's my sister, you know, in your room—but I may be able to, and if I should not be able to, there's no harm done. So I tell you what. You'll know our light porter again?'

'Yes, sure,' said Stephen.

'Very well,' returned Tom. 'When you leave work of a night, between this and your going away, just hang about the Bank an hour or so, will you? Don't take on, as if you meant anything, if he should see you hanging about there; because I shan't put him up to speak to you, unless I find I can do you the service I want to do you. In that case he'll have a note or a message for you, but not else. Now look here! You are sure you understand.'

He had wormed a finger, in the darkness, through a button-hole of Stephen's coat, and was screwing that corner of the garment tight up round and round, in an extraordinary manner.'I understand, sir,' said Stephen.

'Now look here!' repeated Tom. 'Be sure you don't make any mistake then, and don't forget. I shall tell my sister as we go home, what I have in view, and she'll approve, I know. Now look here! You're all right, are you? You understand all about it? Very well then. Come along, Loo!'

He pushed the door open as he called to her, but did not return into the room, or wait to be lighted down the narrow stairs. He was at the bottom when she began to descend, and was in the street before she could take his arm.

Mrs. Pegler remained in her corner until the brother and sister were gone, and until Stephen came back with the candle in his hand. She was in a state of inexpressible admiration of Mrs. Bounderby, and, like an unaccountable old woman, wept, 'because she was such a pretty dear.' Yet Mrs. Pegler was so flurried lest the object of her admiration should return by chance, or anybody else should come, that her cheerfulness was ended for that night. It was late too, to people who rose early and worked hard; therefore the party broke up; and Stephen and Rachael escorted their mysterious acquaintance to the door of the Travellers' Coffee House, where they parted from her.

They walked back together to the corner of the street where Rachael lived, and as they drew nearer and nearer to it, silence crept upon them. When they came to the dark corner where their unfrequent meetings always ended, they stopped, still silent, as if both were afraid to speak.

'I shall strive t' see thee agen, Rachael, afore I go, but if not—'

'Thou wilt not, Stephen, I know. 'Tis better that we make up our minds to be open wi' one another.'

'Thou'rt awlus right. 'Tis bolder and better. I ha been thinkin then, Rachael, that as 'tis but a day or two that remains, 'twere better for thee, my dear, not t' be seen wi' me. 'T might bring thee into trouble, fur no good.'

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''Tis not for that, Stephen, that I mind. But thou know'st our old agreement.

'Tis for that.'

'Well, well,' said he. "Tis better, onnyways.'

'Thou'lt write to me, and tell me all that happens, Stephen?'

'Yes. What can I say now, but Heaven be wi' thee, Heaven bless thee, Heaven thank thee and reward thee!'

'May it bless thee, Stephen, too, in all thy wanderings, and send thee peace and rest at last!'

'I towd thee, my dear,' said Stephen Blackpool—'that night—that I would never see or think o' onnything that angered me, but thou, so much better than me, should'st be beside it. Thou'rt beside it now. Thou mak'st me see it wi' a better eye. Bless thee. Good night. Good-bye!'

It was but a hurried parting in a common street, yet it was a sacred remembrance to these two common people. Utilitarian economists, skeletons of schoolmasters, Commissioners of Fact, genteel and used-up infidels, gabblers of many little dog's-eared creeds, the poor you will have always with you. Cultivate in them, while there is yet time, the utmost graces of the fancies and affections, to adorn their lives so much in need of ornament; or, in the day of your triumph, when romance is utterly driven out of their souls, and they and a bare existence stand face to face, Reality will take a wolfish turn, and make an end of you.

Stephen worked the next day, and the next, uncheered by a word from any one, and shunned in all his comings and goings as before. At the end of the second day, he saw land; at the end of the third, his loom stood empty.

He had overstayed his hour in the street outside the Bank, on each of the two first evenings; and nothing had happened there, good or bad. That he might not be remiss in his part of the engagement, he resolved to wait full two hours, on this third and last night.

There was the lady who had once kept Mr. Bounderby's house, sitting at the first-floor window as he had seen her before; and there was the light porter, sometimes talking with her there, and sometimes looking over the blind below which had Bank upon it, and sometimes coming to the door and standing on the steps for a breath of air. When he first came out, Stephen thought he might be looking for him, and passed near; but the light porter only cast his winking eyes upon him slightly, and said nothing.

Two hours were a long stretch of lounging about, after a long day's labour. Stephen sat upon the step of a door, leaned against a wall under an archway, strolled up and down, listened for the church clock, stopped and watched children playing in the street. Some purpose or other is so natural to every one, that a mere loiterer always looks and feels remarkable. When the first hour was out, Stephen even began to have an uncomfortable sensation upon him of being for the time a disreputable character.

Then came the lamplighter, and two lengthening lines of light all down the long perspective of the street, until they were blended and lost in the distance. Mrs.

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Sparsit closed the first-floor window, drew down the blind, and went up-stairs. Presently, a light went up-stairs after her, passing first the fanlight of the door, and afterwards the two staircase windows, on its way up. By and by, one corner of the second-floor blind was disturbed, as if Mrs. Sparsit's eye were there; also the other corner, as if the light porter's eye were on that side. Still, no communication was made to Stephen. Much relieved when the two hours were at last accomplished, he went away at a quick pace, as a recompense for so much loitering.

He had only to take leave of his landlady, and lie down on his temporary bed upon the floor; for his bundle was made up for to-morrow, and all was arranged for his departure. He meant to be clear of the town very early; before the Hands were in the streets.

It was barely daybreak, when, with a parting look round his room, mournfully wondering whether he should ever see it again, he went out. The town was as entirely deserted as if the inhabitants had abandoned it, rather than hold communication with him. Everything looked wan at that hour. Even the coming sun made but a pale waste in the sky, like a sad sea.

By the place where Rachael lived, though it was not in his way; by the red brick streets; by the great silent factories, not trembling yet; by the railway, where the danger-lights were waning in the strengthening day; by the railway's crazy neighbourhood, half pulled down and half built up; by scattered red brick villas, where the besmoked evergreens were sprinkled with a dirty powder, like untidy snuff-takers; by coal-dust paths and many varieties of ugliness; Stephen got to the top of the hill, and looked back.

Day was shining radiantly upon the town then, and the bells were going for the morning work. Domestic fires were not yet lighted, and the high chimneys had the sky to themselves. Puffing out their poisonous volumes, they would not be long in hiding it; but, for half an hour, some of the many windows were golden, which showed the Coketown people a sun eternally in eclipse, through a medium of smoked glass.

So strange to turn from the chimneys to the birds. So strange, to have the road-dust on his feet instead of the coal-grit. So strange to have lived to his time of life, and yet to be beginning like a boy this summer morning! With these musings in his mind, and his bundle under his arm, Stephen took his attentive face along the high road. And the trees arched over him, whispering that he left a true and loving heart behind.

Harthouse plays upon Louisa's affections by offering to mentor Tom, who is now gambling and losing money. Bounderby's bank has been robbed; around 150 pounds has been stolen from Tom's safe. Bounderby accuses Blackpool of the crime. Louisa is concerned about the fact that she and Tom saw Blackpool before he left town Tom dismisses her concerns .

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Chapter IX: Hearing the Last of It

MRS. SPARSIT, lying by to recover the tone of her nerves in Mr. Bounderby's retreat, kept such a sharp look-out, night and day, under her Coriolanian eyebrows, that her eyes, like a couple of lighthouses on an iron-bound coast, might have warned all prudent mariners from that bold rock her Roman nose and the dark and craggy region in its neighbourhood, but for the placidity of her manner. Although it was hard to believe that her retiring for the night could be anything but a form, so severely wide awake were those classical eyes of hers, and so impossible did it seem that her rigid nose could yield to any relaxing influence, yet her manner of sitting, smoothing her uncomfortable, not to say, gritty mittens (they were constructed of a cool fabric like a meat-safe), or of ambling to unknown places of destination with her foot in her cotton stirrup, was so perfectly serene, that most observers would have been constrained to suppose her a dove, embodied by some freak of nature, in the earthly tabernacle of a bird of the hook-beaked order.

She was a most wonderful woman for prowling about the house. How she got from story to story was a mystery beyond solution. A lady so decorous in herself, and so highly connected, was not to be suspected of dropping over the banisters or sliding down them, yet her extraordinary facility of locomotion suggested the wild idea. Another noticeable circumstance in Mrs. Sparsit was, that she was never hurried. She would shoot with consummate velocity from the roof to the hall, yet would be in full possession of her breath and dignity on the moment of her arrival there. Neither was she ever seen by human vision to go at a great pace.

She took very kindly to Mr. Harthouse, and had some pleasant conversation with him soon after her arrival. She made him her stately curtsey in the garden, one morning before breakfast.

'It appears but yesterday, sir,' said Mrs. Sparsit, 'that I had the honour of receiving you at the Bank, when you were so good as to wish to be made acquainted with Mr. Bounderby's address.'

'An occasion, I am sure, not to be forgotten by myself in the course of Ages,' said Mr. Harthouse, inclining his head to Mrs. Sparsit with the most indolent of all possible airs.

'We live in a singular world, sir,' said Mrs. Sparsit.

'I have had the honour, by a coincidence of which I am proud, to have made a remark, similar in effect, though not so epigrammatically expressed.'

'A singular world, I would say, sir,' pursued Mrs. Sparsit; after acknowledging the compliment with a drooping of her dark eyebrows, not altogether so mild in its expression as her voice was in its dulcet tones; 'as regards the intimacies we form at one time, with individuals we were quite ignorant of, at another. I recall, sir, that on that occasion you went so far as to say you were actually apprehensive of Miss Gradgrind.'

'Your memory does me more honour than my insignificance deserves. I availed myself of your obliging hints to correct my timidity, and it is unnecessary to add that they were perfectly accurate. Mrs. Sparsit's talent for—in fact for anything

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requiring accuracy—with a combination of strength of mind—and Family—is too habitually developed to admit of any question.' He was almost falling asleep over this compliment; it took him so long to get through, and his mind wandered so much in the course of its execution.

'You found Miss Gradgrind—I really cannot call her Mrs. Bounderby; it's very absurd of me—as youthful as I described her?' asked Mrs. Sparsit, sweetly.

'You drew her portrait perfectly,' said Mr. Harthouse. 'Presented her dead image.'

'Very engaging, sir,' said Mrs. Sparsit, causing her mittens slowly to revolve over one another.

'Highly so.'

'It used to be considered,' said Mrs. Sparsit, 'that Miss Gradgrind was wanting in animation, but I confess she appears to me considerably and strikingly improved in that respect. Ay, and indeed here is Mr. Bounderby!' cried Mrs. Sparsit, nodding her head a great many times, as if she had been talking and thinking of no one else. 'How do you find yourself this morning, sir? Pray let us see you cheerful, sir.'

Now, these persistent assuagements of his misery, and lightenings of his load, had by this time begun to have the effect of making Mr. Bounderby softer than usual towards Mrs. Sparsit, and harder than usual to most other people from his wife downward. So, when Mrs. Sparsit said with forced lightness of heart, 'You want your breakfast, sir, but I dare say Miss Gradgrind will soon be here to preside at the table,' Mr. Bounderby replied, 'If I waited to be taken care of by my wife, ma'am, I believe you know pretty well I should wait till Doomsday, so I'll trouble you to take charge of the teapot.' Mrs. Sparsit complied, and assumed her old position at table.

This again made the excellent woman vastly sentimental. She was so humble withal, that when Louisa appeared, she rose, protesting she never could think of sitting in that place under existing circumstances, often as she had had the honour of making Mr. Bounderb/s breakfast, before Mrs. Gradgrind—she begged pardon, she meant to say Miss Bounderby—she hoped to be excused, but she really could not get it right yet, though she trusted to become familiar with it by and by—had assumed her present position. It was only (she observed) because Miss Gradgrind happened to be a little late, and Mr. Bounderby's time was so very precious, and she knew it of old to be so essential that he should breakfast to the moment, that she had taken the liberty of complying with his request; long as his will had been a law to her.

'There! Stop where you are, ma'am,' said Mr. Bounderby, 'stop where you are! Mrs. Bounderby will be very glad to be relieved of the trouble, I believe.'

'Don't say that, sir,' returned Mrs. Sparsit, almost with severity, 'because that is very unkind to Mrs. Bounderby. And to be unkind is not to be you, sir.'

'You may set your mind at rest, ma'am.—You can take it very quietly, can't you, Loo?' said Mr. Bounderby, in a blustering way to his wife.

'Of course. It is of no moment. Why should it be of any importance to me?'

'Why should it be of any importance to any one, Mrs. Sparsit, ma'am?' said Mr. Bounderby, swelling with a sense of slight. 'You attach too much importance to

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these things, ma'am. By George, you'll be corrupted in some of your notions here. You are old- fashioned, ma'am. You are behind Tom Gradgrind's children's time.'

'What is the matter with you?' asked Louisa, coldly surprised. 'What has given you offence?'

'Offence!' repeated Bounderby. 'Do you suppose if there was any offence given me, I shouldn't name it, and request to have it corrected? I am a straightforward man, I believe. I don't go beating about for side-winds.'

'I suppose no one ever had occasion to think you too diffident, or too delicate,' Louisa answered him composedly: 'I have never made that objection to you, either as a child or as a woman. I don't understand what you would have.'

'Have?' returned Mr. Bounderby. 'Nothing. Otherwise, don't you, Loo Bounderby, know thoroughly well that I, Josiah Bounderby of Coketown, would have it?'

She looked at him, as he struck the table and made the teacups ring, with a proud colour in her face that was a new change, Mr. Harthouse thought. 'You are incomprehensible this morning,' said Louisa. 'Pray take no further trouble to explain yourself. I am not curious to know your meaning. What does it matter?'

Nothing more was said on this theme, and Mr. Harthouse was soon idly gay on indifferent subjects. But from this day, the Sparsit action upon Mr. Bounderby threw Louisa and James Harthouse more together, and strengthened the dangerous alienation from her husband and confidence against him with another, into which she had fallen by degrees so fine that she could not retrace them if she tried. But whether she ever tried or no, lay hidden in her own closed heart.

Mrs. Sparsit was so much affected on this particular occasion, that, assisting Mr. Bounderby to his hat after breakfast, and being then alone with him in the hall, she imprinted a chaste kiss upon his hand, murmured 'My benefactor!' and retired, overwhelmed with grief. Yet it is an indubitable fact, within the cognizance of this history, that five minutes after he had left the house in the self-same hat, the same descendant of the Scadgerses and connexion by matrimony of the Powlers, shook her right-hand mitten at his portrait, made a contemptuous grimace at that work of art, and said 'Serve you right, you Noodle, and I am glad of it.'

Mr. Bounderby had not been long gone, when Bitzer appeared. Bitzer had come down by train, shrieking and rattling over the long line of arches that bestrode the wild country of past and present coal-pits, with an express from Stone Lodge. It was a hasty note to inform Louisa that Mrs. Gradgrind lay very ill. She had never been well within her daughter's knowledge; but, she had declined within the last few days, had continued sinking all through the night, and was now as nearly dead, as her limited capacity of being in any state that implied the ghost of an intention to get out of it, allowed.

Accompanied by the lightest of porters, fit colourless servitor at Death's door when Mrs. Gradgrind knocked, Louisa rumbled to Coketown, over the coal-pits past and present, and was whirled into its smoky jaws. She dismissed the messenger to his own devices, and rode away to her old home.

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She had seldom been there since her marriage. Her father was usually sifting and sifting at his parliamentary cinder-heap in London (without being observed to turn up many precious articles among the rubbish), and was still hard at it in the national dust-yard. Her mother had taken it rather as a disturbance than otherwise, to be visited, as she reclined upon her sofa; young people, Louisa felt herself all unfit for; Sissy she had never softened to again, since the night when the stroller's child had raised her eyes to look at Mr. Bounderby's intended wife. She had no inducements to go back, and had rarely gone.

Neither, as she approached her old home now, did any of the best influences of old home descend upon her. The dreams of childhood—its airy fables; its graceful, beautiful, humane, impossible adornments of the world beyond: so good to be believed in once, so good to be remembered when outgrown, for then the least among them rises to the stature of a great Charity in the heart, suffering little children to come into the midst of it, and to keep with their pure hands a garden in the stony ways of this world, wherein it were better for all the children of Adam that they should oftener sun themselves, simple and trustful, and not worldly-wise—what had she to do with these? Remembrances of how she had journeyed to the little that she knew, by the enchanted roads of what she and millions of innocent creatures had hoped and imagined; of how, first coming upon Reason through the tender light of Fancy, she had seen it a beneficent god, deferring to gods as great as itself; not a grim Idol, cruel and cold, with its victims bound hand to foot, and its big dumb shape set up with a sightless stare, never to be moved by anything but so many calculated tons of leverage—what had she to do with these? Her remembrances of home and childhood were remembrances of the drying up of every spring and fountain in her young heart as it gushed out. The golden waters were not there. They were flowing for the fertilization of the land where grapes are gathered from thorns, and figs from thistles.

She went, with a heavy, hardened kind of sorrow upon her, into the house and into her mother's room. Since the time of her leaving home, Sissy had lived with the rest of the family on equal terms. Sissy was at her mother's side; and Jane, her sister, now ten or twelve years old, was in the room.

There was great trouble before it could be made known to Mrs. Gradgrind that her eldest child was there. She reclined, propped up, from mere habit, on a couch: as nearly in her old usual attitude, as anything so helpless could be kept in. She had positively refused to take to her bed; on the ground that if she did, she would never hear the last of it.

Her feeble voice sounded so far away in her bundle of shawls, and the sound of another voice addressing her seemed to take such a long time in getting down to her ears, that she might have been lying at the bottom of a well. The poor lady was nearer Truth than she ever had been: which had much to do with it.

On being told that Mrs. Bounderby was there, she replied, at cross- purposes, that she had never called him by that name since he married Louisa; that pending her choice of an objectionable name, she had called him J; and that she could not

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at present depart from that regulation, not being yet provided with a permanent substitute. Louisa had sat by her for some minutes, and had spoken to her often, before she arrived at a clear understanding who it was. She then seemed to come to it all at once.

'Well, my dear,' said Mrs. Gradgrind, 'and I hope you are going on satisfactorily to yourself. It was all your father's doing. He set his heart upon it. And he ought to know.'

'I want to hear of you, mother; not of myself.'

'You want to hear of me, my dear? That's something new, I am sure, when anybody wants to hear of me. Not at all well, Louisa. Very faint and giddy.' 'Are you in pain, dear mother?'

'I think there's a pain somewhere in the room,' said Mrs. Gradgrind, 'but I couldn't positively say that I have got it.'

After this strange speech, she lay silent for some time. Louisa, holding her hand, could feel no pulse; but kissing it, could see a slight thin thread of life in fluttering motion.

'You very seldom see your sister,' said Mrs. Gradgrind. 'She grows like you. I wish you would look at her. Sissy, bring her here.'

She was brought, and stood with her hand in her sister's. Louisa had observed her with her arm round Sissy's neck, and she felt the difference of this approach.

'Do you see the likeness, Louisa?'

'Yes, mother. I should think her like me. But—'

'Eh! Yes, I always say so,' Mrs. Gradgrind cried, with unexpected quickness. 'And that reminds me. I—I want to speak to you, my dear. Sissy, my good girl, leave us alone a minute.' Louisa had relinquished the hand: had thought that her sister's was a better and brighter face than hers had ever been: had seen in it, not without a rising feeling of resentment, even in that place and at that time, something of the gentleness of the other face in the room; the sweet face with the trusting eyes, made paler than watching and sympathy made it, by the rich dark hair.

Left alone with her mother, Louisa saw her lying with an awful lull upon her face, like one who was floating away upon some great water, all resistance over, content to be carried down the stream. She put the shadow of a hand to her lips again, and recalled her.

'You were going to speak to me, mother.'

'Eh? Yes, to be sure, my dear. You know your father is almost always away now, and therefore I must write to him about it.'

'About what, mother? Don't be troubled. About what?'

'You must remember, my dear, that whenever I have said anything, on any subject, I have never heard the last of it: and consequently, that I have long left off saying anything.'

'I can hear you, mother.' But, it was only by dint of bending down to her ear, and at the same time attentively watching the lips as they moved, that she could link such faint and broken sounds into any chain of connexion.

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'You learnt a great deal, Louisa, and so did your brother. Ologies of all kinds from morning to night. If there is any Ology left, of any description, that has not been worn to rags in this house, all I can say is, I hope I shall never hear its name.'

'I can hear you, mother, when you have strength to go on.' This, to keep her from floating away.

'But there is something—not an Ology at all—that your father has missed, or forgotten, Louisa. I don't know what it is. I have often sat with Sissy near me, and thought about it. I shall never get its name now. But your father may. It makes me restless. I want to write to him, to find out for God's sake, what it is. Give me a pen, give me a pen.'

Even the power of restlessness was gone, except from the poor head, which could just turn from side to side.

She fancied, however, that her request had been complied with, and that the pen she could not have held was in her hand. It matters little what figures of wonderful no-meaning she began to trace upon her wrappers. The hand soon stopped in the midst of them; the light that had always been feeble and dim behind the weak transparency, went out; and even Mrs. Gradgrind, emerged from the shadow in which man walketh and disquieteth himself in vain, took upon her the dread solemnity of the sages and patriarchs.

Mrs. Sparsit relishes the possibility of Louisa's falling in love with Harthouse. Spying on the two, she overhears Harthouse begging Louisa to leave with him.

Chapter XII: Down

THE national dustmen, after entertaining one another with a great many noisy little fights among themselves, had dispersed for the present, and Mr. Gradgrind was at home for the vacation.

He sat writing in the room with the deadly statistical clock, proving something no doubt—probably, in the main, that the Good Samaritan was a Bad Economist. The noise of the rain did not disturb him much; but it attracted his attention sufficiently to make him raise his head sometimes, as if he were rather remonstrating with the elements. When it thundered very loudly, he glanced towards Coketown, having it in his mind that some of the tall chimneys might be struck by lightning.

The thunder was rolling into distance, and the rain was pouring down like a deluge, when the door of his room opened. He looked round the lamp upon his table, and saw, with amazement, his eldest daughter.

'Louisa!'

'Father, I want to speak to you.'

'What is the matter? How strange you look! And good Heaven,' said Mr. Gradgrind, wondering more and more, 'have you come here exposed to this storm?'

She put her hands to her dress, as if she hardly knew. 'Yes.' Then she uncovered her head, and letting her cloak and hood fall where they might, stood looking at him: so colourless, so dishevelled, so defiant and despairing, that he was afraid of her.

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'What is it? I conjure you, Louisa, tell me what is the matter.'

She dropped into a chair before him, and put her cold hand on his arm.

'Father, you have trained me from my cradle?'

'Yes, Louisa.'

'I curse the hour in which I was born to such a destiny.' He looked at her in doubt and dread, vacantly repeating: 'Curse the hour? Curse the hour?'

'How could you give me life, and take from me all the inappreciable things that raise it from the state of conscious death? Where are the graces of my soul? Where are the sentiments of my heart? What have you done, O father, what have you done, with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here!'

She struck herself with both her hands upon her bosom.

'If it had ever been here, its ashes alone would save me from the void in which my whole life sinks. I did not mean to say this; but, father, you remember the last time we conversed in this room?'

He had been so wholly unprepared for what he heard now, that it was with difficulty he answered, 'Yes, Louisa.'

'What has risen to my lips now, would have risen to my lips then, if you had given me a moment's help. I don't reproach you, father. What you have never nurtured in me, you have never nurtured in yourself; but O! if you had only done so long ago, or if you had only neglected me, what a much better and much happier creature I should have been this day!'

On hearing this, after all his care, he bowed his head upon his hand and groaned aloud.

'Father, if you had known, when we were last together here, what even I feared while I strove against it—as it has been my task from infancy to strive against every natural prompting that has arisen in my heart; if you had known that there lingered in my breast, sensibilities, affections, weaknesses capable of being cherished into strength, defying all the calculations ever made by man, and no more known to his arithmetic than his Creator is,—would you have given me to the husband whom I am now sure that I hate?'

He said, 'No. No, my poor child.'

'Would you have doomed me, at any time, to the frost and blight that have hardened and spoiled me? Would you have robbed me—for no one's enrichment— only for the greater desolation of this world—of the immaterial part of my life, the spring and summer of my belief, my refuge from what is sordid and bad in the real things around me, my school in which I should have learned to be more humble and more trusting with them, and to hope in my little sphere to make them better?'

'O no, no. No, Louisa.'

'Yet, father, if I had been stone blind; if I had groped my way by my sense of touch, and had been free, while I knew the shapes and surfaces of things, to exercise my fancy somewhat, in regard to them; I should have been a million times

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wiser, happier, more loving, more contented, more innocent and human in all good respects, than I am with the eyes I have. Now, hear what I have come to say.'

He moved, to support her with his arm. She rising as he did so, they stood close together: she, with a hand upon his shoulder, looking fixedly in his face.

'With a hunger and thirst upon me, father, which have never been for a moment appeased; with an ardent impulse towards some region where rules, and figures, and definitions were not quite absolute; I have grown up, battling every inch of my way.'

'I never knew you were unhappy, my child.'

'Father, I always knew it. In this strife I have almost repulsed and crushed my better angel into a demon. What I have learned has left me doubting, misbelieving, despising, regretting, what I have not learned; and my dismal resource has been to think that life would soon go by, and that nothing in it could be worth the pain and trouble of a contest.'

'And you so young, Louisa!' he said with pity.

'And I so young. In this condition, father—for I show you now, without fear or favour, the ordinary deadened state of my mind as I know it—you proposed my husband to me. I took him. I never made a pretence to him or you that I loved him. I knew, and, father, you knew, and he knew, that I never did. I was not wholly indifferent, for I had a hope of being pleasant and useful to Tom. I made that wild escape into something visionary, and have slowly found out how wild it was. But Tom had been the subject of all the little tenderness of my life; perhaps he became so because I knew so well how to pity him. It matters little now, except as it may dispose you to think more leniently of his errors.'

As her father held her in his arms, she put her other hand upon his other shoulder, and still looking fixedly in his face, went on.

'When I was irrevocably married, there rose up into rebellion against the tie, the old strife, made fiercer by all those causes of disparity which arise out of our two individual natures, and which no general laws shall ever rule or state for me, father, until they shall be able to direct the anatomist where to strike his knife into the secrets of my soul.'

'Louisa!' he said, and said imploringly; for he well remembered what had passed between them in their former interview.

'I do not reproach you, father, I make no complaint. I am here with another object.'

'What can I do, child? Ask me what you will.'

'I am coming to it. Father, chance then threw into my way a new acquaintance; a man such as I had had no experience of; used to the world; light, polished, easy; making no pretences; avowing the low estimate of everything, that I was half afraid to form in secret; conveying to me almost immediately, though I don't know how or by what degrees, that he understood me, and read my thoughts. I could not find that he was worse than I. There seemed to be a near affinity between us. I only wondered it should be worth his while, who cared for nothing else, to care so much for me.'

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'For you, Louisa!'

Her father might instinctively have loosened his hold, but that he felt her strength departing from her, and saw a wild dilating fire in the eyes steadfastly regarding him.

'I say nothing of his plea for claiming my confidence. It matters very little how he gained it. Father, he did gain it. What you know of the story of my marriage, he soon knew, just as well.'

Her father's face was ashy white, and he held her in both his arms.

'I have done no worse, I have not disgraced you. But if you ask me whether I have loved him, or do love him, I tell you plainly, father, that it may be so. I don't know.'

She took her hands suddenly from his shoulders, and pressed them both upon her side; while in her face, not like itself—and in her figure, drawn up, resolute to finish by a last effort what she had to say—the feelings long suppressed broke loose.

'This night, my husband being away, he has been with me, declaring himself my lover. This minute he expects me, for I could release myself of his presence by no other means. I do not know that I am sorry, I do not know that I am ashamed, I do not know that I am degraded in my own esteem. All that I know is, your philosophy and your teaching will not save me. Now, father, you have brought me to this. Save me by some other means!'

He tightened his hold in time to prevent her sinking on the floor, but she cried out in a terrible voice, 'I shall die if you hold me! Let me fall upon the ground!' And he laid her down there, and saw the pride of his heart and the triumph of his system, lying, an insensible heap, at his feet.

2.10.1.3 from "Book the Third: Garnering"

Chapter I: Another Thing Needful

LOUISA awoke from a torpor, and her eyes languidly opened on her old bed at home, and her old room. It seemed, at first, as if all that had happened since the days when these objects were familiar to her were the shadows of a dream, but gradually, as the objects became more real to her sight, the events became more real to her mind.

She could scarcely move her head for pain and heaviness, her eyes were strained and sore, and she was very weak. A curious passive inattention had such possession of her, that the presence of her little sister in the room did not attract her notice for some time. Even when their eyes had met, and her sister had approached the bed, Louisa lay for minutes looking at her in silence, and suffering her timidly to hold her passive hand, before she asked:

'When was I brought to this room?'

'Last night, Louisa.'

'Who brought me here?'

'Sissy, I believe.'

'Why do you believe so?'

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'Because I found her here this morning. She didn't come to my bedside to wake me, as she always does; and I went to look for her. She was not in her own room either; and I went looking for her all over the house, until I found her here taking care of you and cooling your head. Will you see father? Sissy said I was to tell him when you woke.'

'What a beaming face you have, Jane!' said Louisa, as her young sister—timidly still—bent down to kiss her.

'Have I? I am very glad you think so. I am sure it must be Sissy's doing.'

The arm Louisa had begun to twine around her neck, unbent itself. 'You can tell father if you will.' Then, staying her for a moment, she said, 'It was you who made my room so cheerful, and gave it this look of welcome?'

'Oh no, Louisa, it was done before I came. It was—'

Louisa turned upon her pillow, and heard no more. When her sister had withdrawn, she turned her head back again, and lay with her face towards the door, until it opened and her father entered.

He had a jaded anxious look upon him, and his hand, usually steady, trembled in hers. He sat down at the side of the bed, tenderly asking how she was, and dwelling on the necessity of her keeping very quiet after her agitation and exposure to the weather last night. He spoke in a subdued and troubled voice, very different from his usual dictatorial manner; and was often at a loss for words.

'My dear Louisa. My poor daughter.' He was so much at a loss at that place, that he stopped altogether. He tried again.

'My unfortunate child.' The place was so difficult to get over, that he tried again.

'It would be hopeless for me, Louisa, to endeavour to tell you how overwhelmed I have been, and still am, by what broke upon me last night. The ground on which I stand has ceased to be solid under my feet. The only support on which I leaned, and the strength of which it seemed, and still does seem, impossible to question, has given way in an instant. I am stunned by these discoveries. I have no selfish meaning in what I say; but I find the shock of what broke upon me last night, to be very heavy indeed.'

She could give him no comfort herein. She had suffered the wreck of her whole life upon the rock.

'I will not say, Louisa, that if you had by any happy chance undeceived me some time ago, it would have been better for us both; better for your peace, and better for mine. For I am sensible that it may not have been a part of my system to invite any confidence of that kind. I had proved my—my system to myself, and I have rigidly administered it; and I must bear the responsibility of its failures. I only entreat you to believe, my favourite child, that I have meant to do right.'

He said it earnestly, and to do him justice he had. In gauging fathomless deeps with his little mean excise-rod, and in staggering over the universe with his rusty stiff-legged compasses, he had meant to do great things. Within the limits of his short tether he had tumbled about, annihilating the flowers of existence with greater singleness of purpose than many of the blatant personages whose company he kept.

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'I am well assured of what you say, father. I know I have been your favourite child. I know you have intended to make me happy. I have never blamed you, and I never shall.'

He took her outstretched hand, and retained it in his.

'My dear, I have remained all night at my table, pondering again and again on what has so painfully passed between us. When I consider your character; when I consider that what has been known to me for hours, has been concealed by you for years; when I consider under what immediate pressure it has been forced from you at last; I come to the conclusion that I cannot but mistrust myself.'

He might have added more than all, when he saw the face now looking at him. He did add it in effect, perhaps, as he softly moved her scattered hair from her forehead with his hand. Such little actions, slight in another man, were very noticeable in him; and his daughter received them as if they had been words of contrition.

'But,' said Mr. Gradgrind, slowly, and with hesitation, as well as with a wretched sense of happiness, 'if I see reason to mistrust myself for the past, Louisa, I should also mistrust myself for the present and the future. To speak unreservedly to you, I do. I am far from feeling convinced now, however differently I might have felt only this time yesterday, that I am fit for the trust you repose in me; that I know how to respond to the appeal you have come home to make to me; that I have the right instinct—supposing it for the moment to be some quality of that nature—how to help you, and to set you right, my child.'

She had turned upon her pillow, and lay with her face upon her arm, so that he could not see it. All her wildness and passion had subsided; but, though softened, she was not in tears. Her father was changed in nothing so much as in the respect that he would have been glad to see her in tears.

'Some persons hold,' he pursued, still hesitating, 'that there is a wisdom of the Head, and that there is a wisdom of the Heart. I have not supposed so; but, as I have said, I mistrust myself now. I have supposed the head to be all-sufficient. It may not be all- sufficient; how can I venture this morning to say it is! If that other kind of wisdom should be what I have neglected, and should be the instinct that is wanted, Louisa—'

He suggested it very doubtfully, as if he were half unwilling to admit it even now. She made him no answer, lying before him on her bed, still half-dressed, much as he had seen her lying on the floor of his room last night.

'Louisa,' and his hand rested on her hair again, 'I have been absent from here, my dear, a good deal of late; and though your sister's training has been pursued according to—the system,' he appeared to come to that word with great reluctance always, 'it has necessarily been modified by daily associations begun, in her case, at an early age. I ask you—ignorantly and humbly, my daughter—for the better, do you think?'

'Father,' she replied, without stirring, 'if any harmony has been awakened in her young breast that was mute in mine until it turned to discord, let her thank Heaven for it, and go upon her happier way, taking it as her greatest blessing that she has avoided my way.'

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'O my child, my child!' he said, in a forlorn manner, 'I am an unhappy man to see you thus! What avails it to me that you do not reproach me, if I so bitterly reproach myself!' He bent his head, and spoke low to her. 'Louisa, I have a misgiving that some change may have been slowly working about me in this house, by mere love and gratitude: that what the Head had left undone and could not do, the Heart may have been doing silently. Can it be so?'

She made him no reply.

'I am not too proud to believe it, Louisa. How could I be arrogant, and you before me! Can it be so? Is it so, my dear?' He looked upon her once more, lying cast away there; and without another word went out of the room. He had not been long gone, when she heard a light tread near the door, and knew that some one stood beside her.

She did not raise her head. A dull anger that she should be seen in her distress, and that the involuntary look she had so resented should come to this fulfilment, smouldered within her like an unwholesome fire. All closely imprisoned forces rend and destroy. The air that would be healthful to the earth, the water that would enrich it, the heat that would ripen it, tear it when caged up. So in her bosom even now; the strongest qualities she possessed, long turned upon themselves, became a heap of obduracy, that rose against a friend.

It was well that soft touch came upon her neck, and that she understood herself to be supposed to have fallen asleep. The sympathetic hand did not claim her resentment. Let it lie there, let it lie.

It lay there, warming into life a crowd of gentler thoughts; and she rested. As she softened with the quiet, and the consciousness of being so watched, some tears made their way into her eyes. The face touched hers, and she knew that there were tears upon it too, and she the cause of them.

As Louisa feigned to rouse herself, and sat up, Sissy retired, so that she stood placidly near the bedside.

'I hope I have not disturbed you. I have come to ask if you would let me stay with you?'

'Why should you stay with me? My sister will miss you. You are everything to her.'

'Am I?' returned Sissy, shaking her head. 'I would be something to you, if I might.'

'What?' said Louisa, almost sternly.

'Whatever you want most, if I could be that. At all events, I would like to try to be as near it as I can. And however far off that may be, I will never tire of trying. Will you let me?'

'My father sent you to ask me.'

'No indeed,' replied Sissy. 'He told me that I might come in now, but he sent me away from the room this morning—or at least—' She hesitated and stopped.

'At least, what?' said Louisa, with her searching eyes upon her.

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'I thought it best myself that I should be sent away, for I felt very uncertain whether you would like to find me here.' 'Have I always hated you so much?'

'I hope not, for I have always loved you, and have always wished that you should know it. But you changed to me a little, shortly before you left home. Not that I wondered at it. You knew so much, and I knew so little, and it was so natural in many ways, going as you were among other friends, that I had nothing to complain of, and was not at all hurt.'

Her colour rose as she said it modestly and hurriedly. Louisa understood the loving pretence, and her heart smote her.

'May I try?' said Sissy, emboldened to raise her hand to the neck that was insensibly drooping towards her.

Louisa, taking down the hand that would have embraced her in another moment, held it in one of hers, and answered:

'First, Sissy, do you know what I am? I am so proud and so hardened, so confused and troubled, so resentful and unjust to every one and to myself, that everything is stormy, dark, and wicked to me. Does not that repel you?'

'No!'

'I am so unhappy, and all that should have made me otherwise is so laid waste, that if I had been bereft of sense to this hour, and instead of being as learned as you think me, had to begin to acquire the simplest truths, I could not want a guide to peace, contentment, honour, all the good of which I am quite devoid, more abjectly than I do. Does not that repel you?'

'No!'

In the innocence of her brave affection, and the brimming up of her old devoted spirit, the once deserted girl shone like a beautiful light upon the darkness of the other.

Louisa raised the hand that it might clasp her neck and join its fellow there. She fell upon her knees, and clinging to this stroller's child looked up at her almost with veneration.

'Forgive me, pity me, help me! Have compassion on my great need, and let me lay this head of mine upon a loving heart!'

'O lay it here!' cried Sissy. 'Lay it here, my dear.'

Sissy visits Harthouse and convinces him to leave Coketown.

Chapter III: Very Decided

THE indefatigable Mrs. Sparsit, with a violent cold upon her, her voice reduced to a whisper, and her stately frame so racked by continual sneezes that it seemed in danger of dismemberment, gave chase to her patron until she found him in the metropolis; and there, majestically sweeping in upon him at his hotel in St. James's Street, exploded the combustibles with which she was charged, and blew up. Having executed her mission with infinite relish, this high-minded woman then fainted away on Mr. Bounderby's coat-collar.

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Mr. Bounderby's first procedure was to shake Mrs. Sparsit off, and leave her to progress as she might through various stages of suffering on the floor. He next had recourse to the administration of potent restoratives, such as screwing the patient's thumbs, smiting her hands, abundantly watering her face, and inserting salt in her mouth. When these attentions had recovered her (which they speedily did), he hustled her into a fast train without offering any other refreshment, and carried her back to Coketown more dead than alive.

Regarded as a classical ruin, Mrs. Sparsit was an interesting spectacle on her arrival at her journey's end; but considered in any other light, the amount of damage she had by that time sustained was excessive, and impaired her claims to admiration. Utterly heedless of the wear and tear of her clothes and constitution, and adamant to her pathetic sneezes, Mr. Bounderby immediately crammed her into a coach, and bore her off to Stone Lodge.

'Now, Tom Gradgrind,' said Bounderby, bursting into his father-in- law's room late at night; 'here's a lady here—Mrs. Sparsit—you know Mrs. Sparsit—who has something to say to you that will strike you dumb.'

'You have missed my letter!' exclaimed Mr. Gradgrind, surprised by the apparition.

'Missed your letter, sir!' bawled Bounderby. 'The present time is no time for letters. No man shall talk to Josiah Bounderby of Coketown about letters, with his mind in the state it's in now.'

'Bounderby,' said Mr. Gradgrind, in a tone of temperate remonstrance, 'I speak of a very special letter I have written to you, in reference to Louisa.'

'Tom Gradgrind,' replied Bounderby, knocking the flat of his hand several times with great vehemence on the table, 'I speak of a very special messenger that has come to me, in reference to Louisa. Mrs. Sparsit, ma'am, stand forward!'

That unfortunate lady hereupon essaying to offer testimony, without any voice and with painful gestures expressive of an inflamed throat, became so aggravating and underwent so many facial contortions, that Mr. Bounderby, unable to bear it, seized her by the arm and shook her.

'If you can't get it out, ma'am,' said Bounderby, 'leave me to get it out. This is not a time for a lady, however highly connected, to be totally inaudible, and seemingly swallowing marbles. Tom Gradgrind, Mrs. Sparsit latterly found herself, by accident, in a situation to overhear a conversation out of doors between your daughter and your precious gentleman-friend, Mr. James Harthouse.'

'Indeed!' said Mr. Gradgrind.

'Ah! Indeed!' cried Bounderby. 'And in that conversation—' 'It is not necessary to repeat its tenor, Bounderby. I know what passed.' 'You do? Perhaps,' said Bounderby, staring with all his might at his so quiet and assuasive father-in-law, 'you know where your daughter is at the present time!' 'Undoubtedly. She is here.'

'Here?'

'My dear Bounderby, let me beg you to restrain these loud out- breaks, on all accounts. Louisa is here. The moment she could detach herself from that interview

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with the person of whom you speak, and whom I deeply regret to have been the means of introducing to you, Louisa hurried here, for protection. I myself had not been at home many hours, when I received her—here, in this room. She hurried by the train to town, she ran from town to this house, through a raging storm, and presented herself before me in a state of distraction. Of course, she has remained here ever since. Let me entreat you, for your own sake and for hers, to be more quiet.'

Mr. Bounderby silently gazed about him for some moments, in every direction except Mrs. Sparsit's direction; and then, abruptly turning upon the niece of Lady Scadgers, said to that wretched woman:

'Now, ma'am! We shall be happy to hear any little apology you may think proper to offer, for going about the country at express pace, with no other luggage than a Cock-and-a-Bull, ma'am!'

'Sir,' whispered Mrs. Sparsit, 'my nerves are at present too much shaken, and my health is at present too much impaired, in your service, to admit of my doing more than taking refuge in tears.' (Which she did.)

'Well, ma'am,' said Bounderby, 'without making any observation to you that may not be made with propriety to a woman of good family, what I have got to add to that, is that there is something else in which it appears to me you may take refuge, namely, a coach. And the coach in which we came here being at the door, you'll allow me to hand you down to it, and pack you home to the Bank: where the best course for you to pursue, will be to put your feet into the hottest water you can bear, and take a glass of scalding rum and butter after you get into bed.' With these words, Mr. Bounderby extended his right hand to the weeping lady, and escorted her to the conveyance in question, shedding many plaintive sneezes by the way. He soon returned alone.

'Now, as you showed me in your face, Tom Gradgrind, that you wanted to speak to me,' he resumed, 'here I am. But, I am not in a very agreeable state, I tell you plainly: not relishing this business, even as it is, and not considering that I am at any time as dutifully and submissively treated by your daughter, as Josiah Bounderby of Coketown ought to be treated by his wife. You have your opinion, I dare say; and I have mine, I know. If you mean to say anything to me to-night, that goes against this candid remark, you had better let it alone.'

Mr. Gradgrind, it will be observed, being much softened, Mr. Bounderby took particular pains to harden himself at all points. It was his amiable nature.

'My dear Bounderby,' Mr. Gradgrind began in reply.

'Now, you'll excuse me,' said Bounderby, 'but I don't want to be too dear. That, to start with. When I begin to be dear to a man, I generally find that his intention is to come over me. I am not speaking to you politely; but, as you are aware, I am not polite. If you like politeness, you know where to get it. You have your gentleman-friends, you know, and they'll serve you with as much of the article as you want. I don't keep it myself.'

'Bounderby,' urged Mr. Gradgrind, 'we are all liable to mistakes—'

'I thought you couldn't make 'em,' interrupted Bounderby.

'Perhaps I thought so. But, I say we are all liable to mistakes and I should feel sensible of your delicacy, and grateful for it, if you would spare me these references

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to Harthouse. I shall not associate him in our conversation with your intimacy and encouragement; pray do not persist in connecting him with mine.' 'I never mentioned his name!' said Bounderby.

'Well, well!' returned Mr. Gradgrind, with a patient, even a submissive, air. And he sat for a little while pondering. 'Bounderby, I see reason to doubt whether we have ever quite understood Louisa.'

'Who do you mean by We?'

'Let me say I, then,' he returned, in answer to the coarsely blurted question; 'I doubt whether I have understood Louisa. I doubt whether I have been quite right in the manner of her education.'

'There you hit it,' returned Bounderby. 'There I agree with you. You have found it out at last, have you? Education! I'll tell you what education is—To be tumbled out of doors, neck and crop, and put upon the shortest allowance of everything except blows. That's what I call education.'

'I think your good sense will perceive,' Mr. Gradgrind remonstrated in all humility, 'that whatever the merits of such a system may be, it would be difficult of general application to girls.'

'I don't see it at all, sir,' returned the obstinate Bounderby.

'Well,' sighed Mr. Gradgrind, 'we will not enter into the question. I assure you I have no desire to be controversial. I seek to repair what is amiss, if I possibly can; and I hope you will assist me in a good spirit, Bounderby, for I have been very much distressed.'

'I don't understand you, yet,' said Bounderby, with determined obstinacy, 'and therefore I won't make any promises.'

'In the course of a few hours, my dear Bounderby,' Mr. Gradgrind proceeded, in the same depressed and propitiatory manner, 'I appear to myself to have become better informed as to Louisa's character, than in previous years. The enlightenment has been painfully forced upon me, and the discovery is not mine. I think there are—Bounderby, you will be surprised to hear me say this—I think there are qualities in Louisa, which—which have been harshly neglected, and—and a little perverted. And—and I would suggest to you, that—that if you would kindly meet me in a timely endeavour to leave her to her better nature for a while—and to encourage it to develop itself by tenderness and consideration—it—it would be the better for the happiness of all of us. Louisa,' said Mr. Gradgrind, shading his face with his hand, 'has always been my favourite child.'

The blustrous Bounderby crimsoned and swelled to such an extent on hearing these words, that he seemed to be, and probably was, on the brink of a fit. With his very ears a bright purple shot with crimson, he pent up his indignation, however, and said:

'You'd like to keep her here for a time?'

'I—I had intended to recommend, my dear Bounderby, that you should allow Louisa to remain here on a visit, and be attended by Sissy (I mean of course Cecilia Jupe), who understands her, and in whom she trusts.'

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'I gather from all this, Tom Gradgrind,' said Bounderby, standing up with his hands in his pockets, 'that you are of opinion that there's what people call some incompatibility between Loo Bounderby and myself.'

'I fear there is at present a general incompatibility between Louisa, and—and— and almost all the relations in which I have placed her,' was her father's sorrowful

reply.

'Now, look you here, Tom Gradgrind,' said Bounderby the flushed, confronting him with his legs wide apart, his hands deeper in his pockets, and his hair like a hayfield wherein his windy anger was boisterous. 'You have said your say; I am going to say mine. I am a Coketown man. I am Josiah Bounderby of Coketown. I know the bricks of this town, and I know the works of this town, and I know the chimneys of this town, and I know the smoke of this town, and I know the Hands of this town. I know 'em all pretty well. They're real. When a man tells me anything about imaginative qualities, I always tell that man, whoever he is, that I know what he means. He means turtle soup and venison, with a gold spoon, and that he wants to be set up with a coach and six. That's what your daughter wants. Since you are of opinion that she ought to have what she wants, I recommend you to provide it for her. Because, Tom Gradgrind, she will never have it from me.'

'Bounderby,' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'I hoped, after my entreaty, you would have taken a different tone.'

'Just wait a bit,' retorted Bounderby; 'you have said your say, I believe. I heard you out; hear me out, if you please. Don't make yourself a spectacle of unfairness as well as inconsistency, because, although I am sorry to see Tom Gradgrind reduced to his present position, I should be doubly sorry to see him brought so low as that. Now, there's an incompatibility of some sort or another, I am given to understand by you, between your daughter and me. I'll give you to understand, in reply to that, that there unquestionably is an incompatibility of the first magnitude—to be summed up in this—that your daughter don't properly know her husband's merits, and is not impressed with such a sense as would become her, by George! of the honour of his alliance. That's plain speaking, I hope.'

'Bounderby,' urged Mr. Gradgrind, 'this is unreasonable.'

'Is it?' said Bounderby. 'I am glad to hear you say so. Because when Tom Gradgrind, with his new lights, tells me that what I say is unreasonable, I am convinced at once it must be devilish sensible. With your permission I am going on. You know my origin; and you know that for a good many years of my life I didn't want a shoeing-horn, in consequence of not having a shoe. Yet you may believe or not, as you think proper, that there are ladies—born ladies—belonging to families—Families!—who next to worship the ground I walk on.'

He discharged this like a Rocket, at his father-in-law's head.

'Whereas your daughter,' proceeded Bounderby, 'is far from being a born lady. That you know, yourself. Not that I care a pinch of candle-snuff about such things, for you are very well aware I don't; but that such is the fact, and you, Tom Gradgrind, can't change it. Why do I say this?'

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'Not, I fear,' observed Mr. Gradgrind, in a low voice, 'to spare me.'

'Hear me out,' said Bounderby, 'and refrain from cutting in till your turn comes round. I say this, because highly connected females have been astonished to see the way in which your daughter has conducted herself, and to witness her insensibility. They have wondered how I have suffered it. And I wonder myself now, and I won't suffer it.'

'Bounderby,' returned Mr. Gradgrind, rising, 'the less we say to-night the better, I think.'

'On the contrary, Tom Gradgrind, the more we say to-night, the better, I think. That is,' the consideration checked him, 'till I have said all I mean to say, and then I don't care how soon we stop. I come to a question that may shorten the business. What do you mean by the proposal you made just now?'

'What do I mean, Bounderby?'

'By your visiting proposition,' said Bounderby, with an inflexible jerk of the hayfield.

'I mean that I hope you may be induced to arrange in a friendly manner, for allowing Louisa a period of repose and reflection here, which may tend to a gradual alteration for the better in many respects.'

'To a softening down of your ideas of the incompatibility?' said Bounderby.

'If you put it in those terms.'

'What made you think of this?' said Bounderby.

