CHAPTER III.

INFANT LITERATURE.

There is no known manuscript.

This chapter was created by drawing in material from 'A Sketch from Childhood – No. 6' entitled 'The Literature of Infancy' published in *Instructor*, n. s. VIII, 1852 (see Vol. 17), together with new introductory matter. Transitional points and new material written for this chapter are signalled in the textual notes below.

'*The child,*' says Wordsworth, '*is father of the man;*'[1] thus calling into conscious notice the fact, else faintly or not at all perceived, that whatsoever is seen in the maturest adult, blossoming and bearing fruit, must have pre-existed by way of germ in the infant. Yes; all that is now broadly emblazoned in the man, once was latent – seen or not seen – as a vernal bud in the child. But not, therefore, is it true inversely – that all which pre-exists in the child, finds its development in the man. Rudiments and tendencies, which *might* have found, sometimes by accidental, *do* not find, sometimes under the killing frost of counter forces, *cannot* find, their natural evolution. Infancy, therefore, is to be viewed, not only as part of a larger world that waits for its final complement in old age, but also as a separate world itself; part of a continent, but also a distinct peninsula. Most of what he has, the grown-up man inherits from his infant self; but it does not follow that he always enters upon the whole of his natural inheritance.

Childhood, therefore, in the midst of its intellectual weakness, and sometimes even by means of this weakness, enjoys a limited privilege of strength. The heart in this season of life is apprehensive; and, where its sensibilities are profound, is endowed with a special power of listening for the tones of truth – hidden, struggling, or remote: for the knowledge being then narrow, the interest is narrow in the objects of knowledge: consequently the sensibilities are not scattered, are not multiplied, are not crushed and confounded (as afterwards they are) under the burden of that distraction which lurks in the infinite littleness of details.

That mighty silence which infancy is thus privileged by nature and by position to enjoy, co-operates with another source of power – almost peculiar to youth and youthful circumstances – which Wordsworth also was the first person to notice. It belongs to a profound experience of the relations subsisting

between ourselves and nature – that not always are we called upon to seek; sometimes, and in childhood above all, we are sought.

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

* * * *

And again –

> 'Nor less I deem that there are pow'rs
> Which *of themselves* our minds impress;
> And we can feed this mind of ours
> In a wise passiveness.'[2]

These cases of infancy, reached at intervals by special revelations, or creating for itself, through its privileged silence of heart, authentic whispers of truth, or beauty, or power, have some analogy to those other cases, more directly supernatural, in which (according to the old traditional faith of our ancestors) deep messages of admonition reached an individual through sudden angular deflexions of words, uttered or written, that had not been originally addressed to himself. Of these, there were two distinct classes – those where the person concerned had been purely passive, and, secondly, those in which he himself had to some extent co-operated. The first class have been noticed by Cowper, the poet, and by George Herbert, the well-known pious brother of the still better known infidel, Lord Herbert (of Cherbury),[3] in a memorable sonnet; scintillations they are of what seem nothing less than providential lights oftentimes arresting our attention, from the very centre of what else seems the blank darkness of chance and blind accident. 'Books lying open, millions of surprises'[4] – these are among the cases to which Herbert (and to which Cowper) alludes – books, that is to say, left casually open without design or consciousness, from which some careless passer-by, when throwing the most negligent of glances upon the page, has been startled by a solitary word lying, as it were, in ambush, waiting and lurking for *him,* and looking at him steadily as an eye searching the haunted places in his conscience. These cases are in principle identical with those of the *second* class, where the inquirer himself co-operated, or was not entirely passive; cases such as those which the Jews called Bath-col, or daughter of a voice (the echo*