'I have already said, I fear Louisa has not been understood. Is it asking too much, Bounderby, that you, so far her elder, should aid in trying to set her right? You have accepted a great charge of her; for better for worse, for—'

Mr. Bounderby may have been annoyed by the repetition of his own words to Stephen Blackpool, but he cut the quotation short with an angry start.

'Come!' said he, 'I don't want to be told about that. I know what I took her for, as well as you do. Never you mind what I took her for; that's my look out.'

'I was merely going on to remark, Bounderby, that we may all be more or less in the wrong, not even excepting you; and that some yielding on your part, remembering the trust you have accepted, may not only be an act of true kindness, but perhaps a debt incurred towards Louisa.'

'I think differently,' blustered Bounderby. 'I am going to finish this business according to my own opinions. Now, I don't want to make a quarrel of it with you, Tom Gradgrind. To tell you the truth, I don't think it would be worthy of my reputation to quarrel on such a subject. As to your gentleman-friend, he may take himself off, wherever he likes best. If he falls in my way, I shall tell him my mind; if he don't fall in my way, I shan't, for it won't be worth my while to do it. As to your daughter, whom I made Loo Bounderby, and might have done better by leaving Loo Gradgrind, if she don't come home to-morrow, by twelve o'clock at noon, I shall understand that she prefers to stay away, and I shall send her wearing apparel and so forth over here, and you'll take charge of her for the future. What I shall say to people in general, of the incompatibility that led to my so laying down the law,

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will be this. I am Josiah Bounderby, and I had my bringing-up; she's the daughter of Tom Gradgrind, and she had her bringing- up; and the two horses wouldn't pull together. I am pretty well known to be rather an uncommon man, I believe; and most people will understand fast enough that it must be a woman rather out of the common, also, who, in the long run, would come up to my mark.'

'Let me seriously entreat you to reconsider this, Bounderby,' urged Mr. Gradgrind, 'before you commit yourself to such a decision.'

'I always come to a decision,' said Bounderby, tossing his hat on: 'and whatever I do, I do at once. I should be surprised at Tom Gradgrind's addressing such a remark to Josiah Bounderby of Coketown, knowing what he knows of him, if I could be surprised by anything Tom Gradgrind did, after his making himself a party to sentimental humbug. I have given you my decision, and I have got no more to say. Good night!'

So Mr. Bounderby went home to his town house to bed. At five minutes past twelve o'clock next day, he directed Mrs. Bounderby's property to be carefully packed up and sent to Tom Gradgrind's; advertised his country retreat for sale by private contract; and resumed a bachelor life.

Bounderby continues to accuse Blackpool of the bank robbery. Upon Rachel's urging, Louisa tells Bounderby that she and Tom visited Blackpool the night before he disappeared .

Chapter V: Found

DAY and night again, day and night again. No Stephen Blackpool. Where was the man, and why did he not come back?

Every night, Sissy went to Rachael's lodging, and sat with her in her small neat room. All day, Rachael toiled as such people must toil, whatever their anxieties. The smoke-serpents were indifferent who was lost or found, who turned out bad or good; the melancholy mad elephants, like the Hard Fact men, abated nothing of their set routine, whatever happened. Day and night again, day and night again. The monotony was unbroken. Even Stephen Blackpool's disappearance was falling into the general way, and becoming as monotonous a wonder as any piece of machinery in Coketown.

'I misdoubt,' said Rachael, 'if there is as many as twenty left in all this place, who have any trust in the poor dear lad now.'

She said it to Sissy, as they sat in her lodging, lighted only by the lamp at the street corner. Sissy had come there when it was already dark, to await her return from work; and they had since sat at the window where Rachael had found her, wanting no brighter light to shine on their sorrowful talk.

'If it hadn't been mercifully brought about, that I was to have you to speak to,' pursued Rachael, 'times are, when I think my mind would not have kept right. But I get hope and strength through you; and you believe that though appearances may rise against him, he will be proved clear?'

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'I do believe so,' returned Sissy, 'with my whole heart. I feel so certain, Rachael, that the confidence you hold in yours against all discouragement, is not like to be wrong, that I have no more doubt of him than if I had known him through as many years of trial as you have.'

'And I, my dear,' said Rachel, with a tremble in her voice, 'have known him through them all, to be, according to his quiet ways, so faithful to everything honest and good, that if he was never to be heard of more, and I was to live to be a hundred years old, I could say with my last breath, God knows my heart. I have never once left trusting Stephen Blackpool!'

'We all believe, up at the Lodge, Rachael, that he will be freed from suspicion, sooner or later.'

'The better I know it to be so believed there, my dear,' said Rachael, 'and the kinder I feel it that you come away from there, purposely to comfort me, and keep me company, and be seen wi' me when I am not yet free from all suspicion myself, the more grieved I am that I should ever have spoken those mistrusting words to the young lady. And yet I—'

'You don't mistrust her now, Rachael?'

'Now that you have brought us more together, no. But I can't at all times keep out of my mind—'

Her voice so sunk into a low and slow communing with herself, that Sissy, sitting by her side, was obliged to listen with attention.

'I can't at all times keep out of my mind, mistrustings of some one. I can't think who 'tis, I can't think how or why it may be done, but I mistrust that some one has put Stephen out of the way. I mistrust that by his coming back of his own accord, and showing himself innocent before them all, some one would be confounded, who—to prevent that—has stopped him, and put him out of the way.'

'That is a dreadful thought,' said Sissy, turning pale.

'It is a dreadful thought to think he may be murdered.'

Sissy shuddered, and turned paler yet.

'When it makes its way into my mind, dear,' said Rachael, 'and it will come sometimes, though I do all I can to keep it out, wi' counting on to high numbers as I work, and saying over and over again pieces that I knew when I were a child—I fall into such a wild, hot hurry, that, however tired I am, I want to walk fast, miles and miles. I must get the better of this before bed-time. I'll walk home wi' you.'

'He might fall ill upon the journey back,' said Sissy, faintly offering a worn-out scrap of hope; 'and in such a case, there are many places on the road where he might stop.'

'But he is in none of them. He has been sought for in all, and he's not there.' 'True,' was Sissy's reluctant admission.

'He'd walk the journey in two days. If he was footsore and couldn't walk, I sent him, in the letter he got, the money to ride, lest he should have none of his own to spare.'

'Let us hope that to-morrow will bring something better, Rachael. Come into the air!'

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Her gentle hand adjusted Rachael's shawl upon her shining black hair in the usual manner of her wearing it, and they went out. The night being fine, little knots of Hands were here and there lingering at street corners; but it was supper-time with the greater part of them, and there were but few people in the streets.

'You're not so hurried now, Rachael, and your hand is cooler.'

'I get better, dear, if I can only walk, and breathe a little fresh. 'Times when I can't, I turn weak and confused.'

'But you must not begin to fail, Rachael, for you may be wanted at any time to stand by Stephen. To-morrow is Saturday. If no news comes to-morrow, let us walk in the country on Sunday morning, and strengthen you for another week. Will

you go?'

'Yes, dear.'

They were by this time in the street where Mr. Bounderby's house stood. The way to Sissy's destination led them past the door, and they were going straight towards it. Some train had newly arrived in Coketown, which had put a number of vehicles in motion, and scattered a considerable bustle about the town. Several coaches were rattling before them and behind them as they approached Mr. Bounderby's, and one of the latter drew up with such briskness as they were in the act of passing the house, that they looked round involuntarily. The bright gaslight over Mr. Bounderby's steps showed them Mrs. Sparsit in the coach, in an ecstasy of excitement, struggling to open the door; Mrs. Sparsit seeing them at the same moment, called to them to stop.

'It's a coincidence,' exclaimed Mrs. Sparsit, as she was released by the coachman. 'It's a Providence! Come out, ma'am!' then said Mrs. Sparsit, to some one inside, 'come out, or we'll have you dragged out!'

Hereupon, no other than the mysterious old woman descended. Whom Mrs. Sparsit incontinently collared.

'Leave her alone, everybody!' cried Mrs. Sparsit, with great energy. 'Let nobody touch her. She belongs to me. Come in, ma'am!' then said Mrs. Sparsit, reversing her former word of command. 'Come in, ma'am, or we'll have you dragged in!'

The spectacle of a matron of classical deportment, seizing an ancient woman by the throat, and hauling her into a dwelling-house, would have been under any circumstances, sufficient temptation to all true English stragglers so blest as to witness it, to force a way into that dwelling-house and see the matter out. But when the phenomenon was enhanced by the notoriety and mystery by this time associated all over the town with the Bank robbery, it would have lured the stragglers in, with an irresistible attraction, though the roof had been expected to fall upon their heads. Accordingly, the chance witnesses on the ground, consisting of the busiest of the neighbours to the number of some five-and-twenty, closed in after Sissy and Rachael, as they closed in after Mrs. Sparsit and her prize; and the whole body made a disorderly irruption into Mr. Bounderby's dining-room, where the people behind lost not a moment's time in mounting on the chairs, to get the better of the people in front.

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'Fetch Mr. Bounderby down!' cried Mrs. Sparsit. 'Rachael, young woman; you know who this is?'

'It's Mrs. Pegler,' said Rachael.

'I should think it is!' cried Mrs. Sparsit, exulting. 'Fetch Mr. Bounderby. Stand away, everybody!' Here old Mrs. Pegler, muffling herself up, and shrinking from observation, whispered a word of entreaty. 'Don't tell me,' said Mrs. Sparsit, aloud. 'I have told you twenty times, coming along, that I will not leave you till I have handed you over to him myself.'

Mr. Bounderby now appeared, accompanied by Mr. Gradgrind and the whelp, with whom he had been holding conference up-stairs. Mr. Bounderby looked more astonished than hospitable, at sight of this uninvited party in his dining-room.

'Why, what's the matter now!' said he. 'Mrs. Sparsit, ma'am?'

'Sir,' explained that worthy woman, 'I trust it is my good fortune to produce a person you have much desired to find. Stimulated by my wish to relieve your mind, sir, and connecting together such imperfect clues to the part of the country in which that person might be supposed to reside, as have been afforded by the young woman, Rachael, fortunately now present to identify, I have had the happiness to succeed, and to bring that person with me—I need not say most unwillingly on her part. It has not been, sir, without some trouble that I have effected this; but trouble in your service is to me a pleasure, and hunger, thirst, and cold a real gratification.'

Here Mrs. Sparsit ceased; for Mr. Bounderby's visage exhibited an extraordinary combination of all possible colours and expressions of discomfiture, as old Mrs. Pegler was disclosed to his view.

'Why, what do you mean by this?' was his highly unexpected demand, in great warmth. 'I ask you, what do you mean by this, Mrs. Sparsit, ma'am?'

'Sir!' exclaimed Mrs. Sparsit, faintly.

'Why don't you mind your own business, ma'am?' roared Bounderby. 'How dare you go and poke your officious nose into my family affairs?'

This allusion to her favourite feature overpowered Mrs. Sparsit. She sat down stiffly in a chair, as if she were frozen; and with a fixed stare at Mr. Bounderby, slowly grated her mittens against one another, as if they were frozen too.

'My dear Josiah!' cried Mrs. Pegler, trembling. 'My darling boy! I am not to blame. It's not my fault, Josiah. I told this lady over and over again, that I knew she was doing what would not be agreeable to you, but she would do it.'

'What did you let her bring you for? Couldn't you knock her cap off, or her tooth out, or scratch her, or do something or other to her?' asked Bounderby.

'My own boy! She threatened me that if I resisted her, I should be brought by constables, and it was better to come quietly than make that stir in such a'—Mrs. Pegler glanced timidly but proudly round the walls—'such a fine house as this. Indeed, indeed, it is not my fault! My dear, noble, stately boy! I have always lived quiet, and secret, Josiah, my dear. I have never broken the condition once. I have never said I was your mother. I have admired you at a distance; and if I have come

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to town sometimes, with long times between, to take a proud peep at you, I have done it unbeknown, my love, and gone away again.'

Mr. Bounderby, with his hands in his pockets, walked in impatient mortification up and down at the side of the long dining-table, while the spectators greedily took in every syllable of Mrs. Pegler's appeal, and at each succeeding syllable became more and more round-eyed. Mr. Bounderby still walking up and down when Mrs. Pegler had done, Mr. Gradgrind addressed that maligned old lady:

'I am surprised, madam,' he observed with severity, 'that in your old age you have the face to claim Mr. Bounderby for your son, after your unnatural and inhuman treatment of him.'

'Me unnatural!' cried poor old Mrs. Pegler. 'Me inhuman! To my dear boy?'

'Dear!' repeated Mr. Gradgrind. 'Yes; dear in his self-made prosperity, madam, I dare say. Not very dear, however, when you deserted him in his infancy, and left him to the brutality of a drunken grandmother.'

'I deserted my Josiah!' cried Mrs. Pegler, clasping her hands. 'Now, Lord forgive you, sir, for your wicked imaginations, and for your scandal against the memory of my poor mother, who died in my arms before Josiah was born. May you repent of it, sir, and live to know better!'

She was so very earnest and injured, that Mr. Gradgrind, shocked by the possibility which dawned upon him, said in a gentler tone:

'Do you deny, then, madam, that you left your son to—to be brought up in the gutter?'

'Josiah in the gutter!' exclaimed Mrs. Pegler. 'No such a thing, sir. Never! For shame on you! My dear boy knows, and will give you to know, that though he come of humble parents, he come of parents that loved him as dear as the best could, and never thought it hardship on themselves to pinch a bit that he might write and cipher beautiful, and I've his books at home to show it! Aye, have I!' said Mrs. Pegler, with indignant pride. 'And my dear boy knows, and will give you to know, sir, that after his beloved father died, when he was eight years old, his mother, too, could pinch a bit, as it was her duty and her pleasure and her pride to do it, to help him out in life, and put him 'prentice. And a steady lad he was, and a kind master he had to lend him a hand, and well he worked his own way forward to be rich and thriving. And I'll give you to know, sir—for this my dear boy won't—that though his mother kept but a little village shop, he never forgot her, but pensioned me on thirty pound a year—more than I want, for I put by out of it—only making the condition that I was to keep down in my own part, and make no boasts about him, and not trouble him. And I never have, except with looking at him once a year, when he has never knowed it. And it's right,' said poor old Mrs. Pegler, in affectionate championship, 'that I should keep down in my own part, and I have no doubts that if I was here I should do a many unbefitting things, and I am well contented, and I can keep my pride in my Josiah to myself, and I can love for love's own sake! And I am ashamed of you, sir,' said Mrs. Pegler, lastly, 'for your slanders and suspicions. And I never stood here before, nor never wanted to stand here

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when my dear son said no. And I shouldn't be here now, if it hadn't been for being brought here. And for shame upon you, Oh, for shame, to accuse me of being a bad mother to my son, with my son standing here to tell you so different!'

The bystanders, on and off the dining-room chairs, raised a murmur of sympathy with Mrs. Pegler, and Mr. Gradgrind felt himself innocently placed in a very distressing predicament, when Mr. Bounderby, who had never ceased walking up and down, and had every moment swelled larger and larger, and grown redder and redder, stopped short.

'I don't exactly know,' said Mr. Bounderby, 'how I come to be favoured with the attendance of the present company, but I don't inquire. When they're quite satisfied, perhaps they'll be so good as to disperse; whether they're satisfied or not, perhaps they'll be so good as to disperse. I'm not bound to deliver a lecture on my family affairs, I have not undertaken to do it, and I'm not a going to do it. Therefore those who expect any explanation whatever upon that branch of the subject, will be disappointed—particularly Tom Gradgrind, and he can't know it too soon. In reference to the Bank robbery, there has been a mistake made, concerning my mother. If there hadn't been over-officiousness it wouldn't have been made, and I hate over-officiousness at all times, whether or no. Good evening!'

Although Mr. Bounderby carried it off in these terms, holding the door open for the company to depart, there was a blustering sheepishness upon him, at once extremely crestfallen and superlatively absurd. Detected as the Bully of humility, who had built his windy reputation upon lies, and in his boastfulness had put the honest truth as far away from him as if he had advanced the mean claim (there is no meaner) to tack himself on to a pedigree, he cut a most ridiculous figure. With the people filing off at the door he held, who he knew would carry what had passed to the whole town, to be given to the four winds, he could not have looked a Bully more shorn and forlorn, if he had had his ears cropped. Even that unlucky female, Mrs. Sparsit, fallen from her pinnacle of exultation into the Slough of Despond, was not in so bad a plight as that remarkable man and self-made Humbug, Josiah Bounderby of Coketown.

Rachael and Sissy, leaving Mrs. Pegler to occupy a bed at her son's for that night, walked together to the gate of Stone Lodge and there parted. Mr. Gradgrind joined them before they had gone very far, and spoke with much interest of Stephen Blackpool; for whom he thought this signal failure of the suspicions against Mrs. Pegler was likely to work well.

As to the whelp; throughout this scene as on all other late occasions, he had stuck close to Bounderby. He seemed to feel that as long as Bounderby could make no discovery without his knowledge, he was so far safe. He never visited his sister, and had only seen her once since she went home: that is to say on the night when he still stuck close to Bounderby, as already related.

There was one dim unformed fear lingering about his sister's mind, to which she never gave utterance, which surrounded the graceless and ungrateful boy with a dreadful mystery. The same dark possibility had presented itself in the same

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shapeless guise, this very day, to Sissy, when Rachael spoke of some one who would be confounded by Stephen's return, having put him out of the way. Louisa had never spoken of harbouring any suspicion of her brother in connexion with the robbery, she and Sissy had held no confidence on the subject, save in that one interchange of looks when the unconscious father rested his gray head on his hand; but it was understood between them, and they both knew it. This other fear was so awful, that it hovered about each of them like a ghostly shadow; neither daring to think of its being near herself, far less of its being near the other.

And still the forced spirit which the whelp had plucked up, throve with him. If Stephen Blackpool was not the thief, let him show himself. Why didn't he?

Another night. Another day and night. No Stephen Blackpool. Where was the man, and why did he not come back?

Chapter VI: The Starlight

THE Sunday was a bright Sunday in autumn, clear and cool, when early in the morning Sissy and Rachael met, to walk in the country.

As Coketown cast ashes not only on its own head but on the neighbourhood's too—after the manner of those pious persons who do penance for their own sins by putting other people into sackcloth—it was customary for those who now and then thirsted for a draught of pure air, which is not absolutely the most wicked among the vanities of life, to get a few miles away by the railroad, and then begin their walk, or their lounge in the fields. Sissy and Rachael helped themselves out of the smoke by the usual means, and were put down at a station about midway between the town and Mr. Bounderby's retreat.

Though the green landscape was blotted here and there with heaps of coal, it was green elsewhere, and there were trees to see, and there were larks singing (though it was Sunday), and there were pleasant scents in the air, and all was overarched by a bright blue sky. In the distance one way, Coketown showed as a black mist; in another distance hills began to rise; in a third, there was a faint change in the light of the horizon where it shone upon the far-off sea. Under their feet, the grass was fresh; beautiful shadows of branches flickered upon it, and speckled it; hedgerows were luxuriant; everything was at peace. Engines at pits' mouths, and lean old horses that had worn the circle of their daily labour into the ground, were alike quiet; wheels had ceased for a short space to turn; and the great wheel of earth seemed to revolve without the shocks and noises of another time.

They walked on across the fields and down the shady lanes, sometimes getting over a fragment of a fence so rotten that it dropped at a touch of the foot, sometimes passing near a wreck of bricks and beams overgrown with grass, marking the site of deserted works. They followed paths and tracks, however slight. Mounds where the grass was rank and high, and where brambles, dock-weed, and suchlike vegetation, were confusedly heaped together, they always avoided; for dismal stories were told in that country of the old pits hidden beneath such indications.

The sun was high when they sat down to rest. They had seen no one, near or distant, for a long time; and the solitude remained unbroken. 'It is so still here,

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Rachael, and the way is so untrodden, that I think we must be the first who have been here all the summer.'

As Sissy said it, her eyes were attracted by another of those rotten fragments of fence upon the ground. She got up to look at it. 'And yet I don't know. This has not been broken very long. The wood is quite fresh where it gave way. Here are footsteps too.—O Rachael!'

She ran back, and caught her round the neck. Rachael had already started up.

'What is the matter?'

'I don't know. There is a hat lying in the grass.' They went forward together. Rachael took it up, shaking from head to foot. She broke into a passion of tears and lamentations: Stephen Blackpool was written in his own hand on the inside.

'O the poor lad, the poor lad! He has been made away with. He is lying murdered here!'

'Is there—has the hat any blood upon it?' Sissy faltered.

They were afraid to look; but they did examine it, and found no mark of violence, inside or out. It had been lying there some days, for rain and dew had stained it, and the mark of its shape was on the grass where it had fallen. They looked fearfully about them, without moving, but could see nothing more. 'Rachael,' Sissy whispered, 'I will go on a little by myself.'

She had unclasped her hand, and was in the act of stepping forward, when Rachael caught her in both arms with a scream that resounded over the wide landscape. Before them, at their very feet, was the brink of a black ragged chasm hidden by the thick grass. They sprang back, and fell upon their knees, each hiding her face upon the other's neck.

'O, my good Lord! He's down there! Down there!' At first this, and her terrific screams, were all that could be got from Rachael, by any tears, by any prayers, by any representations, by any means. It was impossible to hush her; and it was deadly necessary to hold her, or she would have flung herself down the shaft.

'Rachael, dear Rachael, good Rachael, for the love of Heaven, not these dreadful cries! Think of Stephen, think of Stephen, think of Stephen!'

By an earnest repetition of this entreaty, poured out in all the agony of such a moment, Sissy at last brought her to be silent, and to look at her with a tearless face of stone.

'Rachael, Stephen may be living. You wouldn't leave him lying maimed at the bottom of this dreadful place, a moment, if you could bring help to him?' 'No, no, no!'

'Don't stir from here, for his sake! Let me go and listen.'

She shuddered to approach the pit; but she crept towards it on her hands and knees, and called to him as loud as she could call. She listened, but no sound replied. She called again and listened; still no answering sound. She did this, twenty, thirty times. She took a little clod of earth from the broken ground where he had stumbled, and threw it in. She could not hear it fall.

The wide prospect, so beautiful in its stillness but a few minutes ago, almost carried despair to her brave heart, as she rose and looked all round her, seeing no

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help. 'Rachael, we must lose not a moment. We must go in different directions, seeking aid. You shall go by the way we have come, and I will go forward by the path. Tell any one you see, and every one what has happened. Think of Stephen, think of Stephen!'

She knew by Rachael's face that she might trust her now. And after standing for a moment to see her running, wringing her hands as she ran, she turned and went upon her own search; she stopped at the hedge to tie her shawl there as a guide to the place, then threw her bonnet aside, and ran as she had never run before.

Run, Sissy, run, in Heaven's name! Don't stop for breath. Run, run! Quickening herself by carrying such entreaties in her thoughts, she ran from field to field, and lane to lane, and place to place, as she had never run before; until she came to a shed by an engine-house, where two men lay in the shade, asleep on straw.

First to wake them, and next to tell them, all so wild and breathless as she was, what had brought her there, were difficulties; but they no sooner understood her than their spirits were on fire like hers. One of the men was in a drunken slumber, but on his comrade's shouting to him that a man had fallen down the Old Hell Shaft, he started out to a pool of dirty water, put his head in it, and came back sober.

With these two men she ran to another half-a-mile further, and with that one to another, while they ran elsewhere. Then a horse was found; and she got another man to ride for life or death to the railroad, and send a message to Louisa, which she wrote and gave him. By this time a whole village was up: and windlasses, ropes, poles, candles, lanterns, all things necessary, were fast collecting and being brought into one place, to be carried to the Old Hell Shaft.

It seemed now hours and hours since she had left the lost man lying in the grave where he had been buried alive. She could not bear to remain away from it any longer—it was like deserting him—and she hurried swiftly back, accompanied by half-a-dozen labourers, including the drunken man whom the news had sobered, and who was the best man of all. When they came to the Old Hell Shaft, they found it as lonely as she had left it. The men called and listened as she had done, and examined the edge of the chasm, and settled how it had happened, and then sat down to wait until the implements they wanted should come up.

Every sound of insects in the air, every stirring of the leaves, every whisper among these men, made Sissy tremble, for she thought it was a cry at the bottom of the pit. But the wind blew idly over it, and no sound arose to the surface, and they sat upon the grass, waiting and waiting. After they had waited some time, straggling people who had heard of the accident began to come up; then the real help of implements began to arrive. In the midst of this, Rachael returned; and with her party there was a surgeon, who brought some wine and medicines. But, the expectation among the people that the man would be found alive was very slight indeed.

There being now people enough present to impede the work, the sobered man put himself at the head of the rest, or was put there by the general consent, and made a large ring round the Old Hell Shaft, and appointed men to keep it. Besides

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such volunteers as were accepted to work, only Sissy and Rachael were at first permitted within this ring; but, later in the day, when the message brought an express from Coketown, Mr. Gradgrind and Louisa, and Mr. Bounderby, and the whelp, were also there.

The sun was four hours lower than when Sissy and Rachael had first sat down upon the grass, before a means of enabling two men to descend securely was rigged with poles and ropes. Difficulties had arisen in the construction of this machine, simple as it was; requisites had been found wanting, and messages had had to go and return. It was five o'clock in the afternoon of the bright autumnal Sunday, before a candle was sent down to try the air, while three or four rough faces stood crowded close together, attentively watching it: the man at the windlass lowering as they were told. The candle was brought up again, feebly burning, and then some water was cast in. Then the bucket was hooked on; and the sobered man and another got in with lights, giving the word 'Lower away!'

As the rope went out, tight and strained, and the windlass creaked, there was not a breath among the one or two hundred men and women looking on, that came as it was wont to come. The signal was given and the windlass stopped, with abundant rope to spare. Apparently so long an interval ensued with the men at the windlass standing idle, that some women shrieked that another accident had happened! But the surgeon who held the watch, declared five minutes not to have elapsed yet, and sternly admonished them to keep silence. He had not well done speaking, when the windlass was reversed and worked again. Practised eyes knew that it did not go as heavily as it would if both workmen had been coming up, and that only one was returning.

The rope came in tight and strained; and ring after ring was coiled upon the barrel of the windlass, and all eyes were fastened on the pit. The sobered man was brought up and leaped out briskly on the grass. There was an universal cry of 'Alive or dead?' and then a deep, profound hush.

When he said 'Alive!' a great shout arose and many eyes had tears in them.

'But he's hurt very bad,' he added, as soon as he could make himself heard again. 'Where's doctor? He's hurt so very bad, sir, that we donno how to get him up.'

They all consulted together, and looked anxiously at the surgeon, as he asked some questions, and shook his head on receiving the replies. The sun was setting now; and the red light in the evening sky touched every face there, and caused it to be distinctly seen in all its rapt suspense.

The consultation ended in the men returning to the windlass, and the pitman going down again, carrying the wine and some other small matters with him. Then the other man came up. In the meantime, under the surgeon's directions, some men brought a hurdle, on which others made a thick bed of spare clothes covered with loose straw, while he himself contrived some bandages and slings from shawls and handkerchiefs. As these were made, they were hung upon an arm of the pitman who had last come up, with instructions how to use them: and as he stood, shown by the light he carried, leaning his powerful loose hand upon one of the poles, and

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sometimes glancing down the pit, and sometimes glancing round upon the people, he was not the least conspicuous figure in the scene. It was dark now, and torches were kindled.

It appeared from the little this man said to those about him, which was quickly repeated all over the circle, that the lost man had fallen upon a mass of crumbled rubbish with which the pit was half choked up, and that his fall had been further broken by some jagged earth at the side. He lay upon his back with one arm doubled under him, and according to his own belief had hardly stirred since he fell, except that he had moved his free hand to a side pocket, in which he remembered to have some bread and meat (of which he had swallowed crumbs), and had likewise scooped up a little water in it now and then. He had come straight away from his work, on being written to, and had walked the whole journey; and was on his way to Mr. Bounderby's country house after dark, when he fell. He was crossing that dangerous country at such a dangerous time, because he was innocent of what was laid to his charge, and couldn't rest from coming the nearest way to deliver himself up. The Old Hell Shaft, the pitman said, with a curse upon it, was worthy of its bad name to the last; for though Stephen could speak now, he believed it would soon be found to have mangled the life out of him.

When all was ready, this man, still taking his last hurried charges from his comrades and the surgeon after the windlass had begun to lower him, disappeared into the pit. The rope went out as before, the signal was made as before, and the windlass stopped. No man removed his hand from it now. Every one waited with his grasp set, and his body bent down to the work, ready to reverse and wind in. At length the signal was given, and all the ring leaned forward.

For, now, the rope came in, tightened and strained to its utmost as it appeared, and the men turned heavily, and the windlass complained. It was scarcely endurable to look at the rope, and think of its giving way. But, ring after ring was coiled upon the barrel of the windlass safely, and the connecting chains appeared, and finally the bucket with the two men holding on at the sides—a sight to make the head swim, and oppress the heart—and tenderly supporting between them, slung and tied within, the figure of a poor, crushed, human creature.

A low murmur of pity went round the throng, and the women wept aloud, as this form, almost without form, was moved very slowly from its iron deliverance, and laid upon the bed of straw. At first, none but the surgeon went close to it. He did what he could in its adjustment on the couch, but the best that he could do was to cover it. That gently done, he called to him Rachael and Sissy. And at that time the pale, worn, patient face was seen looking up at the sky, with the broken right hand lying bare on the outside of the covering garments, as if waiting to be taken by another hand.

They gave him drink, moistened his face with water, and administered some drops of cordial and wine. Though he lay quite motionless looking up at the sky, he smiled and said, 'Rachael.' She stooped down on the grass at his side, and bent over him until her eyes were between his and the sky, for he could not so much as turn them to look at her.

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'Rachael, my dear.'

She took his hand. He smiled again and said, 'Don't let 't go.' 'Thou'rt in great pain, my own dear Stephen?'

'I ha' been, but not now. I ha' been—dreadful, and dree, and long, my dear—but 'tis ower now. Ah, Rachael, aw a muddle! Fro' first to last, a muddle!'

The spectre of his old look seemed to pass as he said the word.

'I ha' fell into th' pit, my dear, as have cost wi'in the knowledge o' old fok now livin, hundreds and hundreds o' men's lives—fathers, sons, brothers, dear to thousands an' thousands, an' keeping 'em fro' want and hunger. I ha' fell into a pit that ha' been wi' th' Firedamp crueller than battle. I ha' read on 't in the public petition, as onny one may read, fro' the men that works in pits, in which they ha' pray'n and pray'n the lawmakers for Christ's sake not to let their work be murder to 'em, but to spare 'em for th' wives and children that they loves as well as gentlefok loves theirs. When it were in work, it killed wi'out need; when 'tis let alone, it kills wi'out need. See how we die an' no need, one way an' another—in a muddle—every day!'

He faintly said it, without any anger against any one. Merely as the truth.

'Thy little sister, Rachael, thou hast not forgot her. Thou'rt not like to forget her now, and me so nigh her. Thou know'st—poor, patient, suff rin, dear—how thou didst work for her, seet'n all day long in her little chair at thy winder, and how she died, young and misshapen, awlung o' sickly air as had'n no need to be, an' awlung o' working people's miserable homes. A muddle! Aw a muddle!'

Louisa approached him; but he could not see her, lying with his face turned up to the night sky.

'If aw th' things that tooches us, my dear, was not so muddled, I should'n ha' had'n need to coom heer. If we was not in a muddle among ourseln, I should'n ha' been, by my own fellow weavers and workin' brothers, so mistook. If Mr. Bounderby had ever know'd me right—if he'd ever know'd me at aw—he would'n ha' took'n offence wi' me. He would'n ha' suspect'n me. But look up yonder, Rachael! Look aboove!'

Following his eyes, she saw that he was gazing at a star.

'It ha' shined upon me,' he said reverently, 'in my pain and trouble down below. It ha' shined into my mind. I ha' look'n at 't and thowt o' thee, Rachael, till the muddle in my mind have cleared awa, above a bit, I hope. If soom ha' been wantin' in unnerstan'in me better, I, too, ha' been wantin' in unnerstan'in them better. When I got thy letter, I easily believen that what the yoong ledy sen and done to me, and what her brother sen and done to me, was one, and that there were a wicked plot betwixt 'em. When I fell, I were in anger wi' her, an' hurryin on t' be as onjust t' her as oothers was t' me. But in our judgments, like as in our doins, we mun bear and forbear. In my pain an' trouble, lookin up yonder,—wi' it shinin on me—I ha' seen more clear, and ha' made it my dyin prayer that aw th' world may on'y coom toogether more, an' get a better unnerstan'in o' one another, than when I were in 't my own weak seln.'

Louisa hearing what he said, bent over him on the opposite side to Rachael, so that he could see her.

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'You ha' heard?' he said, after a few moments' silence. 'I ha' not forgot you,

ledy.'

'Yes, Stephen, I have heard you. And your prayer is mine.' 'You ha' a father. Will yo tak' a message to him?' 'He is here,' said Louisa, with dread. 'Shall I bring him to you?' 'If yo please.'

Louisa returned with her father. Standing hand-in-hand, they both looked down upon the solemn countenance.

'Sir, yo will clear me an' mak my name good wi' aw men. This I leave to yo.' Mr. Gradgrind was troubled and asked how?

'Sir,' was the reply: 'yor son will tell yo how. Ask him. I mak no charges: I leave none ahint me: not a single word. I ha' seen an' spok'n wi' yor son, one night. I ask no more o' yo than that yo clear me—an' I trust to yo to do 't.'

The bearers being now ready to carry him away, and the surgeon being anxious for his removal, those who had torches or lanterns, prepared to go in front of the litter. Before it was raised, and while they were arranging how to go, he said to Rachael, looking upward at the star:

'Often as I coom to myseln, and found it shinin' on me down there in my trouble, I thowt it were the star as guided to Our Saviour's home. I awmust think it be the very star!'

They lifted him up, and he was overjoyed to find that they were about to take him in the direction whither the star seemed to him to lead.

'Rachael, beloved lass! Don't let go my hand. We may walk toogether t'night, my dear!'

'I will hold thy hand, and keep beside thee, Stephen, all the way.'

'Bless thee! Will soombody be pleased to coover my face!'

They carried him very gently along the fields, and down the lanes, and over the wide landscape; Rachael always holding the hand in hers. Very few whispers broke the mournful silence. It was soon a funeral procession. The star had shown him where to find the God of the poor; and through humility, and sorrow, and forgiveness, he had gone to his Redeemer's rest.

Chapter VII: Whelp-Hunting

BEFORE the ring formed round the Old Hell Shaft was broken, one figure had disappeared from within it. Mr. Bounderby and his shadow had not stood near Louisa, who held her father's arm, but in a retired place by themselves. When Mr. Gradgrind was summoned to the couch, Sissy, attentive to all that happened, slipped behind that wicked shadow—a sight in the horror of his face, if there had been eyes there for any sight but one—and whispered in his ear. Without turning his head, he conferred with her a few moments, and vanished. Thus the whelp had gone out of the circle before the people moved.

When the father reached home, he sent a message to Mr. Bounderby's, desiring his son to come to him directly. The reply was, that Mr. Bounderby having missed

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him in the crowd, and seeing nothing of him since, had supposed him to be at Stone Lodge.

'I believe, father,' said Louisa, 'he will not come back to town to-night.' Mr. Gradgrind turned away, and said no more.

In the morning, he went down to the Bank himself as soon as it was opened, and seeing his son's place empty (he had not the courage to look in at first) went back along the street to meet Mr. Bounderby on his way there. To whom he said that, for reasons he would soon explain, but entreated not then to be asked for, he had found it necessary to employ his son at a distance for a little while. Also, that he was charged with the duty of vindicating Stephen Blackpool's memory, and declaring the thief. Mr. Bounderby quite confounded, stood stock-still in the street after his father-in-law had left him, swelling like an immense soap-bubble, without its beauty.

Mr. Gradgrind went home, locked himself in his room, and kept it all that day. When Sissy and Louisa tapped at his door, he said, without opening it, 'Not now, my dears; in the evening.' On their return in the evening, he said, 'I am not able yet—to-morrow.' He ate nothing all day, and had no candle after dark; and they heard him walking to and fro late at night.

But, in the morning he appeared at breakfast at the usual hour, and took his usual place at the table. Aged and bent he looked, and quite bowed down; and yet he looked a wiser man, and a better man, than in the days when in this life he wanted nothing—but Facts. Before he left the room, he appointed a time for them to come to him; and so, with his gray head drooping, went away.

'Dear father,' said Louisa, when they kept their appointment, 'you have three young children left. They will be different, I will be different yet, with Heaven's help.'

She gave her hand to Sissy, as if she meant with her help too.

'Your wretched brother,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'Do you think he had planned this robbery, when he went with you to the lodging?'

'I fear so, father. I know he had wanted money very much, and had spent a great deal.'

'The poor man being about to leave the town, it came into his evil brain to cast suspicion on him?'

'I think it must have flashed upon him while he sat there, father. For I asked him to go there with me. The visit did not originate with him.'

'He had some conversation with the poor man. Did he take him aside?'

'He took him out of the room. I asked him afterwards, why he had done so, and he made a plausible excuse; but since last night, father, and when I remember the circumstances by its light, I am afraid I can imagine too truly what passed between them.'

'Let me know,' said her father, 'if your thoughts present your guilty brother in the same dark view as mine.'

'I fear, father,' hesitated Louisa, 'that he must have made some representation to Stephen Blackpool—perhaps in my name, perhaps in his own—which induced

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him to do in good faith and honesty, what he had never done before, and to wait about the Bank those two or three nights before he left the town.' 'Too plain!' returned the father. 'Too plain!'

He shaded his face, and remained silent for some moments. Recovering himself, he said:

'And now, how is he to be found? How is he to be saved from justice? In the few hours that I can possibly allow to elapse before I publish the truth, how is he to be found by us, and only by us? Ten thousand pounds could not effect it.'

'Sissy has effected it, father.'

He raised his eyes to where she stood, like a good fairy in his house, and said in a tone of softened gratitude and grateful kindness, 'It is always you, my child!'

'We had our fears,' Sissy explained, glancing at Louisa, 'before yesterday; and when I saw you brought to the side of the litter last night, and heard what passed (being close to Rachael all the time), I went to him when no one saw, and said to him, "Don't look at me. See where your father is. Escape at once, for his sake and your own!" He was in a tremble before I whispered to him, and he started and trembled more then, and said, "Where can I go? I have very little money, and I don't know who will hide me!" I thought of father's old circus. I have not forgotten where Mr. Sleary goes at this time of year, and I read of him in a paper only the other day. I told him to hurry there, and tell his name, and ask Mr. Sleary to hide him till I came. "I'll get to him before the morning," he said. And I saw him shrink away among the people.'

'Thank Heaven!' exclaimed his father. 'He may be got abroad yet.'

It was the more hopeful as the town to which Sissy had directed him was within three hours' journey of Liverpool, whence he could be swiftly dispatched to any part of the world. But, caution being necessary in communicating with him—for there was a greater danger every moment of his being suspected now, and nobody could be sure at heart but that Mr. Bounderby himself, in a bullying vein of public zeal, might play a Roman part—it was consented that Sissy and Louisa should repair to the place in question, by a circuitous course, alone; and that the unhappy father, setting forth in an opposite direction, should get round to the same bourne by another and wider route. It was further agreed that he should not present himself to Mr. Sleary, lest his intentions should be mistrusted, or the intelligence of his arrival should cause his son to take flight anew; but, that the communication should be left to Sissy and Louisa to open; and that they should inform the cause of so much misery and disgrace, of his father's being at hand and of the purpose for which they had come. When these arrangements had been well considered and were fully understood by all three, it was time to begin to carry them into execution. Early in the afternoon, Mr. Gradgrind walked direct from his own house into the country, to be taken up on the line by which he was to travel; and at night the remaining two set forth upon their different course, encouraged by not seeing any face they knew.

The two travelled all night, except when they were left, for odd numbers of minutes, at branch-places, up illimitable flights of steps, or down wells—which was

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the only variety of those branches—and, early in the morning, were turned out on a swamp, a mile or two from the town they sought. From this dismal spot they were rescued by a savage old postilion, who happened to be up early, kicking a horse in a fly: and so were smuggled into the town by all the back lanes where the pigs lived: which, although not a magnificent or even savoury approach, was, as is usual in such cases, the legitimate highway.

The first thing they saw on entering the town was the skeleton of Sleary's Circus. The company had departed for another town more than twenty miles off, and had opened there last night. The connection between the two places was by a hilly turnpike-road, and the travelling on that road was very slow. Though they took but a hasty breakfast, and no rest (which it would have been in vain to seek under such anxious circumstances), it was noon before they began to find the bills of Sleary's Horse-riding on barns and walls, and one o'clock when they stopped in the market-place.

A Grand Morning Performance by the Riders, commencing at that very hour, was in course of announcement by the bellman as they set their feet upon the stones of the street. Sissy recommended that, to avoid making inquiries and attracting attention in the town, they should present themselves to pay at the door. If Mr. Sleary were taking the money, he would be sure to know her, and would proceed with discretion. If he were not, he would be sure to see them inside; and, knowing what he had done with the fugitive, would proceed with discretion still.

Therefore, they repaired, with fluttering hearts, to the well-remembered booth. The flag with the inscription Sleary's Horse-riding was there; and the Gothic niche was there; but Mr. Sleary was not there. Master Kidderminster, grown too maturely turfy to be received by the wildest credulity as Cupid any more, had yielded to the invincible force of circumstances (and his beard), and, in the capacity of a man who made himself generally useful, presided on this occasion over the exchequer—having also a drum in reserve, on which to expend his leisure moments and superfluous forces. In the extreme sharpness of his look out for base coin, Mr. Kidderminster, as at present situated, never saw anything but money; so Sissy passed him unrecognised, and they went in.

The Emperor of Japan, on a steady old white horse stencilled with black spots, was twirling five wash-hand basins at once, as it is the favourite recreation of that monarch to do. Sissy, though well acquainted with his Royal line, had no personal knowledge of the present Emperor, and his reign was peaceful. Miss Josephine Sleary, in her celebrated graceful Equestrian Tyrolean Flower Act, was then announced by a new clown (who humorously said Cauliflower Act), and Mr. Sleary appeared, leading her in.

Mr. Sleary had only made one cut at the Clown with his long whip-lash, and the Clown had only said, 'If you do it again, I'll throw the horse at you!' when Sissy was recognised both by father and daughter. But they got through the Act with great self-possession; and Mr. Sleary, saving for the first instant, conveyed no more expression into his locomotive eye than into his fixed one. The performance

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seemed a little long to Sissy and Louisa, particularly when it stopped to afford the Clown an opportunity of telling Mr. Sleary (who said 'Indeed, sir!' to all his observations in the calmest way, and with his eye on the house) about two legs sitting on three legs looking at one leg, when in came four legs, and laid hold of one leg, and up got two legs, caught hold of three legs, and threw 'em at four legs, who ran away with one leg. For, although an ingenious Allegory relating to a butcher, a three-legged stool, a dog, and a leg of mutton, this narrative consumed time; and they were in great suspense. At last, however, little fair-haired Josephine made her curtsey amid great applause; and the Clown, left alone in the ring, had just warmed himself, and said, 'Now I'll have a turn!' when Sissy was touched on the shoulder, and beckoned out.

She took Louisa with her; and they were received by Mr. Sleary in a very little private apartment, with canvas sides, a grass floor, and a wooden ceiling all aslant, on which the box company stamped their approbation, as if they were coming through. 'Thethilia,' said Mr. Sleary, who had brandy and water at hand, 'it doth me good to thee you. You wath alwayth a favourite with uth, and you've done uth credith thinth the old timeth I'm thure. You mutht thee our people, my dear, afore we thpeak of bithnith, or they'll break their hearth—ethpethially the women. Here'th Jothphine hath been and got married to E. W. B. Childerth, and thee hath got a boy, and though he'th only three yearth old, he thtickth on to any pony you can bring againtht him. He'th named The Little Wonder of Thcolathtic Equitation; and if you don't hear of that boy at Athley'th, you'll hear of him at Parith. And you recollect Kidderminthter, that wath thought to be rather thweet upon yourthelf? Well. He'th married too. Married a widder. Old enough to be hith mother. Thee wath Tightrope, thee wath, and now thee'th nothing—on accounth of fat. They've got two children, tho we're thtrong in the Fairy bithnith and the Nurthery dodge. If you wath to thee our Children in the Wood, with their father and mother both a dyin' on a horthe—their uncle a retheiving of 'em ath hith wardth, upon a horthe— themthelvth both a goin' a black-berryin' on a horthe—and the Robinth a coming in to cover 'em with leavth, upon a horthe—you'd thay it wath the completetht thing ath ever you thet your eyeth on! And you remember Emma Gordon, my dear, ath wath a'motht a mother to you? Of courthe you do; I needn't athk. Well! Emma, thee lotht her huthband. He wath throw'd a heavy back-fall off a Elephant in a thort of a Pagoda thing ath the Thultan of the Indieth, and he never got the better of it; and thee married a thecond time—married a Cheethemonger ath fell in love with her from the front—and he'th a Overtheer and makin' a fortun.'

These various changes, Mr. Sleary, very short of breath now, related with great heartiness, and with a wonderful kind of innocence, considering what a bleary and brandy-and-watery old veteran he was. Afterwards he brought in Josephine, and E. W. B. Childers (rather deeply lined in the jaws by daylight), and the Little Wonder of Scholastic Equitation, and in a word, all the company. Amazing creatures they were in Louisa's eyes, so white and pink of complexion, so scant of dress, and so demonstrative of leg; but it was very agreeable to see them crowding about Sissy, and very natural in Sissy to be unable to refrain from tears.

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'There! Now Thethilia hath kithd all the children, and hugged all the women, and thaken handth all round with all the men, clear, every one of you, and ring in the band for the thecond part!'

As soon as they were gone, he continued in a low tone. 'Now, Thethilia, I don't athk to know any thecreth, but I thuppothe I may conthider thith to be Mith

Thquire.'

'This is his sister. Yes.'

'And t'other on'th daughter. That'h what I mean. Hope I thee you well, mith. And I hope the Thquire'th well?'

'My father will be here soon,' said Louisa, anxious to bring him to the point. 'Is my brother safe?'

'Thafe and thound!' he replied. 'I want you jutht to take a peep at the Ring, mith, through here. Thethilia, you know the dodgeth; find a thpy-hole for yourthelf.' They each looked through a chink in the boards.

'That'h Jack the Giant Killer—piethe of comic infant bithnith,' said Sleary. 'There'th a property-houthe, you thee, for Jack to hide in; there'th my Clown with a thauthepan-lid and a thpit, for Jack'th thervant; there'th little Jack himthelf in a thplendid thoot of armour; there'th two comic black thervanth twithe ath big ath the houthe, to thtand by it and to bring it in and clear it; and the Giant (a very ecthpenthive bathket one), he an't on yet. Now, do you thee 'em all?'

'Yes,' they both said.

'Look at 'em again,' said Sleary, 'look at 'em well. You thee em all? Very good. Now, mith;' he put a form for them to sit on; 'I have my opinionth, and the Thquire your father hath hith. I don't want to know what your brother'th been up to; ith better for me not to know. All I thay ith, the Thquire hath thtood by Thethilia, and I'll thtand by the Thquire. Your brother ith one them black thervanth.'

Louisa uttered an exclamation, partly of distress, partly of satisfaction.

'Ith a fact,' said Sleary, 'and even knowin' it, you couldn't put your finger on him. Let the Thquire come. I thall keep your brother here after the performanth. I thant undreth him, nor yet wath hith paint off. Let the Thquire come here after the performanth, or come here yourthelf after the performanth, and you thall find your brother, and have the whole plathe to talk to him in. Never mind the lookth of him, ath long ath he'th well hid.'

Louisa, with many thanks and with a lightened load, detained Mr. Sleary no longer then. She left her love for her brother, with her eyes full of tears; and she and Sissy went away until later in the afternoon.

Mr. Gradgrind arrived within an hour afterwards. He too had encountered no one whom he knew; and was now sanguine with Slear/s assistance, of getting his disgraced son to Liverpool in the night. As neither of the three could be his companion without almost identifying him under any disguise, he prepared a letter to a correspondent whom he could trust, beseeching him to ship the bearer off at any cost, to North or South America, or any distant part of the world to which he could be the most speedily and privately dispatched.

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This done, they walked about, waiting for the Circus to be quite vacated; not only by the audience, but by the company and by the horses. After watching it a long time, they saw Mr. Sleary bring out a chair and sit down by the side-door, smoking; as if that were his signal that they might approach.

'Your thervant, Thquire,' was his cautious salutation as they passed in. 'If you want me you'll find me here. You muthn't mind your thon having a comic livery on.'

They all three went in; and Mr. Gradgrind sat down forlorn, on the Clown's performing chair in the middle of the ring. On one of the back benches, remote in the subdued light and the strangeness of the place, sat the villainous whelp, sulky to the last, whom he had the misery to call his son.

In a preposterous coat, like a beadle's, with cuffs and flaps exaggerated to an unspeakable extent; in an immense waistcoat, knee-breeches, buckled shoes, and a mad cocked hat; with nothing fitting him, and everything of coarse material, moth-eaten and full of holes; with seams in his black face, where fear and heat had started through the greasy composition daubed all over it; anything so grimly, detestably, ridiculously shameful as the whelp in his comic livery, Mr. Gradgrind never could by any other means have believed in, weighable and measurable fact though it was. And one of his model children had come to this!

At first the whelp would not draw any nearer, but persisted in remaining up there by himself. Yielding at length, if any concession so sullenly made can be called yielding, to the entreaties of Sissy—for Louisa he disowned altogether—he came down, bench by bench, until he stood in the sawdust, on the verge of the circle, as far as possible, within its limits from where his father sat.

'How was this done?' asked the father.

'How was what done?' moodily answered the son.

'This robbery,' said the father, raising his voice upon the word.

'I forced the safe myself over night, and shut it up ajar before I went away. I had had the key that was found, made long before. I dropped it that morning, that it might be supposed to have been used. I didn't take the money all at once. I pretended to put my balance away every night, but I didn't. Now you know all about it.'

'If a thunderbolt had fallen on me,' said the father, 'it would have shocked me less than this!'

'I don't see why,' grumbled the son. 'So many people are employed in situations of trust; so many people, out of so many, will be dishonest. I have heard you talk, a hundred times, of its being a law. How can I help laws? You have comforted others with such things, father. Comfort yourself!'

The father buried his face in his hands, and the son stood in his disgraceful grotesqueness, biting straw: his hands, with the black partly worn away inside, looking like the hands of a monkey. The evening was fast closing in; and from time to time, he turned the whites of his eyes restlessly and impatiently towards his father. They were the only parts of his face that showed any life or expression, the pigment upon it was so thick.

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'You must be got to Liverpool, and sent abroad.'

'I suppose I must. I can't be more miserable anywhere,' whimpered the whelp, 'than I have been here, ever since I can remember. That's one thing.'

Mr. Gradgrind went to the door, and returned with Sleary, to whom he submitted the question, How to get this deplorable object away?

'Why, I've been thinking of it, Thquire. There'th not muth time to lothe, tho you muth thay yeth or no. Ith over twenty mileth to the rail. There'th a coath in half an hour, that goeth to the rail, 'purpothe to cath the mail train. That train will take him right to Liverpool.'

'But look at him,' groaned Mr. Gradgrind. 'Will any coach—'

'I don't mean that he thould go in the comic livery,' said Sleary. 'Thay the word, and I'll make a Jothkin of him, out of the wardrobe, in five minutes.'

'I don't understand,' said Mr. Gradgrind.

'A Jothkin—a Carter. Make up your mind quick, Thquire. There'll be beer to feth. I've never met with nothing but beer ath'll ever clean a comic blackamoor.'

Mr. Gradgrind rapidly assented; Mr. Sleary rapidly turned out from a box, a smock frock, a felt hat, and other essentials; the whelp rapidly changed clothes behind a screen of baize; Mr. Sleary rapidly brought beer, and washed him white again.

'Now,' said Sleary, 'come along to the coath, and jump up behind; I'll go with you there, and they'll thuppothe you one of my people. Thay farewell to your family, and tharp'th the word.' With which he delicately retired.

'Here is your letter,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'All necessary means will be provided for you. Atone, by repentance and better conduct, for the shocking action you have committed, and the dreadful consequences to which it has led. Give me your hand, my poor boy, and may God forgive you as I do!'

The culprit was moved to a few abject tears by these words and their pathetic tone. But, when Louisa opened her arms, he repulsed her afresh.

'Not you. I don't want to have anything to say to you!'

'O Tom, Tom, do we end so, after all my love!'

'After all your love!' he returned, obdurately. 'Pretty love! Leaving old Bounderby to himself, and packing my best friend Mr. Harthouse off, and going home just when I was in the greatest danger. Pretty love that! Coming out with every word about our having gone to that place, when you saw the net was gathering round me. Pretty love that! You have regularly given me up. You never cared for me.'

'Tharp'th the word!' said Sleary, at the door.

They all confusedly went out: Louisa crying to him that she forgave him, and loved him still, and that he would one day be sorry to have left her so, and glad to think of these her last words, far away: when some one ran against them. Mr. Gradgrind and Sissy, who were both before him while his sister yet clung to his shoulder, stopped and recoiled.

For, there was Bitzer, out of breath, his thin lips parted, his thin nostrils distended, his white eyelashes quivering, his colourless face more colourless than

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ever, as if he ran himself into a white heat, when other people ran themselves into a glow. There he stood, panting and heaving, as if he had never stopped since the night, now long ago, when he had run them down before.

'I'm sorry to interfere with your plans,' said Bitzer, shaking his head, 'but I can't allow myself to be done by horse-riders. I must have young Mr. Tom; he mustn't be got away by horse-riders; here he is in a smock frock, and I must have him!'

By the collar, too, it seemed. For, so he took possession of him.

Chapter VIII: Philosophical

THEY went back into the booth, Sleary shutting the door to keep intruders out. Bitzer, still holding the paralysed culprit by the collar, stood in the Ring, blinking at his old patron through the darkness of the twilight.

'Bitzer,' said Mr. Gradgrind, broken down, and miserably submissive to him, 'have you a heart?'

'The circulation, sir,' returned Bitzer, smiling at the oddity of the question, 'couldn't be carried on without one. No man, sir, acquainted with the facts established by Harvey relating to the circulation of the blood, can doubt that I have a heart.'

'Is it accessible,' cried Mr. Gradgrind, 'to any compassionate influence?' 'It is accessible to Reason, sir,' returned the excellent young man. 'And to nothing else.'

They stood looking at each other; Mr. Gradgrind's face as white as the pursuer's.

'What motive—even what motive in reason—can you have for preventing the escape of this wretched youth,' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'and crushing his miserable father? See his sister here. Pity us!'

'Sir,' returned Bitzer, in a very business-like and logical manner, 'since you ask me what motive I have in reason, for taking young Mr. Tom back to Coketown, it is only reasonable to let you know. I have suspected young Mr. Tom of this bank-robbery from the first. I had had my eye upon him before that time, for I knew his ways. I have kept my observations to myself, but I have made them; and I have got ample proofs against him now, besides his running away, and besides his own confession, which I was just in time to overhear. I had the pleasure of watching your house yesterday morning, and following you here. I am going to take young Mr. Tom back to Coketown, in order to deliver him over to Mr. Bounderby. Sir, I have no doubt whatever that Mr. Bounderby will then promote me to young Mr. Tom's situation. And I wish to have his situation, sir, for it will be a rise to me, and will do me good.'

'If this is solely a question of self-interest with you—' Mr. Gradgrind began.

'I beg your pardon for interrupting you, sir,' returned Bitzer; 'but I am sure you know that the whole social system is a question of self-interest. What you must always appeal to, is a person's self-interest. It's your only hold. We are so constituted. I was brought up in that catechism when I was very young, sir, as you are aware.'

'What sum of money,' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'will you set against your expected promotion?'

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'Thank you, sir,' returned Bitzer, 'for hinting at the proposal; but I will not set any sum against it. Knowing that your clear head would propose that alternative, I have gone over the calculations in my mind; and I find that to compound a felony, even on very high terms indeed, would not be as safe and good for me as my improved prospects in the Bank.'

'Bitzer,' said Mr. Gradgrind, stretching out his hands as though he would have said, See how miserable I am! 'Bitzer, I have but one chance left to soften you. You were many years at my school. If, in remembrance of the pains bestowed upon you there, you can persuade yourself in any degree to disregard your present interest and release my son, I entreat and pray you to give him the benefit of that remembrance.'

'I really wonder, sir,' rejoined the old pupil in an argumentative manner, 'to find you taking a position so untenable. My schooling was paid for; it was a bargain; and when I came away, the bargain ended.'

It was a fundamental principle of the Gradgrind philosophy that everything was to be paid for. Nobody was ever on any account to give anybody anything, or render anybody help without purchase. Gratitude was to be abolished, and the virtues springing from it were not to be. Every inch of the existence of mankind, from birth to death, was to be a bargain across a counter. And if we didn't get to Heaven that way, it was not a politico-economical place, and we had no business there.

'I don't deny,' added Bitzer, 'that my schooling was cheap. But that comes right, sir. I was made in the cheapest market, and have to dispose of myself in the dearest.'

He was a little troubled here, by Louisa and Sissy crying.

'Pray don't do that,' said he, 'it's of no use doing that: it only worries. You seem to think that I have some animosity against young Mr. Tom; whereas I have none at all. I am only going, on the reasonable grounds I have mentioned, to take him back to Coketown. If he was to resist, I should set up the cry of Stop thief! But, he won't resist, you may depend upon it.'

Mr. Sleary, who with his mouth open and his rolling eye as immovably jammed in his head as his fixed one, had listened to these doctrines with profound attention, here stepped forward.

'Thquire, you know perfectly well, and your daughter knowth perfectly well (better than you, becauthe I thed it to her), that I didn't know what your thon had done, and that I didn't want to know—I thed it wath better not, though I only thought, then, it wath thome thkylarking. However, thith young man having made it known to be a robbery of a bank, why, that'h a theriouth thing; muth too theriouth a thing for me to compound, ath thith young man hath very properly called it. Conthequently, Thquire, you muthn't quarrel with me if I take thith young man'th thide, and thay he'th right and there'th no help for it. But I tell you what I'll do, Thquire; I'll drive your thon and thith young man over to the rail, and prevent expothure here. I can't conthent to do more, but I'll do that.'

Fresh lamentations from Louisa, and deeper affliction on Mr. Gradgrind's part, followed this desertion of them by their last friend. But, Sissy glanced at him with great attention; nor did she in her own breast misunderstand him. As they were all

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going out again, he favoured her with one slight roll of his movable eye, desiring her to linger behind. As he locked the door, he said excitedly:

'The Thquire thtood by you, Thethilia, and I'll thtand by the Thquire. More than that: thith ith a prethiouth rathcal, and belongth to that bluthtering Cove that my people nearly pitht out o' winder. It'll be a dark night; I've got a horthe that'll do anything but thpeak; I've got a pony that'll go fifteen mile an hour with Childerth driving of him; I've got a dog that'll keep a man to one plathe four-and-twenty hourth. Get a word with the young Thquire. Tell him, when he theeth our horthe begin to danthe, not to be afraid of being thpilt, but to look out for a pony-gig coming up. Tell him, when he theeth that gig clothe by, to jump down, and it'll take him off at a rattling pathe. If my dog leth thith young man thtir a peg on foot, I give him leave to go. And if my horthe ever thtirth from that thpot where he beginth a danthing, till the morning—I don't know him?—Tharp'th the word!'

The word was so sharp, that in ten minutes Mr. Childers, sauntering about the market-place in a pair of slippers, had his cue, and Mr. Sleary's equipage was ready. It was a fine sight, to behold the learned dog barking round it, and Mr. Sleary instructing him, with his one practicable eye, that Bitzer was the object of his particular attentions. Soon after dark they all three got in and started; the learned dog (a formidable creature) already pinning Bitzer with his eye, and sticking close to the wheel on his side, that he might be ready for him in the event of his showing the slightest disposition to alight.

The other three sat up at the inn all night in great suspense. At eight o'clock in the morning Mr. Sleary and the dog reappeared: both in high spirits.

'All right, Thquire!' said Mr. Sleary, 'your thon may be aboard-a-thip by thith time. Childerth took him off, an hour and a half after we left there latht night. The horthe danthed the polka till he wath dead beat (he would have walthed if he hadn't been in harneth), and then I gave him the word and he went to thleep comfortable. When that prethiouth young Rathcal thed he'd go for'ard afoot, the dog hung on to hith neck-hankercher with all four legth in the air and pulled him down and rolled him over. Tho he come back into the drag, and there he that, 'till I turned the horthe'th head, at half-patht thixth thith morning.'

Mr. Gradgrind overwhelmed him with thanks, of course; and hinted as delicately as he could, at a handsome remuneration in money.

'I don't want money mythelf, Thquire; but Childerth ith a family man, and if you wath to like to offer him a five-pound note, it mightn't be unactheptable. Likewithe if you wath to thtand a collar for the dog, or a thet of bellth for the horthe, I thould be very glad to take 'em. Brandy and water I alwayth take.' He had already called for a glass, and now called for another. 'If you wouldn't think it going too far, Thquire, to make a little thpread for the company at about three and thixth ahead, not reckoning Luth, it would make 'em happy.'

All these little tokens of his gratitude, Mr. Gradgrind very willingly undertook to render. Though he thought them far too slight, he said, for such a service.

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'Very well, Thquire; then, if you'll only give a Horthe-riding, a bethpeak, whenever you can, you'll more than balanthe the account. Now, Thquire, if your daughter will ethcuthe me, I thould like one parting word with you.'

Louisa and Sissy withdrew into an adjoining room; Mr. Sleary, stirring and drinking his brandy and water as he stood, went on:

'Thquire,—you don't need to be told that dogth ith wonderful animalth.'

'Their instinct,' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'is surprising.'

'Whatever you call it—and I'm bletht if I know what to call it'—said Sleary, 'it ith athtonithing. The way in whith a dog'll find you—the dithtanthe he'll come!' 'His scent,' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'being so fine.'

'I'm bletht if I know what to call it,' repeated Sleary, shaking his head, 'but I have had dogth find me, Thquire, in a way that made me think whether that dog hadn't gone to another dog, and thed, "You don't happen to know a perthon of the name of Thleary, do you? Perthon of the name of Thleary, in the Horthe-Riding way—thtout man—game eye?" And whether that dog mightn't have thed, "Well, I can't thay I know him mythelf, but I know a dog that I think would be likely to be acquainted with him." And whether that dog mightn't have thought it over, and thed, "Thleary, Thleary! O yeth, to be thure! A friend of mine menthioned him to me at one time. I can get you hith addreth directly." In conthequenth of my being afore the public, and going about tho muth, you thee, there mutht be a number of dogth acquainted with me, Thquire, that I don't know!'

Mr. Gradgrind seemed to be quite confounded by this speculation.

'Any way,' said Sleary, after putting his lips to his brandy and water, 'ith fourteen month ago, Thquire, thinthe we wath at Chethter. We wath getting up our Children in the Wood one morning, when there cometh into our Ring, by the thtage door, a dog. He had travelled a long way, he wath in a very bad condithon, he wath lame, and pretty well blind. He went round to our children, one after another, as if he wath a theeking for a child he know'd; and then he come to me, and throwd hithelf up behind, and thtood on hith two forelegth, weak ath he wath, and then he wagged hith tail and died. Thquire, that dog wath Merrylegth.'

'Sissy's father's dog!'

'Thethilia'th father'th old dog. Now, Thquire, I can take my oath, from my knowledge of that dog, that that man wath dead—and buried—afore that dog come back to me. Joth'phine and Childerth and me talked it over a long time, whether I thould write or not. But we agreed, "No. There'th nothing comfortable to tell; why unthettle her mind, and make her unhappy?" Tho, whether her father bathely detherted her; or whether he broke hith own heart alone, rather than pull her down along with him; never will be known, now, Thquire, till—no, not till we know how the dogth findth uth out!'

'She keeps the bottle that he sent her for, to this hour; and she will believe in his affection to the last moment of her life,' said Mr. Gradgrind.

'It theemth to prethent two thingth to a perthon, don't it, Thquire?' said Mr. Sleary, musing as he looked down into the depths of his brandy and water: 'one,

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that there ith a love in the world, not all Thelf-interetht after all, but thomething very different; t'other, that it bath a way of ith own of calculating or not calculating, whith thomehow or another ith at leatht ath hard to give a name to, ath the wayth of the dogth ith!'

Mr. Gradgrind looked out of window, and made no reply. Mr. Sleary emptied his glass and recalled the ladies.

'Thethilia my dear, kith me and good-bye! Mith Thquire, to thee you treating of her like a thithter, and a thithter that you trutht and honour with all your heart and more, ith a very pretty thight to me. I hope your brother may live to be better detherving of you, and a greater comfort to you. Thquire, thake handth, firtht and latht! Don't be croth with uth poor vagabondth. People mutht be amuthed. They can't be alwayth a learning, nor yet they can't be alwayth a working, they an't made for it. You mutht have uth, Thquire. Do the withe thing and the kind thing too, and make the betht of uth; not the wurtht!'

'And I never thought before,' said Mr. Sleary, putting his head in at the door again to say it, 'that I wath tho muth of a Cackler!'

Chapter IX: Final

IT is a dangerous thing to see anything in the sphere of a vain blusterer, before the vain blusterer sees it himself. Mr. Bounderby felt that Mrs. Sparsit had audaciously anticipated him, and presumed to be wiser than he. Inappeasably indignant with her for her triumphant discovery of Mrs. Pegler, he turned this presumption, on the part of a woman in her dependent position, over and over in his mind, until it accumulated with turning like a great snowball. At last he made the discovery that to discharge this highly connected female—to have it in his power to say, 'She was a woman of family, and wanted to stick to me, but I wouldn't have it, and got rid of her'—would be to get the utmost possible amount of crowning glory out of the connection, and at the same time to punish Mrs. Sparsit according to her deserts.

Filled fuller than ever, with this great idea, Mr. Bounderby came in to lunch, and sat himself down in the dining-room of former days, where his portrait was. Mrs. Sparsit sat by the fire, with her foot in her cotton stirrup, little thinking whither she was posting.

Since the Pegler affair, this gentlewoman had covered her pity for Mr. Bounderby with a veil of quiet melancholy and contrition. In virtue thereof, it had become her habit to assume a woful look, which woful look she now bestowed upon her patron.

'What's the matter now, ma'am?' said Mr. Bounderby, in a very short, rough way.

'Pray, sir,' returned Mrs. Sparsit, 'do not bite my nose off.'

'Bite your nose off, ma'am?' repeated Mr. Bounderby. 'Your nose!' meaning, as Mrs. Sparsit conceived, that it was too developed a nose for the purpose. After which offensive implication, he cut himself a crust of bread, and threw the knife down with a noise.

Mrs. Sparsit took her foot out of her stirrup, and said, 'Mr. Bounderby, sir!'

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'Well, ma'am?' retorted Mr. Bounderby. 'What are you staring at?' 'May I ask, sir,' said Mrs. Sparsit, 'have you been ruffled this morning?''Yes, ma'am.'

'May I inquire, sir,' pursued the injured woman, 'whether I am the unfortunate cause of your having lost your temper?'

'Now, I'll tell you what, ma'am,' said Bounderby, 'I am not come here to be bullied. A female may be highly connected, but she can't be permitted to bother and badger a man in my position, and I am not going to put up with it.' (Mr. Bounderby felt it necessary to get on: foreseeing that if he allowed of details, he would be beaten.)

Mrs. Sparsit first elevated, then knitted, her Coriolanian eyebrows; gathered up her work into its proper basket; and rose.

'Sir,' said she, majestically. 'It is apparent to me that I am in your way at present. I will retire to my own apartment.'

'Allow me to open the door, ma'am.'

'Thank you, sir; I can do it for myself.'

'You had better allow me, ma'am,' said Bounderby, passing her, and getting his hand upon the lock; 'because I can take the opportunity of saying a word to you, before you go. Mrs. Sparsit, ma'am, I rather think you are cramped here, do you know? It appears to me, that, under my humble roof, there's hardly opening enough for a lady of your genius in other people's affairs.'

Mrs. Sparsit gave him a look of the darkest scorn, and said with great politeness,

'Really, sir?'

'I have been thinking it over, you see, since the late affairs have happened, ma'am,' said Bounderby; 'and it appears to my poor judgment—'

'Oh! Pray, sir,' Mrs. Sparsit interposed, with sprightly cheerfulness, 'don't disparage your judgment. Everybody knows how unerring Mr. Bounderby's judgment is. Everybody has had proofs of it. It must be the theme of general conversation. Disparage anything in yourself but your judgment, sir,' said Mrs. Sparsit, laughing.

Mr. Bounderby, very red and uncomfortable, resumed:

'It appears to me, ma'am, I say, that a different sort of establishment altogether would bring out a lady of your powers. Such an establishment as your relation, Lady Scadgers's, now. Don't you think you might find some affairs there, ma'am, to interfere with?'

'It never occurred to me before, sir,' returned Mrs. Sparsit; 'but now you mention it, should think it highly probable.'

'Then suppose you try, ma'am,' said Bounderby, laying an envelope with a cheque in it in her little basket. 'You can take your own time for going, ma'am; but perhaps in the meanwhile, it will be more agreeable to a lady of your powers of mind, to eat her meals by herself, and not to be intruded upon. I really ought to apologise to you—being only Josiah Bounderby of Coketown—for having stood in your light so long.'

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'Pray don't name it, sir,' returned Mrs. Sparsit. 'If that portrait could speak, sir—but it has the advantage over the original of not possessing the power of committing itself and disgusting others,—it would testify, that a long period has elapsed since I first habitually addressed it as the picture of a Noodle. Nothing that a Noodle does, can awaken surprise or indignation; the proceedings of a Noodle can only inspire contempt.'

Thus saying, Mrs. Sparsit, with her Roman features like a medal struck to commemorate her scorn of Mr. Bounderby, surveyed him fixedly from head to foot, swept disdainfully past him, and ascended the staircase. Mr. Bounderby closed the door, and stood before the fire; projecting himself after his old explosive manner into his portrait—and into futurity.

Into how much of futurity? He saw Mrs. Sparsit fighting out a daily fight at the points of all the weapons in the female armoury, with the grudging, smarting, peevish, tormenting Lady Scadgers, still laid up in bed with her mysterious leg, and gobbling her insufficient income down by about the middle of every quarter, in a mean little airless lodging, a mere closet for one, a mere crib for two; but did he see more? Did he catch any glimpse of himself making a show of Bitzer to strangers, as the rising young man, so devoted to his master's great merits, who had won young Tom's place, and had almost captured young Tom himself, in the times when by various rascals he was spirited away? Did he see any faint reflection of his own image making a vain-glorious will, whereby five-and-twenty Humbugs, past five-and-fifty years of age, each taking upon himself the name, Josiah Bounderby of Coketown, should for ever dine in Bounderby Hall, for ever lodge in Bounderby buildings, for ever attend a Bounderby chapel, for ever go to sleep under a Bounderby chaplain, for ever be supported out of a Bounderby estate, and for ever nauseate all healthy stomachs, with a vast amount of Bounderby balderdash and bluster? Had he any prescience of the day, five years to come, when Josiah Bounderby of Coketown was to die of a fit in the Coketown street, and this same precious will was to begin its long career of quibble, plunder, false pretences, vile example, little service and much law? Probably not. Yet the portrait was to see it all out.

Here was Mr. Gradgrind on the same day, and in the same hour, sitting thoughtful in his own room. How much of futurity did he see? Did he see himself, a white-haired decrepit man, bending his hitherto inflexible theories to appointed circumstances; making his facts and figures subservient to Faith, Hope, and Charity; and no longer trying to grind that Heavenly trio in his dusty little mills? Did he catch sight of himself, therefore much despised by his late political associates? Did he see them, in the era of its being quite settled that the national dustmen have only to do with one another, and owe no duty to an abstraction called a People, 'taunting the honourable gentleman' with this and with that and with what not, five nights a-week, until the small hours of the morning? Probably he had that much foreknowledge, knowing his men.

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Here was Louisa on the night of the same day, watching the fire as in days of yore, though with a gentler and a humbler face. How much of the future might arise before her vision? Broadsides in the streets, signed with her father's name, exonerating the late Stephen Blackpool, weaver, from misplaced suspicion, and publishing the guilt of his own son, with such extenuation as his years and temptation (he could not bring himself to add, his education) might beseech; were of the Present. So, Stephen Blackpool's tombstone, with her father's record of his death, was almost of the Present, for she knew it was to be. These things she could plainly see. But, how much of the Future?

A working woman, christened Rachael, after a long illness once again appearing at the ringing of the Factory bell, and passing to and fro at the set hours, among the Coketown Hands; a woman of pensive beauty, always dressed in black, but sweet-tempered and serene, and even cheerful; who, of all the people in the place, alone appeared to have compassion on a degraded, drunken wretch of her own sex, who was sometimes seen in the town secretly begging of her, and crying to her; a woman working, ever working, but content to do it, and preferring to do it as her natural lot, until she should be too old to labour any more? Did Louisa see this? Such a thing was to be.

A lonely brother, many thousands of miles away, writing, on paper blotted with tears, that her words had too soon come true, and that all the treasures in the world would be cheaply bartered for a sight of her dear face? At length this brother coming nearer home, with hope of seeing her, and being delayed by illness; and then a letter, in a strange hand, saying 'he died in hospital, of fever, such a day, and died in penitence and love of you: his last word being your name'? Did Louisa see these things? Such things were to be.

Herself again a wife—a mother—lovingly watchful of her children, ever careful that they should have a childhood of the mind no less than a childhood of the body, as knowing it to be even a more beautiful thing, and a possession, any hoarded scrap of which, is a blessing and happiness to the wisest? Did Louisa see this? Such a thing was never to be.

But, happy Sissy's happy children loving her; all children loving her; she, grown learned in childish lore; thinking no innocent and pretty fancy ever to be despised; trying hard to know her humbler fellow-creatures, and to beautify their lives of machinery and reality with those imaginative graces and delights, without which the heart of infancy will wither up, the sturdiest physical manhood will be morally stark death, and the plainest national prosperity figures can show, will be the Writing on the Wall,—she holding this course as part of no fantastic vow, or bond, or brotherhood, or sisterhood, or pledge, or covenant, or fancy dress, or fancy fair; but simply as a duty to be done,—did Louisa see these things of herself? These things were to be.

Dear reader! It rests with you and me, whether, in our two fields of action, similar things shall be or not. Let them be! We shall sit with lighter bosoms on the hearth, to see the ashes of our fires turn gray and cold.

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### 2.10.2 Reading and Review Questions

1. Does Dickens offer a coherent social program or political vision in this novel?

2. How do the family relations in the novel parallel the social instability it presents? What relationship is there between the family and the social whole?

3. What role, if any, does Nature play in this novel, and why?

4. What distinctions does the novel make between Fact and Fancy, and how do these distinctions relate to any possibility for social renewal?

## 2.11 DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Image 2.23 | Portrait of Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Artist | William Holman Hunt Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



(1828-1882)

D. G. Rossetti was born into an intellectual family; his father was a Dante scholar, and his mother, a trained governess. D. G. Rossetti trained as both a painter and poet, studying painting with Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893), the father of novelist Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939). He and fellow artists founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848, and Rossetti published several of his poems in its journal The Germ (1850).

Artistic rebels, the Pre-Raphaelites stood for the artist's vision of the truth regardless of convention. They countered the industrialization and mechanization of their era with an organicism they found in the Medieval era. They also sought fidelity to the visible world, often achieved through scrupulously-rendered minute detail. Their elaborate, realistic details were faithful to nature but also symbolic. Rossetti in particular made the non-visual—the spirit or details of religious myth—visible.

Rossetti married poet and painter Elizabeth Siddal (1829-1862), who was also his model. After losing a child, she committed suicide. Out of remorse, Rossetti buried a manuscript of his poems in her grave. Later, he had her body exhumed to recover his poems. Rossetti's reputation grew, and he was embraced by a second generation of Pre-Raphaelites—calling themselves the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood—particularly by William Morris, one of the most important figures in this second group.

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The real love of Rossetti's life was Jane Burden (1839-1914) who married Morris. Rossetti and Morris cofounded a firm of designers that responded to Ruskin's adjuration to involve the whole human being in their work. Rossetti and Jane Morris conducted an affair—that was neither sanctioned nor condemned by Morris. Rossetti wrote his important sonnet sequence, House of Life, influenced by his love for Jane Morris. His poetry was brutally attacked by Robert Buchanan (18411901), who described Rossetti's poetry as "fleshly"—a far from complimentary term during the Victorian era.

Rossetti, who was already addicted to chloral, suffered a nervous breakdown and a decline in his health. He managed to continue to write and paint until he died suddenly in 1882, leaving unfinished paintings behind.

### 2.11.1 "The Blessed Damozel"

Image 2.24 | The Blessed Damozel

Artist | Dante Gabriel Rossetti Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



THE blessed damozel leaned out

From the gold bar of Heaven;

Her eyes were deeper than the depth

Of waters stilled at even;

She had three lilies in her hand,

And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem, No wrought flowers did adorn, But a white rose of Mary's gift, For service meetly worn; Her hair that lay along her back Was yellow like ripe corn. Herseemed she scarce had been a day One of God's choristers; The wonder was not yet quite gone From that still look of hers; Albeit, to them she left, her day Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years. . . . Yet, now, and in this place, Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair Fell all about my face. . . . Nothing: the autumn-fall of leaves. The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house

That she was standing on;

By God built over the sheer depth

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The which is Space begun;

So high, that looking downward thence

She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood Of ether, as a bridge. Beneath, the tides of day and night With flame and darkness ridge The void, as low as where this earth Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met

'Mid deathless love's acclaims,

Spoke evermore among themselves

Their heart-remembered names;

And the souls mounting up to God

Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped

Out of the circling charm;

Until her bosom must have made

The bar she leaned on warm,

And the lilies lay as if asleep

Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw

Time like a pulse shake fierce

Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove

Within the gulf to pierce

Its path; and now she spoke as when

The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon. Was like a little feather Fluttering far down the gulf; and now She spoke through the still weather. Her voice was like the voice of stars Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,

Strove not her accents there,

Fain to be hearkened? When those bells

Possessed the mid-day air,

Strove not her steps to reach my side

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Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,

For he will come," she said.

"Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,

Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?

Are not two prayers a perfect strength?

And shall I feel afraid?

"When round his head the aureole clings,

And he is clothed in white,

I'll take his hand and go with him

To the deep wells of light;

As unto a stream we will step down,

And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,

Occult, withheld, untrod,

Whose lamps are stirred continually

With prayer sent up to God;

And see our old prayers, granted, melt

Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of

That living mystic tree

Within whose secret growth the Dove

Is sometimes felt to be,

While every leaf that His plumes touch

Saith His Name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him, I myself, lying so,

The songs I sing here; which his voice Shall pause in, hushed and slow, And find some knowledge at each pause, Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! we two, we two, thou say'st! Yea, one wast thou with me That once of old. But shall God lift To endless unity

The soul whose likeness with thy soul Was but its love for thee?)

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"We two," she said, "will seek the groves

Where the lady Mary is,

With her five handmaidens, whose names

Are five sweet symphonies,

Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,

Margaret and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks

And foreheads garlanded;

Into the fine cloth white like flame

Weaving the golden thread,

To fashion the birth-robes for them

Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:

Then will I lay my cheek

To his, and tell about our love,

Not once abashed or weak:

And the dear Mother will approve

My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,

To Him round whom all souls

Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads

Bowed with their aureoles:

And angels meeting us shall sing

To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord

Thus much for him and me:—

Only to live as once on earth

With Love,—only to be,

As then awhile, for ever now

Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said, Less sad of speech than mild,— "All this is when he comes." She ceased. The light thrilled towards her, fill'd With angels in strong level flight. Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path Was vague in distant spheres:

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And then she cast her arms along The golden barriers, And laid her face between her hands, And wept. (I heard her tears.)

### 2.11.2 "My Sister's Sleep"

She fell asleep on Christmas Eve.

At length the long-ungranted shade.

Of weary eyelids overweighed The pain nought else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day Over the bed from chime to chime, Then raised herself for the first time,

And as she sat her down did pray.

Her little worktable was spread With work to finish. For the glare Made by her candle, she had care

To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up, Of winter radiance sheer and thin; The hollow halo it was in

Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle sound Of flame, by vents the fireshine drove And reddened. In its dim alcove

The mirror shed a clearness round.

I had been sitting up some nights, And my tired mind felt weak and blank; Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank

The stillness and the broken lights.

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling years Heard in each hour, crept off; and then The ruffled silence spread again,

Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat; Her needles, as she laid them down,

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Met lightly, and her silken gown Settled—no other noise than that.

"Glory unto the Newly Born!" So, as said angels, she did say, Because we were in Christmas Day.

Though it would still be long till morn.

Just then in the room over us There was a pushing back of chairs As some who had sat unawares

So late, now heard the hour, and rose.

With anxious softly-stepping haste Our mother went where Margaret lay, Fearing the sounds o'erhead—should they

Have broken her long watched-for rest!

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned, But suddenly turned back again; And all her features seemed in pain

With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,

And held my breath, and spoke no word.

There was none spoken; but I heard The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept; And both my arms fell, and I sad, "God knows I knew that she was dead."

And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn A little after twelve o'clock, We said, ere the first quarter struck,

"Christ's blessing on the newly born!"

### 2.11.3 "The Burden of Nineveh"

IN our Museum galleries To-day I lingered o'er the prize Dead Greece vouchsafes to living eyes,— Her Art forever in fresh wise

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From hour to hour rejoicing me. Sighing I turned at last to win Once more the London dirt and din; And as I made the swing-door spin And issued, they were hoisting in A winged beast from Nineveh.

A human face the creature wore, And hoofs behind and hoofs before, And flanks with dark runes fretted o'er. 'T was bull, 't was mitred Minotaur, A dead disbowelled mystery; The mummy of a buried faith Stark from the charnel without scathe, Its wings stood for the light to bathe,— Such fossil cerements as might swathe The very corpse of Nineveh.

The print of its first rush-wrapping, Wound ere it dried, still ribbed the thing. What song did the brown maidens sing, From purple mouths alternating,

When that was woven languidly?

What vows, what rites, what prayers preferred,

What songs has the strange image heard?

In what blind vigil stood interred

For ages, till an English word

Broke silence first at Nineveh?

Oh, when upon each sculptured court, Where even the wind might not resort,— O'er which Time passed, of like import With the wild Arab boys at sport,— A living face looked in to see: Oh, seemed it not—the spell once broke— As though the carven warriors woke, As though the shaft the string forsook, The cymbals clashed, the chariots shook, And there was life in Nineveh?

On London stones our sun anew The beast's recovered shadow threw. (No shade that plague of darkness knew,

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No light, no shade, while older grew

By ages the old earth and sea.) Lo thou! could all thy priests have shown Such proof to make thy godhead known? From their dead Past thou liv'st alone; And still thy shadow is thine own

Even as of yore in Nineveh.

That day whereof we keep record, When near thy city-gates the Lord Sheltered his Jonah with a gourd, This sun (I said), here present, poured Even thus this shadow that I see. This shadow has been shed the same From sun and moon,—from lamps which came For prayer,—from fifteen days of flame, The last, while smouldered to a name Sardanapalus' Nineveh.

Within thy shadow, haply, once

Sennacherib has knelt, whose sons

Smote him between the altar-stones;

Or pale Semiramis her zones

Of gold, her incense brought to thee,

In love for grace, in war for aid:....

Ay, and who else?.... till 'neath thy shade

Within his trenches newly made

Last year the Christian knelt and prayed—

Not to thy strength—in Nineveh.

Now, thou poor god, within this hall Where the blank windows blind the wall From pedestal to pedestal, The kind of light shall on thee fall

Which London takes the day to be: While school-foundations in the act Of holiday, three files compact, Shall learn to view thee as a fact Connected with that zealous tract:

"Rome,—Babylon and Nineveh."

Deemed they of this, those worshippers, When, in some mythic chain of verse

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Which man shall not again rehearse, The faces of thy ministers

Yearned pale with bitter ecstasy? Greece, Egypt, Rome,—did any god Before whose feet men knelt unshod Deem that in this unblest abode Another scarce more unknown god

Should house with him, from Nineveh?

Ah! in what quarries lay the stone From which this pygmy pile has grown, Unto man's need how long unknown, Since thy vast temples, court and cone,

Rose far in desert history? Ah! what is here that does not lie All strange to thine awakened eye? Ah! what is here can testify (Save that dumb presence of the sky)

Unto thy day and Nineveh?

Why, of those mummies in the room Above, there might indeed have come One out of Egypt to thy home, An alien. Nay, but were not some

Of these thine own "antiquity"? And now,—they and their gods and thou All relics here together,—now Whose profit? whether bull or cow, Isis or Ibis, who or how,

Whether of Thebes or Nineveh?

The consecrated metals found, And ivory tablets underground, Winged seraphim and creatures crowned, When air and daylight filled the mound, Fell into dust immediately. And even as these, the images Of awe and worship,—even as these,— So, smitten with the sun's increase, Her glory mouldered and did cease From immemorial Nineveh.

The day her builders made their halt, Those cities of the lake of salt

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Stood firmly 'stablished without fault, Made proud with pillars of basalt, With sardonyx and porphyry. The day that Jonah bore abroad To Nineveh the voice of God, A brackish lake lay in his road, Where erst Pride fixed her sure abode, As then in royal Nineveh.

The day when he, Pride's lord and Man's, Showed all the kingdoms at a glance To Him before whose countenance The years recede, the years advance, And said, Fall down and worship me— Mid all the pomp beneath that look, Then stirred there, haply, some rebuke, Where to the wind the salt pools shook, And in those tracts, of life forsook, That knew thee not, O Nineveh!

Delicate harlot! On thy throne Thou with a world beneath thee prone In state for ages sat'st alone; And needs were years and lustres flown Ere strength of man could vanquish thee: Whom even thy victor foes must bring, Still royal, among maids that sing As with doves' voices, taboring Upon their breasts, unto the King,— A kingly conquest, Nineveh!

Here woke my thought. The wind's slow sway Had waxed; and like the human play Of scorn that smiling spreads away, The sunshine shivered off the day:

The callous wind, it seemed to me, Swept up the shadow from the ground: And pale as whom the Fates astound, The god forlorn stood winged and crowned: Within I knew the cry lay bound

Of the dumb soul of Nineveh.

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And as I turned, my sense half shut Still saw the crowds of kerb and rut Go past as marshalled to the strut Of rank in gypsum quaintly cut.

It seemed in one same pageantry They followed forms which had been erst; To pass, till on my sight should burst That future of the best or worst When some may question which was first,

Of London or of Nineveh.

For as that Bull-god once did stand And watched the burial-clouds of sand, Till these at last without a hand Rose o'er his eyes, another land, And blinded him with destiny:— So may he stand again; till now, In ships of unknown sail and prow, Some tribe of the Australian plough Bear him afar,—a relic now Of London, not of Nineveh!

Or it may chance indeed that when Man's age is hoary among men,— His centuries threescore and ten,— His furthest childhood shall seem then

More clear than later times may be: Who, finding in this desert place This form, shall hold us for some race That walked not in Christ's lowly ways, But bowed its pride and vowed its praise

Unto the God of Nineveh.

The smile rose first,—anon drew nigh

The thought: Those heavy wings spread high

So sure of flight, which do not fly;

That set gaze never on the sky;

Those scriptured flanks it cannot see;

Its crown a brow-contracting load:

Its planted feet which trust the sod

(So grew the image as I trod):

O Nineveh, was this thy God,—

Thine also, mighty Nineveh?

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### 2.11.4 "Jenny"

"Vengeance of Jenny's case! Fie on her! Never name her, child!" — (Mrs. Quickly.)

Lazy laughing languid Jenny,

Fond of a kiss and fond of a guinea,

Whose head upon my knee to-night

Rests for a while, as if grown light

With all our dances and the sound

To which the wild tunes spun you round:

Fair Jenny mine, the thoughtless queen

Of kisses which the blush between

Could hardly make much daintier;

Whose eyes are as blue skies, whose hair

Is countless gold incomparable:

Fresh flower, scarce touched with signs that tell

Of Love's exuberant hotbed:—Nay,

Poor flower left torn since yesterday

Until to-morrow leave you bare;

Poor handful of bright spring-water

Flung in the whirlpool's shrieking face;

Poor shameful Jenny, full of grace

Thus with your head upon my knee;—

Whose person or whose purse may be

The lodestar of your reverie?

This room of yours, my Jenny, looks A change from mine so full of books, Whose serried ranks hold fast, forsooth, So many captive hours of youth,— The hours they thieve from day and night To make one's cherished work come right, And leave it wrong for all their theft, Even as to-night my work was left: Until I vowed that since my brain And eyes of dancing seemed so fain, My feet should have some dancing too:— And thus it was I met with you. Well, I suppose 'twas hard to part, For here I am. And now, sweetheart, You seem too tired to get to bed.

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It was a careless life I led When rooms like this were scarce so strange Not long ago. What breeds the change,— The many aims or the few years? Because to-night it all appears Something I do not know again.

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The cloud's not danced out of my brain,— The cloud that made it turn and swim While hour by hour the books grew dim. Why, Jenny, as I watch you there,—

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For all your wealth of loosened hair, Your silk ungirdled and unlac'd And warm sweets open to the waist, All golden in the lamplight's gleam,— You know not what a book you seem, Half-read by lightning in a dream! How should you know, my Jenny? Nay, And I should be ashamed to say:— Poor beauty, so well worth a kiss! But while my thought runs on like this With wasteful whims more than enough, I wonder what you're thinking of.

If of myself you think at all, What is the thought?—conjectural On sorry matters best unsolved?— Or inly is each grace revolved To fit me with a lure?—or (sad To think!) perhaps you're merely glad That I'm not drunk or ruffianly And let you rest upon my knee.

For sometimes, were the truth confess'd, You're thankful for a little rest,— Glad from the crush to rest within, From the heart-sickness and the din Where envy's voice at virtue's pitch Mocks you because your gown is rich; And from the pale girl's dumb rebuke, Whose ill-clad grace and toil-worn look Proclaim the strength that keeps her weak And other nights than yours bespeak; And from the wise unchildish elf, To schoolmate lesser than himself Pointing you out, what thing you are:— Yes, from the daily jeer and jar, From shame and shame's outbraving too, Is rest not sometimes sweet to you?— But most from the hatefulness of man Who spares not to end what he began, Whose acts are ill and his speech ill, Who, having used you at his will, Thrusts you aside, as when I dine I serve the dishes and the wine.

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Well, handsome Jenny mine, sit up, I've filled our glasses, let us sup, And do not let me think of you, Lest shame of yours suffice for two. What, still so tired? Well, well then, keep Your head there, so you do not sleep; But that the weariness may pass And leave you merry, take this glass. Ah! lazy lily hand, more bless'd If ne'er in rings it had been dress'd Nor ever by a glove conceal'd!

Behold the lilies of the field, They toil not neither do they spin; (So doth the ancient text begin,— Not of such rest as one of these Can share.) Another rest and ease Along each summer-sated path From its new lord the garden hath, Than that whose spring in blessings ran Which praised the bounteous husbandman, Ere yet, in days of hankering breath, The lilies sickened unto death.

What, Jenny, are your lilies dead? Aye, and the snow-white leaves are spread Like winter on the garden-bed. But you had roses left in May,— They were not gone too. Jenny, nay, But must your roses die, and those Their purfled buds that should unclose? Even so; the leaves are curled apart, Still red as from the broken heart, And here's the naked stem of thorns.

Nay, nay, mere words. Here nothing warns As yet of winter. Sickness here Or want alone could waken fear,— Nothing but passion wrings a tear. Except when there may rise unsought Haply at times a passing thought Of the old days which seem to be Much older than any history

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That is written in any book;

When she would lie in fields and look

Along the ground through the blown grass,

And wonder where the city was,

Far out of sight, whose broil and bale

They told her then for a child's tale.

Jenny, you know the city now. A child can tell the tale there, how Some things which are not yet enroll'd In market-lists are bought and sold Even till the early Sunday light, When Saturday night is market-night Everywhere, be it dry or wet, And market-night in the Haymarket. Our learned London children know, Poor Jenny, all your pride and woe; Have seen your lifted silken skirt Advertise dainties through the dirt; Have seen your coach-wheels splash rebuke On virtue; and have learned your look When, wealth and health slipped past, you stare Along the streets alone, and there, Round the long park, across the bridge, The cold lamps at the pavement's edge Wind on together and apart, A fiery serpent for your heart.

Let the thoughts pass, an empty cloud! Suppose I were to think aloud,— What if to her all this were said? Why, as a volume seldom read Being opened halfway shuts again, So might the pages of her brain Be parted at such words, and thence Close back upon the dusty sense. For is there hue or shape defin'd In Jenny's desecrated mind, Where all contagious currents meet, A Lethe of the middle street? Nay, it reflects not any face, Nor sound is in its sluggish pace, But as they coil those eddies clot, And night and day remember not.

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Why, Jenny, you're asleep at last!— Asleep, poor Jenny, hard and fast,— So young and soft and tired; so fair, With chin thus nestled in your hair, Mouth quiet, eyelids almost blue As if some sky of dreams shone through!

Just as another woman sleeps! Enough to throw one's thoughts in heaps Of doubt and horror,—what to say Or think,—this awful secret sway, The potter's power over the clay! Of the same lump (it has been said) For honour and dishonour made, Two sister vessels. Here is one.

My cousin Nell is fond of fun, And fond of dress, and change, and praise, So mere a woman in her ways: And if her sweet eyes rich in youth Are like her lips that tell the truth, My cousin Nell is fond of love. And she's the girl I'm proudest of. Who does not prize her, guard her well? The love of change, in cousin Nell, Shall find the best and hold it dear: The unconquered mirth turn quieter Not through her own, through others' woe: The conscious pride of beauty glow Beside another's pride in her, One little part of all they share. For Love himself shall ripen these In a kind soil to just increase Through years of fertilizing peace.

Of the same lump (as it is said) For honour and dishonour made, Two sister vessels. Here is one.

It makes a goblin of the sun.

So pure,—so fall'n! How dare to think Of the first common kindred link?

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Yet, Jenny, till the world shall burn It seems that all things take their turn; And who shall say but this fair tree May need, in changes that may be, Your children's children's charity? Scorned then, no doubt, as you are scorn'd! Shall no man hold his pride forewarn'd Till in the end, the Day of Days, At Judgment, one of his own race, As frail and lost as you, shall rise,— His daughter, with his mother's eyes?

How Jenny's clock ticks on the shelf! Might not the dial scorn itself That has such hours to register? Yet as to me, even so to her Are golden sun and silver moon, In daily largesse of earth's boon, Counted for life-coins to one tune. And if, as blindfold fates are toss'd, Through some one man this life be lost, Shall soul not somehow pay for soul?

Fair shines the gilded aureole In which our highest painters place Some living woman's simple face. And the stilled features thus descried As Jenny's long throat droops aside,— The shadows where the cheeks are thin, And pure wide curve from ear to chin,— With Raffael's, Leonardo's hand To show them to men's souls, might stand, Whole ages long, the whole world through, For preachings of what God can do. What has man done here? How atone, Great God, for this which man has done? And for the body and soul which by Man's pitiless doom must now comply With lifelong hell, what lullaby Of sweet forgetful second birth Remains? All dark. No sign on earth What measure of God's rest endows The many mansions of his house.

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If but a woman's heart might see Such erring heart unerringly For once! But that can never be.

Like a rose shut in a book In which pure women may not look, For its base pages claim control To crush the flower within the soul; Where through each dead rose-leaf that clings, Pale as transparent psyche-wings, To the vile text, are traced such things As might make lady's cheek indeed More than a living rose to read; So nought save foolish foulness may Watch with hard eyes the sure decay; And so the life-blood of this rose, Puddled with shameful knowledge, flows Through leaves no chaste hand may unclose:

Yet still it keeps such faded show Of when 'twas gathered long ago, That the crushed petals' lovely grain, The sweetness of the sanguine stain, Seen of a woman's eyes, must make Her pitiful heart, so prone to ache, Love roses better for its sake:— Only that this can never be:— Even so unto her sex is she.

Yet, Jenny, looking long at you, The woman almost fades from view. A cipher of man's changeless sum Of lust, past, present, and to come, Is left. A riddle that one shrinks

To challenge from the scornful sphinx.

Like a toad within a stone Seated while Time crumbles on; Which sits there since the earth was curs'd For Man's transgression at the first; Which, living through all centuries, Not once has seen the sun arise; Whose life, to its cold circle charmed,

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The earth's whole summers have not warmed;

Which always—whitherso the stone

Be flung—sits there, deaf, blind, alone;—

Aye, and shall not be driven out

Till that which shuts him round about

Break at the very Master's stroke,

And the dust thereof vanish as smoke,

And the seed of Man vanish as dust:—

Even so within this world is Lust.

Come, come, what use in thoughts like this? Poor little Jenny, good to kiss,— You'd not believe by what strange roads Thought travels, when your beauty goads A man to-night to think of toads! Jenny, wake up . . . . Why, there's the dawn!

And there's an early waggon drawn To market, and some sheep that jog Bleating before a barking dog; And the old streets come peering through Another night that London knew; And all as ghostlike as the lamps.

So on the wings of day decamps My last night's frolic. Glooms begin To shiver off as lights creep in Past the gauze curtains half drawn-to, And the lamp's doubled shade grows blue,— Your lamp, my Jenny, kept alight, Like a wise virgin's, all one night! And in the alcove coolly spread Glimmers with dawn your empty bed; And yonder your fair face I see Reflected lying on my knee, Where teems with first foreshadowings Your pier-glass scrawled with diamond rings: And on your bosom all night worn Yesterday's rose now droops forlorn But dies not yet this summer morn.

And now without, as if some word Had called upon them that they heard,

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The London sparrows far and nigh Clamour together suddenly; And Jenny's cage-bird grown awake Here in their song his part must take, Because here too the day doth break.

And somehow in myself the dawn Among stirred clouds and veils withdrawn Strikes greyly on her. Let her sleep. But will it wake her if I heap These cushions thus beneath her head Where my knee was? No,—there's your bed, My Jenny, while you dream. And there I lay among your golden hair Perhaps the subject of your dreams, These golden coins. For still one deems That Jenny's flattering sleep confers New magic on the magic purse,— Grim web, how clogged with shrivelled flies! Between the threads fine fumes arise And shape their pictures in the brain. There roll no streets in glare and rain, Nor flagrant man-swine whets his tusk; But delicately sighs in musk The homage of the dim boudoir; Or like a palpitating star Thrilled into song, the opera-night Breathes faint in the quick pulse of light; Or at the carriage-window shine Rich wares for choice; or, free to dine, Whirls through its hour of health (divine For her) the concourse of the Park. And though in the discounted dark Her functions there and here are one, Beneath the lamps and in the sun There reigns at least the acknowledged belle Apparelled beyond parallel. Ah Jenny, yes, we know your dreams.

For even the Paphian Venus seems A goddess o'er the realms of love, When silver-shrined in shadowy grove:

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Aye, or let offerings nicely plac'd But hide Priapus to the waist, And whoso looks on him shall see An eligible deity.

Why, Jenny, waking here alone May help you to remember one, Though all the memory's long outworn Of many a double-pillowed morn. I think I see you when you wake, And rub your eyes for me, and shake My gold, in rising, from your hair, A Danae for a moment there.

Jenny, my love rang true! for still Love at first sight is vague, until That tinkling makes him audible.

And must I mock you to the last, Ashamed of my own shame,—aghast Because some thoughts not born amiss Rose at a poor fair face like this?

Well, of such thoughts so much I know: In my life, as in hers, they show, By a far gleam which I may near, A dark path I can strive to clear.

Only one kiss. Goodbye, my dear.

### 2.11.5 "The Woodspurge"

The wind flapped loose, the wind was still, Shaken out dead from tree and hill: I had walked on at the wind's will,— I sat now, for the wind was still.