* '*Echo augury:*' – The daughter of a voice meant an echo, the original sound being viewed as the mother, and the reverberation, or secondary sound, as the daughter. Analogically, therefore, the direct and original meaning of any word, or sentence, or counsel, was the mother meaning; but the secondary, or mystical meaning, created by peculiar circumstances for one separate and peculiar ear, the daughter meaning, or echo meaning. This mode of augury, through secondary interpretations of chance words, is not, as some readers may fancy, an old, obsolete, or merely Jewish form of seeking the divine pleasure. About a century ago, a man so famous, and by

augury), viz., where a man, perplexed in judgment and sighing for some determining counsel, suddenly heard from a stranger in some unlooked-for quarter words not meant for himself, but clamorously applying to the difficulty besetting him. In these instances, the mystical word, that carried a secret meaning and message to one sole ear in the world, was always unsought for: *that* constituted its virtue and its divinity; and to arrange means wilfully for catching at such casual words, would have defeated the purpose. A well-known variety of augury, conducted upon this principle, lay in the 'Sortes Biblicae,' where the Bible was the oracular book consulted, and far more extensively at a later period in the 'Sortes Virgilianae,'* where the Aeneid was the oracle consulted.

Something analogous to these spiritual transfigurations of a word or a sentence, by a bodily organ (eye or ear) that has been touched with virtue for evoking the spiritual echo lurking in its recesses, belongs, perhaps, to every impassioned mind for the kindred result of forcing out the peculiar beauty, pathos, or grandeur, that may happen to lodge (unobserved by ruder forms of sensibility) in special passages scattered up and down literature. Meantime, I wish the reader to understand that, in putting forward the peculiar power with which my childish eye detected a grandeur or a pomp of beauty not seen by others in some special instances, I am not arrogating more than it is lawful for every man the very humblest to arrogate, viz., an individuality of mental constitution so far applicable to special and exceptional cases as to reveal in

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repute so unsuperstitious, as Dr Doddridge,[5] was guided in a primary act of choice, influencing his whole after life, by a few chance words from a child reading aloud to his mother. With the other mode of augury, viz., that noticed by Herbert, where not the ear but the eye presides, catching at some word that chance has thrown upon the eye in some book left open by negligence, or opened at random by one's-self, Cowper the poet, and his friend Newton,[6] with scores of others that could be mentioned, were made acquainted through practical results and personal experiences that in *their* belief were memorably important.

* '*Sortes Virgilianae:*' – Upon what principle could it have been that Virgil was adopted as the oracular fountain in such a case? An author so limited even as to bulk, and much more limited as regards compass of thought and variety of situation or character, was about the worst that Pagan literature offered. But I myself once threw out a suggestion, which (if it is sound) exposes a motive in behalf of such a choice that would be likely to overrule the strong motives against it. That motive was, unless my whole speculation is groundless, the very same which led Dante, in an age of ignorance, to select Virgil as his guide in Hades.[7] The seventh son of a seventh son, has always traditionally been honoured as the depositary of magical and other supernatural gifts. And the same traditional privilege attached to any man whose maternal grandfather was a sorcerer. Now it happened that Virgil's maternal grandfather bore the name of *Magus*. This, by the ignorant multitude in Naples, &c., who had been taught to reverence his tomb, was translated from its true acceptation as a proper name, to a false one as an appellative: it was supposed to indicate not the name, but the profession of the old gentleman. And thus, according to the belief of the Lazzaroni,[8] that excellent Christian, P. Virgilius Maro, had stepped by mere succession and right of inheritance into his wicked old grandpapa's infernal powers and knowledge, both of which he exercised, doubtless, for centuries without blame, and for the benefit of the faithful.

them a life and power of beauty which others (and sometimes, which, *all* others) had missed.

The first case belongs to the march (or boundary) line between my eighth and ninth years: the others to a period earlier by two and a half years. But I notice the latest case before the others, as it connected itself with a great epoch in the movement of my intellect. There is a dignity to every man in the mere historical assigning, if accurately he *can* assign, the first dawning upon his mind of any godlike faculty or apprehension, and more especially if that first dawning happened to connect itself with circumstances of individual or incommunicable splendour. The passage which I am going to cite, first of all revealed to me the immeasurableness of the morally sublime. What was it, and where was it? Strange the reader will think it, and strange* it is, that a case of colossal sublimity should first emerge from such a writer as Phaedrus[10] the Aesopian fabulist. A great mistake it was, on the part of Doctor S.,[11] that the second book in the Latin language which I was summoned to study should have been Phaedrus – a writer ambitious of investing the simplicity or rather homeliness of Aesop with aulic graces and satiric brilliancy. But so it was; and Phaedrus naturally towered into enthusiasm when he had occasion to mention that the most intellectual of all races amongst men, viz., the Athenians, had raised a mighty statue to one who belonged to the same class in a social sense as himself, viz., the class of slaves, and rose above that class by the same intellectual power applying itself to the same object, viz., the moral apologue. These were the two lines in which that glory of the sublime, so stirring to my childish sense, seemed to burn as in some mighty pharos: –