Between my knees my forehead was,— My lips, drawn in, said not Alas! My hair was over in the grass, My naked ears heard the day pass.

My eyes, wide open, had the run Of some ten weeds to fix upon;

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Among those few, out of the sun,

The woodspurge flowered, three cups in one.

From perfect grief there need not be Wisdom or even memory: One thing then learnt remains to me,— The woodspurge has a cup of three.

### 2.11.6 From The House of Life

2.11.6.1 "The Sonnet"

A Sonnet is a moment's monument,

Memorial from the Soul's eternity

To one dead deathless hour. Look that it be,

Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,

Of its own arduous fulness reverent:

Carve it in ivory or in ebony,

As Day or Night may rule; and let Time see

Its Powering crest impearled and orient.

A Sonnet is a coin: its face reveals

The soul,—its converse, to what Power 'tis due:—

Whether for tribute to the august appeals

Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,

It serve, or, 'mid the dark wharfs cavernous breath,

In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.

2.11.6.2 "19. Silent Noon"

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass,— The finger-points look through like rosy blooms: Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms 'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass. All round our nest, far as the eye can pass, Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-hedge. 'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky:— So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above. Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower, This close-companioned inarticulate hour When twofold silence was the song of love.

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### 2.11.7 Reading and Review Questions

1. What, if anything, is revolutionary about Rossetti's depiction of heaven, the soul, and earth?

2. To what extent, if any, might the sonnets in The House of Life be characterized as Romantic rather than Medieval? And to what extent might they have seemed modern to Rossetti's readers?

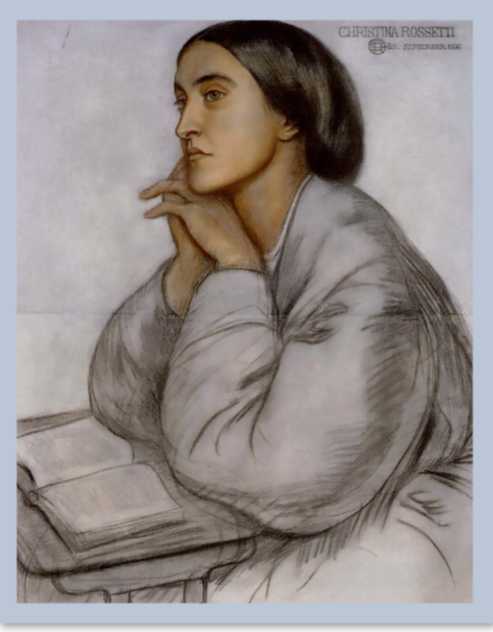
3. How painterly are the details in these poems? And why?

4. What, if anything, is troubling or problematic about Rossetti's use of symbolism? Consider, for instance, his description of the woodspurge as having "a cup of three."

## 2.12 CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Image 2.26 | Portrait of Christina Rossetti

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(1830-1894)

Born into an artistic family—her brother was D. G. Rossetti—Christina Rossetti started writing while still in her teens. An unofficial member of the Pre-Raphaelites, Christina published seven of her poems in The Germ. She also was briefly engaged to marry John Collinson (1825-1881), a Pre-Raphaelite, until he returned to Roman Catholicism.

A strong evangelical, Rossetti wrote religious lyrical poetry and prose works, including Seek and Find (1879), Called To Be Saints (1881), and The Face of the Deep (1892). Her most famous work, Goblin Market, is rich with religious imagery channeling both spiritual and (uncannily) physical temptation, passion, and redemption. Its erotic undertones are softened and made acceptable to contemporary readers by its child-like, fairy-tale structure, and conventional moral. Its exploration of a "fallen" woman who is not ejected from Eden may have been influenced by Rossetti's volunteer work at St. Mary Magdalene's home for prostitutes and unwed mothers.

Other of Rossetti's works were more straightforwardly intended for children, including Sing-Song: a Nursery Rhyme Book (1872). She also published a hybrid of poetry and prose, Time Flies (1882), and encyclopedic entries on Italian literature.

Though on the surface she lived the house-bound life of an unmarried woman devoted to her family, Rossetti nevertheless entered the public realm with her

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writing, her many friendships with fellow writers and artists, and her social work. Her writing, with its somewhat general themes of faith and love, expresses her individuality and intense feelings through its metrical mastery, painterly details, and natural imagery.

Rossetti died of breast cancer in 1894.

### 2.12.1 "Goblin Market"

Morning and evening

Maids heard the goblins cry:

'Come buy our orchard fruits,

Come buy, come buy:

Apples and quinces,

Lemons and oranges,

Plump unpecked cherries,

Melons and raspberries,

Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,

Swart-headed mulberries,

Wild free-born cranberries,

Crab-apples, dewberries,

Pine-apples, blackberries,

Apricots, strawberries; —

All ripe together

In summer weather, —

Morns that pass by,

Fair eves that fly;

Come buy, come buy:

Our grapes fresh from the vine,

Pomegranates full and fine,

Dates and sharp bullaces,

Rare pears and greengages,

Damsons and bilberries,

Taste them and try:

Currants and gooseberries,

Bright-fire-like barberries,

Figs to fill your mouth,

Citrons from the South,

Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;

Come buy, come buy.'

Evening by evening Among the brookside rushes, Laura bowed her head to hear, Lizzie veiled her blushes:

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Crouching close together

In the cooling weather,

With clasping arms and cautioning lips,

With tingling cheeks and finger tips.

'Lie close,' Laura said,

Pricking up her golden head:

'We must not look at goblin men,

We must not buy their fruits:

Who knows upon what soil they fed

Their hungry thirsty roots?'

'Come buy,' call the goblins

Hobbling down the glen.

'Oh,' cried Lizzie, 'Laura, Laura,

You should not peep at goblin men.'

Lizzie covered up her eyes,

Covered close lest they should look;

Laura reared her glossy head,

And whispered like the restless brook:

'Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,

Down the glen tramp little men.

One hauls a basket,

One bears a plate,

One lugs a golden dish

Of many pounds weight.

How fair the vine must grow

Whose grapes are so luscious;

How warm the wind must blow

Through those fruit bushes.'

'No,' said Lizzie, 'No, no, no;

Their offers should not charm us,

Their evil gifts would harm us.'

She thrust a dimpled finger

In each ear, shut eyes and ran:

Curious Laura chose to linger

Wondering at each merchant man.

One had a cat's face,

One whisked a tail,

One tramped at a rat's pace,

One crawled like a snail,

One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,

One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.

She heard a voice like voice of doves

Cooing all together:

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They sounded kind and full of loves In the pleasant weather.

Laura stretched her gleaming neck Like a rush-imbedded swan, Like a lily from the beck, Like a moonlit poplar branch, Like a vessel at the launch When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen

Turned and trooped the goblin men,

With their shrill repeated cry,

'Come buy, come buy.'

When they reached where Laura was

They stood stock still upon the moss,

Leering at each other,

Brother with queer brother;

Signalling each other,

Brother with sly brother.

One set his basket down,

One reared his plate;

One began to weave a crown

Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown

(Men sell not such in any town);

One heaved the golden weight

Of dish and fruit to offer her:

'Come buy, come buy,' was still their cry.

Laura stared but did not stir,

Longed but had no money:

The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste

In tones as smooth as honey,

The cat-faced purr'd,

The rat-faced spoke a word

Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;

One parrot-voiced and jolly

Cried 'Pretty Goblin' still for 'Pretty Polly;' —

One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:

'Good folk, I have no coin;

To take were to purloin:

I have no copper in my purse,

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I have no silver either,

And all my gold is on the furze

That shakes in windy weather

Above the rusty heather.'

'You have much gold upon your head,'

They answered all together:

'Buy from us with a golden curl.'

She clipped a precious golden lock,

She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,

Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red:

Sweeter than honey from the rock,

Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,

Clearer than water flowed that juice;

She never tasted such before,

How should it cloy with length of use?

She sucked and sucked and sucked the more

Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;

She sucked until her lips were sore;

Then flung the emptied rinds away

But gathered up one kernel stone,

And knew not was it night or day

As she turned home alone.

Lizzie met her at the gate

Full of wise upbraidings:

'Dear, you should not stay so late,

Twilight is not good for maidens;

Should not loiter in the glen

In the haunts of goblin men.

Do you not remember Jeanie,

How she met them in the moonlight,

Took their gifts both choice and many,

Ate their fruits and wore their flowers

Plucked from bowers

Where summer ripens at all hours?

But ever in the noonlight

She pined and pined away;

Sought them by night and day,

Found them no more, but dwindled and grew grey;

Then fell with the first snow,

While to this day no grass will grow

Where she lies low:

I planted daisies there a year ago

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Image 2.27 | Goblin Market—"Buy from us with a golden curl" Artist | Dante Gabriel Rossetti Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



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That never blow.

You should not loiter so.'

'Nay, hush,' said Laura:

'Nay, hush, my sister:

I ate and ate my fill,

Yet my mouth waters still;

To-morrow night I will

Buy more:' and kissed her:

'Have done with sorrow;

I'll bring you plums tomorrow

Fresh on their mother twigs,

Cherries worth getting;

You cannot think what figs

My teeth have met in,

What melons icy-cold

Piled on a dish of gold

Too huge for me to hold,

What peaches with a velvet nap,

Pellucid grapes without one seed:

Odorous indeed must be the mead

Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink

With lilies at the brink,

And sugar-sweet their sap.'

Image 2.28 | Goblin Market—Golden Head by Golden Head

Artist | Dante Gabriel Rossetti Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



Golden head by golden head, Like two pigeons in one nest Folded in each other's wings, They lay down in their curtained bed: Like two blossoms on one stem, Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow, Like two wands of ivory Tipped with gold for awful kings. Moon and stars gazed in at them, Wind sang to them lullaby, Lumbering owls forbore to fly, Not a bat flapped to and fro Round their rest:

Cheek to cheek and breast to breast Locked together in one nest.

Early in the morning

When the first cock crowed his warning,

Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,

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Laura rose with Lizzie:

Fetched in honey, milked the cows,

Aired and set to rights the house,

Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,

Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,

Next churned butter, whipped up cream,

Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;

Talked as modest maidens should:

Lizzie with an open heart,

Laura in an absent dream,

One content, one sick in part;

One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,

One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came:

They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;

Lizzie most placid in her look,

Laura most like a leaping flame.

They drew the gurgling water from its deep;

Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags,

Then turning homeward said: 'The sunset flushes

Those furthest loftiest crags;

Come, Laura, not another maiden lags,

No wilful squirrel wags,

The beasts and birds are fast asleep.'

But Laura loitered still among the rushes

And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still

The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill:

Listening ever, but not catching

The customary cry,

'Come buy, come buy,'

With its iterated jingle

Of sugar-baited words:

Not for all her watching

Once discerning even one goblin

Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;

Let alone the herds

That used to tramp along the glen,

In groups or single,

Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, 'O Laura, come;

I hear the fruit-call but I dare not look:

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You should not loiter longer at this brook:

Come with me home.

The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,

Each glowworm winks her spark,

Let us get home before the night grows dark:

For clouds may gather

Though this is summer weather,

Put out the lights and drench us through;

Then if we lost our way what should we do?'

Laura turned cold as stone

To find her sister heard that cry alone,

That goblin cry,

'Come buy our fruits, come buy.'

Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?

Must she no more such succous pasture find,

Gone deaf and blind?

Her tree of life drooped from the root:

She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;

But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,

Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way;

So crept to bed, and lay

Silent till Lizzie slept;

Then sat up in a passionate yearning,

And gnashed her teeth for baulked desire, and wept

As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,

Laura kept watch in vain

In sullen silence of exceeding pain.

She never caught again the goblin cry:

'Come buy, come buy;' —

She never spied the goblin men

Hawking their fruits along the glen:

But when the noon waxed bright

Her hair grew thin and grey;

She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn

To swift decay and burn

Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone She set it by a wall that faced the south; Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,

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Watched for a waxing shoot,

But there came none;

It never saw the sun,

It never felt the trickling moisture run:

While with sunk eyes and faded mouth

She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees

False waves in desert drouth

With shade of leaf-crowned trees,

And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,

Tended the fowls or cows,

Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,

Brought water from the brook:

But sat down listless in the chimney-nook

And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear

To watch her sister's cankerous care

Yet not to share.

She night and morning

Caught the goblins' cry:

'Come buy our orchard fruits,

Come buy, come buy:' —

Beside the brook, along the glen,

She heard the tramp of goblin men,

The voice and stir

Poor Laura could not hear;

Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,

But feared to pay too dear.

She thought of Jeanie in her grave,

Who should have been a bride;

But who for joys brides hope to have

Fell sick and died

In her gay prime,

In earliest Winter time

With the first glazing rime,

With the first snow-fall of crisp Winter time.

Till Laura dwindling Seemed knocking at Death's door: Then Lizzie weighed no more Better and worse;

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But put a silver penny in her purse,

Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze

At twilight, halted by the brook:

And for the first time in her life

Began to listen and look.

Laughed every goblin When they spied her peeping: Came towards her hobbling, Flying, running, leaping, Puffing and blowing, Chuckling, clapping, crowing, Clucking and gobbling, Mopping and mowing, Full of airs and graces, Pulling wry faces, Demure grimaces, Cat-like and rat-like, Ratel—and wombat-like, Snail-paced in a hurry, Parrot-voiced and whistler, Helter skelter, hurry skurry, Chattering like magpies, Fluttering like pigeons, Gliding like fishes,— Hugged her and kissed her: Squeezed and caressed her: Stretched up their dishes, Panniers, and plates: 'Look at our apples Russet and dun, Bob at our cherries, Bite at our peaches, Citrons and dates, Grapes for the asking, Pears red with basking Out in the sun, Plums on their twigs; Pluck them and suck them, Pomegranates, figs.' —

'Good folk,' said Lizzie, Mindful of Jeanie:

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'Give me much and many:' —

Held out her apron,

Tossed them her penny.

'Nay, take a seat with us,

Honour and eat with us,'

They answered grinning:

'Our feast is but beginning.

Night yet is early,

Warm and dew-pearly,

Wakeful and starry:

Such fruits as these

No man can carry;

Half their bloom would fly,

Half their dew would dry,

Half their flavour would pass by.

Sit down and feast with us,

Be welcome guest with us,

Cheer you and rest with us.' —

'Thank you,' said Lizzie: 'But one waits

At home alone for me:

So without further parleying,

If you will not sell me any

Of your fruits though much and many,

Give me back my silver penny

I tossed you for a fee.' —

They began to scratch their pates,

No longer wagging, purring,

But visibly demurring,

Grunting and snarling.

One called her proud,

Cross-grained, uncivil;

Their tones waxed loud,

Their looks were evil.

Lashing their tails

They trod and hustled her,

Elbowed and jostled her,

Clawed with their nails,

Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,

Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,

Twitched her hair out by the roots,

Stamped upon her tender feet,

Held her hands and squeezed their fruits

Against her mouth to make her eat.

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White and golden Lizzie stood, Like a lily in a flood, — Like a rock of blue-veined stone Lashed by tides obstreperously, — Like a beacon left alone In a hoary roaring sea, Sending up a golden fire, — Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree White with blossoms honey-sweet Sore beset by wasp and bee, — Like a royal virgin town Topped with gilded dome and spire Close beleaguered by a fleet Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,

Twenty cannot make him drink.

Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,

Coaxed and fought her,

Bullied and besought her,

Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,

Kicked and knocked her,

Mauled and mocked her,

Lizzie uttered not a word;

Would not open lip from lip

Lest they should cram a mouthful in:

But laughed in heart to feel the drip

Of juice that syrupped all her face,

And lodged in dimples of her chin,

And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.

At last the evil people,

Worn out by her resistance,

Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit

Along whichever road they took,

Not leaving root or stone or shoot;

Some writhed into the ground,

Some dived into the brook

With ring and ripple,

Some scudded on the gale without a sound, Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle, Lizzie went her way;

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Knew not was it night or day;

Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze,

Threaded copse and dingle,

And heard her penny jingle

Bouncing in her purse, —

Its bounce was music to her ear.

She ran and ran

As if she feared some goblin man

Dogged her with gibe or curse

Or something worse:

But not one goblin skurried after,

Nor was she pricked by fear;

The kind heart made her windy-paced

That urged her home quite out of breath with haste

And inward laughter.

She cried 'Laura,' up the garden,

'Did you miss me?

Come and kiss me.

Never mind my bruises,

Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices

Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,

Goblin pulp and goblin dew.

Eat me, drink me, love me;

Laura, make much of me:

For your sake I have braved the glen

And had to do with goblin merchant men.'

Laura started from her chair,

Flung her arms up in the air,

Clutched her hair:

'Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted

For my sake the fruit forbidden?

Must your light like mine be hidden,

Your young life like mine be wasted,

Undone in mine undoing,

And ruined in my ruin,

Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?' —

She clung about her sister,

Kissed and kissed and kissed her:

Tears once again

Refreshed her shrunken eyes,

Dropping like rain

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After long sultry drouth;

Shaking with aguish fear, and pain,

She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,

That juice was wormwood to her tongue,

She loathed the feast:

Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung,

Rent all her robe, and wrung

Her hands in lamentable haste,

And beat her breast.

Her locks streamed like the torch

Borne by a racer at full speed,

Or like the mane of horses in their flight,

Or like an eagle when she stems the light

Straight toward the sun,

Or like a caged thing freed,

Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her heart,

Met the fire smouldering there

And overbore its lesser flame;

She gorged on bitterness without a name:

Ah! fool, to choose such part

Of soul-consuming care!

Sense failed in the mortal strife:

Like the watch-tower of a town

Which an earthquake shatters down,

Like a lightning-stricken mast,

Like a wind-uprooted tree

Spun about,

Like a foam-topped waterspout Cast down headlong in the sea, She fell at last;

Pleasure past and anguish past, Is it death or is it life?

Life out of death.

That night long Lizzie watched by her, Counted her pulse's flagging stir, Felt for her breath,

Held water to her lips, and cooled her face With tears and fanning leaves:

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But when the first birds chirped about their eaves, And early reapers plodded to the place Of golden sheaves, And dew-wet grass

Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,

And new buds with new day

Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,

Laura awoke as from a dream,

Laughed in the innocent old way,

Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice;

Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of grey,

Her breath was sweet as May

And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years

Afterwards, when both were wives

With children of their own;

Their mother-hearts beset with fears,

Their lives bound up in tender lives;

Laura would call the little ones

And tell them of her early prime,

Those pleasant days long gone

Of not-returning time:

Would talk about the haunted glen,

The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,

Their fruits like honey to the throat

But poison in the blood;

(Men sell not such in any town:)

Would tell them how her sister stood

In deadly peril to do her good,

And win the fiery antidote:

Then joining hands to little hands

Would bid them cling together,

'For there is no friend like a sister

In calm or stormy weather;

To cheer one on the tedious way,

To fetch one if one goes astray,

To lift one if one totters down,

To strengthen whilst one stands.'

### 2.12.2 Reading and Review Questions

1. Rossetti was an unofficial member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. She was a model for many of their paintings. Does Goblin Market reveal

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any Pre-Raphaelite qualities? If so, to what effect? How, if at all, does her gender affect her rendering of these qualities?

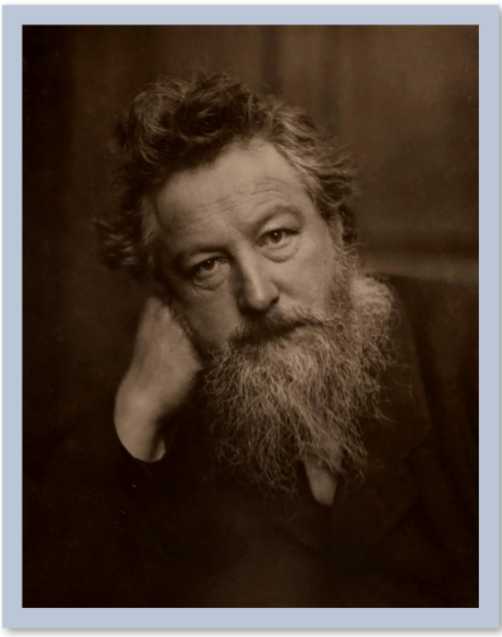
2. How does Rossetti use nature and nature imagery in this poem, and why?

3. How would Rossetti's contemporaries view the ending with the fallen but redeemed Lizzie surrounded by her own children?

4. Does this poem include any positive figure identified as masculine? Why, or why not?

Image 2.29 | Photo of William Morris

Photographer | Frederick Hollyer Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



## 2.13 WILLIAM MORRIS

(1834-1894)

William Morris was born into a wealthy family, with his father William owning a tin mine. At the age of twenty-one, Morris received an annual income of 900 pounds. In 1853, he entered Exeter College at Oxford, where he met Edward Burne-Jones. They founded the Brotherhood, the second generation of Pre-Raphaelites. Morris especially espoused the social aspects of Pre-Raphaelite medievalism, admiring what he saw as its organic quality with each human being having responsibility towards the other and individuals realizing their full self through their occupation. Although Morris seemed to idealize the Middle Ages, his poetry evinces a clear-eyed view of its brutality, hypocrisy, and inequalities (particularly between the sexes).

Morris's first collection of poetry, The Defence of Guenevere (1858), reflects these qualities and may have been influenced by his troubled relationship with his wife, Jane Burden, who conducted an affair with his friend, D. G. Rossetti. He also wrote a utopian novel, News from Nowhere (1889); fantasies and prose romances, including The House of the Wolfings (1888) and The Wood Beyond the Wood (1894); and an epic-length poem combining Greek and Norse myths, The Earthly Paradise (1868-70).

Besides writing, Morris supported art and craftsmanship by founding a company that eventually became Morris and Co. Using machinery and factories, Morris's company produced textiles, ceramics, stained glass, tapestries, and wallpaper that maintained the medieval aesthetic. He founded the Arts and Crafts Movement that promoted hand-made pottery, textiles, furniture, and books as a moral and social corrective to the inequalities within the factory system.

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His social concerns developed into serious involvement with leftist politics. He ultimately became an outspoken socialist at a time when social change, especially a concern for laborers, gained momentum in England. He lectured, wrote pamphlets, and participated in demonstrations, twice being arrested and once fined.

In the last years of his life, Morris suffered from debilitating gout, eventually becoming a complete invalid before dying in 1896.

### 2.13.1 "The Defence of Guenevere"

But, knowing now that they would have her speak, She threw her wet hair backward from her brow, Her hand close to her mouth touching her cheek,

As though she had had there a shameful blow, And feeling it shameful to feel ought but shame All through her heart, yet felt her cheek burned so,

She must a little touch it; like one lame

She walked away from Gauwaine, with her head

Still lifted up; and on her cheek of flame

The tears dried quick; she stopped at last and said: "O knights and lords, it seems but little skill To talk of well-known things past now and dead.

"God wot I ought to say, I have done ill,

And pray you all forgiveness heartily!

Because you must be right such great lords—still

"Listen, suppose your time were come to die, And you were quite alone and very weak; Yea, laid a dying while very mightily

"The wind was ruffling up the narrow streak Of river through your broad lands running well: Suppose a hush should come, then some one speak:

"'One of these cloths is heaven, and one is hell, Now choose one cloth for ever, which they be, I will not tell you, you must somehow tell

"'Of your own strength and mightiness; here, see!' Yea, yea, my lord, and you to ope your eyes, At foot of your familiar bed to see

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"A great God's angel standing, with such dyes, Not known on earth, on his great wings, and hands, Held out two ways, light from the inner skies

"Showing him well, and making his commands Seem to be God's commands, moreover, too, Holding within his hands the cloths on wands;

"And one of these strange choosing cloths was blue, Wavy and long, and one cut short and red; No man could tell the better of the two.

"After a shivering half-hour you said,

'God help! heaven's colour, the blue;' and he said, 'hell.'

Perhaps you then would roll upon your bed,

"And cry to all good men that loved you well, 'Ah Christ! if only I had known, known, known;' Launcelot went away, then I could tell,

"Like wisest man how all things would be, moan, And roll and hurt myself, and long to die, And yet fear much to die for what was sown.

"Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie, Whatever may have happened through these years, God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie."

Her voice was low at first, being full of tears, But as it cleared, it grew full loud and shrill, Growing a windy shriek in all men's ears,

A ringing in their startled brains, until

She said that Gauwaine lied, then her voice sunk,

And her great eyes began again to fill,

Though still she stood right up, and never shrunk, But spoke on bravely, glorious lady fair! Whatever tears her full lips may have drunk,

She stood, and seemed to think, and wrung her hair, Spoke out at last with no more trace of shame, With passionate twisting of her body there:

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"It chanced upon a day that Launcelot came To dwell at Arthur's court: at Christmas-time This happened; when the heralds sung his name,

"'Son of King Ban of Benwick,' seemed to chime Along with all the bells that rang that day, O'er the white roofs, with little change of rhyme.

"Christmas and whitened winter passed away, And over me the April sunshine came, Made very awful with black hail-clouds, yea

"And in Summer I grew white with flame,

And bowed my head down—Autumn, and the sick

Sure knowledge things would never be the same,

"However often Spring might be most thick Of blossoms and buds, smote on me, and I grew Careless of most things, let the clock tick, tick,

"To my unhappy pulse, that beat right through My eager body; while I laughed out loud, And let my lips curl up at false or true,

"Seemed cold and shallow without any cloud. Behold my judges, then the cloths were brought: While I was dizzied thus, old thoughts would crowd,

"Belonging to the time ere I was bought By Arthur's great name and his little love, Must I give up for ever then, I thought,

"That which I deemed would ever round me move Glorifying all things; for a little word, Scarce ever meant at all, must I now prove

"Stone-cold for ever? Pray you, does the Lord Will that all folks should be quite happy and good? I love God now a little, if this cord

"Were broken, once for all what striving could Make me love anything in earth or heaven. So day by day it grew, as if one should

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"Slip slowly down some path worn smooth and even,

Down to a cool sea on a summer day;

Yet still in slipping there was some small leaven

"Of stretched hands catching small stones by the way, Until one surely reached the sea at last, And felt strange new joy as the worn head lay

"Back, with the hair like sea-weed; yea all past Sweat of the forehead, dryness of the lips, Washed utterly out by the dear waves o'ercast

"In the lone sea, far off from any ships! Do I not know now of a day in Spring? No minute of that wild day ever slips

"From out my memory; I hear thrushes sing, And wheresoever I may be, straightway Thoughts of it all come up with most fresh sting;

"I was half mad with beauty on that day, And went without my ladies all alone, In a quiet garden walled round every way;

"I was right joyful of that wall of stone,

That shut the flowers and trees up with the sky,

And trebled all the beauty: to the bone,

"Yea right through to my heart, grown very shy With weary thoughts, it pierced, and made me glad; Exceedingly glad, and I knew verily,

"A little thing just then had made me mad; I dared not think, as I was wont to do, Sometimes, upon my beauty; if I had

"Held out my long hand up against the blue, And, looking on the tenderly darken'd fingers, Thought that by rights one ought to see quite through,

"There, see you, where the soft still light yet lingers, Round by the edges; what should I have done, If this had joined with yellow spotted singers,

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"And startling green drawn upward by the sun? But shouting, loosed out, see now! all my hair, And trancedly stood watching the west wind run

"With faintest half-heard breathing sound—why there I lose my head e'en now in doing this; But shortly listen—In that garden fair

"Came Launcelot walking; this is true, the kiss Wherewith we kissed in meeting that spring day, I scarce dare talk of the remember'd bliss,

"When both our mouths went wandering in one way, And aching sorely, met among the leaves; Our hands being left behind strained far away.

"Never within a yard of my bright sleeves Had Launcelot come before—and now, so nigh! After that day why is it Guenevere grieves?

"Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie, Whatever happened on through all those years, God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie.

"Being such a lady could I weep these tears

If this were true? A great queen such as I

Having sinn'd this way, straight her conscience sears;

"And afterwards she liveth hatefully, Slaying and poisoning, certes never weeps,— Gauwaine be friends now, speak me lovingly.

"Do I not see how God's dear pity creeps

All through your frame, and trembles in your mouth?

Remember in what grave your mother sleeps,

"Buried in some place far down in the south, Men are forgetting as I speak to you; By her head sever'd in that awful drouth

"Of pity that drew Agravaine's fell blow, I pray your pity! let me not scream out For ever after, when the shrill winds blow

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"Through half your castle-locks! let me not shout For ever after in the winter night When you ride out alone! in battle-rout

"Let not my rusting tears make your sword light! Ah! God of mercy how he turns away! So, ever must I dress me to the fight,

"So—let God's justice work! Gauwaine, I say, See me hew down your proofs: yea all men know Even as you said how Mellyagraunce one day,

"One bitter day in la Fausse Garde, for so

All good knights held it after, saw—

Yea, sirs, by cursed unknightly outrage; though

"You, Gauwaine, held his word without a flaw, This Mellyagraunce saw blood upon my bed— Whose blood then pray you? is there any law

"To make a queen say why some spots of red

Lie on her coverlet? or will you say,

'Your hands are white, lady, as when you wed,

"'Where did you bleed?' and must I stammer out— Nay, I blush indeed, fair lord, only to rend My sleeve up to my shoulder, where there lay

"'A knife-point last night:' so must I defend

The honour of the lady Guenevere?

Not so, fair lords, even if the world should end

"This very day, and you were judges here Instead of God. Did you see Mellyagraunce When Launcelot stood by him? what white fear

"Curdled his blood, and how his teeth did dance, His side sink in? as my knight cried and said, 'Slayer of unarm'd men, here is a chance!

"'Setter of traps, I pray you guard your head, By God I am so glad to fight with you, Stripper of ladies, that my hand feels lead

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"'For driving weight; hurrah now! draw and do, For all my wounds are moving in my breast, And I am getting mad with waiting so.'

"He struck his hands together o'er the beast, Who fell down flat, and grovell'd at his feet, And groan'd at being slain so young—'at least,'

"My knight said, 'Rise you, sir, who are so fleet At catching ladies, half-arm'd will I fight, My left side all uncovered!' then I weet,

"Up sprang Sir Mellyagraunce with great delight Upon his knave's face; not until just then Did I quite hate him, as I saw my knight

"Along the lists look to my stake and pen With such a joyous smile, it made me sigh From agony beneath my waist-chain, when

"The fight began, and to me they drew nigh; Ever Sir Launcelot kept him on the right, And traversed warily, and ever high

"And fast leapt caitiff s sword, until my knight Sudden threw up his sword to his left hand, Caught it, and swung it; that was all the fight,

"Except a spout of blood on the hot land;

For it was hottest summer; and I know

I wonder'd how the fire, while I should stand

"And burn, against the heat, would quiver so, Yards above my head; thus these matters went; Which things were only warnings of the woe

"That fell on me. Yet Mellyagraunce was shent, For Mellyagraunce had fought against the Lord; Therefore, my lords, take heed lest you be blent

"With all this wickedness; say no rash word Against me, being so beautiful; my eyes, Wept all away to grey, may bring some sword

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Image 2.30 | Morris's painting of Queen Guenivere Artist | William Morris Source | Wikimedia Commons License | Public Domain



"To drown you in your blood; see my breast rise, Like waves of purple sea, as here I stand; And how my arms are moved in wonderful wise,

"Yea also at my full heart's strong command, See through my long throat how the words go up In ripples to my mouth; how in my hand

"The shadow likes like wine within a cup Of marvellously colour'd gold; yea now This little wind is rising, look you up,

"And wonder how the light is falling so Within my moving tresses: will you dare, When you have looked a little on my brow,

"To say this thing is vile? or will you care For any plausible lies of cunning woof, When you can see my face with no lie there

"For ever? am I not a gracious proof— 'But in your chamber Launcelot was found'— Is there a good knight then would stand aloof,

"When a queen says with gentle queenly sound: 'O true as steel come now and talk with me, I love to see your step upon the ground

"'Unwavering, also well I love to see That gracious smile light up your face, and hear Your wonderful words, that all mean verily

"'The thing they seem to mean: good friend, so dear

To me in everything, come here to-night,

Or else the hours will pass most dull and drear;

"'If you come not, I fear this time I might Get thinking over much of times gone by, When I was young, and green hope was in sight;

"'For no man cares now to know why I sigh; And no man comes to sing me pleasant songs, Nor any brings me the sweet flowers that lie

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"'So thick in the gardens; therefore one so longs

To see you, Launcelot; that we may be

Like children once again, free from all wrongs

"'Just for one night.' Did he not come to me? What thing could keep true Launcelot away If I said 'come?' there was one less than three

"In my quiet room that night, and we were gay; Till sudden I rose up, weak, pale, and sick, Because a bawling broke our dream up, yea

"I looked at Launcelot's face and could not speak, For he looked helpless too, for a little while; Then I remember how I tried to shriek,

"And could not, but fell down; from tile to tile The stones they threw up rattled o'er my head, And made me dizzier; till within a while

"My maids were all about me, and my head On Launcelot's breast was being soothed away From its white chattering, until Launcelot said—

"By God! I will not tell you more to-day, Judge any way you will—what matters it? You know quite well the story of that fray,

"How Launcelot still'd their bawling, the mad fit

That caught up Gauwaine—all, all, verily,

But just that which would save me; these things flit.

"Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie, Whatever may have happen'd these long years, God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie!

"All I have said is truth, by Christ's dear tears." She would not speak another word, but stood Turn'd sideways; listening, like a man who hears

His brother's trumpet sounding through the wood

Of his foes' lances. She lean'd eagerly,

And gave a slight spring sometimes, as she could

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At last hear something really; joyfully

Her cheek grew crimson, as the headlong speed

Of the roan charger drew all men to see,

The knight who came was Launcelot at good need.

### 2.13.2 "The Haystack in the Floods"

HAD she come all the way for this, To part at last without a kiss? Yea, had she borne the dirt and rain That her own eyes might see him slain Beside the haystack in the floods? Along the dripping leafless woods, The stirrup touching either shoe, She rode astride as troopers do; With kirtle kilted to her knee, To which the mud splash'd wretchedly; And the wet dripp'd from every tree Upon her head and heavy hair, And on her eyelids broad and fair; The tears and rain ran down her face.

By fits and starts they rode apace,

And very often was his place

Far off from her; he had to ride

Ahead, to see what might betide

When the roads cross'd; and sometimes, when

There rose a murmuring from his men,

Had to turn back with promises;

Ah me! she had but little ease;

And often for pure doubt and dread

She sobb'd, made giddy in the head

By the swift riding; while, for cold,

Her slender fingers scarce could hold

The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,

She felt the foot within her shoe

Against the stirrup: all for this,

To part at last without a kiss

Beside the haystack in the floods.

For when they near'd that old soak'd hay, They saw across the only way That Judas, Godmar, and the three.

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Red running lions dismally Grinn'd from his pennon, under which, In one straight line along the ditch, They counted thirty heads.

So then,

While Robert turn'd round to his men, She saw at once the wretched end, And, stooping down, tried hard to rend Her coif the wrong way from her head, And hid her eyes; while Robert said: Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one, At Poictiers where we made them run So fast: why, sweet my love, good cheer, The Gascon frontier is so near, Nought after this.

But, O, she said, My God! my God! I have to tread The long way back without you; then The court at Paris; those six men; The gratings of the Chatelet; The swift Seine on some rainy day Like this, and people standing by, And laughing, while my weak hands try To recollect how strong men swim. All this, or else a life with him, For which I should be damned at last, Would God that this next hour were past!

He answer'd not, but cried his cry, St. George for Marny! cheerily; And laid his hand upon her rein. Alas! no man of all his train Gave back that cheery cry again; And, while for rage his thumb beat fast Upon his sword-hilts, some one cast About his neck a kerchief long, And bound him.

Then they went along To Godmar; who said: Now, Jehane, Your lover's life is on the wane

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So fast, that, if this very hour

You yield not as my paramour,

He will not see the rain leave off:

Nay, keep your tongue from gibe and scoff,

Sir Robert, or I slay you now.

She laid her hand upon her brow,

Then gazed upon the palm, as though

She thought her forehead bled, and—No.

She said, and turn'd her head away,

As there were nothing else to say,

And everything were settled: red

Grew Godmar's face from chin to head:

Jehane, on yonder hill there stands

My castle, guarding well my lands:

What hinders me from taking you,

And doing that I list to do

To your fair wilful body, while

Your knight lies dead?

A wicked smile Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin, A long way out she thrust her chin: go You know that I should strangle you While you were sleeping; or bite through Your throat, by God's help: ah! she said, Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid! For in such wise they hem me in, I cannot choose but sin and sin, Whatever happens: yet I think They could not make me eat or drink, And so should I just reach my rest. Nay, if you do not my behest, O Jehane! though I love you well, Said Godmar, would I fail to tell All that I know. Foul lies,' she said. Eh? lies my Jehane? by God's head, At Paris folks would deem them true! Do you know, Jehane, they cry for you, "Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown! Give us Jehane to burn or drown!"— Eh—gag me Robert!—sweet my friend, This were indeed a piteous end no For those long fingers, and long feet,

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And long neck, and smooth shoulders sweet; An end that few men would forget That saw it—So, an hour yet: Consider, Jehane, which to take Of life or death!

So, scarce awake, Dismounting, did she leave that place, And totter some yards: with her face Turn'd upward to the sky she lay, Her head on a wet heap of hay, And fell asleep: and while she slept, And did not dream, the minutes crept Round to the twelve again; but she, Being waked at last, sigh'd quietly, And strangely childlike came, and said: I will not. Straightway Godmar's head, As though it hung on strong wires, turn'd Most sharply round, and his face burn'd.

For Robert—both his eyes were dry, He could not weep, but gloomily He seem'd to watch the rain; yea, too, His lips were firm; he tried once more To touch her lips; she reach'd out, sore And vain desire so tortured them, The poor grey lips, and now the hem Of his sleeve brush'd them.

With a start Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart; From Robert's throat he loosed the bands Of silk and mail; with empty hands Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw, The long bright blade without a flaw Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand In Robert's hair; she saw him bend Back Robert's head; she saw him send The thin steel down; the blow told well, Right backward the knight Robert fell, And moan'd as dogs do, being half dead, Unwitting, as I deem: so then Godmar turn'd grinning to his men,

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Who ran, some five or six, and beat His head to pieces at their feet.

Then Godmar turn'd again and said: So, Jehane, the first fitte is read! Take note, my lady, that your way Lies backward to the Chatelet! She shook her head and gazed awhile At her cold hands with a rueful smile, As though this thing had made her mad.

This was the parting that they had Beside the haystack in the floods.

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### 2.13.3 "How I Became a Socialist"

I am asked by the Editor to give some sort of a history of the above conversion, and I feel that it may be of some use to do so, if my readers will look upon me as a type of a certain group of people, but not so easy to do clearly, briefly and truly. Let me, however, try. But first, I will say what I mean by being a Socialist, since I am told that the word no longer expresses definitely and with certainty what it did ten years

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ago. Well, what I mean by Socialism is a condition of society in which there should be neither rich nor poor, neither master nor master's man, neither idle nor overworked, neither brain-sick brain workers, nor heart-sick hand workers, in a word, in which all men would be living in equality of condition, and would manage their affairs unwastefully, and with the full consciousness that harm to one would mean harm to all—the realization at last of the meaning of the word COMMONWEALTH.

Now this view of Socialism which I hold to-day, and hope to die holding, is what I began with; I had no transitional period, unless you may call such a brief period of political radicalism during which I saw my ideal clear enough, but had no hope of any realization of it. That came to an end some months before I joined the (then) Democratic Federation, and the meaning of my joining that body was that I had conceived a hope of the realization of my ideal. If you ask me how much of a hope, or what I thought we Socialists then living and working would accomplish towards it, or when there would be effected any change in the face of society, I must say, I do not know. I can only say that I did not measure my hope, nor the joy that it brought me at the time. For the rest, when I took that step I was blankly ignorant of economics; I had never so much as opened Adam Smith, or heard of Ricardo, or of Karl Marx. Oddly enough, I had read some of Mill, to wit, those posthumous papers of his (published, was it in the Westminster Review or the Fortnightly?) in which he attacks Socialism in its Fourierist guise. In those papers he put the arguments, as far as they go, clearly and honestly, and the result, so far as I was concerned, was to convince me that Socialism was a necessary change, and that it was possible to bring it about in our own days. Those papers put the finishing touch to my conversion to Socialism. Well, having joined a Socialist body (for the Federation soon became definitely Socialist), I put some conscience into trying to learn the economical side of Socialism, and even tackled Marx, though I must confess that, whereas I thoroughly enjoyed the historical part of Capital, I suffered agonies of confusion of the brain over reading the pure economics of that great work. Anyhow, I read what I could, and will hope that some information stuck to me from my reading; but more, I must think, from continuous conversation with such friends as Bax and Hyndman and Scheu, and the brisk course of propaganda meetings which were going on at the time, and in which I took my share. Such finish to what of education in practical Socialism as I am capable of I received afterwards from some of my Anarchist friends, from whom I learned, quite against their intention, that Anarchism was impossible, much as I learned from Mill against his intention that Socialism was necessary.

But in this telling how I fell into practical Socialism I have begun, as I perceive, in the middle, for in my position of a well-to-do man, not suffering from the disabilities which oppress a working man at every step, I feel that I might never have been drawn into the practical side of the question if an ideal had not forced me to seek towards it. For politics as politics, i.e., not regarded as a necessary if cumbersome and disgustful means to an end, would never have attracted me, nor when I had become conscious of the wrongs of society as it now is, and the oppression

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Image 2.32 | A Dream of John Ball

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of poor people, could I have ever believed in the possibility of a partial setting right of those wrongs. In other words, I could never have been such a fool as to believe in the happy and "respectable" poor.

If, therefore, my ideal forced me to look for practical Socialism, what was it that forced me to conceive of an ideal? Now, here comes in what I said of my being (in this paper) a type of a certain group of mind.

Before the uprising of modern Socialism almost all intelligent people either were, or professed themselves to be, quite contented with the civilization of this century. Again, almost all of these really were thus contented, and saw nothing to do but to perfect the said civilization by getting rid of a few ridiculous survivals of the barbarous ages. To be short, this was the Whig frame of mind, natural to the modern prosperous middle-class men, who, in fact, as far as mechanical progress is concerned, have nothing to ask for, if only Socialism would leave them alone to enjoy their plentiful style.

But besides these contented ones there were others who were not really contented, but had a vague sentiment of repulsion to the triumph of civilization, but were coerced into silence by the measureless power of Whiggery. Lastly, there were a few who were in open rebellion against the said Whiggery—a few, say two, Carlyle and Ruskin. The latter, before my days of practical Socialism, was my master towards the ideal aforesaid, and, looking backward, I cannot help saying, by the way, how deadly dull the world would have been twenty years ago but for Ruskin! It was through him that I learned to give form to my discontent, which I must say was not by any means vague. Apart from the desire to produce beautiful things, the leading passion of my life has been and is hatred of modern civilization. What shall I say of it now, when the words are put into my mouth, my hope of its destruction—what shall I say of its supplanting by Socialism?

What shall I say concerning its mastery of and its waste of mechanical power, its commonwealth so poor, its enemies of the commonwealth so rich, its stupendous organization—for the misery of life! Its contempt of simple pleasures which everyone could enjoy but for its folly? Its eyeless vulgarity which has destroyed art, the one certain solace of labour? All this I felt then as now, but I did not know why it was so. The hope of the past times was gone, the struggles of mankind for many ages had produced nothing but this sordid, aimless, ugly confusion; the immediate future seemed to me likely to intensify all the present evils by sweeping away the last survivals of the days before the dull squalor of civilization had settled down on the world. This was a bad look-out indeed, and, if I may mention myself as a personality and not as a mere type, especially so to a man of my disposition, careless of metaphysics and religion, as well as of scientific analysis, but with a deep love of the earth and the life on it, and a passion for the history of the past of mankind. Think of it! Was it all to end in a counting-house on the top of a cinder-heap, with Podsnap's drawing-room in the offing, and a Whig committee dealing out champagne to the rich and margarine to the poor in such convenient proportions as would make all men contented together, though the pleasure of the eyes was gone from the world,

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and the place of Homer was to be taken by Huxley? Yet, believe me, in my heart, when I really forced myself to look towards the future, that is what I saw in it, and, as far as I could tell, scarce anyone seemed to think it worth while to struggle against such a consummation of civilization. So there I was in for a fine pessimistic end of life, if it had not somehow dawned on me that amidst all this filth of civilization the seeds of a great change, what we others call Social-Revolution, were beginning to germinate. The whole face of things was changed to me by that discovery, and all I had to do then in order to become a Socialist was to hook myself on to the practical movement, which, as before said, I have tried to do as well as I could.

To sum up, then the study of history and the love and practice of art forced me into a hatred of the civilization which, if things were to stop as they are, would turn history into inconsequent nonsense, and make art a collection of the curiosities of the past, which would have no serious relation to the life of the present.

But the consciousness of revolution stirring amidst our hateful modern society prevented me, luckier than many others of artistic perceptions, from crystallizing into a mere railer against "progress" on the one hand, and on the other from wasting time and energy in any of the numerous schemes by which the quasi-artistic of the middle classes hope to make art grow when it has no longer any root, and thus I became a practical Socialist.

A last word or two. Perhaps some of our friends will say, what have we to do with these matters of history and art? We want by means of Social-Democracy to win a decent livelihood, we want in some sort to live, and that at once. Surely any one who professes to think that the question of art and cultivation must go before that of the knife and fork (and there are some who do propose that) does not understand what art means, or how that its roots must have a soil of a thriving and unanxious life. Yet it must be remembered that civilization has reduced the workman to such a skinny and pitiful existence, that he scarcely knows how to frame a desire for any life much better than that which he now endures perforce. It is the province of art to set the true ideal of a full and reasonable life before him, a life to which the perception and creation of beauty, the enjoyment of real pleasure that is, shall be felt to be as necessary to man as his daily bread, and that no man, and no set of men, can be deprived of this except by mere opposition, which should be resisted to the utmost.

### 2.13.4 Reading and Review Questions

1. What, if any, visual effects do these poems use, and why? How do they affect your understanding of the poems' meaning?

2. What moral, or ethical, situations do the poems' characters face, and why? What comment, if any, do their actions make on morality in general?

3. Do these poems address the social and cultural position of women? Are they sympathetic to women's issues? How do you know?

4. Considering their focus on the past, might these works be considered escapist? Why, or why not?

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## 2.14 GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

(1844-1889)

Image 2.33 | Photo of Gerard Manley Hopkins

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Gerard Manley Hopkins, born to Manley and Catherine Smith in 1844, went to grammar school in Highgate then to Balliol College, Oxford. There, he won a poetry prize for "The Escorial," a poem about a ruined palace built to St. Lawrence. His tutors at Oxford included Walter Pater and theologian Benjamin Jowett. Hopkins vacillated between his interest in aestheticism and religion, ultimately converting to Roman Catholicism through the influence of John Henry Newman. Like Wilde, Hopkins graduated with a double first in Classics. Before entering the Society of Jesus, Hopkins experimented with various styles of poetry, including the Romantics' and D. G. Rossetti's and Christina Rossetti's.

In 1862, when he entered training as a Jesuit, Hopkins burned his poems, considering poetry to be a distraction. As a priest, Hopkins held various posts in industrial cities. He taught at a seminary, eventually becoming a professor of Greek at a Catholic university in Dublin. He was uncertain whether or not this work was the right form of service to God, and he endured a tension between his religious and artistic desires.

In 1875 occurred the wreck of the Deutschland in which five Franciscan nuns died. It moved Hopkins to write "The Wreck of the Deutschland," the first of his major poems. Reading the works of Duns Scotus (1265-1308) helped Hopkins to reconcile his faith and art, particularly as Hopkins developed his concept of "inscape." As with landscape, inscape draws relationships and patterns, connecting individual objects with their groups by their significant patterns.

Through his study of Welsh, Hopkins developed another characteristic concept of his poetry, "sprung rhythm." This unique, syncopated rhythm uses reversals of feet and is monosyllabic; the rhythm goes not by line but by stanza. Through it, Hopkins thought he could approximate ordinary speech in his poetry.

Up until 1884, Hopkins wrote a burst of poems, many of which used brilliant nature imagery. In the few years remaining before his death in 1889, Hopkins felt an alienation from God that he expressed in what are called the "terrible sonnets." Few of Hopkins's poems were published in the nineteenth century. His friend Robert Bridges published a heavily annotated edition of Hopkins's poems in 1918.

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### 2.14.1 "The Wreck of the Deutschland"

To the happy memory of five Franciscan Nuns, exiles by the Falk Laws, drowned between midnight and morning of Dec. 7th, 1875

I

Thou mastering me God! giver of breath and bread; World's strand, sway of the sea; Lord of living and dead; Thou hast bound bones & veins in me, fastened me flesh, And after it almost unmade, what with dread, Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh? Over again I feel thy finger and find thee.

I did say yes

O at lightning and lashed rod;

Thou heardst me truer than tongue confess Thy terror, O Christ, O God; Thou knowest the walls, altar and hour and night: The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee trod Hard down with a horror of height: And the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire of stress.

The frown of his face Before me, the hurtle of hell Behind, where, where was a, where was a place?

I whirled out wings that spell

And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host. My heart, but you were dovewinged, I can tell, Carrier-witted, I am bold to boast, To flash from the flame to the flame then, tower from the grace to the grace.

I am soft sift In an hourglass—at the wall Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift, And it crowds and it combs to the fall; I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane, But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift.

I kiss my hand To the stars, lovely-asunder

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Starlight, wafting him out of it; and Glow, glory in thunder; Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west: Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder, His mystery must be instressed, stressed; For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.

Not out of his bliss Springs the stress felt Nor first from heaven (and few know this) Swings the stroke dealt— Stroke and a stress that stars and storms deliver, That guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed by and melt— But it rides time like riding a river (And here the faithful waver, the faithless fable and miss).

It dates from day Of his going in Galilee; Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey; Manger, maiden's knee; The dense and the driven Passion, and frightful sweat; Thence the discharge of it, there its swelling to be, Though felt before, though in high flood yet— What none would have known of it, only the heart, being hard at bay,

Is out with it! Oh,

We lash with the best or worst Word last! How a lush-kept plush-capped sloe Will, mouthed to flesh-burst, Gush!—flush the man, the being with it, sour or sweet, Brim, in a flash, full!—Hither then, last or first, To hero of Calvary, Christ,'s feet— Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it—men go.

Be adored among men, God, three-numbered form; Wring thy rebel, dogged in den, Man's malice, with wrecking and storm. Beyond saying sweet, past telling of tongue, Thou art lightning and love, I found it, a winter and warm; Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung: Hast thy dark descending and most art merciful then.

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With an anvil-ding And with fire in him forge thy will Or rather, rather then, stealing as Spring Through him, melt him but master him still: Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul, Or as Austin, a lingering-out sweet skill, Make mercy in all of us, out of us all Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King.

II

"Some find me a sword; some The flange and the rail; flame, Fang, or flood" goes Death on drum, And storms bugle his fame. But we dream we are rooted in earth—Dust! Flesh falls within sight of us, we, though our flower the same, Wave with the meadow, forget that there must The sour scythe cringe, and the blear share come.

On Saturday sailed from Bremen, American-outward-bound, Take settler and seamen, tell men with women, Two hundred souls in the round— O Father, not under thy feathers nor ever as guessing The goal was a shoal, of a fourth the doom to be drowned; Yet did the dark side of the bay of thy blessing Not vault them, the million of rounds of thy mercy not reeve even them in?

Into the snows she sweeps, Hurling the haven behind, The Deutschland, on Sunday; and so the sky keeps, For the infinite air is unkind, And the sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow, Sitting Eastnortheast, in cursed quarter, the wind; Wiry and white-fiery and whirlwind-swivelled snow Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps.

She drove in the dark to leeward, She struck—not a reef or a rock But the combs of a smother of sand: night drew her Dead to the Kentish Knock; And she beat the bank down with her bows and the ride of her keel: The breakers rolled on her beam with ruinous shock;

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And canvass and compass, the whorl and the wheel Idle for ever to waft her or wind her with, these she endured.

Hope had grown grey hairs, Hope had mourning on, Trenched with tears, carved with cares, Hope was twelve hours gone; And frightful a nightfall folded rueful a day Nor rescue, only rocket and lightship, shone, And lives at last were washing away: To the shrouds they took,—they shook in the hurling and horrible airs.

One stirred from the rigging to save The wild woman-kind below, With a rope's end round the man, handy and brave— He was pitched to his death at a blow, For all his dreadnought breast and braids of thew: They could tell him for hours, dandled the to and fro Through the cobbled foam-fleece, what could he do With the burl of the fountains of air, buck and the flood of the wave?

They fought with God's cold— And they could not and fell to the deck (Crushed them) or water (and drowned them) or rolled With the sea-romp over the wreck. Night roared, with the heart-break hearing a heart-broke rabble, The woman's wailing, the crying of child without check— Till a lioness arose breasting the babble, A prophetess towered in the tumult, a virginal tongue told.

Ah, touched in your bower of bone Are you! turned for an exquisite smart, Have you! make words break from me here all alone, Do you!—mother of being in me, heart. O unteachably after evil, but uttering truth, Why, tears! is it? tears; such a melting, a madrigal start! Never-eldering revel and river of youth, What can it be, this glee? the good you have there of your own?

Sister, a sister calling A master, her master and mine!— And the inboard seas run swirling and hawling; The rash smart sloggering brine

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Blinds her; but she that weather sees one thing, one; Has one fetch in her: she rears herself to divine Ears, and the call of the tall nun To the men in the tops and the tackle rode over the storm's brawling.

She was first of a five and came Of a coifed sisterhood. (O Deutschland, double a desperate name! O world wide of its good! But Gertrude, lily, and Luther, are two of a town, Christ's lily and beast of the waste wood: From life's dawn it is drawn down, Abel is Cain's brother and breasts they have sucked the same.)

Loathed for a love men knew in them, Banned by the land of their birth, Rhine refused them, Thames would ruin them; Surf, snow, river and earth Gnashed: but thou art above, thou Orion of light; Thy unchancelling poising palms were weighing the worth, Thou martyr-master: in thy sight Storm flakes were scroll-leaved flowers, lily showers—sweet heaven was astrew in them.

Five! the finding and sake And cipher of suffering Christ. Mark, the mark is of man's make And the word of it Sacrificed. But he scores it in scarlet himself on his own bespoken, Before-time-taken, dearest prized and priced— Stigma, signal, cinquefoil token For lettering of the lamb's fleece, ruddying of the rose-flake.

Joy fall to thee, father Francis, Drawn to the Life that died; With the gnarls of the nails in thee, niche of the lance, his Lovescape crucified And seal of his seraph-arrival! and these thy daughters And five-lived and leaved favour and pride, Are sisterly sealed in wild waters, To bathe in his fall-gold mercies, to breathe in his all-fire glances.

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Away in the loveable west, On a pastoral forehead of Wales, I was under a roof here, I was at rest, And they the prey of the gales; She to the black-about air, to the breaker, the thickly Falling flakes, to the throng that catches and quails Was calling "O Christ, Christ, come quickly": The cross to her she calls Christ to her, christens her wildworst Best.

The majesty! what did she mean? Breathe, arch and original Breath. Is it love in her of the being as her lover had been? Breathe, body of lovely Death. They were else-minded then, altogether, the men Woke thee with a we are perishing in the weather of Gennesareth. Or is it that she cried for the crown then, The keener to come at the comfort for feeling the combating keen?

For how to the heart's cheering The down-dugged ground-hugged grey Hovers off, the jay-blue heavens appearing Of pied and peeled May! Blue-beating and hoary-glow height; or night, still higher, With belled fire and the moth-soft Milky way, What by your measure is the heaven of desire, The treasure never eyesight got, nor was ever guessed what for the hearing?

No, but it was not these. The jading and jar of the cart, Time's tasking, it is fathers that asking for ease Of the sodden-with-its-sorrowing heart, Not danger, electrical horror; then further it finds The appealing of the Passion is tenderer in prayer apart: Other, I gather, in measure her mind's Burden, in wind's burly and beat of endragoned seas.

But how shall I . . . make me room there: Reach me a . . . Fancy, come faster— Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there, Thing that she . . . there then! the Master, Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head: He was to cure the extremity where he had cast her;

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Do, deal, lord it with living and dead; Let him ride, her pride, in his triumph, despatch and have done with his doom there.

Ah! there was a heart right There was single eye! Read the unshapeable shock night And knew the who and the why; Wording it how but by him that present and past, Heaven and earth are word of, worded by?— The Simon Peter of a soul! to the blast Tarpeian-fast, but a blown beacon of light.

Jesu, heart's light, Jesu, maid's son, What was the feast followed the night Thou hadst glory of this nun?— Feast of the one woman without stain. For so conceived, so to conceive thee is done; But here was heart-throe, birth of a brain, Word, that heard and kept thee and uttered thee outright.

Well, she has thee for the pain, for the Patience; but pity of the rest of them! Heart, go and bleed at a bitterer vein for the Comfortless unconfessed of them— No not uncomforted: lovely-felicitous Providence Finger of a tender of, O of a feathery delicacy, the breast of the Maiden could obey so, be a bell to, ring of it, and Startle the poor sheep back! is the shipwrack then a harvest, does tempest carry the grain for thee?

I admire thee, master of the tides, Of the Yore-flood, of the year's fall; The recurb and the recovery of the gulf s sides, The girth of it and the wharf of it and the wall; Staunching, quenching ocean of a motionable mind; Ground of being, and granite of it: past all Grasp God, throned behind Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides;

With a mercy that outrides The all of water, an ark For the listener; for the lingerer with a love glides

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Lower than death and the dark; A vein for the visiting of the past-prayer, pent in prison, The-last-breath penitent spirits—the uttermost mark Our passion-plunged giant risen, The Christ of the Father compassionate, fetched in the storm of his strides.

Now burn, new born to the world, Doubled-natured name, The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame, Mid-numbered he in three of the thunder-throne! Not a dooms-day dazzle in his coming nor dark as he came; Kind, but royally reclaiming his own; A released shower, let flash to the shire, not a lightning of fire hard-hurled.

Dame, at our door Drowned, and among our shoals, Remember us in the roads, the heaven-haven of the Reward: Our King back, Oh, upon english souls! Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us, be a crimson-cresseted east, More brightening her, rare-dear Britain, as his reign rolls, Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest, Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord.

### 2.14.2 "The Windhover"

To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding

High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing

In his ecstacy! then off, off forth on swing, As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding

Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear, Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermillion.

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### 2.14.3 "Pied Beauty"

Glory be to God for dappled things—

For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;

For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim: Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings; Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;

And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange; Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?) With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim; He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change: Praise him.

### 2.14.4 "God's Grandeur"

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod? Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things; And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs— Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

### 2.14.5 "No Worst, There is None"

No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief, More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring. Comforter, where, where is your comforting? Mary, mother of us, where is your relief? My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chief Woe, world-sorrow; on an age-old anvil wince and sing— Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked 'No lingering! Let me be fell: force I must be brief'.

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O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep, Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

### 2.14.6 "Carrion Comfort"

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;

Not untwist—slack they may be—these last strands of man

In me or, most weary, cry I can no more. I can;

Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.

But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me

Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me? scan

With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? and fan,

O in turns of tempest, me heaped there; me frantic to avoid thee and flee?

Why? That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear. Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod, Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy, would laugh, cheer. Cheer whom though? the hero whose heaven-handling flung me, foot trod Me? or me that fought him? O which one? is it each one? That night, that year Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God.

### 2.14.7 Reading and Review Questions

1. Because the majority of his poems were published in the twentieth century, Hopkins's work sometimes is characterized as modern rather than Victorian. What Victorian features, if any, do Hopkins's poems possess?

2. How organic, if at all, are his images to their respective poems, and why?

3. What is the effect, if any, of Hopkins's unusual diction in his poems, including his use of archaic and compound words and dialect?

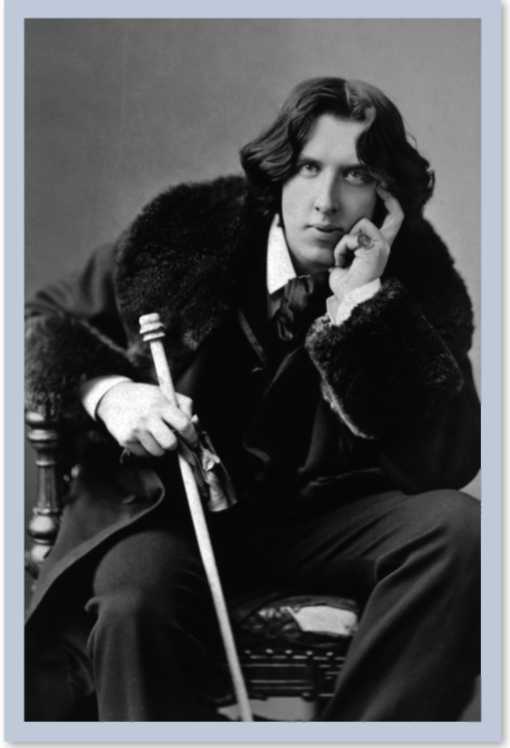
4. How does his concept of inscape shape the meaning and effect of these poems?

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## 2.15 OSCAR WILDE

(1854-1900)

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Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde

was the son of Sir William Wilde, a prominent Dublin eye and ear surgeon, and Jane Francesca Elgee, a poet and revolutionary. Wilde studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and Magdalen College, Oxford, where he took double first in Classics. His intellectual and artistic abilities won him awards and recognition, including the prestigious Newdigate Prize (1878) for his poem "Ravenna." While at Oxford, Wilde studied under both John Ruskin and Walter Pater, scholars and writers who encouraged Wilde's strong interest in Aestheticism.

After graduating, Wilde entered the professional world by publishing Poems (1881). He also made a lecture tour of America, where he introduced Americans to Aestheticism in preparation for the American debut of Gilbert and Sullivan's popular operetta Patience (1881), a work that satirized Aestheticism. And Wilde became editor of Woman's World, a fashionable magazine. Constance Lloyd Wilde, whom Wilde married in 1884, contributed to this magazine, advocating for sensible, "scientific" clothing for women.

Besides poetry, Wilde published works in almost every literary genre, including fairy-tales in The Happy Prince (1888), the novel The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890), essays and dialogues in Intentions (1891), short stories in Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Stories (1891), and drama, both tragic and comic. Salome (1894) would have been performed by the great Sarah Bernhardt had it not been banned for illegally depicting Biblical figures on stage. His comedies, culminating in The Importance of Being Earnest (1895), were immensely successful, even though they satirized their main audience, members of Victorian high society and their manifold hypocrisies. All of Wilde's works are peppered with aphorisms, for which he is justly famous. His aphorisms are often amoral, flippant, and skeptical and introduce principles, or the lack of principles, in the world.

His society's hypocrisies came to the fore in Wilde's trial and arrest for gross indecency, or homosexuality, even though his aristocratic partner, Lord Alfred Douglas (1870-1945), never went to trial. Wilde was sentenced to two years' imprisonment at hard labor, during which time he wrote a long letter to Douglas. This letter, now known as De Profundis (1905), develops many of his social,

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philosophical, and aesthetic views, particularly on individualism and the need for self-realization. After his release, Wilde published only two letters to the Times advocating prison reform and the poem "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" published pseudonymously in 1898. Wilde left England as an exile, ultimately dying in Paris.

### 2.15.1 The Importance of Being Earnest

Cast of Characters:

John (Jack/Ernest) Worthing Lane

Algernon Moncrieff Gwendolen Fairfax Lady Bracknell Cecily Cardew Miss Prism Merriman

Rev. Canon Chasuble

First Act

Scene

Morning-room in Algernon's flat in Half-Moon Street. The room is luxuriously and artistically furnished. The sound of a piano is heard in the adjoining room.

[Lane is arranging afternoon tea on the table, and after the music has ceased, Algernon enters.]

ALGERNON. Did you hear what I was playing, Lane? LANE. I didn't think it polite to listen, sir.

ALGERNON. I'm sorry for that, for your sake. I don't play accurately—any one can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for Life.

LANE. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. And, speaking of the science of Life, have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?

LANE. Yes, sir. [Hands them on a salver.]

ALGERNON. [Inspects them, takes two, and sits down on the sofa.] Oh! . . . by the way, Lane, I see from your book that on Thursday night, when Lord Shoreman

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and Mr. Worthing were dining with me, eight bottles of champagne are entered as having been consumed.

LANE. Yes, sir; eight bottles and a pint.

ALGERNON. Why is it that at a bachelor's establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? I ask merely for information.

LANE. I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. I have often observed that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

ALGERNON. Good heavens! Is marriage so demoralising as that?

LANE. I believe it is a very pleasant state, sir. I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once. That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.

ALGERNON. [Languidly.] I don't know that I am much interested in your family life, Lane.

LANE. No, sir; it is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself. ALGERNON. Very natural, I am sure. That will do, Lane, thank you. LANE. Thank you, sir. [Lane goes out.]

ALGERNON. Lane's views on marriage seem somewhat lax. Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility.

[Enter LANE.]

LANE. Mr. Ernest Worthing. [Enter Jack.] [Lane goes out.]

ALGERNON. How are you, my dear Ernest? What brings you up to town?

JACK. Oh, pleasure, pleasure! What else should bring one anywhere? Eating as usual, I see, Algy!

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ALGERNON. [Stiffly.] I believe it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o'clock. Where have you been since last Thursday?

JACK. [Sitting down on the sofa.] In the country.

ALGERNON. What on earth do you do there?

JACK. [Pulling off his gloves.] When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people. It is excessively boring.

ALGERNON. And who are the people you amuse?

JACK. [Airily.] Oh, neighbours, neighbours.

ALGERNON. Got nice neighbours in your part of Shropshire?

JACK. Perfectly horrid! Never speak to one of them.

ALGERNON. How immensely you must amuse them! [Goes over and takes sandwich.] By the way, Shropshire is your county, is it not?

JACK. Eh? Shropshire? Yes, of course. Hallo! Why all these cups? Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? Who is coming to

tea?

ALGERNON. Oh! merely Aunt Augusta and Gwendolen. JACK. How perfectly delightful!

ALGERNON. Yes, that is all very well; but I am afraid Aunt Augusta won't quite approve of your being here.

JACK. May I ask why?

ALGERNON. My dear fellow, the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

JACK. I am in love with Gwendolen. I have come up to town expressly to propose to her.

ALGERNON. I thought you had come up for pleasure? . . . I call that business. JACK. How utterly unromantic you are!

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ALGERNON. I really don't see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic to be in love. But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. Then the excitement is all over. The very essence of romance is uncertainty. If ever I get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact.

JACK. I have no doubt about that, dear Algy. The Divorce Court was specially invented for people whose memories are so curiously constituted.

ALGERNON. Oh! there is no use speculating on that subject. Divorces are made in Heaven—[Jack puts out his hand to take a sandwich. Algernon at once interferes.] Please don't touch the cucumber sandwiches. They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta. [Takes one and eats it.]

JACK. Well, you have been eating them all the time.

ALGERNON. That is quite a different matter. She is my aunt. [Takes plate from below.] Have some bread and butter. The bread and butter is for Gwendolen. Gwendolen is devoted to bread and butter.

JACK. [Advancing to table and helping himself.] And very good bread and butter it is too.

ALGERNON. Well, my dear fellow, you need not eat as if you were going to eat it all. You behave as if you were married to her already. You are not married to her already, and I don't think you ever will be.

JACK. Why on earth do you say that?

ALGERNON. Well, in the first place girls never marry the men they flirt with. Girls don't think it right.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense!

ALGERNON. It isn't. It is a great truth. It accounts for the extraordinary number of bachelors that one sees all over the place. In the second place, I don't give my consent.

JACK. Your consent!

ALGERNON. My dear fellow, Gwendolen is my first cousin. And before I allow you to marry her, you will have to clear up the whole question of Cecily. [Rings bell.]

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JACK. Cecily! What on earth do you mean? What do you mean, Algy, by Cecily! I don't know any one of the name of Cecily.

[Enter LANE.]

ALGERNON. Bring me that cigarette case Mr. Worthing left in the smoking-room the last time he dined here.

LANE. Yes, sir. [Lane goes out.]

JACK. Do you mean to say you have had my cigarette case all this time? I wish to goodness you had let me know. I have been writing frantic letters to Scotland Yard about it. I was very nearly offering a large reward.

ALGERNON. Well, I wish you would offer one. I happen to be more than usually hard up.

JACK. There is no good offering a large reward now that the thing is found.

[Enter Lane with the cigarette case on a salver. Algernon takes it at once. Lane goes out.]

ALGERNON. I think that is rather mean of you, Ernest, I must say. [Opens case and examines it.] However, it makes no matter, for, now that I look at the inscription inside, I find that the thing isn't yours after all.

JACK. Of course it's mine. [Moving to him.] You have seen me with it a hundred times, and you have no right whatsoever to read what is written inside. It is a very ungentlemanly thing to read a private cigarette case.

ALGERNON. Oh! it is absurd to have a hard and fast rule about what one should read and what one shouldn't. More than half of modern culture depends on what one shouldn't read.

JACK. I am quite aware of the fact, and I don't propose to discuss modern culture. It isn't the sort of thing one should talk of in private. I simply want my cigarette case back.

ALGERNON. Yes; but this isn't your cigarette case. This cigarette case is a present from some one of the name of Cecily, and you said you didn't know any one of that name.

JACK. Well, if you want to know, Cecily happens to be my aunt.

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ALGERNON. Your aunt!

JACK. Yes. Charming old lady she is, too. Lives at Tunbridge Wells. Just give it back to me, Algy.

ALGERNON. [Retreating to back of sofa.] But why does she call herself little Cecily if she is your aunt and lives at Tunbridge Wells? [Reading.] 'From little Cecily with her fondest love.'

JACK. [Moving to sofa and kneeling upon it.] My dear fellow, what on earth is there in that? Some aunts are tall, some aunts are not tall. That is a matter that surely an aunt may be allowed to decide for herself. You seem to think that every aunt should be exactly like your aunt! That is absurd! For Heaven's sake give me back my cigarette case. [Follows Algernon round the room.]

ALGERNON. Yes. But why does your aunt call you her uncle? 'From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack.' There is no objection, I admit, to an aunt being a small aunt, but why an aunt, no matter what her size may be, should call her own nephew her uncle, I can't quite make out. Besides, your name isn't Jack at all; it is Ernest.

JACK. It isn't Ernest; it's Jack.

ALGERNON. You have always told me it was Ernest. I have introduced you to every one as Ernest. You answer to the name of Ernest. You look as if your name was Ernest. You are the most earnest-looking person I ever saw in my life. It is perfectly absurd your saying that your name isn't Ernest. It's on your cards. Here is one of them. [Taking it from case.] 'Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany.' I'll keep this as a proof that your name is Ernest if ever you attempt to deny it to me, or to Gwendolen, or to any one else. [Puts the card in his pocket.]

JACK. Well, my name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country, and the cigarette case was given to me in the country.

ALGERNON. Yes, but that does not account for the fact that your small Aunt Cecily, who lives at Tunbridge Wells, calls you her dear uncle. Come, old boy, you had much better have the thing out at once.

JACK. My dear Algy, you talk exactly as if you were a dentist. It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It produces a false impression,

ALGERNON. Well, that is exactly what dentists always do. Now, go on! Tell me the whole thing. I may mention that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist; and I am quite sure of it now.

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JACK. Bunburyist? What on earth do you mean by a Bunburyist?

ALGERNON. I'll reveal to you the meaning of that incomparable expression as soon as you are kind enough to inform me why you are Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

JACK. Well, produce my cigarette case first.

ALGERNON. Here it is. [Hands cigarette case.] Now produce your explanation, and pray make it improbable. [Sits on sofa.]

JACK. My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. In fact it's perfectly ordinary. Old Mr. Thomas Cardew, who adopted me when I was a little boy, made me in his will guardian to his grand-daughter, Miss Cecily Cardew. Cecily, who addresses me as her uncle from motives of respect that you could not possibly appreciate, lives at my place in the country under the charge of her admirable governess, Miss Prism.

ALGERNON. Where is that place in the country, by the way?

JACK. That is nothing to you, dear boy. You are not going to be invited . . . I may tell you candidly that the place is not in Shropshire.

ALGERNON. I suspected that, my dear fellow! I have Bunburyed all over Shropshire on two separate occasions. Now, go on. Why are you Ernest in town and Jack in the country?

JACK. My dear Algy, I don't know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. You are hardly serious enough. When one is placed in the position of guardian, one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. It's one's duty to do so. And as a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness, in order to get up to town I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, who lives in the Albany, and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

ALGERNON. The truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!

JACK. That wouldn't be at all a bad thing.

ALGERNON. Literary criticism is not your forte, my dear fellow. Don't try it. You should leave that to people who haven't been at a University. They do it so well in

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the daily papers. What you really are is a Bunburyist. I was quite right in saying you were a Bunburyist. You are one of the most advanced Bunburyists I know.

JACK. What on earth do you mean?

ALGERNON. You have invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, in order that you may be able to come up to town as often as you like. I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, in order that I may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose. Bunbury is perfectly invaluable. If it wasn't for Bunbury's extraordinary bad health, for instance, I wouldn't be able to dine with you at Willis's to-night, for I have been really engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week.

JACK. I haven't asked you to dine with me anywhere to-night.

ALGERNON. I know. You are absurdly careless about sending out invitations. It is very foolish of you. Nothing annoys people so much as not receiving invitations.

JACK. You had much better dine with your Aunt Augusta.

ALGERNON. I haven't the smallest intention of doing anything of the kind. To begin with, I dined there on Monday, and once a week is quite enough to dine with one's own relations. In the second place, whenever I do dine there I am always treated as a member of the family, and sent down with either no woman at all, or two. In the third place, I know perfectly well whom she will place me next to, to-night. She will place me next Mary Farquhar, who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner-table. That is not very pleasant. Indeed, it is not even decent . . . and that sort of thing is enormously on the increase. The amount of women in London who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. It looks so bad. It is simply washing one's clean linen in public. Besides, now that I know you to be a confirmed Bunburyist I naturally want to talk to you about Bunburying. I want to tell you the rules.

JACK. I'm not a Bunburyist at all. If Gwendolen accepts me, I am going to kill my brother, indeed I think I'll kill him in any case. Cecily is a little too much interested in him. It is rather a bore. So I am going to get rid of Ernest. And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr . . . with your invalid friend who has the absurd name.

ALGERNON. Nothing will induce me to part with Bunbury, and if you ever get married, which seems to me extremely problematic, you will be very glad to know Bunbury. A man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it.

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JACK. That is nonsense. If I marry a charming girl like Gwendolen, and she is the only girl I ever saw in my life that I would marry, I certainly won't want to know Bunbury.

ALGERNON. Then your wife will. You don't seem to realise, that in married life three is company and two is none.

JACK. [Sententiously.] That, my dear young friend, is the theory that the corrupt French Drama has been propounding for the last fifty years.

ALGERNON. Yes; and that the happy English home has proved in half the time.

JACK. For heaven's sake, don't try to be cynical. It's perfectly easy to be cynical.

ALGERNON. My dear fellow, it isn't easy to be anything nowadays. There's such a lot of beastly competition about. [The sound of an electric bell is heard.] Ah! that must be Aunt Augusta. Only relatives, or creditors, ever ring in that Wagnerian manner. Now, if I get her out of the way for ten minutes, so that you can have an opportunity for proposing to Gwendolen, may I dine with you to-night at Willis's?

JACK. I suppose so, if you want to.

ALGERNON. Yes, but you must be serious about it. I hate people who are not serious about meals. It is so shallow of them.

[Enter Lane.]

Lady Bracknell and Miss Fairfax.

[Algernon goes forward to meet them. Enter Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen.]

LADY BRACKNELL. Good afternoon, dear Algernon, I hope you are behaving very well.

ALGERNON. I'm feeling very well, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. That's not quite the same thing. In fact the two things rarely go together. [Sees Jack and bows to him with icy coldness.]

ALGERNON. [To Gwendolen.] Dear me, you are smart!

GWENDOLEN. I am always smart! Am I not, Mr. Worthing?

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JACK. You're quite perfect, Miss Fairfax.

GWENDOLEN. Oh! I hope I am not that. It would leave no room for developments, and I intend to develop in many directions. [Gwendolen and Jack sit down together in the corner.]

LADY BRACKNELL. I'm sorry if we are a little late, Algernon, but I was obliged to call on dear Lady Harbury. I hadn't been there since her poor husband's death. I never saw a woman so altered; she looks quite twenty years younger. And now I'll have a cup of tea, and one of those nice cucumber sandwiches you promised me.

ALGERNON. Certainly, Aunt Augusta. [Goes over to tea-table.]

LADY BRACKNELL. Won't you come and sit here, Gwendolen?

GWENDOLEN. Thanks, mamma, I'm quite comfortable where I am.

ALGERNON. [Picking up empty plate in horror.] Good heavens! Lane! Why are there no cucumber sandwiches? I ordered them specially.

LANE. [Gravely.] There were no cucumbers in the market this morning, sir. I went down twice.

ALGERNON. No cucumbers!

LANE. No, sir. Not even for ready money.

ALGERNON. That will do, Lane, thank you.

LANE. Thank you, sir. [Goes out.]

ALGERNON. I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

LADY BRACKNELL. It really makes no matter, Algernon. I had some crumpets with Lady Harbury, who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

ALGERNON. I hear her hair has turned quite gold from grief.

LADY BRACKNELL. It certainly has changed its colour. From what cause I, of course, cannot say. [Algernon crosses and hands tea.] Thank you. I've quite a treat for you to-night, Algernon. I am going to send you down with Mary Farquhar. She is such a nice woman, and so attentive to her husband. It's delightful to watch them.

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ALGERNON. I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.

LADY BRACKNELL. [Frowning.] I hope not, Algernon. It would put my table completely out. Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. Fortunately he is accustomed to that.

ALGERNON. It is a great bore, and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. [Exchanges glances with Jack.] They seem to think I should be with him.

LADY BRACKNELL. It is very strange. This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

ALGERNON. Yes; poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

LADY BRACKNELL. Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that

Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shillyshallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice . . . as far as any improvement in his ailment goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception, and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when every one has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

ALGERNON. I'll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, if he is still conscious, and I think I can promise you he'll be all right by Saturday. Of course the music is a great difficulty. You see, if one plays good music, people don't listen, and if one plays bad music people don't talk. But I'll run over the programme I've drawn out, if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

LADY BRACKNELL. Thank you, Algernon. It is very thoughtful of you. [Rising, and following Algernon.] I'm sure the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations. French songs I cannot possibly allow. People always seem to think that they are improper, and either look shocked, which is vulgar, or laugh, which is worse. But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, I believe is so. Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

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GWENDOLEN. Certainly, mamma.

[Lady Bracknell and Algernon go into the music-room, Gwendolen remains behind.]

JACK. Charming day it has been, Miss Fairfax.

GWENDOLEN. Pray don't talk to me about the weather, Mr. Worthing. Whenever people talk to me about the weather, I always feel quite certain that they mean something else. And that makes me so nervous.

JACK. I do mean something else.

GWENDOLEN. I thought so. In fact, I am never wrong.

JACK. And I would like to be allowed to take advantage of Lady Bracknell's temporary absence . . .

GWENDOLEN. I would certainly advise you to do so. Mamma has a way of coming back suddenly into a room that I have often had to speak to her about.

JACK. [Nervously.] Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you more than any girl . . . I have ever met since . . . I met you.

GWENDOLEN. Yes, I am quite well aware of the fact. And I often wish that in public, at any rate, you had been more demonstrative. For me you have always had an irresistible fascination. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you. [Jack looks at her in amazement.] We live, as I hope you know, Mr Worthing, in an age of ideals. The fact is constantly mentioned in the more expensive monthly magazines, and has reached the provincial pulpits, I am told; and my ideal has always been to love some one of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.

JACK. You really love me, Gwendolen?

GWENDOLEN. Passionately!

JACK. Darling! You don't know how happy you've made me. GWENDOLEN. My own Ernest!

JACK. But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

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GWENDOLEN. But your name is Ernest.

JACK. Yes, I know it is. But supposing it was something else? Do you mean to say you couldn't love me then?

GWENDOLEN. [Glibly.] Ah! that is clearly a metaphysical speculation, and like most metaphysical speculations has very little reference at all to the actual facts of real life, as we know them.

JACK. Personally, darling, to speak quite candidly, I don't much care about the name of Ernest . . . I don't think the name suits me at all.

GWENDOLEN. It suits you perfectly. It is a divine name. It has a music of its own. It produces vibrations.

JACK. Well, really, Gwendolen, I must say that I think there are lots of other much nicer names. I think Jack, for instance, a charming name.

GWENDOLEN. Jack? . . . No, there is very little music in the name Jack, if any at all, indeed. It does not thrill. It produces absolutely no vibrations . . . I have known several Jacks, and they all, without exception, were more than usually plain. Besides, Jack is a notorious domesticity for John! And I pity any woman who is married to a man called John. She would probably never be allowed to know the entrancing pleasure of a single moment's solitude. The only really safe name is Ernest

JACK. Gwendolen, I must get christened at once—I mean we must get married at once. There is no time to be lost.

GWENDOLEN. Married, Mr. Worthing?

JACK. [Astounded.] Well . . . surely. You know that I love you, and you led me to believe, Miss Fairfax, that you were not absolutely indifferent to me.

GWENDOLEN. I adore you. But you haven't proposed to me yet. Nothing has been said at all about marriage. The subject has not even been touched on.

JACK. Well . . . may I propose to you now?

GWENDOLEN. I think it would be an admirable opportunity. And to spare you any possible disappointment, Mr. Worthing, I think it only fair to tell you quite frankly before-hand that I am fully determined to accept you.

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JACK. Gwendolen!

GWENDOLEN. Yes, Mr. Worthing, what have you got to say to me?

JACK. You know what I have got to say to you.

GWENDOLEN. Yes, but you don't say it.

JACK. Gwendolen, will you marry me? [Goes on his knees.]

GWENDOLEN. Of course I will, darling. How long you have been about it! I am afraid you have had very little experience in how to propose.

JACK. My own one, I have never loved any one in the world but you.

GWENDOLEN. Yes, but men often propose for practice. I know my brother Gerald does. All my girl-friends tell me so. What wonderfully blue eyes you have, Ernest! They are quite, quite, blue. I hope you will always look at me just like that, especially when there are other people present. [Enter Lady Bracknell.]

LADY BRACKNELL. Mr. Worthing! Rise, sir, from this semi-recumbent posture. It is most indecorous.

GWENDOLEN. Mamma! [He tries to rise; she restrains him.] I must beg you to retire. This is no place for you. Besides, Mr. Worthing has not quite finished yet.

LADY BRACKNELL. Finished what, may I ask?

GWENDOLEN. I am engaged to Mr. Worthing, mamma. [They rise together.]

LADY BRACKNELL. Pardon me, you are not engaged to any one. When you do become engaged to some one, I, or your father, should his health permit him, will inform you of the fact. An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself . . . And now I have a few questions to put to you, Mr. Worthing. While I am making these inquiries, you, Gwendolen, will wait for me below in the carriage.

GWENDOLEN. [Reproachfully.] Mamma!

LADY BRACKNELL. In the carriage, Gwendolen! [Gwendolen goes to the door. She and Jack blow kisses to each other behind Lady Bracknell's back. Lady Bracknell looks vaguely about as if she could not understand what the noise was. Finally turns round.] Gwendolen, the carriage!

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GWENDOLEN. Yes, mamma. [Goes out, looking back at Jack.] LADY BRACKNELL. [Sitting down.] You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing. [Looks in her pocket for note-book and pencil.] JACK. Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

LADY BRACKNELL. [Pencil and note-book in hand.] I feel bound to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men, although I have the same list as the dear Duchess of Bolton has. We work together, in fact. However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires. Do you smoke?

JACK. Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.

LADY BRACKNELL. I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind. There are far too many idle men in London as it is. How old are you?

JACK. Twenty-nine.

LADY BRACKNELL. A very good age to be married at. I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing. Which do you know?

JACK. [After some hesitation.] I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL. I am pleased to hear it. I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone. The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square. What is your income?

JACK. Between seven and eight thousand a year.

LADY BRACKNELL. [Makes a note in her book.] In land, or in investments? JACK. In investments, chiefly.

LADY BRACKNELL. That is satisfactory. What between the duties expected of one during one's lifetime, and the duties exacted from one after one's death, land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure. It gives one position, and prevents one from keeping it up. That's all that can be said about land.

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JACK. I have a country house with some land, of course, attached to it, about fifteen hundred acres, I believe; but I don't depend on that for my real income. In fact, as far as I can make out, the poachers are the only people who make anything out of it.

LADY BRACKNELL. A country house! How many bedrooms? Well, that point can be cleared up afterwards. You have a town house, I hope? A girl with a simple, unspoiled nature, like Gwendolen, could hardly be expected to reside in the country.

JACK. Well, I own a house in Belgrave Square, but it is let by the year to Lady Bloxham. Of course, I can get it back whenever I like, at six months' notice.

LADY BRACKNELL. Lady Bloxham? I don't know her.

JACK. Oh, she goes about very little. She is a lady considerably advanced in years.

LADY BRACKNELL. Ah, nowadays that is no guarantee of respectability of character. What number in Belgrave Square?

JACK. 149.

LADY BRACKNELL. [Shaking her head.] The unfashionable side. I thought there was something. However, that could easily be altered.

JACK. Do you mean the fashion, or the side?

LADY BRACKNELL. [Sternly.] Both, if necessary, I presume. What are your polities?

JACK. Well, I am afraid I really have none. I am a Liberal Unionist.

LADY BRACKNELL. Oh, they count as Tories. They dine with us. Or come in the evening, at any rate. Now to minor matters. Are your parents living?

JACK. I have lost both my parents.

LADY BRACKNELL. To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. Was he born in what the Radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?

JACK. I am afraid I really don't know. The fact is, Lady Bracknell, I said I had lost my parents. It would be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me . . . I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was . . . well, I was found.

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LADY BRACKNELL. Found!

JACK. The late Mr. Thomas Cardew, an old gentleman of a very charitable and kindly disposition, found me, and gave me the name of Worthing, because he happened to have a first-class ticket for Worthing in his pocket at the time. Worthing is a place in Sussex. It is a seaside resort.

LADY BRACKNELL. Where did the charitable gentleman who had a first-class ticket for this seaside resort find you?

JACK. [Gravely.] In a hand-bag.

LADY BRACKNELL. A hand-bag?

JACK. [Very seriously.] Yes, Lady Bracknell. I was in a hand-bag—a somewhat large, black leather hand-bag, with handles to it—an ordinary hand-bag in fact.

LADY BRACKNELL. In what locality did this Mr. James, or Thomas, Cardew come across this ordinary hand-bag?

JACK. In the cloak-room at Victoria Station. It was given to him in mistake for his own.

LADY BRACKNELL. The cloak-room at Victoria Station?

JACK. Yes. The Brighton line.

LADY BRACKNELL. The line is immaterial. Mr. Worthing, I confess I feel somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. To be born, or at any rate bred, in a hand-bag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life that reminds one of the worst excesses of the French Revolution. And I presume you know what that unfortunate movement led to? As for the particular locality in which the hand-bag was found, a cloak-room at a railway station might serve to conceal a social indiscretion—has probably, indeed, been used for that purpose before now—but it could hardly be regarded as an assured basis for a recognised position in good society.

JACK. May I ask you then what you would advise me to do? I need hardly say I would do anything in the world to ensure Gwendolen's happiness.

LADY BRACKNELL. I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and to make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over.

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JACK. Well, I don't see how I could possibly manage to do that. I can produce the hand-bag at any moment. It is in my dressing-room at home. I really think that should satisfy you, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL. Me, sir! What has it to do with me? You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel? Good morning, Mr. Worthing!

[Lady Bracknell sweeps out in majestic indignation.]

JACK. Good morning! [Algernon, from the other room, strikes up the Wedding March. Jack looks perfectly furious, and goes to the door.] For goodness' sake don't play that ghastly tune, Algy. How idiotic you are!

[The music stops and Algernon enters cheerily.]

ALGERNON. Didn't it go off all right, old boy? You don't mean to say Gwendolen refused you? I know it is a way she has. She is always refusing people. I think it is most ill-natured of her.

JACK. Oh, Gwendolen is as right as a trivet. As far as she is concerned, we are engaged. Her mother is perfectly unbearable. Never met such a Gorgon . . . I don't really know what a Gorgon is like, but I am quite sure that Lady Bracknell is one. In any case, she is a monster, without being a myth, which is rather unfair . . . I beg your pardon, Algy, I suppose I shouldn't talk about your own aunt in that way before you.

ALGERNON. My dear boy, I love hearing my relations abused. It is the only thing that makes me put up with them at all. Relations are simply a tedious pack of people, who haven't got the remotest knowledge of how to live, nor the smallest instinct about when to die.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense!

ALGERNON. It isn't!

JACK. Well, I won't argue about the matter. You always want to argue about things.

ALGERNON. That is exactly what things were originally made for.

JACK. Upon my word, if I thought that, I'd shoot myself . . . [A pause.] You don't think there is any chance of Gwendolen becoming like her mother in about a hundred and fifty years, do you, Algy?

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ALGERNON. All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his.

JACK. Is that clever?

ALGERNON. It is perfectly phrased! and quite as true as any observation in civilised life should be.

JACK. I am sick to death of cleverness. Everybody is clever nowadays. You can't go anywhere without meeting clever people. The thing has become an absolute public nuisance. I wish to goodness we had a few fools left.

ALGERNON. We have.

JACK. I should extremely like to meet them. What do they talk about? ALGERNON. The fools? Oh! about the clever people, of course. JACK. What fools!

ALGERNON. By the way, did you tell Gwendolen the truth about your being Ernest in town, and Jack in the country?

JACK. [In a very patronising manner.] My dear fellow, the truth isn't quite the sort of thing one tells to a nice, sweet, refined girl. What extraordinary ideas you have about the way to behave to a woman!

ALGERNON. The only way to behave to a woman is to make love to her, if she is pretty, and to some one else, if she is plain.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense.

ALGERNON. What about your brother? What about the profligate Ernest?

JACK. Oh, before the end of the week I shall have got rid of him. I'll say he died in Paris of apoplexy. Lots of people die of apoplexy, quite suddenly, don't they?

ALGERNON. Yes, but it's hereditary, my dear fellow. It's a sort of thing that runs in families. You had much better say a severe chill.

JACK. You are sure a severe chill isn't hereditary, or anything of that kind? ALGERNON. Of course it isn't!

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JACK. Very well, then. My poor brother Ernest to carried off suddenly, in Paris, by a severe chill. That gets rid of him.

ALGERNON. But I thought you said that . . . Miss Cardew was a little too much interested in your poor brother Ernest? Won't she feel his loss a good deal?

JACK. Oh, that is all right. Cecily is not a silly romantic girl, I am glad to say. She has got a capital appetite, goes long walks, and pays no attention at all to her lessons.

ALGERNON. I would rather like to see Cecily.

JACK. I will take very good care you never do. She is excessively pretty, and she is only just eighteen.

ALGERNON. Have you told Gwendolen yet that you have an excessively pretty ward who is only just eighteen?

JACK. Oh! one doesn't blurt these things out to people. Cecily and Gwendolen are perfectly certain to be extremely great friends. I'll bet you anything you like that half an hour after they have met, they will be calling each other sister.

ALGERNON. Women only do that when they have called each other a lot of other things first. Now, my dear boy, if we want to get a good table at Willis's, we really must go and dress. Do you know it is nearly seven?

JACK. [Irritably.] Oh! It always is nearly seven.

ALGERNON. Well, I'm hungry.

JACK. I never knew you when you weren't . . .

ALGERNON. What shall we do after dinner? Go to a theatre? JACK. Oh no! I loathe listening.

ALGERNON. Well, let us go to the Club? JACK. Oh, no! I hate talking.

ALGERNON. Well, we might trot round to the Empire at ten? JACK. Oh, no! I can't bear looking at things. It is so silly.

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ALGERNON. Well, what shall we do?

JACK. Nothing!

ALGERNON. It is awfully hard work doing nothing. However, I don't mind hard work where there is no definite object of any kind.

[Enter LANE.]

LANE. Miss Fairfax.

[Enter Gwendolen. Lane goes out.]

ALGERNON. Gwendolen, upon my word!

GWENDOLEN. Algy, kindly turn your back. I have something very particular to say to Mr. Worthing.

ALGERNON. Really, Gwendolen, I don't think I can allow this at all.

GWENDOLEN. Algy, you always adopt a strictly immoral attitude towards life. You are not quite old enough to do that. [Algernon retires to the fireplace.]

JACK. My own darling!

GWENDOLEN. Ernest, we may never be married. From the expression on mamma's face I fear we never shall. Few parents nowadays pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out. Whatever influence I ever had over mamma, I lost at the age of three. But although she may prevent us from becoming man and wife, and I may marry some one else, and marry often, nothing that she can possibly do can alter my eternal devotion to you.

JACK. Dear Gwendolen!

GWENDOLEN. The story of your romantic origin, as related to me by mamma, with unpleasing comments, has naturally stirred the deeper fibres of my nature. Your Christian name has an irresistible fascination. The simplicity of your character makes you exquisitely incomprehensible to me. Your town address at the Albany I have. What is your address in the country?

JACK. The Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire.

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[Algernon, who has been carefully listening, smiles to himself, and writes the address on his shirt-cuff. Then picks up the Railway Guide.]

GWENDOLEN. There is a good postal service, I suppose? It may be necessary to do something desperate. That of course will require serious consideration. I will communicate with you daily.

JACK. My own one!

GWENDOLEN. How long do you remain in town?

JACK. Till Monday.

GWENDOLEN. Good! Algy, you may turn round now. ALGERNON. Thanks, I've turned round already. GWENDOLEN. You may also ring the bell. JACK. You will let me see you to your carriage, my own darling?

GWENDOLEN. Certainly.

JACK. [To Lane, who now enters.] I will see Miss Fairfax out. LANE. Yes, sir. [Jack and Gwendolen go off.]

[Lane presents several letters on a salver to Algernon. It is to be surmised that they are bills, as Algernon, after looking at the envelopes, tears them up.]

ALGERNON. A glass of sherry, Lane.

LANE. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. To-morrow, Lane, I'm going Bunburying.

LANE. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. I shall probably not be back till Monday. You can put up my dress clothes, my smoking jacket, and all the Bunbury suits . . .

LANE. Yes, sir. [Handing sherry.]

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ALGERNON. I hope to-morrow will be a fine day, Lane. LANE. It never is, sir.

ALGERNON. Lane, you're a perfect pessimist. LANE. I do my best to give satisfaction, sir. [Enter Jack. Lane goes off.]

JACK. There's a sensible, intellectual girl! the only girl I ever cared for in my life. [Algernon is laughing immoderately.] What on earth are you so amused at?

ALGERNON. Oh, I'm a little anxious about poor Bunbury, that is all.

JACK. If you don't take care, your friend Bunbury will get you into a serious scrape some day.

ALGERNON. I love scrapes. They are the only things that are never serious. JACK. Oh, that's nonsense, Algy. You never talk anything but nonsense. ALGERNON. Nobody ever does.

[Jack looks indignantly at him, and leaves the room. Algernon lights a cigarette, reads his shirt-cuff, and smiles.]

ACT DROP

SECOND ACT

SCENE

Garden at the Manor House. A flight of grey stone steps leads up to the house. The garden, an old-fashioned one, full of roses. Time of year, July. Basket chairs, and a table covered with books, are set under a large yew-tree.

[Miss Prism discovered seated at the table. Cecily is at the back watering flowers.]

MISS PRISM. [Calling.] Cecily, Cecily! Surely such a utilitarian occupation as the watering of flowers is rather Moulton's duty than yours? Especially at a moment when intellectual pleasures await you. Your German grammar is on the table. Pray open it at page fifteen. We will repeat yesterday's lesson.

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CECILY. [Coming over very slowly.] But I don't like German. It isn't at all a becoming language. I know perfectly well that I look quite plain after my German lesson.

MISS PRISM. Child, you know how anxious your guardian is that you should improve yourself in every way. He laid particular stress on your German, as he was leaving for town yesterday. Indeed, he always lays stress on your German when he is leaving for town.

CECILY. Dear Uncle Jack is so very serious! Sometimes he is so serious that I think he cannot be quite well.

MISS PRISM. [Drawing herself up.] Your

guardian enjoys the best of health, and his gravity of demeanour is especially to be commended in one so comparatively young as he is. I know no one who has a higher sense of duty and responsibility.

Image 2.35 | Miss Prism & Cecily

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CECILY. I suppose that is why he often looks a little bored when we three are together.

MISS PRISM. Cecily! I am surprised at you. Mr. Worthing has many troubles in his life. Idle merriment and triviality would be out of place in his conversation. You must remember his constant anxiety about that unfortunate young man his brother.

CECILY. I wish Uncle Jack would allow that unfortunate young man, his brother, to come down here sometimes. We might have a good influence over him, Miss Prism. I am sure you certainly would. You know German, and geology, and things of that kind influence a man very much. [Cecily begins to write in her diary.]

MISS PRISM. [Shaking her head.] I do not think that even I could produce any effect on a character that according to his own brother's admission is irretrievably weak and vacillating. Indeed I am not sure that I would desire to reclaim him. I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment's notice. As a man sows so let him reap. You must put away your diary, Cecily. I really don't see why you should keep a diary at all.

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CECILY. I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. If I didn't write them down, I should probably forget all about them.

MISS PRISM. Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary that we all carry about with us.

CECILY. Yes, but it usually chronicles the things that have never happened, and couldn't possibly have happened. I believe that Memory is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels that Mudie sends us.

MISS PRISM. Do not speak slightingly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days.

CECILY. Did you really, Miss Prism? How wonderfully clever you are! I hope it did not end happily? I don't like novels that end happily. They depress me so much.

MISS PRISM. The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.

CECILY. I suppose so. But it seems very unfair. And was your novel ever published?

MISS PRISM. Alas! no. The manuscript unfortunately was abandoned. [Cecily starts.] I use the word in the sense of lost or mislaid. To your work, child, these speculations are profitless.

CECILY. [Smiling.] But I see dear Dr. Chasuble coming up through the garden. MISS PRISM. [Rising and advancing.] Dr. Chasuble! This is indeed a pleasure. [Enter Canon Chasuble.]

CHASUBLE. And how are we this morning? Miss Prism, you are, I trust, well?

CECILY. Miss Prism has just been complaining of a slight headache. I think it would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the Park, Dr. Chasuble.

MISS PRISM. Cecily, I have not mentioned anything about a headache.

CECILY. No, dear Miss Prism, I know that, but I felt instinctively that you had a headache. Indeed I was thinking about that, and not about my German lesson, when the Rector came in.

CHASUBLE. I hope, Cecily, you are not inattentive.

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CECILY. Oh, I am afraid I am.

CHASUBLE. That is strange. Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism's pupil, I would hang upon her lips. [Miss Prism glares.] I spoke metaphorically.—My metaphor was drawn from bees. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, I suppose, has not returned from town yet?

MISS PRISM. We do not expect him till Monday afternoon.

CHASUBLE. Ah yes, he usually likes to spend his Sunday in London. He is not one of those whose sole aim is enjoyment, as, by all accounts, that unfortunate young man his brother seems to be. But I must not disturb Egeria and her pupil any longer.

MISS PRISM. Egeria? My name is Laetitia, Doctor.

CHASUBLE. [Bowing.] A classical allusion merely, drawn from the Pagan authors. I shall see you both no doubt at Evensong?

MISS PRISM. I think, dear Doctor, I will have a stroll with you. I find I have a headache after all, and a walk might do it good.

CHASUBLE. With pleasure, Miss Prism, with pleasure. We might go as far as the schools and back.

MISS PRISM. That would be delightful. Cecily, you will read your Political Economy in my absence. The chapter on the Fall of the Rupee you may omit. It is somewhat too sensational. Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side.

[Goes down the garden with Dr. Chasuble.]

CECILY. [Picks up books and throws them back on table.] Horrid Political Economy! Horrid Geography! Horrid, horrid German!

[Enter Merriman with a card on a salver.]

MERRIMAN. Mr. Ernest Worthing has just driven over from the station. He has brought his luggage with him.

CECILY. [Takes the card and reads it.] 'Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany, W.' Uncle Jack's brother! Did you tell him Mr. Worthing was in town?

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MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss. He seemed very much disappointed. I mentioned that you and Miss Prism were in the garden. He said he was anxious to speak to you privately for a moment.

CECILY. Ask Mr. Ernest Worthing to come here. I suppose you had better talk to the housekeeper about a room for him.

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss.

[Merriman goes off.]

CECILY. I have never met any really wicked person before. I feel rather frightened. I am so afraid he will look just like every one else.

[Enter Algernon, very gay and debonnair.] He does!

ALGERNON. [Raising his hat.] You are my little cousin Cecily, I'm sure.

CECILY. You are under some strange mistake. I am not little. In fact, I believe I am more than usually tall for my age. [Algernon is rather taken aback.] But I am your cousin Cecily. You, I see from your card, are Uncle Jack's brother, my cousin Ernest, my wicked cousin Ernest.

ALGERNON. Oh! I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily. You mustn't think that I am wicked.

CECILY. If you are not, then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.

ALGERNON. [Looks at her in amazement.] Oh! Of course I have been rather reckless.

CECILY. I am glad to hear it.

ALGERNON. In fact, now you mention the subject, I have been very bad in my own small way.

CECILY. I don't think you should be so proud of that, though I am sure it must have been very pleasant.

ALGERNON. It is much pleasanter being here with you.

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CECILY. I can't understand how you are here at all. Uncle Jack won't be back till Monday afternoon.

ALGERNON. That is a great disappointment. I am obliged to go up by the first train on Monday morning. I have a business appointment that I am anxious . . . to miss?

CECILY. Couldn't you miss it anywhere but in London? ALGERNON. No: the appointment is in London.

CECILY. Well, I know, of course, how important it is not to keep a business engagement, if one wants to retain any sense of the beauty of life, but still I think you had better wait till Uncle Jack arrives. I know he wants to speak to you about your emigrating.

ALGERNON. About my what?

CECILY. Your emigrating. He has gone up to buy your outfit.

ALGERNON. I certainly wouldn't let Jack buy my outfit. He has no taste in neckties

at all.

CECILY. I don't think you will require neckties. Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.

ALGERNON. Australia! I'd sooner die.

CECILY. Well, he said at dinner on Wednesday night, that you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia.

ALGERNON. Oh, well! The accounts I have received of Australia and the next world, are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

CECILY. Yes, but are you good enough for it?

ALGERNON. I'm afraid I'm not that. That is why I want you to reform me. You might make that your mission, if you don't mind, cousin Cecily.

CECILY. I'm afraid I've no time, this afternoon.

ALGERNON. Well, would you mind my reforming myself this afternoon?

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CECILY. It is rather Quixotic of you. But I think you should try.

ALGERNON. I will. I feel better already.

CECILY. You are looking a little worse. ALGERNON. That is because I am hungry.

CECILY. How thoughtless of me. I should have remembered that when one is going to lead an entirely new life, one requires regular and wholesome meals. Won't you come in?

ALGERNON. Thank you. Might I have a buttonhole first? I never have any appetite unless I have a buttonhole first.

CECILY. A Marechal Niel? [Picks up scissors.]

ALGERNON. No, I'd sooner have a pink rose.

CECILY. Why? [Cuts a flower.]

ALGERNON. Because you are like a pink rose, Cousin Cecily.

CECILY. I don't think it can be right for you to talk to me like that. Miss Prism never says such things to me.

ALGERNON. Then Miss Prism is a short-sighted old lady. [Cecily puts the rose in his buttonhole.] You are the prettiest girl I ever saw.

CECILY. Miss Prism says that all good looks are a snare.

ALGERNON. They are a snare that every sensible man would like to be caught in.

CECILY. Oh, I don't think I would care to catch a sensible man. I shouldn't know what to talk to him about.

[They pass into the house. Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble return.]

MISS PRISM. You are too much alone, dear Dr. Chasuble. You should get married. A misanthrope I can understand—a womanthrope, never!

CHASUBLE. [With a scholar's shudder.] Believe me, I do not deserve so neologistic a phrase. The precept as well as the practice of the Primitive Church was distinctly against matrimony.

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MISS PRISM. [Sententiously.] That is obviously the reason why the Primitive Church has not lasted up to the present day. And you do not seem to realise, dear Doctor, that by persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. Men should be more careful; this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

CHASUBLE. But is a man not equally attractive when married? MISS PRISM. No married man is ever attractive except to his wife. CHASUBLE. And often, I've been told, not even to her.

MISS PRISM. That depends on the intellectual sympathies of the woman. Maturity can always be depended on. Ripeness can be trusted. Young women are green. [Dr. Chasuble starts.] I spoke horticulturally. My metaphor was drawn from fruits. But where is Cecily?

CHASUBLE. Perhaps she followed us to the schools.

[Enter Jack slowly from the back of the garden. He is dressed in the deepest mourning, with crape hatband and black gloves.]

MISS PRISM. Mr. Worthing! CHASUBLE. Mr. Worthing?

MISS PRISM. This is indeed a surprise. We did not look for you till Monday afternoon.

JACK. [Shakes Miss Prism's hand in a tragic manner.] I have returned sooner than I expected. Dr. Chasuble, I hope you are well?

CHASUBLE. Dear Mr. Worthing, I trust this garb of woe does not betoken some terrible calamity?

JACK. My brother.

MISS PRISM. More shameful debts and extravagance? CHASUBLE. Still leading his life of pleasure? JACK. [Shaking his head.] Dead!

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CHASUBLE. Your brother Ernest dead? JACK. Quite dead.

MISS PRISM. What a lesson for him! I trust he will profit by it.

CHASUBLE. Mr. Worthing, I offer you my sincere condolence. You have at least the consolation of knowing that you were always the most generous and forgiving of brothers.

JACK. Poor Ernest! He had many faults, but it is a sad, sad blow.

CHASUBLE. Very sad indeed. Were you with him at the end?

JACK. No. He died abroad; in Paris, in fact. I had a telegram last night from the manager of the Grand Hotel.

CHASUBLE. Was the cause of death mentioned?

JACK. A severe chill, it seems.

MISS PRISM. As a man sows, so shall he reap.

CHASUBLE. [Raising his hand.] Charity, dear Miss Prism, charity! None of us are perfect. I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts. Will the interment take place here?

JACK. No. He seems to have expressed a desire to be buried in Paris.

CHASUBLE. In Paris! [Shakes his head.] I fear that hardly points to any very serious state of mind at the last. You would no doubt wish me to make some slight allusion to this tragic domestic affliction next Sunday. [Jack presses his hand convulsively.] My sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful, or, as in the present case, distressing. [All sigh.] I have preached it at harvest celebrations, christenings, confirmations, on days of humiliation and festal days. The last time I delivered it was in the Cathedral, as a charity sermon on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Discontent among the Upper Orders. The Bishop, who was present, was much struck by some of the analogies I drew.

JACK. Ah! that reminds me, you mentioned christenings I think, Dr. Chasuble? I suppose you know how to christen all right? [Dr. Chasuble looks astounded.] I mean, of course, you are continually christening, aren't you?

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MISS PRISM. It is, I regret to say, one of the Rector's most constant duties in this parish. I have often spoken to the poorer classes on the subject. But they don't seem to know what thrift is.

CHASUBLE. But is there any particular infant in whom you are interested, Mr. Worthing? Your brother was, I believe, unmarried, was he not?

JACK. Oh yes.

MISS PRISM. [Bitterly.] People who live entirely for pleasure usually are.

JACK. But it is not for any child, dear Doctor. I am very fond of children. No! the fact is, I would like to be christened myself, this afternoon, if you have nothing better to do.

CHASUBLE. But surely, Mr. Worthing, you have been christened already?

JACK. I don't remember anything about it.

CHASUBLE. But have you any grave doubts on the subject?

JACK. I certainly intend to have. Of course I don't know if the thing would bother you in any way, or if you think I am a little too old now.

CHASUBLE. Not at all. The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.

JACK. Immersion!

CHASUBLE. You need have no apprehensions. Sprinkling is all that is necessary, or indeed I think advisable. Our weather is so changeable. At what hour would you wish the ceremony performed?

JACK. Oh, I might trot round about five if that would suit you.

CHASUBLE. Perfectly, perfectly! In fact I have two similar ceremonies to perform at that time. A case of twins that occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man.

JACK. Oh! I don't see much fun in being christened along with other babies. It would be childish. Would half-past five do?

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CHASUBLE. Admirably! Admirably! [Takes out watch.] And now, dear Mr. Worthing, I will not intrude any longer into a house of sorrow. I would merely beg you not to be too much bowed down by grief. What seem to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.

MISS PRISM. This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind. [Enter Cecily from the house.]

CECILY. Uncle Jack! Oh, I am pleased to see you back. But what horrid clothes you have got on! Do go and change them.

MISS PRISM. Cecily!

CHASUBLE. My child! my child! [Cecily goes towards Jack; he kisses her brow in a melancholy manner.]

CECILY. What is the matter, Uncle Jack? Do look happy! You look as if you had toothache, and I have got such a surprise for you. Who do you think is in the dining-room? Your brother!

JACK. Who?

CECILY. Your brother Ernest. He arrived about half an hour ago. JACK. What nonsense! I haven't got a brother.

CECILY. Oh, don't say that. However badly he may have behaved to you in the past he is still your brother. You couldn't be so heartless as to disown him. I'll tell him to come out. And you will shake hands with him, won't you, Uncle Jack? [Runs back into the house.]

CHASUBLE. These are very joyful tidings.

MISS PRISM. After we had all been resigned to his loss, his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

JACK. My brother is in the dining-room? I don't know what it all means. I think it is perfectly absurd.

[Enter Algernon and Cecily hand in hand. They come slowly up to Jack.] JACK. Good heavens! [Motions Algernon away.]

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ALGERNON. Brother John, I have come down from town to tell you that I am very sorry for all the trouble I have given you, and that I intend to lead a better life in the future. [Jack glares at him and does not take his hand.]

CECILY. Uncle Jack, you are not going to refuse your own brother's hand?

JACK. Nothing will induce me to take his hand. I think his coming down here disgraceful. He knows perfectly well why.

CECILY. Uncle Jack, do be nice. There is some good in every one. Ernest has just been telling me about his poor invalid friend Mr. Bunbury whom he goes to visit so often. And surely there must be much good in one who is kind to an invalid, and leaves the pleasures of London to sit by a bed of pain.

JACK. Oh! he has been talking about Bunbury, has he?

CECILY. Yes, he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury, and his terrible state of health.

JACK. Bunbury! Well, I won't have him talk to you about Bunbury or about anything else. It is enough to drive one perfectly frantic.

ALGERNON. Of course I admit that the faults were all on my side. But I must say that I think that Brother John's coldness to me is peculiarly painful. I expected a more enthusiastic welcome, especially considering it is the first time I have come here.

CECILY. Uncle Jack, if you don't shake hands with Ernest I will never forgive you. JACK. Never forgive me? CECILY. Never, never, never!

JACK. Well, this is the last time I shall ever do it. [Shakes with Algernon and glares.]

CHASUBLE. It's pleasant, is it not, to see so perfect a reconciliation? I think we might leave the two brothers together.

MISS PRISM. Cecily, you will come with us.

CECILY. Certainly, Miss Prism. My little task of reconciliation is over. CHASUBLE. You have done a beautiful action to-day, dear child.

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MISS PRISM. We must not be premature in our judgments.

CECILY. I feel very happy. [They all go off except Jack and Algernon.]

JACK. You young scoundrel, Algy, you must get out of this place as soon as possible. I don't allow any Bunburying here.

[Enter Merriman.]

MERRIMAN. I have put Mr. Ernest's things in the room next to yours, sir. I suppose that is all right?

JACK. What?

MERRIMAN. Mr. Ernest's luggage, sir. I have unpacked it and put it in the room next to your own.

JACK. His luggage?

MERRIMAN. Yes, sir. Three portmanteaus, a dressing-case, two hat-boxes, and a large luncheon-basket.

ALGERNON. I am afraid I can't stay more than a week this time.

JACK. Merriman, order the dog-cart at once. Mr. Ernest has been suddenly called back to town.

MERRIMAN. Yes, sir. [Goes back into the house.]

ALGERNON. What a fearful liar you are, Jack. I have not been called back to town at all.

JACK. Yes, you have.

ALGERNON. I haven't heard any one call me. JACK. Your duty as a gentleman calls you back.

ALGERNON. My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasures in the smallest degree.

JACK. I can quite understand that.

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ALGERNON. Well, Cecily is a darling.

JACK. You are not to talk of Miss Cardew like that. I don't like it.

ALGERNON. Well, I don't like your clothes. You look perfectly ridiculous in them. Why on earth don't you go up and change? It is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning for a man who is actually staying for a whole week with you in your house as a guest. I call it grotesque.

JACK. You are certainly not staying with me for a whole week as a guest or anything else. You have got to leave . . . by the four-five train.

ALGERNON. I certainly won't leave you so long as you are in mourning. It would be most unfriendly. If I were in mourning you would stay with me, I suppose. I should think it very unkind if you didn't.

JACK. Well, will you go if I change my clothes?

ALGERNON. Yes, if you are not too long. I never saw anybody take so long to dress, and with such little result.

JACK. Well, at any rate, that is better than being always over-dressed as you are.

ALGERNON. If I am occasionally a little over-dressed, I make up for it by being always immensely over-educated.

JACK. Your vanity is ridiculous, your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden utterly absurd. However, you have got to catch the four-five, and I hope you will have a pleasant journey back to town. This Bunburying, as you call it, has not been a great success for you.

[Goes into the house.]

ALGERNON. I think it has been a great success. I'm in love with Cecily, and that is everything.

[Enter Cecily at the back of the garden. She picks up the can and begins to water the flowers.] But I must see her before I go, and make arrangements for another Bunbury. Ah, there she is.

CECILY. Oh, I merely came back to water the roses. I thought you were with Uncle Jack.

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ALGERNON. He's gone to order the dog-cart for me. CECILY. Oh, is he going to take you for a nice drive? ALGERNON. He's going to send me away.

CECILY. Then have we got to part?

ALGERNON. I am afraid so. It's a very painful parting.

CECILY. It is always painful to part from people whom one has known for a very brief space of time. The absence of old friends one can endure with equanimity. But even a momentary separation from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable.

ALGERNON. Thank you.

[Enter Merriman.]

MERRIMAN. The dog-cart is at the door, sir. [Algernon looks appealingly at

Cecily.]

CECILY. It can wait, Merriman for . . . five minutes. MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss. [Exit Merriman.]

ALGERNON. I hope, Cecily, I shall not offend you if I state quite frankly and openly that you seem to me to be in every way the visible personification of absolute perfection.

CECILY. I think your frankness does you great credit, Ernest. If you will allow me, I will copy your remarks into my diary. [Goes over to table and begins writing in diary.]

ALGERNON. Do you really keep a diary? I'd give anything to look at it. May I?

CECILY. Oh no. [Puts her hand over it.] You see, it is simply a very young girl's record of her own thoughts and impressions, and consequently meant for publication. When it appears in volume form I hope you will order a copy. But pray, Ernest, don't stop. I delight in taking down from dictation. I have reached 'absolute perfection'. You can go on. I am quite ready for more.

ALGERNON. [Somewhat taken aback.] Ahem! Ahem!

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CECILY. Oh, don't cough, Ernest. When one is dictating one should speak fluently and not cough. Besides, I don't know how to spell a cough. [Writes as Algernon speaks.]

ALGERNON. [Speaking very rapidly.] Cecily, ever since I first looked upon your wonderful and incomparable beauty, I have dared to love you wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly.

CECILY. I don't think that you should tell me that you love me wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly. Hopelessly doesn't seem to make much sense, does it?

ALGERNON. Cecily!

[Enter Merriman.]

MERRIMAN. The dog-cart is waiting, sir. ALGERNON. Tell it to come round next week, at the same hour. MERRIMAN. [Looks at Cecily, who makes no sign.] Yes, sir. [Merriman retires.]

CECILY. Uncle Jack would be very much annoyed if he knew you were staying on till next week, at the same hour.

ALGERNON. Oh, I don't care about Jack. I don't care for anybody in the whole world but you. I love you, Cecily. You will marry me, won't you?

CECILY. You silly boy! Of course. Why, we have been engaged for the last three months.

ALGERNON. For the last three months?

CECILY. Yes, it will be exactly three months on Thursday.

ALGERNON. But how did we become engaged?

CECILY. Well, ever since dear Uncle Jack first confessed to us that he had a younger brother who was very wicked and bad, you of course have formed the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism. And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. One feels there must be something in him, after all. I daresay it was foolish of me, but I fell in love with you, Ernest.

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ALGERNON. Darling! And when was the engagement actually settled?

CECILY. On the 14th of February last. Worn out by your entire ignorance of my existence, I determined to end the matter one way or the other, and after a long struggle with myself I accepted you under this dear old tree here. The next day I bought this little ring in your name, and this is the little bangle with the true lover's knot I promised you always to wear.

ALGERNON. Did I give you this? It's very pretty, isn't it?

CECILY. Yes, you've wonderfully good taste, Ernest. It's the excuse I've always given for your leading such a bad life. And this is the box in which I keep all your dear letters. [Kneels at table, opens box, and produces letters tied up with blue ribbon.]

ALGERNON. My letters! But, my own sweet Cecily, I have never written you any letters.

CECILY. You need hardly remind me of that, Ernest. I remember only too well that I was forced to write your letters for you. I wrote always three times a week, and sometimes oftener.

ALGERNON. Oh, do let me read them, Cecily?

CECILY. Oh, I couldn't possibly. They would make you far too conceited. [Replaces box.] The three you wrote me after I had broken off the engagement are so beautiful, and so badly spelled, that even now I can hardly read them without crying a little.

ALGERNON. But was our engagement ever broken off?

CECILY. Of course it was. On the 22nd of last March. You can see the entry if you like. [Shows diary.] 'To-day I broke off my engagement with Ernest. I feel it is better to do so. The weather still continues charming.'

ALGERNON. But why on earth did you break it off? What had I done? I had done nothing at all. Cecily, I am very much hurt indeed to hear you broke it off. Particularly when the weather was so charming.

CECILY. It would hardly have been a really serious engagement if it hadn't been broken off at least once. But I forgave you before the week was out.

ALGERNON. [Crossing to her, and kneeling.] What a perfect angel you are, Cecily.

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CECILY. You dear romantic boy. [He kisses her, she puts her fingers through his hair.] I hope your hair curls naturally, does it?

ALGERNON. Yes, darling, with a little help from others.

CECILY. I am so glad.

ALGERNON. You'll never break off our engagement again, Cecily?

CECILY. I don't think I could break it off now that I have actually met you. Besides, of course, there is the question of your name.

ALGERNON. Yes, of course. [Nervously.]

CECILY. You must not laugh at me, darling, but it had always been a girlish dream of mine to love some one whose name was Ernest. [Algernon rises, Cecily also.] There is something in that name that seems to inspire absolute confidence. I pity any poor married woman whose husband is not called Ernest.

ALGERNON. But, my dear child, do you mean to say you could not love me if I had some other name?

CECILY. But what name?

ALGERNON. Oh, any name you like—Algernon—for instance . . . CECILY. But I don't like the name of Algernon.

ALGERNON. Well, my own dear, sweet, loving little darling, I really can't see why you should object to the name of Algernon. It is not at all a bad name. In fact, it is rather an aristocratic name. Half of the chaps who get into the Bankruptcy Court are called Algernon. But seriously, Cecily . . . [Moving to her] . . . if my name was Algy, couldn't you love me?

CECILY. [Rising.] I might respect you, Ernest, I might admire your character, but I fear that I should not be able to give you my undivided attention.

ALGERNON. Ahem! Cecily! [Picking up hat.] Your Rector here is, I suppose, thoroughly experienced in the practice of all the rites and ceremonials of the

Church?

CECILY. Oh, yes. Dr. Chasuble is a most learned man. He has never written a single book, so you can imagine how much he knows.

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ALGERNON. I must see him at once on a most important christening—I mean on most important business.

CECILY. Oh!

ALGERNON. I shan't be away more than half an hour.

CECILY. Considering that we have been engaged since February the 14th, and that I only met you to-day for the first time, I think it is rather hard that you should leave me for so long a period as half an hour. Couldn't you make it twenty minutes?

ALGERNON. I'll be back in no time.

[Kisses her and rushes down the garden.]

CECILY. What an impetuous boy he is! I like his hair so much. I must enter his proposal in my diary.

[Enter Merriman.]

MERRIMAN. A Miss Fairfax has just called to see Mr. Worthing. On very important business, Miss Fairfax states.

CECILY. Isn't Mr. Worthing in his library?

MERRIMAN. Mr. Worthing went over in the direction of the Rectory some time

ago.

CECILY. Pray ask the lady to come out here; Mr. Worthing is sure to be back soon. And you can bring tea.

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss. [Goes out.]

CECILY. Miss Fairfax! I suppose one of the many good elderly women who are associated with Uncle Jack in some of his philanthropic work in London. I don't quite like women who are interested in philanthropic work. I think it is so forward of them.

[Enter Merriman.]

MERRIMAN. Miss Fairfax.

[Enter Gwendolen.]

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[Exit Merriman.]

CECILY. [Advancing to meet her.] Pray let me introduce myself to you. My name is Cecily Cardew.

GWENDOLEN. Cecily Cardew? [Moving to her and shaking hands.] What a very sweet name! Something tells me that we are going to be great friends. I like you already more than I can say. My first impressions of people are never wrong.

CECILY. How nice of you to like me so much after we have known each other such a comparatively short time. Pray sit down.

GWENDOLEN. [Still standing up.] I may call you Cecily, may I not?

CECILY. With pleasure!

GWENDOLEN. And you will always call me Gwendolen, won't you? CECILY. If you wish.

GWENDOLEN. Then that is all quite settled, is it not? CECILY. I hope so. [A pause. They both sit down together.]

GWENDOLEN. Perhaps this might be a favourable opportunity for my mentioning who I am. My father is Lord Bracknell. You have never heard of papa, I suppose?

CECILY. I don't think so.

GWENDOLEN. Outside the family circle, papa, I am glad to say, is entirely unknown. I think that is quite as it should be. The home seems to me to be the proper sphere for the man. And certainly once a man begins to neglect his domestic duties he becomes painfully effeminate, does he not? And I don't like that. It makes men so very attractive. Cecily, mamma, whose views on education are remarkably strict, has brought me up to be extremely short-sighted; it is part of her system; so do you mind my looking at you through my glasses?

CECILY. Oh! not at all, Gwendolen. I am very fond of being looked at.

GWENDOLEN. [After examining Cecily carefully through a lorgnette.] You are here on a short visit, I suppose.

CECILY. Oh no! I live here.

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GWENDOLEN. [Severely.] Really? Your mother, no doubt, or some female relative of advanced years, resides here also?

CECILY. Oh no! I have no mother, nor, in fact, any relations.

GWENDOLEN. Indeed?

CECILY. My dear guardian, with the assistance of Miss Prism, has the arduous task of looking after me.

GWENDOLEN. Your guardian? CECILY. Yes, I am Mr. Worthing's ward.

GWENDOLEN. Oh! It is strange he never mentioned to me that he had a ward. How secretive of him! He grows more interesting hourly. I am not sure, however, that the news inspires me with feelings of unmixed delight. [Rising and going to her.] I am very fond of you, Cecily; I have liked you ever since I met you! But I am bound to state that now that I know that you are Mr. Worthing's ward, I cannot help expressing a wish you were—well, just a little older than you seem to be—and not quite so very alluring in appearance. In fact, if I may speak candidly—

CECILY. Pray do! I think that whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid.

GWENDOLEN. Well, to speak with perfect candour, Cecily, I wish that you were fully forty-two, and more than usually plain for your age. Ernest has a strong upright nature. He is the very soul of truth and honour. Disloyalty would be as impossible to him as deception. But even men of the noblest possible moral character are extremely susceptible to the influence of the physical charms of others. Modern, no less than Ancient History, supplies us with many most painful examples of what I refer to. If it were not so, indeed, History would be quite unreadable.

CECILY. I beg your pardon, Gwendolen, did you say Ernest?

GWENDOLEN. Yes.

CECILY. Oh, but it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is my guardian. It is his brother—his elder brother.

GWENDOLEN. [Sitting down again.] Ernest never mentioned to me that he had a brother.

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CECILY. I am sorry to say they have not been on good terms for a long time.

GWENDOLEN. Ah! that accounts for it. And now that I think of it I have never heard any man mention his brother. The subject seems distasteful to most men. Cecily, you have lifted a load from my mind. I was growing almost anxious. It would have been terrible if any cloud had come across a friendship like ours, would it not? Of course you are quite, quite sure that it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is your guardian?

CECILY. Quite sure. [A pause.] In fact, I am going to be his. GWENDOLEN. [Inquiringly.] I beg your pardon?

CECILY. [Rather shy and confidingly.] Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret of it to you. Our little county newspaper is sure to chronicle the fact next week. Mr. Ernest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

GWENDOLEN. [Quite politely, rising.] My darling Cecily, I think there must be some slight error. Mr. Ernest Worthing is engaged to me. The announcement will appear in the Morning Post on Saturday at the latest.

CECILY. [Very politely, rising.] I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Ernest proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago. [Shows diary.]

GWENDOLEN. [Examines diary through her lorgnettte carefully.] It is certainly very curious, for he asked me to be his wife yesterday afternoon at 5.30. If you would care to verify the incident, pray do so. [Produces diary of her own.] I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. I am so sorry, dear Cecily, if it is any disappointment to you, but I am afraid I have the prior claim.

CECILY. It would distress me more than I can tell you, dear Gwendolen, if it caused you any mental or physical anguish, but I feel bound to point out that since Ernest proposed to you he clearly has changed his mind.

GWENDOLEN. [Meditatively.] If the poor fellow has been entrapped into any foolish promise I shall consider it my duty to rescue him at once, and with a firm hand.

CECILY. [Thoughtfully and sadly.] Whatever unfortunate entanglement my dear boy may have got into, I will never reproach him with it after we are married.

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GWENDOLEN. Do you allude to me, Miss Cardew, as an entanglement? You are presumptuous. On an occasion of this kind it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one's mind. It becomes a pleasure.

CECILY. Do you suggest, Miss Fairfax, that I entrapped Ernest into an engagement? How dare you? This is no time for wearing the shallow mask of manners. When I see a spade I call it a spade.

GWENDOLEN. [Satirically.] I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different.

[Enter Merriman, followed by the footman. He carries a salver, table cloth, and plate stand. Cecily is about to retort. The presence of the servants exercises a restraining influence, under which both girls chafe.]

MERRIMAN. Shall I lay tea here as usual, Miss?

CECILY. [Sternly, in a calm voice.] Yes, as usual. [Merriman begins to clear table and lay cloth. A long pause. Cecily and Gwendolen glare at each other.]

GWENDOLEN. Are there many interesting walks in the vicinity, Miss Cardew?

CECILY. Oh! yes! a great many. From the top of one of the hills quite close one can see five counties.

GWENDOLEN. Five counties! I don't think I should like that; I hate crowds.

CECILY. [Sweetly.] I suppose that is why you live in town? [Gwendolen bites her lip, and beats her foot nervously with her parasol.]

GWENDOLEN. [Looking round.] Quite a well-kept garden this is, Miss Cardew.

CECILY. So glad you like it, Miss Fairfax.

GWENDOLEN. I had no idea there were any flowers in the country.

CECILY. Oh, flowers are as common here, Miss Fairfax, as people are in London.

GWENDOLEN. Personally I cannot understand how anybody manages to exist in the country, if anybody who is anybody does. The country always bores me to death.

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CECILY. Ah! This is what the newspapers call agricultural depression, is it not? I believe the aristocracy are suffering very much from it just at present. It is almost an epidemic amongst them, I have been told. May I offer you some tea, Miss Fairfax?

GWENDOLEN. [With elaborate politeness.] Thank you. [Aside.] Detestable girl! But I require tea!

CECILY. [Sweetly.] Sugar?

GWENDOLEN. [Superciliously.] No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any more. [Cecily looks angrily at her, takes up the tongs and puts four lumps of sugar into the cup.]

CECILY. [Severely.] Cake or bread and butter?

GWENDOLEN. [In a bored manner.] Bread and butter, please. Cake is rarely seen at the best houses nowadays.

CECILY. [Cuts a very large slice of cake, and puts it on the tray.] Hand that to Miss Fairfax.

[Merriman does so, and goes out with footman. Gwendolen drinks the tea and makes a grimace. Puts down cup at once, reaches out her hand to the bread and butter, looks at it, and finds it is cake. Rises in indignation.]

GWENDOLEN. You have filled my tea with lumps of sugar, and though I asked most distinctly for bread and butter, you have given me cake. I am known for the gentleness of my disposition, and the extraordinary sweetness of my nature, but I warn you, Miss Cardew, you may go too far.

CECILY. [Rising.] To save my poor, innocent, trusting boy from the machinations of any other girl there are no lengths to which I would not go.

GWENDOLEN. From the moment I saw you I distrusted you. I felt that you were false and deceitful. I am never deceived in such matters. My first impressions of people are invariably right.

CECILY. It seems to me, Miss Fairfax, that I am trespassing on your valuable time. No doubt you have many other calls of a similar character to make in the neighbourhood.

[Enter Jack.]

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GWENDOLEN. [Catching sight of him.] Ernest! My own Ernest! JACK. Gwendolen! Darling! [Offers to kiss her.]

GWENDOLEN. [Draws back.] A moment! May I ask if you are engaged to be married to this young lady? [Points to Cecily.]

JACK. [Laughing.] To dear little Cecily! Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

GWENDOLEN. Thank you. You may! [Offers her cheek.]

CECILY. [Very sweetly.] I knew there must be some misunderstanding, Miss Fairfax. The gentleman whose arm is at present round your waist is my guardian, Mr. John Worthing.

GWENDOLEN. I beg your pardon? CECILY. This is Uncle Jack. GWENDOLEN. [Receding.] Jack! Oh!

[Enter Algernon.]

CECILY. Here is Ernest.

ALGERNON. [Goes straight over to Cecily without noticing any one else.] My own love! [Offers to kiss her.]

CECILY. [Drawing back.] A moment, Ernest! May I ask you—are you engaged to be married to this young lady?

ALGERNON. [Looking round.] To what young lady? Good heavens! Gwendolen!

CECILY. Yes! to good heavens, Gwendolen, I mean to Gwendolen.

ALGERNON. [Laughing.] Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

CECILY. Thank you. [Presenting her cheek to be kissed.] You may. [Algernon kisses her.]

GWENDOLEN. I felt there was some slight error, Miss Cardew. The gentleman who is now embracing you is my cousin, Mr. Algernon Moncrieff.

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CECILY. [Breaking away from Algernon.] Algernon Moncrieff! Oh! [The two girls move towards each other and put their arms round each other's waists protection.]

CECILY. Are you called Algernon?

ALGERNON. I cannot deny it.

CECILY. Oh!

GWENDOLEN. Is your name really John?

JACK. [Standing rather proudly.] I could deny it if I liked. I could deny anything if I liked. But my name certainly is John. It has been John for years.

CECILY. [To Gwendolen.] A gross deception has been practised on both of us.

GWENDOLEN. My poor wounded Cecily!

CECILY. My sweet wronged Gwendolen!

GWENDOLEN. [Slowly and seriously.] You will call me sister, will you not? [They embrace. Jack and Algernon groan and walk up and down.]

CECILY. [Rather brightly.] There is just one question I would like to be allowed to ask my guardian.

GWENDOLEN. An admirable idea! Mr. Worthing, there is just one question I would like to be permitted to put to you. Where is your brother Ernest? We are both engaged to be married to your brother Ernest, so it is a matter of some importance to us to know where your brother Ernest is at present.

JACK. [Slowly and hesitatingly.] Gwendolen—Cecily—it is very painful for me to be forced to speak the truth. It is the first time in my life that I have ever been reduced to such a painful position, and I am really quite inexperienced in doing anything of the kind. However, I will tell you quite frankly that I have no brother Ernest. I have no brother at all. I never had a brother in my life, and I certainly have not the smallest intention of ever having one in the future.

CECILY. [Surprised.] No brother at all?

JACK. [Cheerily.] None!

GWENDOLEN. [Severely.] Had you never a brother of any kind?

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JACK. [Pleasantly.] Never. Not even of any kind.

GWENDOLEN. I am afraid it is quite clear, Cecily, that neither of us is engaged to be married to any one.

CECILY. It is not a very pleasant position for a young girl suddenly to find herself in. Is it?

GWENDOLEN. Let us go into the house. They will hardly venture to come after us there.

CECILY. No, men are so cowardly, aren't they? [They retire into the house with scornful looks.]

JACK. This ghastly state of things is what you call Bunburying, I suppose?

ALGERNON. Yes, and a perfectly wonderful Bunbury it is. The most wonderful Bunbury I have ever had in my life.

JACK. Well, you've no right whatsoever to Bunbury here.

ALGERNON. That is absurd. One has a right to Bunbury anywhere one chooses. Every serious Bunburyist knows that.

JACK. Serious Bunburyist! Good heavens!

ALGERNON. Well, one must be serious about something, if one wants to have any amusement in life. I happen to be serious about Bunburying. What on earth you are serious about I haven't got the remotest idea. About everything, I should fancy. You have such an absolutely trivial nature.

JACK. Well, the only small satisfaction I have in the whole of this wretched business is that your friend Bunbury is quite exploded. You won't be able to run down to the country quite so often as you used to do, dear Algy. And a very good thing too.

ALGERNON. Your brother is a little off colour, isn't he, dear Jack? You won't be able to disappear to London quite so frequently as your wicked custom was. And not a bad thing either.

JACK. As for your conduct towards Miss Cardew, I must say that your taking in a sweet, simple, innocent girl like that is quite inexcusable. To say nothing of the fact that she is my ward.

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ALGERNON. I can see no possible defence at all for your deceiving a brilliant, clever, thoroughly experienced young lady like Miss Fairfax. To say nothing of the fact that she is my cousin.

JACK. I wanted to be engaged to Gwendolen, that is all. I love her.

ALGERNON. Well, I simply wanted to be engaged to Cecily. I adore her.

JACK. There is certainly no chance of your marrying Miss Cardew.

ALGERNON. I don't think there is much likelihood, Jack, of you and Miss Fairfax being united.

JACK. Well, that is no business of yours.

ALGERNON. If it was my business, I wouldn't talk about it. [Begins to eat muffins.] It is very vulgar to talk about one's business. Only people like stock-brokers do that, and then merely at dinner parties.

JACK. How can you sit there, calmly eating muffins when we are in this horrible trouble, I can't make out. You seem to me to be perfectly heartless.

ALGERNON. Well, I can't eat muffins in an agitated manner. The butter would probably get on my cuffs. One should always eat muffins quite calmly. It is the only way to eat them.

JACK. I say it's perfectly heartless your eating muffins at all, under the circumstances.

ALGERNON. When I am in trouble, eating is the only thing that consoles me. Indeed, when I am in really great trouble, as any one who knows me intimately will tell you, I refuse everything except food and drink. At the present moment I am eating muffins because I am unhappy. Besides, I am particularly fond of muffins. [Rising.]

JACK. [Rising.] Well, that is no reason why you should eat them all in that greedy way. [Takes muffins from Algernon.]

ALGERNON. [Offering tea-cake.] I wish you would have tea-cake instead. I don't like tea-cake.

JACK. Good heavens! I suppose a man may eat his own muffins in his own garden. ALGERNON. But you have just said it was perfectly heartless to eat muffins.

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JACK. I said it was perfectly heartless of you, under the circumstances. That is a very different thing.

ALGERNON. That may be. But the muffins are the same. [He seizes the muffin-dish from Jack.]

JACK. Algy, I wish to goodness you would go.

ALGERNON. You can't possibly ask me to go without having some dinner. It's absurd. I never go without my dinner. No one ever does, except vegetarians and people like that. Besides I have just made arrangements with Dr. Chasuble to be christened at a quarter to six under the name of Ernest.

JACK. My dear fellow, the sooner you give up that nonsense the better. I made arrangements this morning with Dr. Chasuble to be christened myself at 5.30, and I naturally will take the name of Ernest. Gwendolen would wish it. We can't both be christened Ernest. It's absurd. Besides, I have a perfect right to be christened if I like. There is no evidence at all that I have ever been christened by anybody. I should think it extremely probable I never was, and so does Dr. Chasuble. It is entirely different in your case. You have been christened already.

ALGERNON. Yes, but I have not been christened for years.

JACK. Yes, but you have been christened. That is the important thing.

ALGERNON. Quite so. So I know my constitution can stand it. If you are not quite sure about your ever having been christened, I must say I think it rather dangerous your venturing on it now. It might make you very unwell. You can hardly have forgotten that some one very closely connected with you was very nearly carried off this week in Paris by a severe chill.

JACK. Yes, but you said yourself that a severe chill was not hereditary.

ALGERNON. It usen't to be, I know—but I daresay it is now. Science is always making wonderful improvements in things.

JACK. [Picking up the muffin-dish.] Oh, that is nonsense; you are always talking nonsense.

ALGERNON. Jack, you are at the muffins again! I wish you wouldn't. There are only two left. [Takes them.] I told you I was particularly fond of muffins.

JACK. But I hate tea-cake.

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ALGERNON. Why on earth then do you allow tea-cake to be served up for your guests? What ideas you have of hospitality!

JACK. Algernon! I have already told you to go. I don't want you here. Why don't

you go!

ALGERNON. I haven't quite finished my tea yet! and there is still one muffin left. [Jack groans, and sinks into a chair. Algernon still continues eating.]

ACT DROP

THIRD ACT

SCENE

Morning-room at the Manor House.

[Gwendolen and Cecily are at the window, looking out into the garden.]

GWENDOLEN. The fact that they did not follow us at once into the house, as any one else would have done, seems to me to show that they have some sense of shame

left.

CECILY. They have been eating muffins. That looks like repentance.

GWENDOLEN. [After a pause.] They don't seem to notice us at all. Couldn't you cough?

CECILY. But I haven't got a cough.

GWENDOLEN. They're looking at us. What effrontery! CECILY. They're approaching. That's very forward of them. GWENDOLEN. Let us preserve a dignified silence.

CECILY. Certainly. It's the only thing to do now. [Enter Jack followed by Algernon. They whistle some dreadful popular air from a British Opera.]

GWENDOLEN. This dignified silence seems to produce an unpleasant effect.

CECILY. A most distasteful one.

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GWENDOLEN. But we will not be the first to speak.

CECILY. Certainly not.

GWENDOLEN. Mr. Worthing, I have something very particular to ask you. Much depends on your reply.

CECILY. Gwendolen, your common sense is invaluable. Mr. Moncrieff, kindly answer me the following question. Why did you pretend to be my guardian's brother?

ALGERNON. In order that I might have an opportunity of meeting you. CECILY. [To Gwendolen.] That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation, does it

not?

GWENDOLEN. Yes, dear, if you can believe him.

CECILY. I don't. But that does not affect the wonderful beauty of his answer.

GWENDOLEN. True. In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing. Mr. Worthing, what explanation can you offer to me for pretending to have a brother? Was it in order that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?

JACK. Can you doubt it, Miss Fairfax?

GWENDOLEN. I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. But I intend to crush them. This is not the moment for German scepticism. [Moving to Cecily.] Their explanations appear to be quite satisfactory, especially Mr. Worthing's. That seems to me to have the stamp of truth upon it.

CECILY. I am more than content with what Mr. Moncrieff said. His voice alone inspires one with absolute credulity.

GWENDOLEN. Then you think we should forgive them?

CECILY. Yes. I mean no.

GWENDOLEN. True! I had forgotten. There are principles at stake that one cannot surrender. Which of us should tell them? The task is not a pleasant one.

CECILY. Could we not both speak at the same time?

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GWENDOLEN. An excellent idea! I nearly always speak at the same time as other people. Will you take the time from me?

CECILY. Certainly. [Gwendolen beats time with uplifted finger.]

Gwendolen and Cecily [Speaking together.] Your Christian names are still an insuperable barrier. That is all!

Jack and Algernon [Speaking together.] Our Christian names! Is that all? But we are going to be christened this afternoon.

GWENDOLEN. [To Jack.] For my sake you are prepared to do this terrible thing?

JACK. I am.

CECILY. [To Algernon.] To please me you are ready to face this fearful ordeal?

ALGERNON. I am!

GWENDOLEN. How absurd to talk of the equality of the sexes! Where questions of self-sacrifice are concerned, men are infinitely beyond us.

JACK. We are. [Clasps hands with Algernon.]

CECILY. They have moments of physical courage of which we women know absolutely nothing.

GWENDOLEN. [To Jack.] Darling!

ALGERNON. [To Cecily.] Darling! [They fall into each other's arms.] [Enter Merriman. When he enters he coughs loudly, seeing the situation.] MERRIMAN. Ahem! Ahem! Lady Bracknell! JACK. Good heavens!

[Enter Lady Bracknell. The couples separate in alarm. Exit Merriman.] LADY BRACKNELL. Gwendolen! What does this mean?

GWENDOLEN. Merely that I am engaged to be married to Mr. Worthing, mamma.

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LADY BRACKNELL. Come here. Sit down. Sit down immediately. Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old. [Turns to Jack.] Apprised, sir, of my daughter's sudden flight by her trusty maid, whose confidence I purchased by means of a small coin, I followed her at once by a luggage train. Her unhappy father is, I am glad to say, under the impression that she is attending a more than usually lengthy lecture by the University Extension Scheme on the Influence of a permanent income on Thought. I do not propose to undeceive him. Indeed I have never undeceived him on any question. I would consider it wrong. But of course, you will clearly understand that all communication between yourself and my daughter must cease immediately from this moment. On this point, as indeed on all points, I am firm.

JACK. I am engaged to be married to Gwendolen Lady Bracknell!

LADY BRACKNELL. You are nothing of the kind, sir. And now, as regards Algernon! . . . Algernon!

ALGERNON. Yes, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. May I ask if it is in this house that your invalid friend Mr. Bunbury resides?

ALGERNON. [Stammering.] Oh! No! Bunbury doesn't live here. Bunbury is somewhere else at present. In fact, Bunbury is dead,

LADY BRACKNELL. Dead! When did Mr. Bunbury die? His death must have been extremely sudden.

ALGERNON. [Airily.] Oh! I killed Bunbury this afternoon. I mean poor Bunbury died this afternoon.

LADY BRACKNELL. What did he die of? ALGERNON. Bunbury? Oh, he was quite exploded.

LADY BRACKNELL. Exploded! Was he the victim of a revolutionary outrage? I was not aware that Mr. Bunbury was interested in social legislation. If so, he is well punished for his morbidity.

ALGERNON. My dear Aunt Augusta, I mean he was found out! The doctors found out that Bunbury could not live, that is what I mean—so Bunbury died.

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LADY BRACKNELL. He seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. I am glad, however, that he made up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, and acted under proper medical advice. And now that we have finally got rid of this Mr. Bunbury, may I ask, Mr. Worthing, who is that young person whose hand my nephew Algernon is now holding in what seems to me a peculiarly unnecessary manner?

JACK. That lady is Miss Cecily Cardew, my ward. [Lady Bracknell bows coldly to

Cecily.]

ALGERNON. I am engaged to be married to Cecily, Aunt Augusta. LADY BRACKNELL. I beg your pardon?

CECILY. Mr. Moncrieff and I are engaged to be married, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL. [With a shiver, crossing to the sofa and sitting down.] I do not know whether there is anything peculiarly exciting in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire, but the number of engagements that go on seems to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. I think some preliminary inquiry on my part would not be out of place. Mr. Worthing, is Miss Cardew at all connected with any of the larger railway stations in London? I merely desire information. Until yesterday I had no idea that there were any families or persons whose origin was a Terminus. [Jack looks perfectly furious, but restrains himself.]

JACK. [In a clear, cold voice.] Miss Cardew is the grand-daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew of 149 Belgrave Square, S.W.; Gervase Park, Dorking, Surrey; and the Sporran, Fifeshire, N.B.

LADY BRACKNELL. That sounds not unsatisfactory. Three addresses always inspire confidence, even in tradesmen. But what proof have I of their authenticity?

JACK. I have carefully preserved the Court Guides of the period. They are open to your inspection, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL. [Grimly.] I have known strange errors in that publication.

JACK. Miss Cardew's family solicitors are Messrs. Markby, Markby, and Markby.

LADY BRACKNELL. Markby, Markby, and Markby? A firm of the very highest position in their profession. Indeed I am told that one of the Mr. Markby's is occasionally to be seen at dinner parties. So far I am satisfied.

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JACK. [Very irritably.] How extremely kind of you, Lady Bracknell! I have also in my possession, you will be pleased to hear, certificates of Miss Cardew's birth, baptism, whooping cough, registration, vaccination, confirmation, and the measles; both the German and the English variety.

LADY BRACKNELL. Ah! A life crowded with incident, I see; though perhaps somewhat too exciting for a young girl. I am not myself in favour of premature experiences. [Rises, looks at her watch.] Gwendolen! the time approaches for our departure. We have not a moment to lose. As a matter of form, Mr. Worthing, I had better ask you if Miss Cardew has any little fortune?

JACK. Oh! about a hundred and thirty thousand pounds in the Funds. That is all. Goodbye, Lady Bracknell. So pleased to have seen you.

LADY BRACKNELL. [Sitting down again.] A moment, Mr. Worthing. A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! And in the Funds! Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady, now that I look at her. Few girls of the present day have any really solid qualities, any of the qualities that last, and improve with time. We live, I regret to say, in an age of surfaces. [To Cecily.] Come over here, dear. [Cecily goes across.] Pretty child! your dress is sadly simple, and your hair seems almost as Nature might have left it. But we can soon alter all that. A thoroughly experienced French maid produces a really marvellous result in a very brief space of time. I remember recommending one to young Lady Lancing, and after three months her own husband did not know her.

JACK. And after six months nobody knew her.

LADY BRACKNELL. [Glares at Jack for a few moments. Then bends, with a practised smile, to Cecily.] Kindly turn round, sweet child. [Cecily turns completely round.] No, the side view is what I want. [Cecily presents her profe.] Yes, quite as I expected. There are distinct social possibilities in your profile. The two weak points in our age are its want of principle and its want of profile. The chin a little higher, dear. Style largely depends on the way the chin is worn. They are worn very high, just at present. Algernon!

ALGERNON. Yes, Aunt Augusta!

LADY BRACKNELL. There are distinct social possibilities in Miss Cardew's profile.

ALGERNON. Cecily is the sweetest, dearest, prettiest girl in the whole world. And I don't care twopence about social possibilities.

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LADY BRACKNELL. Never speak disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. Only people who can't get into it do that. [To Cecily.] Dear child, of course you know that Algernon has nothing but his debts to depend upon. But I do not approve of mercenary marriages. When I married Lord Bracknell I had no fortune of any kind. But I never dreamed for a moment of allowing that to stand in my way. Well, I suppose I must give my consent.

ALGERNON. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. Cecily, you may kiss me! CECILY. [Kisses her.] Thank you, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL. You may also address me as Aunt Augusta for the future.

CECILY. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. The marriage, I think, had better take place quite soon.

ALGERNON. Thank you, Aunt Augusta. CECILY. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. To speak frankly, I am not in favour of long engagements. They give people the opportunity of finding out each other's character before marriage, which I think is never advisable.

JACK. I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Lady Bracknell, but this engagement is quite out of the question. I am Miss Cardew's guardian, and she cannot marry without my consent until she comes of age. That consent I absolutely decline to give.

LADY BRACKNELL. Upon what grounds may I ask? Algernon is an extremely, I may almost say an ostentatiously, eligible young man. He has nothing, but he looks everything. What more can one desire?

JACK. It pains me very much to have to speak frankly to you, Lady Bracknell, about your nephew, but the fact is that I do not approve at all of his moral character. I suspect him of being untruthful. [Algernon and Cecily look at him in indignant amazement.]

LADY BRACKNELL. Untruthful! My nephew Algernon? Impossible! He is an Oxonian.

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JACK. I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter. This afternoon during my temporary absence in London on an important question of romance, he obtained admission to my house by means of the false pretence of being my brother. Under an assumed name he drank, I've just been informed by my butler, an entire pint bottle of my Perrier-Jouet, Brut, '89; wine I was specially reserving for myself. Continuing his disgraceful deception, he succeeded in the course of the afternoon in alienating the affections of my only ward. He subsequently stayed to tea, and devoured every single muffin. And what makes his conduct all the more heartless is, that he was perfectly well aware from the first that I have no brother, that I never had a brother, and that I don't intend to have a brother, not even of any kind. I distinctly told him so myself yesterday afternoon.

LADY BRACKNELL. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, after careful consideration I have decided entirely to overlook my nephew's conduct to you.

JACK. That is very generous of you, Lady Bracknell. My own decision, however, is unalterable. I decline to give my consent.

LADY BRACKNELL. [To Cecily.] Come here, sweet child. [Cecily goes over.] How old are you, dear?

CECILY. Well, I am really only eighteen, but I always admit to twenty when I go to evening parties.

LADY BRACKNELL. You are perfectly right in making some slight alteration. Indeed, no woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. It looks so calculating . . . [In a meditative manner.] Eighteen, but admitting to twenty at evening parties. Well, it will not be very long before you are of age and free from the restraints of tutelage. So I don't think your guardian's consent is, after all, a matter of any importance.

JACK. Pray excuse me, Lady Bracknell, for interrupting you again, but it is only fair to tell you that according to the terms of her grandfather's will Miss Cardew does not come legally of age till she is thirty-five.

LADY BRACKNELL. That does not seem to me to be a grave objection. Thirty-five is a very attractive age. London society is full of women of the very highest birth who have, of their own free choice, remained thirty-five for years. Lady Dumbleton is an instance in point. To my own knowledge she has been thirty-five ever since she arrived at the age of forty, which was many years ago now. I see no reason why our dear Cecily should not be even still more attractive at the age you mention than she is at present. There will be a large accumulation of property.

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CECILY. Algy, could you wait for me till I was thirty-five? ALGERNON. Of course I could, Cecily. You know I could.

CECILY. Yes, I felt it instinctively, but I couldn't wait all that time. I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. It always makes me rather cross. I am not punctual myself, I know, but I do like punctuality in others, and waiting, even to be married, is quite out of the question.

ALGERNON. Then what is to be done, Cecily?

CECILY. I don't know, Mr. Moncrieff.

LADY BRACKNELL. My dear Mr. Worthing, as Miss Cardew states positively that she cannot wait till she is thirty-five—a remark which I am bound to say seems to me to show a somewhat impatient nature—I would beg of you to reconsider your decision.

JACK. But my dear Lady Bracknell, the matter is entirely in your own hands. The moment you consent to my marriage with Gwendolen, I will most gladly allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

LADY BRACKNELL. [Rising and drawing herself up.] You must be quite aware that what you propose is out of the question.

JACK. Then a passionate celibacy is all that any of us can look forward to.

LADY BRACKNELL. That is not the destiny I propose for Gwendolen. Algernon, of course, can choose for himself. [Pulls out her watch.] Come, dear, [Gwendolen rises] we have already missed five, if not six, trains. To miss any more might expose us to comment on the platform.

[Enter Dr. Chasuble.]

CHASUBLE. Everything is quite ready for the christenings.

LADY BRACKNELL. The christenings, sir! Is not that somewhat premature?

CHASUBLE. [Looking rather puzzled, and pointing to Jack and Algernon.] Both these gentlemen have expressed a desire for immediate baptism.

LADY BRACKNELL. At their age? The idea is grotesque and irreligious! Algernon, I forbid you to be baptized. I will not hear of such excesses. Lord Bracknell would

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be highly displeased if he learned that that was the way in which you wasted your time and money.

CHASUBLE. Am I to understand then that there are to be no christenings at all this afternoon?

JACK. I don't think that, as things are now, it would be of much practical value to either of us, Dr. Chasuble.

CHASUBLE. I am grieved to hear such sentiments from you, Mr. Worthing. They savour of the heretical views of the Anabaptists, views that I have completely refuted in four of my unpublished sermons. However, as your present mood seems to be one peculiarly secular, I will return to the church at once. Indeed, I have just been informed by the pew-opener that for the last hour and a half Miss Prism has been waiting for me in the vestry.

LADY BRACKNELL. [Starting.] Miss Prism! Did I hear you mention a Miss Prism?

CHASUBLE. Yes, Lady Bracknell. I am on my way to join her.

LADY BRACKNELL. Pray allow me to detain you for a moment. This matter may prove to be one of vital importance to Lord Bracknell and myself. Is this Miss Prism a female of repellent aspect, remotely connected with education?

CHASUBLE. [Somewhat indignantly.] She is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability.

LADY BRACKNELL. It is obviously the same person. May I ask what position she holds in your household?

CHASUBLE. [Severely.] I am a celibate, madam.

JACK. [Interposing.] Miss Prism, Lady Bracknell, has been for the last three years Miss Cardew's esteemed governess and valued companion.

LADY BRACKNELL. In spite of what I hear of her, I must see her at once. Let her be sent for.

CHASUBLE. [Looking off.] She approaches; she is nigh. [Enter Miss Prism hurriedly.]

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MISS PRISM. I was told you expected me in the vestry, dear Canon. I have been waiting for you there for an hour and three-quarters. [Catches sight of Lady Bracknell, who has fixed her with a stony glare. Miss Prism grows pale and quails. She looks anxiously round as if desirous to escape.]

LADY BRACKNELL. [In a severe, judicial voice.] Prism! [Miss Prism bows her head in shame.] Come here, Prism! [Miss Prism approaches in a humble manner.] Prism! Where is that baby? [General consternation. The Canon starts back in horror. Algernon and Jack pretend to be anxious to shield Cecily and Gwendolen from hearing the details of a terrible public scandal.] Twenty-eight years ago, Prism, you left Lord Bracknell's house, Number 104, Upper Grosvenor Street, in charge of a perambulator that contained a baby of the male sex. You never returned. A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight, standing by itself in a remote corner of Bayswater. It contained the manuscript of a three-volume novel of more than usually revolting sentimentality. [Miss Prism starts in involuntary indignation.] But the baby was not there! [Every one looks at Miss Prism.] Prism! Where is that baby? [A pause.]

MISS PRISM. Lady Bracknell, I admit with shame that I do not know. I only wish I did. The plain facts of the case are these. On the morning of the day you mention, a day that is for ever branded on my memory, I prepared as usual to take the baby out in its perambulator. I had also with me a somewhat old, but capacious handbag in which I had intended to place the manuscript of a work of fiction that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself, I deposited the manuscript in the basinette, and placed the baby in the hand-bag.

JACK. [Who has been listening attentively.] But where did you deposit the handbag?

MISS PRISM. Do not ask me, Mr. Worthing.

JACK. Miss Prism, this is a matter of no small importance to me. I insist on knowing where you deposited the hand-bag that contained that infant.

MISS PRISM. I left it in the cloak-room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

JACK. What railway station?

MISS PRISM. [Quite crushed.] Victoria. The Brighton line. [Sinks into a chair.]

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JACK. I must retire to my room for a moment. Gwendolen, wait here for me.

GWENDOLEN. If you are not too long, I will wait here for you all my life. [Exit Jack in great excitement.]

CHASUBLE. What do you think this means, Lady Bracknell?

LADY BRACKNELL. I dare not even suspect, Dr. Chasuble. I need hardly tell you that in families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur. They are hardly considered the thing.

[Noises heard overhead as if some one was throwing trunks about. Every one looks

up.]

CECILY. Uncle Jack seems strangely agitated. CHASUBLE. Your guardian has a very emotional nature.

LADY BRACKNELL. This noise is extremely unpleasant. It sounds as if he was having an argument. I dislike arguments of any kind. They are always vulgar, and often convincing.

CHASUBLE. [Looking up.] It has stopped now. [The noise is redoubled.]

LADY BRACKNELL. I wish he would arrive at some conclusion.

GWENDOLEN. This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last. [Enter Jack with a hand-bag of black leather in his hand.]

JACK. [Rushing over to Miss Prism.] Is this the hand-bag, Miss Prism? Examine it carefully before you speak. The happiness of more than one life depends on your answer.

MISS PRISM. [Calmly.] It seems to be mine. Yes, here is the injury it received through the upsetting of a Gower Street omnibus in younger and happier days. Here is the stain on the lining caused by the explosion of a temperance beverage, an incident that occurred at Leamington. And here, on the lock, are my initials. I had forgotten that in an extravagant mood I had had them placed there. The bag is undoubtedly mine. I am delighted to have it so unexpectedly restored to me. It has been a great inconvenience being without it all these years.

JACK. [In a pathetic voice.] Miss Prism, more is restored to you than this handbag. I was the baby you placed in it.

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MISS PRISM. [Amazed.] You?

JACK. [Embracing her.] Yes . . . mother!

MISS PRISM. [Recoiling in indignant astonishment.] Mr. Worthing! I am unmarried!

JACK. Unmarried! I do not deny that is a serious blow. But after all, who has the right to cast a stone against one who has suffered? Cannot repentance wipe out an act of folly? Why should there be one law for men, and another for women? Mother, I forgive you. [Tries to embrace her again.]

MISS PRISM. [Still more indignant.] Mr. Worthing, there is some error. [Pointing to Lady Bracknell.] There is the lady who can tell you who you really are.

JACK. [After a pause.] Lady Bracknell, I hate to seem inquisitive, but would you kindly inform me who I am?

LADY BRACKNELL. I am afraid that the news I have to give you will not altogether please you. You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon's elder brother.

JACK. Algy's elder brother! Then I have a brother after all. I knew I had a brother! I always said I had a brother! Cecily,—how could you have ever doubted that I had a brother? [Seizes hold of Algernon.] Dr. Chasuble, my unfortunate brother. Miss Prism, my unfortunate brother. Gwendolen, my unfortunate brother. Algy, you young scoundrel, you will have to treat me with more respect in the future. You have never behaved to me like a brother in all your life.

ALGERNON. Well, not till to-day, old boy, I admit. I did my best, however, though I was out of practice.

[Shakes hands.]

GWENDOLEN. [To Jack.] My own! But what own are you? What is your Christian name, now that you have become some one else?

JACK. Good heavens! . . . I had quite forgotten that point. Your decision on the subject of my name is irrevocable, I suppose?

GWENDOLEN. I never change, except in my affections.

CECILY. What a noble nature you have, Gwendolen!

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JACK. Then the question had better be cleared up at once. Aunt Augusta, a moment. At the time when Miss Prism left me in the hand-bag, had I been christened already?

LADY BRACKNELL. Every luxury that money could buy, including christening, had been lavished on you by your fond and doting parents.

JACK. Then I was christened! That is settled. Now, what name was I given? Let me know the worst.

LADY BRACKNELL. Being the eldest son you were naturally christened after your father.

JACK. [Irritably.] Yes, but what was my father's Christian name?

LADY BRACKNELL. [Meditatively.] I cannot at the present moment recall what the General's Christian name was. But I have no doubt he had one. He was eccentric, I admit. But only in later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion, and other things of that kind.

JACK. Algy! Can't you recollect what our father's Christian name was?

ALGERNON. My dear boy, we were never even on speaking terms. He died before I was a year old.

JACK. His name would appear in the Army Lists of the period, I suppose, Aunt Augusta?

LADY BRACKNELL. The General was essentially a man of peace, except in his domestic life. But I have no doubt his name would appear in any military directory.

JACK. The Army Lists of the last forty years are here. These delightful records should have been my constant study. [Rushes to bookcase and tears the books out.] M. Generals . . . Mallam, Maxbohm, Magley, what ghastly names they have—Markby, Migsby, Mobbs, Moncrieff! Lieutenant 1840, Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel, Colonel, General 1869, Christian names, Ernest John. [Puts book very quietly down and speaks quite calmly.] I always told you, Gwendolen, my name was Ernest, didn't I? Well, it is Ernest after all. I mean it naturally is Ernest.

LADY BRACKNELL. Yes, I remember now that the General was called Ernest, I knew I had some particular reason for disliking the name.

GWENDOLEN. Ernest! My own Ernest! I felt from the first that you could have no other name!

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JACK. Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Can you forgive me?

GWENDOLEN. I can. For I feel that you are sure to change.

JACK. My own one!

CHASUBLE. [To Miss Prism.] Laetitia! [Embraces her] MISS PRISM. [Enthusiastically.] Frederick! At last! ALGERNON. Cecily! [Embraces her.] At last! JACK. Gwendolen! [Embraces her.] At last!

LADY BRACKNELL. My nephew, you seem to be displaying signs of triviality.

JACK. On the contrary, Aunt Augusta, I've now realised for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest.

TABLEAU

### 2.15.2 "The Ballad of Reading Gaol"

He did not wear his scarlet coat,

For blood and wine are red, And blood and wine were on his hands

When they found him with the dead, The poor dead woman whom he loved,

And murdered in her bed.

He walked amongst the Trial Men

In a suit of shabby gray; A cricket cap was on his head,

And his step seemed light and gay; But I never saw a man who looked

So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked

With such a wistful eye Upon that little tent of blue

Which prisoners call the sky,

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And at every drifting cloud that went With sails of silver by.

I walked, with other souls in pain,

Within another ring, And was wondering if the man had done

A great or little thing, When a voice behind me whispered low,

"That fellow's got to swing."

Dear Christ! the very prison walls

Suddenly seemed to reel, And the sky above my head became

Like a casque of scorching steel; And, though I was a soul in pain,

My pain I could not feel.

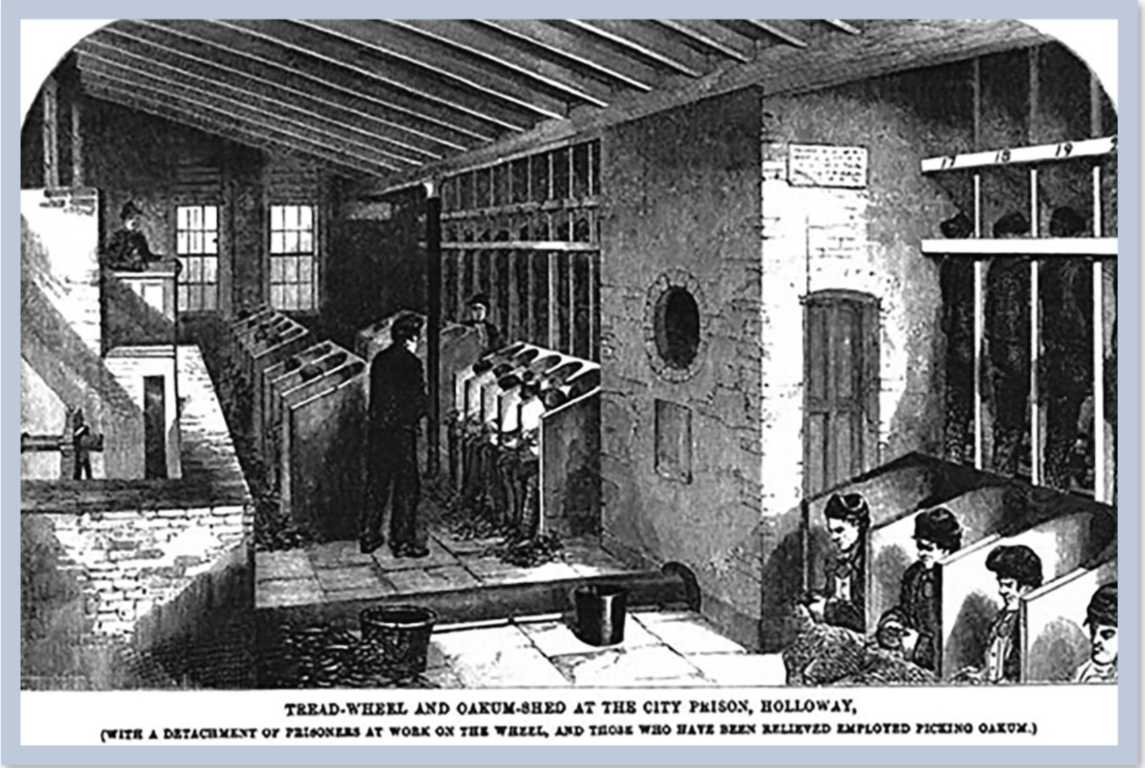
I only knew what hunted thought Quickened his step, and why He looked upon the garish day

Image 2.36 | Tread Wheel and Oakum Shed at Holloway Prison

Artist | Unknown

Source | Old Police Cells Museum

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With such a wistful eye; The man had killed the thing he loved, And so he had to die.

Yet each man kills the thing he loves,

By each let this be heard, Some do it with a bitter look,

Some with a flattering word, The coward does it with a kiss,

The brave man with a sword!

Some kill their love when they are young,

And some when they are old; Some strangle with the hands of Lust,

Some with the hands of Gold: The kindest use a knife, because

The dead so soon grow cold.

Some love too little, some too long,

Some sell, and others buy; Some do the deed with many tears,

And some without a sigh: For each man kills the thing he loves,

Yet each man does not die.

He does not die a death of shame

On a day of dark disgrace, Nor have a noose about his neck,

Nor a cloth upon his face, Nor drop feet foremost through the floor

Into an empty space. He does not sit with silent men

Who watch him night and day; Who watch him when he tries to weep,

And when he tries to pray; Who watch him lest himself should rob

The prison of its prey.

He does not wake at dawn to see Dread figures throng his room,

The shivering Chaplain robed in white, The Sheriff stern with gloom,

And the Governor all in shiny black, With the yellow face of Doom.

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He does not rise in piteous haste To put on convict-clothes,

While some coarse-mouthed Doctor gloats, and notes

Each new and nerve-twitched pose, Fingering a watch whose little ticks

Are like horrible hammer-blows.

He does not know that sickening thirst

That sands one's throat, before The hangman with his gardener's gloves

Slips through the padded door, And binds one with three leathern thongs,

That the throat may thirst no more.

He does not bend his head to hear

The Burial Office read, Nor, while the terror of his soul

Tells him he is not dead, Cross his own coffin, as he moves

Into the hideous shed.

He does not stare upon the air

Through a little roof of glass: He does not pray with lips of clay

For his agony to pass; Nor feel upon his shuddering cheek

The kiss of Caiaphas.

II

Six weeks our guardsman walked the yard,

In the suit of shabby gray: His cricket cap was on his head,

And his step seemed light and gay, But I never saw a man who looked

So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked

With such a wistful eye Upon that little tent of blue

Which prisoners call the sky, And at every wandering cloud that trailed

Its ravelled fleeces by.

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He did not wring his hands, as do Those witless men who dare

To try to rear the changeling Hope In the cave of black Despair:

He only looked upon the sun, And drank the morning air.

He did not wring his hands nor weep,

Nor did he peek or pine, But he drank the air as though it held

Some healthful anodyne; With open mouth he drank the sun

As though it had been wine!

And I and all the souls in pain, Who tramped the other ring,

Forgot if we ourselves had done A great or little thing,

And watched with gaze of dull amaze The man who had to swing.

And strange it was to see him pass With a step so light and gay,

And strange it was to see him look So wistfully at the day,

And strange it was to think that he Had such a debt to pay.

For oak and elm have pleasant leaves That in the spring-time shoot:

But grim to see is the gallows-tree, With its adder-bitten root,

And, green or dry, a man must die Before it bears its fruit!

The loftiest place is that seat of grace For which all worldlings try:

But who would stand in hempen band Upon a scaffold high,

And through a murderer's collar take His last look at the sky?

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It is sweet to dance to violins

When Love and Life are fair: To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes

Is delicate and rare: But it is not sweet with nimble feet

To dance upon the air!

So with curious eyes and sick surmise

We watched him day by day, And wondered if each one of us

Would end the self-same way, For none can tell to what red Hell

His sightless soul may stray.

At last the dead man walked no more

Amongst the Trial Men, And I knew that he was standing up In the black dock's dreadful pen, And that never would I see his face

In God's sweet world again.

Like two doomed ships that pass in storm We had crossed each other's way:

But we made no sign, we said no word, We had no word to say;

For we did not meet in the holy night, But in the shameful day.

A prison wall was round us both,

Two outcast men we were: The world had thrust us from its heart,

And God from out His care: And the iron gin that waits for Sin

Had caught us in its snare.

III

In Debtors' Yard the stones are hard,

And the dripping wall is high, So it was there he took the air

Beneath the leaden sky, And by each side a Warder walked,

For fear the man might die.

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Or else he sat with those who watched

His anguish night and day; Who watched him when he rose to weep,

And when he crouched to pray, Who watched him lest himself should rob

Their scaffold of its prey.

The Governor was strong upon

The Regulations Act: The Doctor said that Death was but

A scientific fact:

And twice a day the Chaplain called, And left a little tract.

And twice a day he smoked his pipe,

And drank his quart of beer: His soul was resolute, and held

No hiding-place for fear; He often said that he was glad

The hangman's hands were near.

But why he said so strange a thing

No Warder dared to ask: For he to whom a watcher's doom

Is given as his task, Must set a lock upon his lips,

And make his face a mask.

Or else he might be moved, and try

To comfort or console: And what should Human Pity do

Pent up in Murderers' Hole? What word of grace in such a place

Could help a brother's soul?

With slouch and swing around the ring

We trod the Fools' Parade! We did not care: we knew we were

The Devil's Own Brigade: And shaven head and feet of lead

Make a merry masquerade.

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We tore the tarry rope to shreds

With blunt and bleeding nails; We rubbed the doors, and scrubbed the floors,

And cleaned the shining rails: And, rank by rank, we soaped the plank,

And clattered with the pails.

We sewed the sacks, we broke the stones,

We turned the dusty drill: We banged the tins, and bawled the hymns,

And sweated on the mill: But in the heart of every man

Terror was lying still.

So still it lay that every day Crawled like a weed-clogged wave:

And we forgot the bitter lot That waits for fool and knave,

Till once, as we tramped in from work, We passed an open grave.

With yawning mouth the yellow hole

Gaped for a living thing; The very mud cried out for blood

To the thirsty asphalte ring: And we knew that ere one dawn grew fair

Some prisoner had to swing.

Right in we went, with soul intent

On Death and Dread and Doom: The hangman, with his little bag,

Went shuffling through the gloom: And each man trembled as he crept

Into his numbered tomb.

That night the empty corridors

Were full of forms of Fear, And up and down the iron town

Stole feet we could not hear, And through the bars that hide the stars

White faces seemed to peer.

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He lay as one who lies and dreams

in a pleasant meadow-land, The watchers watched him as he slept,

And could not understand How one could sleep so sweet a sleep

With a hangman close at hand.

But there is no sleep when men must weep

Who never yet have wept: So we—the fool, the fraud, the knave—

That endless vigil kept, And through each brain on hands of pain

Another's terror crept.

Alas! it is a fearful thing

To feel another's guilt! For, right within, the sword of Sin

Pierced to its poisoned hilt, And as molten lead were the tears we shed

For the blood we had not spilt.

The Warders with their shoes of felt

Crept by each padlocked door, And peeped and saw, with eyes of awe,

Gray figures on the floor, And wondered why men knelt to pray

Who never prayed before.

All through the night we knelt and prayed,

Mad mourners of a corse! The troubled plumes of midnight were

The plumes upon a hearse: And bitter wine upon a sponge

Was the savour of Remorse.

The gray cock crew, the red cock crew,

But never came the day: And crooked shapes of Terror crouched,

In the corners where we lay: And each evil sprite that walks by night

Before us seemed to play.

They glided past, they glided fast, Like travellers through a mist:

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They mocked the moon in a rigadoon

Of delicate turn and twist, And with formal pace and loathsome grace

The phantoms kept their tryst.

With mop and mow, we saw them go,

Slim shadows hand in hand: About, about, in ghostly rout

They trod a saraband:

And the damned grotesques made arabesques, Like the wind upon the sand!

With the pirouettes of marionettes,

They tripped on pointed tread: But with flutes of Fear they filled the ear,

As their grisly masque they led, And loud they sang, and long they sang,

For they sang to wake the dead.

"Oho!" they cried, "The world is wide,

But fettered limbs go lame! And once, or twice, to throw the dice

Is a gentlemanly game, But he does not win who plays with Sin

In the secret House of Shame."

No things of air these antics were,

That frolicked with such glee: To men whose lives were held in gyves,

And whose feet might not go free, Ah! wounds of Christ! they were living things,

Most terrible to see.

Around, around, they waltzed and wound;

Some wheeled in smirking pairs; With the mincing step of a demirep

Some sidled up the stairs: And with subtle sneer, and fawning leer,

Each helped us at our prayers.

The morning wind began to moan,

But still the night went on: Through its giant loom the web of gloom

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Crept till each thread was spun: And, as we prayed, we grew afraid Of the Justice of the Sun.

The moaning wind went wandering round

The weeping prison-wall: Till like a wheel of turning steel

We felt the minutes crawl: O moaning wind! what had we done

To have such a seneschal?

At last I saw the shadowed bars,

Like a lattice wrought in lead, Move right across the whitewashed wall

That faced my three-plank bed, And I knew that somewhere in the world

God's dreadful dawn was red.

At six o'clock we cleaned our cells, At seven all was still,

But the sough and swing of a mighty wing

The prison seemed to fill, For the Lord of Death with icy breath

Had entered in to kill.

He did not pass in purple pomp,

Nor ride a moon-white steed. Three yards of cord and a sliding board

Are all the gallows' need: So with rope of shame the Herald came

To do the secret deed.

We were as men who through a fen

Of filthy darkness grope: We did not dare to breath a prayer,

Or to give our anguish scope: Something was dead in each of us,

And what was dead was Hope.

For Man's grim Justice goes its way,

And will not swerve aside: It slays the weak, it slays the strong,

It has a deadly stride:

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With iron heel it slays the strong, The monstrous parricide!

We waited for the stroke of eight: Each tongue was thick with thirst:

For the stroke of eight is the stroke of Fate That makes a man accursed,

And Fate will use a running noose For the best man and the worst.

We had no other thing to do, Save to wait for the sign to come:

So, like things of stone in a valley lone, Quiet we sat and dumb:

But each man's heart beat thick and quick, Like a madman on a drum!

With sudden shock the prison-clock

Smote on the shivering air, And from all the gaol rose up a wail

Of impotent despair,

Like the sound that frightened marshes hear From some leper in his lair.

And as one sees most fearful things

In the crystal of a dream, We saw the greasy hempen rope

Hooked to the blackened beam, And heard the prayer the hangman's snare

Strangled into a scream.

And all the woe that moved him so

That he gave that bitter cry, And the wild regrets, and the bloody sweats,

None knew so well as I: For he who lives more lives than one

More deaths than one must die.

IV

There is no chapel on the day On which they hang a man: The Chaplain's heart is far too sick,

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Or his face is far too wan, Or there is that written in his eyes Which none should look upon.

So they kept us close till nigh on noon,

And then they rang the bell, And the Warders with their jingling keys

Opened each listening cell, And down the iron stair we tramped,

Each from his separate Hell.

Out into God's sweet air we went,

But not in wonted way, For this man's face was white with fear,

And that man's face was gray, And I never saw sad men who looked

So wistfully at the day.

I never saw sad men who looked

With such a wistful eye Upon that little tent of blue

We prisoners called the sky, And at every careless cloud that passed

In happy freedom by.

But there were those amongst us all Who walked with downcast head,

And knew that, had each got his due, They should have died instead:

He had but killed a thing that lived, Whilst they had killed the dead.

For he who sins a second time

Wakes a dead soul to pain, And draws it from its spotted shroud, And makes it bleed again, And makes it bleed great gouts of blood,

And makes it bleed in vain!

Like ape or clown, in monstrous garb

With crooked arrows starred, Silently we went round and round

The slippery asphalte yard;

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Silently we went round and round, And no man spoke a word.

Silently we went round and round, And through each hollow mind

The Memory of dreadful things Rushed like a dreadful wind,

And Horror stalked before each man, And Terror crept behind.

The Warders strutted up and down, And kept their herd of brutes,

Their uniforms were spick and span, And they wore their Sunday suits,

But we knew the work they had been at, By the quicklime on their boots.

For where a grave had opened wide,

There was no grave at all: Only a stretch of mud and sand

By the hideous prison-wall, And a little heap of burning lime,

That the man should have his pall.

For he has a pall, this wretched man,

Such as few men can claim: Deep down below a prison-yard,

Naked for greater shame, He lies, with fetters on each foot,

Wrapt in a sheet of flame!

And all the while the burning lime

Eats flesh and bone away, It eats the brittle bone by night,

And the soft flesh by day, It eats the flesh and bone by turns,

But it eats the heart alway.

For three long years they will not sow

Or root or seedling there: For three long years the unblessed spot

Will sterile be and bare, And look upon the wondering sky

With unreproachful stare.

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They think a murderer's heart would taint

Each simple seed they sow. It is not true! God's kindly earth

Is kindlier than men know, And the red rose would but blow more red,

The white rose whiter blow.

Out of his mouth a red, red rose!

Out of his heart a white! For who can say by what strange way,

Christ brings His will to light, Since the barren staff the pilgrim bore

Bloomed in the great Pope's sight?

But neither milk-white rose nor red

May bloom in prison air; The shard, the pebble, and the flint,

Are what they give us there: For flowers have been known to heal

A common man's despair.

So never will wine-red rose or white, Petal by petal, fall

On that stretch of mud and sand that lies

By the hideous prison-wall, To tell the men who tramp the yard

That God's Son died for all.

Yet though the hideous prison-wall Still hems him round and round,

And a spirit may not walk by night That is with fetters bound,

And a spirit may but weep that lies In such unholy ground.

He is at peace—this wretched man—

At peace, or will be soon: There is no thing to make him mad,

Nor does Terror walk at noon, For the lampless Earth in which he lies

Has neither Sun nor Moon.

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They hanged him as a beast is hanged:

They did not even toll A requiem that might have brought

Rest to his startled soul, But hurriedly they took him out,

And hid him in a hole.

They stripped him of his canvas clothes,

And gave him to the flies: They mocked the swollen purple throat,

And the stark and staring eyes: And with laughter loud they heaped the shroud

in which their convict lies.

The Chaplain would not kneel to pray

By his dishonoured grave: Nor mark it with that blessed Cross

That Christ for sinners gave, Because the man was one of those

Whom Christ came down to save.

Yet all is well; he has but passed

To Life's appointed bourne: And alien tears will fill for him

Pity's long-broken urn, For his mourners will be outcast men,

And outcasts always mourn.

V

I know not whether Laws be right,

Or whether Laws be wrong; All that we know who lie in gaol

Is that the wall is strong; And that each day is like a year,

A year whose days are long.

But this I know, that every Law

That men have made for Man, Since first Man took his brother's life,

And the sad world began, But straws the wheat and saves the chaff

With a most evil fan.

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This too I know—and wise it were

If each could know the same— That every prison that men build

Is built with bricks of shame, And bound with bars lest Christ should see

How men their brothers maim.

With bars they blur the gracious moon,

And blind the goodly sun: And they do well to hide their Hell,

For in it things are done That Son of God nor son of Man

Ever should look upon!

The vilest deeds like poison weeds

Bloom well in prison-air. It is only what is good in Man

That wastes and withers there: Pale Anguish keeps the heavy gate,

And the Warder is Despair.

For they starve the little frightened child

Till it weeps both night and day: And they scourge the weak, and flog the fool,

And gibe the old and gray, And some grow mad, and all grow bad,

And none a word may say.

Each narrow cell in which we dwell

Is a foul and dark latrine, And the fetid breath of living Death

Chokes up each grated screen, And all, but Lust, is turned to dust

In Humanity's machine.

The brackish water that we drink

Creeps with a loathsome slime, And the bitter bread they weigh in scales

Is full of chalk and lime, And Sleep will not lie down, but walks

Wild-eyed, and cries to Time.

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But though lean Hunger and green Thirst

Like asp with adder fight, We have little care of prison fare,

For what chills and kills outright Is that every stone one lifts by day

Becomes one's heart by night.

With midnight always in one's heart,

And twilight in one's cell, We turn the crank, or tear the rope,

Each in his separate Hell, And the silence is more awful far

Than the sound of a brazen bell.

And never a human voice comes near

To speak a gentle word: And the eye that watches through the door

Is pitiless and hard: And by all forgot, we rot and rot,

With soul and body marred.

And thus we rust Life's iron chain

Degraded and alone: And some men curse, and some men weep,

And some men make no moan: But God's eternal Laws are kind

And break the heart of stone.

And every human heart that breaks,

In prison-cell or yard, Is as that broken box that gave

Its treasure to the Lord, And filled the unclean leper's house

With the scent of costliest nard.

Ah! happy they whose hearts can break

And peace of pardon win! How else may man make straight his plan

And cleanse his soul from Sin? How else but through a broken heart

May Lord Christ enter in?

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And he of the swollen purple throat,

And the stark and staring eyes, Waits for the holy hands that took

The Thief to Paradise; And a broken and a contrite heart

The Lord will not despise.

The man in red who reads the Law

Gave him three weeks of life, Three little weeks in which to heal

His soul of his soul's strife, And cleanse from every blot of blood

The hand that held the knife.

And with tears of blood he cleansed the hand, The hand that held the steel:

For only blood can wipe out blood,

And only tears can heal: And the crimson stain that was of Cain

Became Christ's snow-white seal.

VI

In Reading gaol by Reading town

There is a pit of shame, And in it lies a wretched man

Eaten by teeth of flame, In a burning winding-sheet he lies,

And his grave has got no name.

And there, till Christ call forth the dead,

In silence let him lie: No need to waste the foolish tear,

Or heave the windy sigh: The man had killed the thing he loved,

And so he had to die.

And all men kill the thing they love,

By all let this be heard, Some do it with a bitter look,

Some with a flattering word, The coward does it with a kiss,

The brave man with a sword!

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### 2.15.3 Reading and Review Questions

1. What's the effect, if any, of the numerous paradoxes in The Importance of Being Earnest?

2. How, if at all, does the play address gender issues? Consider such lines as, "Why should there be one law for men, and another for women?"

3. What comments, if any, do these works make on guilt and crime? Consider "Bunbury" in the play and the poem's repeated allusion to Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner: "Each man kills the thing he loves."

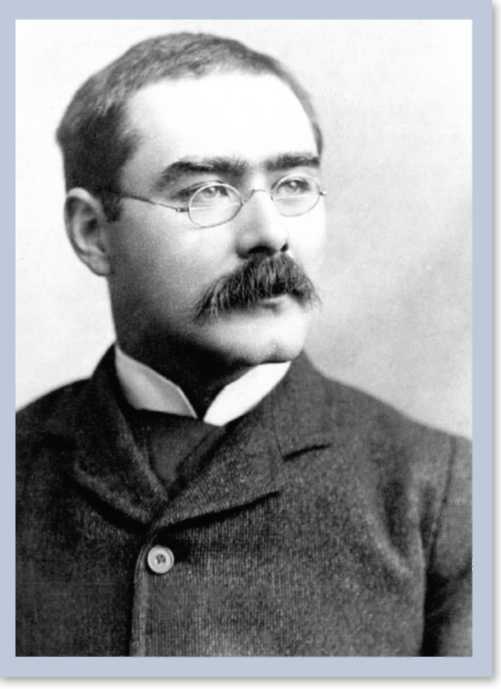
4. To what extent, if any, does style (literary style) create meaning in these works?

## 2.16 RUDYARD KIPLING

(1865-1936)

Image 2.37 | Photo of Rudyard Kipling

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Born in India where his father taught architecture in Bombay (now Mumbai), Rudyard Kipling always viewed his childhood there as idyllic. In contrast, he always viewed his introduction (even indoctrination) to "superior" British society—by being boarded out for six years to a sea captain living in Southsea—as desolating. Seemingly abandoned by his parents, Kipling was left to the less than tender care of the captain's widow. He found consolation, however, in the company of his uncle, Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898), the Pre-Raphaelite painter and friend of William Morris. His artistic tastes and knowledge were honed by the readings, games, and story-telling he enjoyed with Burne-Jones's family.

Equally agreeable was his studying at the United Services College, whose headmaster Cormell Price was a friend of both Burne-Jones and Morris and whose radical precepts fostered Kipling's interest in poetry. Not expected to qualify for a scholarship at Oxford, Kipling was provided a position—through his parents' connections—as reporter for the Civil and Military Gazette in Lahore, where his father then worked as a museum curator.

His reporting gave him insights to Anglo-Indian society, British colonial administration, British military life, and Indian culture. His extraordinary creativity

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and energy led to his regularly publishing stories in the Gazette that he published in volume form as Soldiers Three (1888). While depicting rugged "masculinity" and adventures, these stories also revealed general human failings and vices that occurred across races. Promoted to a senior paper, The Pioneer, Kipling's exposes and commentaries evoked considerable backlash and complaint, to the point that Kipling returned to England, where he soon won a place in English letters with his The Courting of Dinah Shadd and Other Stories (1890), The Light That Failed (1891), and Barrack-Room Ballads and Other Verses (1892).

In 1892, Kipling married Caroline Balestier, his agent's sister. Her family connections in Vermont led the couple to settle in Dummerston, Vermont where they had Naulakha built, a home somewhat reminiscent of an Indian bungalow. There Kipling wrote The Jungle Book (1894), Captains Courageous (1897), and The Day's Work (1898). Family disputes caused the couple to return to England in 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. His writing then gave sometimes nuanced, sometimes jingoistic voice to the last hurrah of British Imperialism, including Cecil Rhodes's (1853—1902) extremely problematic—and ultimately unsuccessful—empire-building in South Africa. Like so many others in England, the Kiplings suffered loss in WWI with the death of their son John. Kipling's subsequent activities in the first decades of the twentieth century focused on emotional recovery from the war.

Kipling's diverse literary output—poetry, short stories, essays, novels, and autobiography—may on the whole reveal the worse of British racial bias, Western prejudice, and political conservatism. Yet they also reveal his concern with the individual within the larger social system, even when he over-relied on such systems. "The Man Who Would Be King" recounts the "might-makes-right" power-grabbing of two adventurers, Daniel Dravot and Peachey Carnehan who intrepidly go away to be kings. They exploit so-called native superstition that views these two men as gods. And they call attention to the apparent whiteness of the Kafirs they dominate as a positive. Yet their story references the Masonic brotherhood, a group that Kipling upheld as ideally (if not actually) a brotherhood of all humankind— "prince" or "beggar" regardless of race. And Carnahan undergoes Christ-like punishment and penance. The crown (and head) he carries at the end of the book disappears, as though it's a passing on of the baton.

### 2.16.1 "The Man Who Would Be King"

"Brother to a Prince and fellow to a beggar if he be found worthy."

The Law, as quoted, lays down a fair conduct of life, and one not easy to follow. I have been fellow to a beggar again and again under circumstances which prevented either of us finding out whether the other was worthy. I have still to be brother to a Prince, though I once came near to kinship with what might have been a veritable King and was promised the reversion of a Kingdom—army, law-courts, revenue

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and policy all complete. But, to-day, I greatly fear that my King is dead, and if I want a crown I must go and hunt it for myself.

The beginning of everything was in a railway train upon the road to Mhow from Ajmir. There had been a deficit in the Budget, which necessitated travelling, not Second-class, which is only half as dear as First-class, but by Intermediate, which is very awful indeed. There are no cushions in the Intermediate class, and the population are either Intermediate, which is Eurasian, or native, which for a long night journey is nasty; or Loafer, which is amusing though intoxicated. Intermediates do not patronize refreshment-rooms. They carry their food in bundles and pots, and buy sweets from the native sweetmeat-sellers, and drink the roadside water. That is why in the hot weather Intermediates are taken out of the carriages dead, and in all weathers are most properly looked down upon.

My particular Intermediate happened to be empty till I reached Nasirabad, when a huge gentleman in shirt-sleeves entered, and, following the custom of Intermediates, passed the time of day. He was a wanderer and a vagabond like myself, but with an educated taste for whiskey. He told tales of things he had seen and done, of out-of-the-way corners of the Empire into which he had penetrated, and of adventures in which he risked his life for a few days' food. "If India was filled with men like you and me, not knowing more than the crows where they'd get their next day's rations, it isn't seventy millions of revenue the land would be paying— it's seven hundred million," said he; and as I looked at his mouth and chin I was disposed to agree with him. We talked politics—the politics of Loaferdom that sees things from the underside where the lath and plaster is not smoothed off—and we talked postal arrangements because my friend wanted to send a telegram back from the next station to Ajmir, which is the turning-off place from the Bombay to the Mhow line as you travel westward. My friend had no money beyond eight annas which he wanted for dinner, and I had no money at all, owing to the hitch in the Budget before mentioned. Further, I was going into a wilderness where, though I should resume touch with the Treasury, there were no telegraph offices. I was, therefore, unable to help him in any way.

"We might threaten a Station-master, and make him send a wire on tick," said my friend, "but that'd mean inquiries for you and for me, and I've got my hands full these days. Did you say you are travelling back along this line within any days?"

"Within ten," I said.

"Can't you make it eight?" said he. "Mine is rather urgent business."

"I can send your telegram within ten days if that will serve you," I said.

"I couldn't trust the wire to fetch him now I think of it. It's this way. He leaves Delhi on the 23d for Bombay. That means he'll be running through Ajmir about the night of the 23 d."

"But I'm going into the Indian Desert," I explained.

"Well and good," said he. "You'll be changing at Marwar Junction to get into Jodhpore territory—you must do that—and he'll be coming through Marwar

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Junction in the early morning of the 24th by the Bombay Mail. Can you be at Marwar Junction on that time? 'Twon't be inconveniencing you because I know that there's precious few pickings to be got out of these Central India States—even though you pretend to be correspondent of the Backwoodsman." "Have you ever tried that trick?" I asked.

"Again and again, but the Residents find you out, and then you get escorted to the Border before you've time to get your knife into them. But about my friend here. I must give him a word o' mouth to tell him what's come to me or else he won't know where to go. I would take it more than kind of you if you was to come out of Central India in time to catch him at Marwar Junction, and say to him:— 'He has gone South for the week.' He'll know what that means. He's a big man with a red beard, and a great swell he is. You'll find him sleeping like a gentleman with all his luggage round him in a second-class compartment. But don't you be afraid. Slip down the window, and say:— 'He has gone South for the week,' and he'll tumble. It's only cutting your time of stay in those parts by two days. I ask you as a stranger—going to the West," he said with emphasis.

"Where have you come from?" said I.

"From the East," said he, "and I am hoping that you will give him the message on the Square—for the sake of my Mother as well as your own."

Englishmen are not usually softened by appeals to the memory of their mothers, but for certain reasons, which will be fully apparent, I saw fit to agree.

"It's more than a little matter," said he, "and that's why I ask you to do it—and now I know that I can depend on you doing it. A second-class carriage at Marwar Junction, and a red-haired man asleep in it. You'll be sure to remember. I get out at the next station, and I must hold on there till he comes or sends me what I want."

"I'll give the message if I catch him," I said, "and for the sake of your Mother as well as mine I'll give you a word of advice. Don't try to run the Central India States just now as the correspondent of the Backwoodsman. There's a real one knocking about here, and it might lead to trouble."

"Thank you," said he simply, "and when will the swine be gone? I can't starve because he's ruining my work. I wanted to get hold of the Degumber Rajah down here about his father's widow, and give him a jump."

"What did he do to his father's widow, then?"

"Filled her up with red pepper and slippered her to death as she hung from a beam. I found that out myself and I'm the only man that would dare going into the State to get hush-money for it. They'll try to poison me, same as they did in Chortumna when I went on the loot there. But you'll give the man at Marwar Junction my message?"

He got out at a little roadside station, and I reflected. I had heard, more than once, of men personating correspondents of newspapers and bleeding small Native States with threats of exposure, but I had never met any of the caste before. They lead a hard life, and generally die with great suddenness. The Native States have a wholesome horror of English newspapers, which may throw light on their

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peculiar methods of government, and do their best to choke correspondents with champagne, or drive them out of their mind with four-in-hand barouches. They do not understand that nobody cares a straw for the internal administration of Native States so long as oppression and crime are kept within decent limits, and the ruler is not drugged, drunk, or diseased from one end of the year to the other. Native States were created by Providence in order to supply picturesque scenery, tigers and tall-writing. They are the dark places of the earth, full of unimaginable cruelty, touching the Railway and the Telegraph on one side, and, on the other, the days of Harun-al-Raschid. When I left the train I did business with divers Kings, and in eight days passed through many changes of life. Sometimes I wore dress-clothes and consorted with Princes and Politicals, drinking from crystal and eating from silver. Sometimes I lay out upon the ground and devoured what I could get, from a plate made of a flapjack, and drank the running water, and slept under the same rug as my servant. It was all in a day's work.

Then I headed for the Great Indian Desert upon the proper date, as I had promised, and the night Mail set me down at Marwar Junction, where a funny little, happy-go-lucky, native managed railway runs to Jodhpore. The Bombay Mail from Delhi makes a short halt at Marwar. She arrived as I got in, and I had just time to hurry to her platform and go down the carriages. There was only one second-class on the train. I slipped the window and looked down upon a flaming red beard, half covered by a railway rug. That was my man, fast asleep, and I dug him gently in the ribs. He woke with a grunt and I saw his face in the light of the lamps. It was a great and shining face.

"Tickets again?" said he.

"No," said I. "I am to tell you that he is gone South for the week. He is gone South for the week!"

The train had begun to move out. The red man rubbed his eyes. "He has gone South for the week," he repeated. "Now that's just like his impudence. Did he say that I was to give you anything?—'Cause I won't."

"He didn't," I said and dropped away, and watched the red lights die out in the dark. It was horribly cold because the wind was blowing off the sands. I climbed into my own train—not an Intermediate Carriage this time—and went to sleep.

If the man with the beard had given me a rupee I should have kept it as a memento of a rather curious affair. But the consciousness of having done my duty was my only reward.

Later on I reflected that two gentlemen like my friends could not do any good if they foregathered and personated correspondents of newspapers, and might, if they "stuck up" one of the little rat-trap states of Central India or Southern Rajputana, get themselves into serious difficulties. I therefore took some trouble to describe them as accurately as I could remember to people who would be interested in deporting them; and succeeded, so I was later informed, in having them headed back from the Degumber borders.

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Then I became respectable, and returned to an Office where there were no Kings and no incidents except the daily manufacture of a newspaper. A newspaper office seems to attract every conceivable sort of person, to the prejudice of discipline. Zenana-mission ladies arrive, and beg that the Editor will instantly abandon all his duties to describe a Christian prize-giving in a back-slum of a perfectly inaccessible village; Colonels who have been overpassed for commands sit down and sketch the outline of a series of ten, twelve, or twenty-four leading articles on Seniority versus Selection; missionaries wish to know why they have not been permitted to escape from their regular vehicles of abuse and swear at a brother-missionary under special patronage of the editorial We; stranded theatrical companies troop up to explain that they cannot pay for their advertisements, but on their return from New Zealand or Tahiti will do so with interest; inventors of patent punkah-pulling machines, carriage couplings and unbreakable swords and axle-trees call with specifications in their pockets and hours at their disposal; tea-companies enter and elaborate their prospectuses with the office pens; secretaries of ball-committees clamor to have the glories of their last dance more fully expounded; strange ladies rustle in and say:— "I want a hundred lady's cards printed at once, please," which is manifestly part of an Editor's duty; and every dissolute ruffian that ever tramped the Grand Trunk Road makes it his business to ask for employment as a proof-reader. And, all the time, the telephone-bell is ringing madly, and Kings are being killed on the Continent, and Empires are saying, "You're another," and Mister Gladstone is calling down brimstone upon the British Dominions, and the little black copy-boys are whining, "kaa-pi chayha-yeh" (copy wanted) like tired bees, and most of the paper is as blank as Modred's shield.

But that is the amusing part of the year. There are other six months wherein none ever come to call, and the thermometer walks inch by inch up to the top of the glass, and the office is darkened to just above reading light, and the press machines are red-hot of touch, and nobody writes anything but accounts of amusements in the Hill-stations or obituary notices. Then the telephone becomes a tinkling terror, because it tells you of the sudden deaths of men and women that you knew intimately, and the prickly-heat covers you as with a garment, and you sit down and write:— "A slight increase of sickness is reported from the Khuda Janta Khan District. The outbreak is purely sporadic in its nature, and, thanks to the energetic efforts of the District authorities, is now almost at an end. It is, however, with deep regret we record the death, etc."

Then the sickness really breaks out, and the less recording and reporting the better for the peace of the subscribers. But the Empires and the Kings continue to divert themselves as selfishly as before, and the foreman thinks that a daily paper really ought to come out once in twenty-four hours, and all the people at the Hill-stations in the middle of their amusements say:— "Good gracious! Why can't the paper be sparkling? I'm sure there's plenty going on up here."

That is the dark half of the moon, and, as the advertisements say, "must be experienced to be appreciated."

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It was in that season, and a remarkably evil season, that the paper began running the last issue of the week on Saturday night, which is to say Sunday morning, after the custom of a London paper. This was a great convenience, for immediately after the paper was put to bed, the dawn would lower the thermometer from 96° to almost 84° for almost half an hour, and in that chill—you have no idea how cold is 84° on the grass until you begin to pray for it—a very tired man could set off to sleep ere the heat roused him.

One Saturday night it was my pleasant duty to put the paper to bed alone. A King or courtier or a courtesan or a community was going to die or get a new Constitution, or do something that was important on the other side of the world, and the paper was to be held open till the latest possible minute in order to catch the telegram. It was a pitchy black night, as stifling as a June night can be, and the loo, the red-hot wind from the westward, was booming among the tinder-dry trees and pretending that the rain was on its heels. Now and again a spot of almost boiling water would fall on the dust with the flop of a frog, but all our weary world knew that was only pretence. It was a shade cooler in the press-room than the office, so I sat there, while the type ticked and clicked, and the night-jars hooted at the windows, and the all but naked compositors wiped the sweat from their foreheads and called for water. The thing that was keeping us back, whatever it was, would not come off, though the loo dropped and the last type was set, and the whole round earth stood still in the choking heat, with its finger on its lip, to wait the event. I drowsed, and wondered whether the telegraph was a blessing, and whether this dying man, or struggling people, was aware of the inconvenience the delay was causing. There was no special reason beyond the heat and worry to make tension, but, as the clock-hands crept up to three o'clock and the machines spun their fly-wheels two and three times to see that all was in order, before I said the word that would set them off, I could have shrieked aloud.

Then the roar and rattle of the wheels shivered the quiet into little bits. I rose to go away, but two men in white clothes stood in front of me. The first one said:— "It's him!" The second said—"So it is!" And they both laughed almost as loudly as the machinery roared, and mopped their foreheads. "We see there was a light burning across the road and we were sleeping in that ditch there for coolness, and I said to my friend here, the office is open. Let's come along and speak to him as turned us back from the Degumber State," said the smaller of the two. He was the man I had met in the Mhow train, and his fellow was the red-bearded man of Marwar Junction. There was no mistaking the eyebrows of the one or the beard of the other.

I was not pleased, because I wished to go to sleep, not to squabble with loafers. "What do you want?" I asked.

"Half an hour's talk with you cool and comfortable, in the office," said the red-bearded man. "We'd like some drink—the Contrack doesn't begin yet, Peachey, so you needn't look—but what we really want is advice. We don't want money. We ask you as a favor, because you did us a bad turn about Degumber."

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I led from the press-room to the stifling office with the maps on the walls, and the red-haired man rubbed his hands. "That's something like," said he. "This was the proper shop to come to. Now, Sir, let me introduce to you Brother Peachey Carnehan, that's him, and Brother Daniel Dravot, that is me, and the less said about our professions the better, for we have been most things in our time. Soldier, sailor, compositor, photographer, proof-reader, street-preacher, and correspondents of the Backwoodsman when we thought the paper wanted one. Carnehan is sober, and so am I. Look at us first and see that's sure. It will save you cutting into my talk. We'll take one of your cigars apiece, and you shall see us light." I watched the test. The men were absolutely sober, so I gave them each a tepid peg.

"Well and good," said Carnehan of the eyebrows, wiping the froth from his mustache. "Let me talk now, Dan. We have been all over India, mostly on foot. We have been boiler-fitters, engine-drivers, petty contractors, and all that, and we have decided that India isn't big enough for such as us."

They certainly were too big for the office. Dravot's beard seemed to fill half the room and Carnehan's shoulders the other half, as they sat on the big table. Carnehan continued:—"The country isn't half worked out because they that governs it won't let you touch it. They spend all their blessed time in governing it, and you can't lift a spade, nor chip a rock, nor look for oil, nor anything like that without all the Government saying—'Leave it alone and let us govern.' Therefore, such as it is, we will let it alone, and go away to some other place where a man isn't crowded and can come to his own. We are not little men, and there is nothing that we are afraid of except Drink, and we have signed a Contrack on that. Therefore, we are going away to be Kings."

"Kings in our own right," muttered Dravot.

"Yes, of course," I said. "You've been tramping in the sun, and it's a very warm night, and hadn't you better sleep over the notion? Come to-morrow."

"Neither drunk nor sunstruck," said Dravot. "We have slept over the notion half a year, and require to see Books and Atlases, and we have decided that there is only one place now in the world that two strong men can Sar-a-whack. They call it Kafiristan. By my reckoning its the top right-hand corner of Afghanistan, not more than three hundred miles from Peshawar. They have two and thirty heathen idols there, and we'll be the thirty-third. It's a mountainous country, and the women of those parts are very beautiful."

"But that is provided against in the Contrack," said Carnehan. "Neither Women nor Liquor, Daniel."

"And that's all we know, except that no one has gone there, and they fight, and in any place where they fight a man who knows how to drill men can always be a King. We shall go to those parts and say to any King we find—'D'you want to vanquish your foes?' and we will show him how to drill men; for that we know better than anything else. Then we will subvert that King and seize his Throne and establish a Dy-nasty."

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"You'll be cut to pieces before you're fifty miles across the Border," I said. "You have to travel through Afghanistan to get to that country. It's one mass of mountains and peaks and glaciers, and no Englishman has been through it. The people are utter brutes, and even if you reached them you couldn't do anything."

"That's more like," said Carnehan. "If you could think us a little more mad we would be more pleased. We have come to you to know about this country, to read a book about it, and to be shown maps. We want you to tell us that we are fools and to show us your books." He turned to the book-cases.

"Are you at all in earnest?" I said.

"A little," said Dravot, sweetly. "As big a map as you have got, even if it's all blank where Kafiristan is, and any books you've got. We can read, though we aren't very educated."

I uncased the big thirty-two-miles-to-the-inch map of India, and two smaller Frontier maps, hauled down volume INF-KAN of the Encyclopadia Britannica, and the men consulted them.

"See here!" said Dravot, his thumb on the map. "Up to Jagdallak, Peachey and me know the road. We was there with Roberts's Army. We'll have to turn off to the right at Jagdallak through Laghmann territory. Then we get among the hills— fourteen thousand feet—fifteen thousand—it will be cold work there, but it don't look very far on the map."

I handed him Wood on the Sources of the Oxus. Carnehan was deep in the Encyclopadia.

"They're a mixed lot," said Dravot, reflectively; "and it won't help us to know the names of their tribes. The more tribes the more they'll fight, and the better for us. From Jagdallak to Ashang. H'mm!"

"But all the information about the country is as sketchy and inaccurate as can be," I protested. "No one knows anything about it really. Here's the file of the United Services' Institute. Read what Bellew says."

"Blow Bellew!" said Carnehan. "Dan, they're an all-fired lot of heathens, but this book here says they think they're related to us English."

I smoked while the men pored over Raverty, Wood, the maps and the Encyclopadia.

"There is no use your waiting," said Dravot, politely. "It's about four o'clock now. We'll go before six o'clock if you want to sleep, and we won't steal any of the papers. Don't you sit up. We're two harmless lunatics, and if you come, to-morrow evening, down to the Serai we'll say good-by to you."

"You are two fools," I answered. "You'll be turned back at the Frontier or cut up the minute you set foot in Afghanistan. Do you want any money or a recommendation down-country? I can help you to the chance of work next week."

"Next week we shall be hard at work ourselves, thank you," said Dravot. "It isn't so easy being a King as it looks. When we've got our Kingdom in going order we'll let you know, and you can come up and help us to govern it."

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"Would two lunatics make a Contrack like that!" said Carnehan, with subdued pride, showing me a greasy half-sheet of note-paper on which was written the following. I copied it, then and there, as a curiosity:—

This Contract between me and you persuing witnesseth in the name of God— Amen and so forth.

(One) That me and you will settle this matter together: i.e., to be Kings of Kafiristan.

(Two) That you and me will not while this matter is being settled, look at any Liquor, nor any Woman black, white or brown, so as to get mixed up with one or the other harmful.

(Three) That we conduct ourselves with Dignity and Discretion, and if one of us gets into trouble the other will stay by him. Signed by you and me this day. Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan. Daniel Dravot. Both Gentlemen at Large.

"There was no need for the last article," said Carnehan, blushing modestly; "but it looks regular. Now you know the sort of men that loafers are—we are loafers, Dan, until we get out of India—and do you think that we could sign a Contrack like that unless we was in earnest? We have kept away from the two things that make life worth having."

"You won't enjoy your lives much longer if you are going to try this idiotic adventure. Don't set the office on fire," I said, "and go away before nine o'clock."

I left them still poring over the maps and making notes on the back of the "Contrack." "Be sure to come down to the Serai to-morrow," were their parting words.

The Kumharsen Serai is the great four-square sink of humanity where the strings of camels and horses from the North load and unload. All the nationalities of Central Asia may be found there, and most of the folk of India proper. Balkh and Bokhara there meet Bengal and Bombay, and try to draw eye-teeth. You can buy ponies, turquoises, Persian pussy-cats, saddle-bags, fat-tailed sheep and musk in the Kumharsen Serai, and get many strange things for nothing. In the afternoon I went down there to see whether my friends intended to keep their word or were lying about drunk.

A priest attired in fragments of ribbons and rags stalked up to me, gravely twisting a child's paper whirligig. Behind him was his servant, bending under the load of a crate of mud toys. The two were loading up two camels, and the inhabitants of the Serai watched them with shrieks of laughter.

"The priest is mad," said a horse-dealer to me. "He is going up to Kabul to sell toys to the Amir. He will either be raised to honor or have his head cut off. He came in here this morning and has been behaving madly ever since."

"The witless are under the protection of God," stammered a flat-cheeked Usbeg in broken Hindi. "They foretell future events."

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"Would they could have foretold that my caravan would have been cut up by the Shinwaris almost within shadow of the Pass!" grunted the Eusufzai agent of a Rajputana trading-house whose goods had been feloniously diverted into the hands of other robbers just across the Border, and whose misfortunes were the laughingstock of the bazar. "Ohe, priest, whence come you and whither do you go?"

"From Roum have I come," shouted the priest, waving his whirligig; "from Roum, blown by the breath of a hundred devils across the sea! O thieves, robbers, liars, the blessing of Pir Khan on pigs, dogs, and perjurers! Who will take the Protected of God to the North to sell charms that are never still to the Amir? The camels shall not gall, the sons shall not fall sick, and the wives shall remain faithful while they are away, of the men who give me place in their caravan. Who will assist me to slipper the King of the Roos with a golden slipper with a silver heel? The protection of Pir Kahn be upon his labors!" He spread out the skirts of his gaberdine and pirouetted between the lines of tethered horses.

"There starts a caravan from Peshawar to Kabul in twenty days, Huzrut," said the Eusufzai trader. "My camels go therewith. Do thou also go and bring us good luck."

"I will go even now!" shouted the priest. "I will depart upon my winged camels, and be at Peshawar in a day! Ho! Hazar Mir Khan," he yelled to his servant "drive out the camels, but let me first mount my own."

He leaped on the back of his beast as it knelt, and turning round to me, cried:—

"Come thou also, Sahib, a little along the road, and I will sell thee a charm—an amulet that shall make thee King of Kafiristan."

Then the light broke upon me, and I followed the two camels out of the Serai till we reached open road and the priest halted.

"What d' you think o' that?" said he in English. "Carnehan can't talk their patter, so I've made him my servant. He makes a handsome servant. 'Tisn't for nothing that I've been knocking about the country for fourteen years. Didn't I do that talk neat? We'll hitch on to a caravan at Peshawar till we get to Jagdallak, and then we'll see if we can get donkeys for our camels, and strike into Kafiristan. Whirligigs for the Amir, O Lor! Put your hand under the camel-bags and tell me what you feel."

I felt the butt of a Martini, and another and another.

"Twenty of 'em," said Dravot, placidly.

"Twenty of 'em, and ammunition to correspond, under the whirligigs and the mud dolls."

"Heaven help you if you are caught with those things!" I said. "A Martini is worth her weight in silver among the Pathans."

"Fifteen hundred rupees of capital—every rupee we could beg, borrow, or steal—are invested on these two camels," said Dravot. "We won't get caught. We're going through the Khaiber with a regular caravan. Who'd touch a poor mad priest?"

"Have you got everything you want?" I asked, overcome with astonishment.

"Not yet, but we shall soon. Give us a momento of your kindness, Brother. You did me a service yesterday, and that time in Marwar. Half my Kingdom shall you

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have, as the saying is." I slipped a small charm compass from my watch-chain and handed it up to the priest.

"Good-by," said Dravot, giving me his hand cautiously. "It's the last time we'll shake hands with an Englishman these many days. Shake hands with him, Carnehan," he cried, as the second camel passed me.

Carnehan leaned down and shook hands. Then the camels passed away along the dusty road, and I was left alone to wonder. My eye could detect no failure in the disguises. The scene in the Serai attested that they were complete to the native mind. There was just the chance, therefore, that Carnehan and Dravot would be able to wander through Afghanistan without detection. But, beyond, they would find death, certain and awful death.

Ten days later a native friend of mine, giving me the news of the day from Peshawar, wound up his letter with:— "There has been much laughter here on account of a certain mad priest who is going in his estimation to sell petty gauds and insignificant trinkets which he ascribes as great charms to H. H. the Amir of Bokhara. He passed through Peshawar and associated himself to the Second Summer caravan that goes to Kabul. The merchants are pleased because through superstition they imagine that such mad fellows bring good-fortune."

The two then, were beyond the Border. I would have prayed for them, but, that night, a real King died in Europe, and demanded an obituary notice.

The wheel of the world swings through the same phases again and again. Summer passed and winter thereafter, and came and passed again. The daily paper continued and I with it, and upon the third summer there fell a hot night, a night-issue, and a strained waiting for something to be telegraphed from the other side of the world, exactly as had happened before. A few great men had died in the past two years, the machines worked with more clatter, and some of the trees in the Office garden were a few feet taller. But that was all the difference.

I passed over to the press-room, and went through just such a scene as I have already described. The nervous tension was stronger than it had been two years before, and I felt the heat more acutely. At three o'clock I cried, "Print off," and turned to go, when there crept to my chair what was left of a man. He was bent into a circle, his head was sunk between his shoulders, and he moved his feet one over the other like a bear. I could hardly see whether he walked or crawled—this rag-wrapped, whining cripple who addressed me by name, crying that he was come back. "Can you give me a drink?" he whimpered. "For the Lord's sake, give me a drink!"

I went back to the office, the man following with groans of pain, and I turned up the lamp.

"Don't you know me?" he gasped, dropping into a chair, and he turned his drawn face, surmounted by a shock of gray hair, to the light.

I looked at him intently. Once before had I seen eyebrows that met over the nose in an inch-broad black band, but for the life of me I could not tell where.

"I don't know you," I said, handing him the whiskey. "What can I do for you?"

He took a gulp of the spirit raw, and shivered in spite of the suffocating heat.

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"I've come back," he repeated; "and I was the King of Kafiristan—me and Dravot—crowned Kings we was! In this office we settled it—you setting there and giving us the books. I am Peachey—Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan, and you've been setting here ever since—O Lord!"

I was more than a little astonished, and expressed my feelings accordingly.

"It's true," said Carnehan, with a dry cackle, nursing his feet which were wrapped in rags. "True as gospel. Kings we were, with crowns upon our heads— me and Dravot—poor Dan—oh, poor, poor Dan, that would never take advice, not though I begged of him!"

"Take the whiskey," I said, "and take your own time. Tell me all you can recollect of everything from beginning to end. You got across the border on your camels, Dravot dressed as a mad priest and you his servant. Do you remember that?"

"I ain't mad—yet, but I will be that way soon. Of course I remember. Keep looking at me, or maybe my words will go all to pieces. Keep looking at me in my eyes and don't say anything."

I leaned forward and looked into his face as steadily as I could. He dropped one hand upon the table and I grasped it by the wrist. It was twisted like a bird's claw, and upon the back was a ragged, red, diamond-shaped scar.

"No, don't look there. Look at me," said Carnehan.

"That comes afterwards, but for the Lord's sake don't distrack me. We left with that caravan, me and Dravot, playing all sorts of antics to amuse the people we were with. Dravot used to make us laugh in the evenings when all the people was cooking their dinners—cooking their dinners, and ... what did they do then? They lit little fires with sparks that went into Dravot's beard, and we all laughed—fit to die. Little red fires they was, going into Dravot's big red beard—so funny." His eyes left mine and he smiled foolishly.

"You went as far as Jagdallak with that caravan," I said at a venture, "after you had lit those fires. To Jagdallak, where you turned off to try to get into Kafiristan."

"No, we didn't neither. What are you talking about? We turned off before Jagdallak, because we heard the roads was good. But they wasn't good enough for our two camels—mine and Dravot's. When we left the caravan, Dravot took off all his clothes and mine too, and said we would be heathen, because the Kafirs didn't allow Mohammedans to talk to them. So we dressed betwixt and between, and such a sight as Daniel Dravot I never saw yet nor expect to see again. He burned half his beard, and slung a sheep-skin over his shoulder, and shaved his head into patterns. He shaved mine, too, and made me wear outrageous things to look like a heathen. That was in a most mountaineous country, and our camels couldn't go along any more because of the mountains. They were tall and black, and coming home I saw them fight like wild goats—there are lots of goats in Kafiristan. And these mountains, they never keep still, no more than the goats. Always fighting they are, and don't let you sleep at night."

"Take some more whiskey," I said, very slowly. "What did you and Daniel Dravot do when the camels could go no further because of the rough roads that led into Kafiristan?"

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"What did which do? There was a party called Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan that was with Dravot. Shall I tell you about him? He died out there in the cold. Slap from the bridge fell old Peachey, turning and twisting in the air like a penny whirligig that you can sell to the Amir—No; they was two for three ha'pence, those whirligigs, or I am much mistaken and woful sore. And then these camels were no use, and Peachey said to Dravot—'For the Lord's sake, let's get out of this before our heads are chopped off,' and with that they killed the camels all among the mountains, not having anything in particular to eat, but first they took off the boxes with the guns and the ammunition, till two men came along driving four mules. Dravot up and dances in front of them, singing,—'Sell me four mules.' Says the first man,—'If you are rich enough to buy, you are rich enough to rob;' but before ever he could put his hand to his knife, Dravot breaks his neck over his knee, and the other party runs away. So Carnehan loaded the mules with the rifles that was taken off the camels, and together we starts forward into those bitter cold mountainous parts, and never a road broader than the back of your hand."

He paused for a moment, while I asked him if he could remember the nature of the country through which he had journeyed.

"I am telling you as straight as I can, but my head isn't as good as it might be. They drove nails through it to make me hear better how Dravot died. The country was mountainous and the mules were most contrary, and the inhabitants was dispersed and solitary. They went up and up, and down and down, and that other party Carnehan, was imploring of Dravot not to sing and whistle so loud, for fear of bringing down the tremenjus avalanches. But Dravot says that if a King couldn't sing it wasn't worth being King, and whacked the mules over the rump, and never took no heed for ten cold days. We came to a big level valley all among the mountains, and the mules were near dead, so we killed them, not having anything in special for them or us to eat. We sat upon the boxes, and played odd and even with the cartridges that was jolted out.

"Then ten men with bows and arrows ran down that valley, chasing twenty men with bows and arrows, and the row was tremenjus. They was fair men— fairer than you or me—with yellow hair and remarkable well built. Says Dravot, unpacking the guns—'This is the beginning of the business. We'll fight for the ten men,' and with that he fires two rifles at the twenty men and drops one of them at two hundred yards from the rock where we was sitting. The other men began to run, but Carnehan and Dravot sits on the boxes picking them off at all ranges, up and down the valley. Then we goes up to the ten men that had run across the snow too, and they fires a footy little arrow at us. Dravot he shoots above their heads and they all falls down flat. Then he walks over them and kicks them, and then he lifts them up and shakes hands all around to make them friendly like. He calls them and gives them the boxes to carry, and waves his hand for all the world as though he was King already. They takes the boxes and him across the valley and up the hill into a pine wood on the top, where there was half a dozen big stone idols. Dravot he goes to the biggest—a fellow they call Imbra—and lays a rifle and a cartridge at his

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feet, rubbing his nose respectful with his own nose, patting him on the head, and saluting in front of it. He turns round to the men and nods his head, and says,— 'That's all right. I'm in the know too, and these old jim-jams are my friends.' Then he opens his mouth and points down it, and when the first man brings him food, he says—'No;' and when the second man brings him food, he says—'No;' but when one of the old priests and the boss of the village brings him food, he says—'Yes;' very haughty, and eats it slow. That was how we came to our first village, without any trouble, just as though we had tumbled from the skies. But we tumbled from one of those damned rope-bridges, you see, and you couldn't expect a man to laugh much after that."

"Take some more whiskey and go on," I said. "That was the first village you came into. How did you get to be King?"

"I wasn't King," said Carnehan. "Dravot he was the King, and a handsome man he looked with the gold crown on his head and all. Him and the other party stayed in that village, and every morning Dravot sat by the side of old Imbra, and the people came and worshipped. That was Dravot's order. Then a lot of men came into the valley, and Carnehan and Dravot picks them off with the rifles before they knew where they was, and runs down into the valley and up again the other side, and finds another village, same as the first one, and the people all falls down flat on their faces, and Dravot says,—'Now what is the trouble between you two villages?' and the people points to a woman, as fair as you or me, that was carried off, and Dravot takes her back to the first village and counts up the dead—eight there was. For each dead man Dravot pours a little milk on the ground and waves his arms like a whirligig and, 'That's all right,' says he. Then he and Carnehan takes the big boss of each village by the arm and walks them down into the valley, and shows them how to scratch a line with a spear right down the valley, and gives each a sod of turf from both sides o' the line. Then all the people comes down and shouts like the devil and all, and Dravot says,—'Go and dig the land, and be fruitful and multiply,' which they did, though they didn't understand. Then we asks the names of things in their lingo—bread and water and fire and idols and such, and Dravot leads the priest of each village up to the idol, and says he must sit there and judge the people, and if anything goes wrong he is to be shot.

"Next week they was all turning up the land in the valley as quiet as bees and much prettier, and the priests heard all the complaints and told Dravot in dumb show what it was about. 'That's just the beginning,' says Dravot. 'They think we're gods.' He and Carnehan picks out twenty good men and shows them how to click off a rifle, and form fours, and advance in line, and they was very pleased to do so, and clever to see the hang of it. Then he takes out his pipe and his baccy-pouch and leaves one at one village, and one at the other, and off we two goes to see what was to be done in the next valley. That was all rock, and there was a little village there, and Carnehan says,—'Send 'em to the old valley to plant,' and takes 'em there and gives 'em some land that wasn't took before. They were a poor lot, and we blooded 'em with a kid before letting 'em into the new Kingdom. That was to impress the

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people, and then they settled down quiet, and Carnehan went back to Dravot who had got into another valley, all snow and ice and most mountainous. There was no people there and the Army got afraid, so Dravot shoots one of them, and goes on till he finds some people in a village, and the Army explains that unless the people wants to be killed they had better not shoot their little matchlocks; for they had matchlocks. We makes friends with the priest and I stays there alone with two of the Army, teaching the men how to drill, and a thundering big Chief comes across the snow with kettledrums and horns twanging, because he heard there was a new god kicking about. Carnehan sights for the brown of the men half a mile across the snow and wings one of them. Then he sends a message to the Chief that, unless he wished to be killed, he must come and shake hands with me and leave his arms behind. The Chief comes alone first, and Carnehan shakes hands with him and whirls his arms about, same as Dravot used, and very much surprised that Chief was, and strokes my eyebrows. Then Carnehan goes alone to the Chief, and asks him in dumb show if he had an enemy he hated. 'I have,' says the Chief. So Carnehan weeds out the pick of his men, and sets the two of the Army to show them drill and at the end of two weeks the men can manoeuvre about as well as Volunteers. So he marches with the Chief to a great big plain on the top of a mountain, and the Chiefs men rushes into a village and takes it; we three Martinis firing into the brown of the enemy. So we took that village too, and I gives the Chief a rag from my coat and says, 'Occupy till I come': which was scriptural. By way of a reminder, when me and the Army was eighteen hundred yards away, I drops a bullet near him standing on the snow, and all the people falls flat on their faces. Then I sends a letter to Dravot, wherever he be by land or by sea."

At the risk of throwing the creature out of train I interrupted,—"How could you write a letter up yonder?"

"The letter?—Oh!—The letter! Keep looking at me between the eyes, please. It was a string-talk letter, that we'd learned the way of it from a blind beggar in the

Punjab."

I remember that there had once come to the office a blind man with a knotted twig and a piece of string which he wound round the twig according to some cypher of his own. He could, after the lapse of days or hours, repeat the sentence which he had reeled up. He had reduced the alphabet to eleven primitive sounds; and tried to teach me his method, but failed.

"I sent that letter to Dravot," said Carnehan; "and told him to come back because this Kingdom was growing too big for me to handle, and then I struck for the first valley, to see how the priests were working. They called the village we took along with the Chief, Bashkai, and the first village we took, Er-Heb. The priest at Er-Heb was doing all right, but they had a lot of pending cases about land to show me, and some men from another village had been firing arrows at night. I went out and looked for that village and fired four rounds at it from a thousand yards. That used all the cartridges I cared to spend, and I waited for Dravot, who had been away two or three months, and I kept my people quiet.

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"One morning I heard the devil's own noise of drums and horns, and Dan Dravot marches down the hill with his Army and a tail of hundreds of men, and, which was the most amazing—a great gold crown on his head. 'My Gord, Carnehan,' says Daniel, 'this is a tremenjus business, and we've got the whole country as far as it's worth having. I am the son of Alexander by Queen Semiramis, and you're my younger brother and a god too! It's the biggest thing we've ever seen. I've been marching and fighting for six weeks with the Army, and every footy little village for fifty miles has come in rejoiceful; and more than that, I've got the key of the whole show, as you'll see, and I've got a crown for you! I told 'em to make two of 'em at a place called Shu, where the gold lies in the rock like suet in mutton. Gold I've seen, and turquoise I've kicked out of the cliffs, and there's garnets in the sands of the river, and here's a chunk of amber that a man brought me. Call up all the priests and, here, take your crown.'

"One of the men opens a black hair bag and I slips the crown on. It was too small and too heavy, but I wore it for the glory. Hammered gold it was—five pound weight, like a hoop of a barrel.

"'Peachey,' says Dravot, 'we don't want to fight no more. The Craft's the trick so help me!' and he brings forward that same Chief that I left at Bashkai—Billy Fish we called him afterwards, because he was so like Billy Fish that drove the big tank-engine at Mach on the Bolan in the old days. 'Shake hands with him,' says Dravot, and I shook hands and nearly dropped, for Billy Fish gave me the Grip. I said nothing, but tried him with the Fellow Craft Grip. He answers, all right, and I tried the Master's Grip, but that was a slip. 'A Fellow Craft he is!' I says to Dan. 'Does he know the word?' 'He does,' says Dan, 'and all the priests know. It's a miracle! The Chiefs and the priest can work a Fellow Craft Lodge in a way that's very like ours, and they've cut the marks on the rocks, but they don't know the Third Degree, and they've come to find out. It's Gord's Truth. I've known these long years that the Afghans knew up to the Fellow Craft Degree, but this is a miracle. A god and a Grand-Master of the Craft am I, and a Lodge in the Third Degree I will open, and we'll raise the head priests and the Chiefs of the villages.'

"'It's against all the law,' I says, 'holding a Lodge without warrant from any one; and we never held office in any Lodge.'

"'It's a master-stroke of policy,' says Dravot. 'It means running the country as easy as a four-wheeled bogy on a down grade. We can't stop to inquire now, or they'll turn against us. I've forty Chiefs at my heel, and passed and raised according to their merit they shall be. Billet these men on the villages and see that we run up a Lodge of some kind. The temple of Imbra will do for the Lodge-room. The women must make aprons as you show them. I'll hold a levee of Chiefs tonight and Lodge to-morrow.'

"I was fair run off my legs, but I wasn't such a fool as not to see what a pull this Craft business gave us. I showed the priests' families how to make aprons of the degrees, but for Dravot's apron the blue border and marks was made of turquoise lumps on white hide, not cloth. We took a great square stone in the temple for

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the Master's chair, and little stones for the officers' chairs, and painted the black pavement with white squares, and did what we could to make things regular.

"At the levee which was held that night on the hillside with big bonfires, Dravot gives out that him and me were gods and sons of Alexander, and Past GrandMasters in the Craft, and was come to make Kafiristan a country where every man should eat in peace and drink in quiet, and specially obey us. Then the Chiefs come round to shake hands, and they was so hairy and white and fair it was just shaking hands with old friends. We gave them names according as they was like men we had known in India—Billy Fish, Holly Dilworth, Pikky Kergan that was Bazar-master when I was at Mhow, and so on, and so on.

"The most amazing miracle was at Lodge next night. One of the old priests was watching us continuous, and I felt uneasy, for I knew we'd have to fudge the Ritual, and I didn't know what the men knew. The old priest was a stranger come in from beyond the village of Bashkai. The minute Dravot puts on the Master's apron that the girls had made for him, the priest fetches a whoop and a howl, and tries to overturn the stone that Dravot was sitting on. 'It's all up now,' I says. 'That comes of meddling with the Craft without warrant!' Dravot never winked an eye, not when ten priests took and tilted over the Grand-Master's chair—which was to say the stone of Imbra. The priest begins rubbing the bottom end of it to clear away the black dirt, and presently he shows all the other priests the Master's Mark, same as was on Dravot's apron, cut into the stone. Not even the priests of the temple of Imbra knew it was there. The old chap falls flat on his face at Dravot's feet and kisses 'em. 'Luck again,' says Dravot, across the Lodge to me, 'they say it's the missing Mark that no one could understand the why of. We're more than safe now.' Then he bangs the butt of his gun for a gavel and says:— 'By virtue of the authority vested in me by my own right hand and the help of Peachey, I declare myself Grand-Master of all Freemasonry in Kafiristan in this the Mother Lodge o' the country, and King of Kafiristan equally with Peachey!' At that he puts on his crown and I puts on mine—I was doing Senior Warden—and we opens the Lodge in most ample form. It was a amazing miracle! The priests moved in Lodge through the first two degrees almost without telling, as if the memory was coming back to them. After that, Peachey and Dravot raised such as was worthy—high priests and Chiefs of far-off villages. Billy Fish was the first, and I can tell you we scared the soul out of him. It was not in any way according to Ritual, but it served our turn. We didn't raise more than ten of the biggest men because we didn't want to make the Degree common. And they was clamoring to be raised.

"'In another six months,' says Dravot, 'we'll hold another Communication and see how you are working.' Then he asks them about their villages, and learns that they was fighting one against the other and were fair sick and tired of it. And when they wasn't doing that they was fighting with the Mohammedans. 'You can fight those when they come into our country,' says Dravot. 'Tell off every tenth man of your tribes for a Frontier guard, and send two hundred at a time to this valley to be drilled. Nobody is going to be shot or speared any more so long as he does well, and

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I know that you won't cheat me because you're white people—sons of Alexander— and not like common, black Mohammedans. You are my people and by God,' says he, running off into English at the end—'I'll make a damned fine Nation of you, or I'll die in the making!'

"I can't tell all we did for the next six months because Dravot did a lot I couldn't see the hang of, and he learned their lingo in a way I never could. My work was to help the people plough, and now and again to go out with some of the Army and see what the other villages were doing, and make 'em throw rope-bridges across the ravines which cut up the country horrid. Dravot was very kind to me, but when he walked up and down in the pine wood pulling that bloody red beard of his with both fists I knew he was thinking plans I could not advise him about, and I just waited for orders.

"But Dravot never showed me disrespect before the people. They were afraid of me and the Army, but they loved Dan. He was the best of friends with the priests and the Chiefs; but any one could come across the hills with a complaint and Dravot would hear him out fair, and call four priests together and say what was to be done. He used to call in Billy Fish from Bashkai, and Pikky Kergan from Shu, and an old Chief we called Kafuzelum—it was like enough to his real name—and hold councils with 'em when there was any fighting to be done in small villages. That was his Council of War, and the four priests of Bashkai, Shu, Khawak, and Madora was his Privy Council. Between the lot of 'em they sent me, with forty men and twenty rifles, and sixty men carrying turquoises, into the Ghorband country to buy those hand-made Martini rifles, that come out of the Amir's workshops at Kabul, from one of the Amir's Herati regiments that would have sold the very teeth out of their mouths for turquoises.

"I stayed in Ghorband a month, and gave the Governor the pick of my baskets for hush-money, and bribed the colonel of the regiment some more, and, between the two and the tribes-people, we got more than a hundred hand-made Martinis, a hundred good Kohat Jezails that'll throw to six hundred yards, and forty manloads of very bad ammunition for the rifles. I came back with what I had, and distributed 'em among the men that the Chiefs sent in to me to drill. Dravot was too busy to attend to those things, but the old Army that we first made helped me, and we turned out five hundred men that could drill, and two hundred that knew how to hold arms pretty straight. Even those cork-screwed, hand-made guns was a miracle to them. Dravot talked big about powder-shops and factories, walking up and down in the pine wood when the winter was coming on.

"'I won't make a Nation,' says he. 'I'll make an Empire! These men aren't niggers; they're English! Look at their eyes—look at their mouths. Look at the way they stand up. They sit on chairs in their own houses. They're the Lost Tribes, or something like it, and they've grown to be English. I'll take a census in the spring if the priests don't get frightened. There must be a fair two million of 'em in these hills. The villages are full o' little children. Two million people—two hundred and fifty thousand fighting men—and all English! They only want the rifles and a little

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drilling. Two hundred and fifty thousand men, ready to cut in on Russia's right flank when she tries for India! Peachey, man,' he says, chewing his beard in great hunks, 'we shall be Emperors—Emperors of the Earth! Rajah Brooke will be a suckling to us. I'll treat with the Viceroy on equal terms. I'll ask him to send me twelve picked English—twelve that I know of—to help us govern a bit. There's Mackray, Sergeant-pensioner at Segowli—many's the good dinner he's given me, and his wife a pair of trousers. There's Donkin, the Warder of Tounghoo Jail; there's hundreds that I could lay my hand on if I was in India. The Viceroy shall do it for me. I'll send a man through in the spring for those men, and I'll write for a dispensation from the Grand Lodge for what I've done as Grand-Master. That—and all the Sniders that'll be thrown out when the native troops in India take up the Martini. They'll be worn smooth, but they'll do for fighting in these hills. Twelve English, a hundred thousand Sniders run through the Amir's country in driblets—I'd be content with twenty thousand in one year—and we'd be an Empire. When everything was shipshape, I'd hand over the crown—this crown I'm wearing now—to Queen Victoria on my knees, and she'd say:— "Rise up, Sir Daniel Dravot." Oh, its big! It's big, I tell you! But there's so much to be done in every place—Bashkai, Khawak, Shu, and everywhere else.'

"'What is it?' I says. 'There are no more men coming in to be drilled this autumn. Look at those fat, black clouds. They're bringing the snow.'

"'It isn't that,' says Daniel, putting his hand very hard on my shoulder; 'and I don't wish to say anything that's against you, for no other living man would have followed me and made me what I am as you have done. You're a first-class Commander-in-Chief, and the people know you; but—it's a big country, and somehow you can't help me, Peachey, in the way I want to be helped.'

"'Go to your blasted priests, then!' I said, and I was sorry when I made that remark, but it did hurt me sore to find Daniel talking so superior when I'd drilled all the men, and done all he told me.

"'Don't let's quarrel, Peachey,' says Daniel without cursing. 'You're a King too, and the half of this Kingdom is yours; but can't you see, Peachey, we want cleverer men than us now—three or four of 'em that we can scatter about for our Deputies? It's a hugeous great State, and I can't always tell the right thing to do, and I haven't time for all I want to do, and here's the winter coming on and all.' He put half his beard into his mouth, and it was as red as the gold of his crown.

"'I'm sorry, Daniel,' says I. 'I've done all I could. I've drilled the men and shown the people how to stack their oats better, and I've brought in those tinware rifles from Ghorband—but I know what you're driving at. I take it Kings always feel oppressed that way.'

"'There's another thing too,' says Dravot, walking up and down. 'The winter's coming and these people won't be giving much trouble, and if they do we can't move about. I want a wife.'

"'For Gord's sake leave the women alone!' I says. 'We've both got all the work we can, though I am a fool. Remember the Contrack, and keep clear o' women.'

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"'The Contrack only lasted till such time as we was Kings; and Kings we have been these months past,' says Dravot, weighing his crown in his hand. 'You go get a wife too, Peachey—a nice, strappin', plump girl that'll keep you warm in the winter. They're prettier than English girls, and we can take the pick of 'em. Boil 'em once or twice in hot water, and they'll come as fair as chicken and ham.'

"'Don't tempt me!' I says. 'I will not have any dealings with a woman not till we are a dam' side more settled than we are now. I've been doing the work o' two men, and you've been doing the work o' three. Let's lie off a bit, and see if we can get some better tobacco from Afghan country and run in some good liquor; but no women.'

"'Who's talking o' women?' says Dravot. 'I said wife—a Queen to breed a King's son for the King. A Queen out of the strongest tribe, that'll make them your blood-brothers, and that'll lie by your side and tell you all the people thinks about you and their own affairs. That's what I want.'

"'Do you remember that Bengali woman I kept at Mogul Serai when I was platelayer?' says I. 'A fat lot o' good she was to me. She taught me the lingo and one or two other things; but what happened? She ran away with the Station Master's servant and half my month's pay. Then she turned up at Dadur Junction in tow of a half-caste, and had the impidence to say I was her husband—all among the drivers of the running-shed!'

"'We've done with that,' says Dravot. 'These women are whiter than you or me, and a Queen I will have for the winter months.'

"'For the last time o' asking, Dan, do not,' I says. 'It'll only bring us harm. The Bible says that Kings ain't to waste their strength on women, 'specially when they've got a new raw Kingdom to work over.'

"'For the last time of answering, I will,' said Dravot, and he went away through the pine-trees looking like a big red devil. The low sun hit his crown and beard on one side, and the two blazed like hot coals.

"But getting a wife was not as easy as Dan thought. He put it before the Council, and there was no answer till Billy Fish said that he'd better ask the girls. Dravot damned them all round. 'What's wrong with me?' he shouts, standing by the idol Imbra. 'Am I a dog or am I not enough of a man for your wenches? Haven't I put the shadow of my hand over this country? Who stopped the last Afghan raid?' It was me really, but Dravot was too angry to remember. 'Who bought your guns? Who repaired the bridges? Who's the Grand-Master of the sign cut in the stone?' and he thumped his hand on the block that he used to sit on in Lodge, and at Council, which opened like Lodge always. Billy Fish said nothing and no more did the others. 'Keep your hair on, Dan,' said I; 'and ask the girls. That's how it's done at home, and these people are quite English.'

"'The marriage of a King is a matter of State,' says Dan, in a white-hot rage, for he could feel, I hope, that he was going against his better mind. He walked out of the Council-room, and the others sat still, looking at the ground.

"'Billy Fish,' says I to the Chief of Bashkai, 'what's the difficulty here? A straight answer to a true friend.' 'You know,' says Billy Fish. 'How should a man tell you who know everything? How can daughters of men marry gods or devils? It's not proper.'

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"I remembered something like that in the Bible; but if, after seeing us as long as they had, they still believed we were gods it wasn't for me to undeceive them.

"'A god can do anything,' says I. 'If the King is fond of a girl he'll not let her die.' 'She'll have to,' said Billy Fish. 'There are all sorts of gods and devils in these mountains, and now and again a girl marries one of them and isn't seen any more. Besides, you two know the Mark cut in the stone. Only the gods know that. We thought you were men till you showed the sign of the Master.'

"'I wished then that we had explained about the loss of the genuine secrets of a Master-Mason at the first go-off; but I said nothing. All that night there was a blowing of horns in a little dark temple half-way down the hill, and I heard a girl crying fit to die. One of the priests told us that she was being prepared to marry the King.

"'I'll have no nonsense of that kind,' says Dan. 'I don't want to interfere with your customs, but I'll take my own wife. 'The girl's a little bit afraid,' says the priest. 'She thinks she's going to die, and they are a-heartening of her up down in the temple.'

"'Hearten her very tender, then,' says Dravot, 'or I'll hearten you with the butt of a gun so that you'll never want to be heartened again.' He licked his lips, did Dan, and stayed up walking about more than half the night, thinking of the wife that he was going to get in the morning. I wasn't any means comfortable, for I knew that dealings with a woman in foreign parts, though you was a crowned King twenty times over, could not but be risky. I got up very early in the morning while Dravot was asleep, and I saw the priests talking together in whispers, and the Chiefs talking together too, and they looked at me out of the corners of their eyes.

"'What is up, Fish?' I says to the Bashkai man, who was wrapped up in his furs and looking splendid to behold.

"'I can't rightly say,' says he; 'but if you can induce the King to drop all this nonsense about marriage, you'll be doing him and me and yourself a great service.'

"'That I do believe,' says I. 'But sure, you know, Billy, as well as me, having fought against and for us, that the King and me are nothing more than two of the finest men that God Almighty ever made. Nothing more, I do assure you.'

"'That may be,' says Billy Fish, 'and yet I should be sorry if it was.' He sinks his head upon his great fur cloak for a minute and thinks. 'King,' says he, 'be you man or god or devil, I'll stick by you to-day. I have twenty of my men with me, and they will follow me. We'll go to Bashkai until the storm blows over.'

"A little snow had fallen in the night, and everything was white except the greasy fat clouds that blew down and down from the north. Dravot came out with his crown on his head, swinging his arms and stamping his feet, and looking more pleased than Punch.

"'For the last time, drop it, Dan,' says I in a whisper. 'Billy Fish here says that there will be a row.'

"'A row among my people!' says Dravot. 'Not much. Peachy, you're a fool not to get a wife too. Where's the girl?' says he with a voice as loud as the braying of

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a jackass. 'Call up all the Chiefs and priests, and let the Emperor see if his wife suits him.'

"There was no need to call any one. They were all there leaning on their guns and spears round the clearing in the centre of the pine wood. A deputation of priests went down to the little temple to bring up the girl, and the horns blew up fit to wake the dead. Billy Fish saunters round and gets as close to Daniel as he could, and behind him stood his twenty men with matchlocks. Not a man of them under six feet. I was next to Dravot, and behind me was twenty men of the regular Army. Up comes the girl, and a strapping wench she was, covered with silver and turquoises but white as death, and looking back every minute at the priests.

"'She'll do,' said Dan, looking her over. 'What's to be afraid of, lass? Come and kiss me.' He puts his arm round her. She shuts her eyes, gives a bit of a squeak, and down goes her face in the side of Dan's flaming red beard.

"'The slut's bitten me!' says he, clapping his hand to his neck, and, sure enough, his hand was red with blood. Billy Fish and two of his matchlock-men catches hold of Dan by the shoulders and drags him into the Bashkai lot, while the priests howls in their lingo,—'Neither god nor devil but a man!' I was all taken aback, for a priest cut at me in front, and the Army behind began firing into the Bashkai men.

"'God A-mighty!' says Dan. 'What is the meaning o' this?'

"'Come back! Come away!' says Billy Fish. 'Ruin and Mutiny is the matter. We'll break for Bashkai if we can.'

"I tried to give some sort of orders to my men—the men o' the regular Army— but it was no use, so I fired into the brown of 'em with an English Martini and drilled three beggars in a line. The valley was full of shouting, howling creatures, and every soul was shrieking, 'Not a god nor a devil but only a man!' The Bashkai troops stuck to Billy Fish all they were worth, but their matchlocks wasn't half as good as the Kabul breech-loaders, and four of them dropped. Dan was bellowing like a bull, for he was very wrathy; and Billy Fish had a hard job to prevent him running out at the crowd.

"'We can't stand,' says Billy Fish. 'Make a run for it down the valley! The whole place is against us.' The matchlock-men ran, and we went down the valley in spite of Dravot's protestations. He was swearing horribly and crying out that he was a King. The priests rolled great stones on us, and the regular Army fired hard, and there wasn't more than six men, not counting Dan, Billy Fish, and Me, that came down to the bottom of the valley alive.

"'Then they stopped firing and the horns in the temple blew again. 'Come away—for Gord's sake come away!' says Billy Fish. 'They'll send runners out to all the villages before ever we get to Bashkai. I can protect you there, but I can't do anything now.'

"My own notion is that Dan began to go mad in his head from that hour. He stared up and down like a stuck pig. Then he was all for walking back alone and killing the priests with his bare hands; which he could have done. 'An Emperor am I,' says Daniel, 'and next year I shall be a Knight of the Queen.'

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"'All right, Dan,' says I; 'but come along now while there's time.'

"'It's your fault,' says he, 'for not looking after your Army better. There was mutiny in the midst, and you didn't know—you damned engine-driving, plate-laying, missionary's-pass-hunting hound!' He sat upon a rock and called me every foul name he could lay tongue to. I was too heart-sick to care, though it was all his foolishness that brought the smash.

"'I'm sorry, Dan,' says I, 'but there's no accounting for natives. This business is our Fifty-Seven. Maybe we'll make something out of it yet, when we've got to Bashkai.'

"'Let's get to Bashkai, then,' says Dan, 'and, by God, when I come back here again I'll sweep the valley so there isn't a bug in a blanket left!'

"'We walked all that day, and all that night Dan was stumping up and down on the snow, chewing his beard and muttering to himself.

"'There's no hope o' getting clear,' said Billy Fish. 'The priests will have sent runners to the villages to say that you are only men. Why didn't you stick on as gods till things was more settled? I'm a dead man,' says Billy Fish, and he throws himself down on the snow and begins to pray to his gods.

"Next morning we was in a cruel bad country—all up and down, no level ground at all, and no food either. The six Bashkai men looked at Billy Fish hungry-wise as if they wanted to ask something, but they said never a word. At noon we came to the top of a flat mountain all covered with snow, and when we climbed up into it, behold, there was an army in position waiting in the middle!

"'The runners have been very quick,' says Billy Fish, with a little bit of a laugh. 'They are waiting for us.'

"Three or four men began to fire from the enemy's side, and a chance shot took Daniel in the calf of the leg. That brought him to his senses. He looks across the snow at the Army, and sees the rifles that we had brought into the country.

"'We're done for,' says he. 'They are Englishmen, these people,—and it's my blasted nonsense that has brought you to this. Get back, Billy Fish, and take your men away; you've done what you could, and now cut for it. Carnehan,' says he, 'shake hands with me and go along with Billy. Maybe they won't kill you. I'll go and meet 'em alone. It's me that did it. Me, the King!'

"'Go!' says I. 'Go to Hell, Dan. I'm with you here. Billy Fish, you clear out, and we two will meet those folk.'

"'I'm a Chief,' says Billy Fish, quite quiet. 'I stay with you. My men can go.'

"The Bashkai fellows didn't wait for a second word but ran off, and Dan and Me and Billy Fish walked across to where the drums were drumming and the horns were horning. It was cold—awful cold. I've got that cold in the back of my head now. There's a lump of it there."

The punkah-coolies had gone to sleep. Two kerosene lamps were blazing in the office, and the perspiration poured down my face and splashed on the blotter as I leaned forward. Carnehan was shivering, and I feared that his mind might go. I wiped my face, took a fresh grip of the piteously mangled hands, and said:— "What happened after that?"

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The momentary shift of my eyes had broken the clear current.

"What was you pleased to say?" whined Carnehan. "They took them without any sound. Not a little whisper all along the snow, not though the King knocked down the first man that set hand on him—not though old Peachey fired his last cartridge into the brown of 'em. Not a single solitary sound did those swines make. They just closed up, tight, and I tell you their furs stunk. There was a man called Billy Fish, a good friend of us all, and they cut his throat, Sir, then and there, like a pig; and the King kicks up the bloody snow and says:— 'We've had a dashed fine run for our money. What's coming next?' But Peachey, Peachey Taliaferro, I tell you, Sir, in confidence as betwixt two friends, he lost his head, Sir. No, he didn't neither. The King lost his head, so he did, all along o' one of those cunning rope-bridges. Kindly let me have the paper-cutter, Sir. It tilted this way. They marched him a mile across that snow to a rope-bridge over a ravine with a river at the bottom. You may have seen such. They prodded him behind like an ox. 'Damn your eyes!' says the King. 'D'you suppose I can't die like a gentleman?' He turns to Peachey—Peachey that was crying like a child. 'I've brought you to this, Peachey,' says he. 'Brought you out of your happy life to be killed in Kafiristan, where you was late Commander-in-Chief of the Emperor's forces. Say you forgive me, Peachey.' 'I do,' says Peachey. 'Fully and freely do I forgive you, Dan.' 'Shake hands, Peachey,' says he. 'I'm going now.' Out he goes, looking neither right nor left, and when he was plumb in the middle of those dizzy dancing ropes, 'Cut, you beggars,' he shouts; and they cut, and old Dan fell, turning round and round and round, twenty thousand miles, for he took half an hour to fall till he struck the water, and I could see his body caught on a rock with the gold crown close beside.

"But do you know what they did to Peachey between two pine-trees? They crucified him, sir, as Peachey's hands will show. They used wooden pegs for his hands and his feet; and he didn't die. He hung there and screamed, and they took him down next day, and said it was a miracle that he wasn't dead. They took him down—poor old Peachey that hadn't done them any harm—that hadn't done them any . . ."

He rocked to and fro and wept bitterly, wiping his eyes with the back of his scarred hands and moaning like a child for some ten minutes.

"They was cruel enough to feed him up in the temple, because they said he was more of a god than old Daniel that was a man. Then they turned him out on the snow, and told him to go home, and Peachey came home in about a year, begging along the roads quite safe; for Daniel Dravot he walked before and said:— 'Come along, Peachey. It's a big thing we're doing.' The mountains they danced at night, and the mountains they tried to fall on Peachey's head, but Dan he held up his hand, and Peachey came along bent double. He never let go of Dan's hand, and he never let go of Dan's head. They gave it to him as a present in the temple, to remind him not to come again, and though the crown was pure gold, and Peachey was starving, never would Peachey sell the same. You knew Dravot, sir! You knew Right Worshipful Brother Dravot! Look at him now!"

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He fumbled in the mass of rags round his bent waist; brought out a black horsehair bag embroidered with silver thread; and shook therefrom on to my table—the dried, withered head of Daniel Dravot! The morning sun that had long been paling the lamps struck the red beard and blind sunken eyes; struck, too, a heavy circlet of gold studded with raw turquoises, that Carnehan placed tenderly on the battered temples.

"You behold now," said Carnehan, "the Emperor in his habit as he lived— the King of Kafiristan with his crown upon his head. Poor old Daniel that was a monarch once!"

I shuddered, for, in spite of defacements manifold, I recognized the head of the man of Marwar Junction. Carnehan rose to go. I attempted to stop him. He was not fit to walk abroad. "Let me take away the whiskey, and give me a little money," he gasped. "I was a King once. I'll go to the Deputy Commissioner and ask to set in the Poor-house till I get my health. No, thank you, I can't wait till you get a carriage for me. I've urgent private affairs—in the south—at Marwar."

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He shambled out of the office and departed in the direction of the Deputy Commissioner's house. That day at noon I had occasion to go down the blinding hot Mall, and I saw a crooked man crawling along the white dust of the roadside, his hat in his hand, quavering dolorously after the fashion of street-singers at Home. There was not a soul in sight, and he was out of all possible earshot of the houses. And he sang through his nose, turning his head from right to left:—

"The Son of Man goes forth to war, A golden crown to gain; His blood-red banner streams afar— Who follows in his train?"

I waited to hear no more, but put the poor wretch into my carriage and drove him off to the nearest missionary for eventual transfer to the Asylum. He repeated the hymn twice while he was with me whom he did not in the least recognize, and I left him singing to the missionary.

Two days later I inquired after his welfare of the Superintendent of the Asylum.

"He was admitted suffering from sun-stroke. He died early yesterday morning," said the Superintendent. "Is it true that he was half an hour bareheaded in the sun at midday?"

"Yes," said I, "but do you happen to know if he had anything upon him by any chance when he died?"

"Not to my knowledge," said the Superintendent. And there the matter rests.

### 2.16.2 Reading and Review Questions

1. The opening epigraph echoes Masonic ideas on equality. How, if at all, does it affect your understanding of the story? On what grounds is worthiness based, does this story suggest?

2. What might Kipling be suggesting about the British Imperial project by having this story's proponents and practitioners of imperialism be thieves and "rogues?" What's significant about their drawing up of a Contract?

3. Compare this story to Conrad's Heart of Darkness. What attitudes might these two works share about the "white man's burden," and why? How do you know? Consider their respective treatment of whiteness. Consider the relationship their respective protagonists develop with "natives."

4. Why do women come forward as significant to the story only when the intended (and forced) bride bites and bloodies Dravot? What attitudes towards women do the Kafirs seem to hold? What attitudes do Carnahan and Dravot hold? How do you know?