> 'Aesopo statuam ingentem posuere Attici;
> Servumque collocârunt eternâ in basi:'[12]

A colossal statue did the Athenians raise to Aesop; and a poor Pariah slave they planted upon an everlasting pedestal. I have not scrupled to introduce the word *Pariah,* because in that way only could I decipher to the reader by what particular avenue it was that the sublimity which I fancy in the passage reached my heart. This sublimity originated in the awful chasm, in the abyss that no eye could bridge, between the pollution of slavery – the being a man, yet without right or lawful power belonging to a man – between this unutterable degradation and the starry altitude of the slave at that moment when, upon the unveiling of his everlasting statue, all the armies of the earth might be conceived as presenting arms to the emancipated man, the cymbals and kettledrums of kings as drowning the whispers of his ignominy, and the harps of all his sisters that wept over slavery yet joining in one choral gratulation to the regenerated slave. I assign the elements of what I did in reality feel at that time, which to the reader may seem extravagant, and by no means of what it

* '*Strange,*' &c.: – Yet I remember that, in 'The Pursuits of Literature' – a satirical poem once universally famous – the lines about Mnemosyne and her daughters, the Pierides, are cited as exhibiting matchless sublimity.[9] Perhaps, therefore, if carefully searched, this writer may contain other jewels not yet appreciated.

was reasonable to feel. But, in order that full justice may be done to my childish self, I must point out to the reader another source of what strikes me as real grandeur. Horace, that exquisite master of the lyre, and that most shallow of critics, it is needless to say that in those days I had not read. Consequently I knew nothing of his idle canon, that the opening of poems must be humble and subdued. But my own sensibility told me how much of additional grandeur accrued to these two lines as being the immediate and all-pompous *opening* of the poem. The same feeling I had received from the crashing overture to the grand chapter of Daniel – 'Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords.'[13] But, above all, I felt this effect produced in the two opening lines of 'Macbeth:'

> 'WHEN (but watch that an emphasis of thunder dwells upon that word "when") –
> WHEN shall we three meet again –
> In thunder, lightning, or in rain?'[14]

What an orchestral crash bursts upon the ear in that all-shattering question! And one syllable of apologetic preparation, so as to meet the suggestion of Horace, would have the effect of emasculating the whole tremendous alarum. The passage in Phaedrus differs thus far from that in 'Macbeth,' that the first line, simply stating a matter of fact, with no more of sentiment than belongs to the word *ingentem,* and to the antithesis between the two parties so enormously divided – Aesop the slave and the Athenians – must be read as an *apoggiatura,* or hurried note of introduction flying forward as if on wings to descend with the fury and weight of a thousand orchestras upon the immortal passion of the second line – 'Servumque collocârunt ETERNA IN BASI.' This passage from Phaedrus, which might be briefly designated *The Apotheosis of the Slave,* gave to me my first grand and jubilant sense of the moral sublime.

Two other experiences of mine of the same class had been earlier, and these I had shared with my sister Elizabeth. The first was derived from the 'Arabian Nights.' Mrs Barbauld, a lady now very nearly forgotten,* then filled a large

* *'Very nearly forgotten:'* – Not quite, however. It must be hard upon eighty or eighty-five years since she first commenced authorship – a period which allows time for a great deal of forgetting: and yet, in the very week when I am revising this passage, I observe advertised a new edition, attractively illustrated, of the 'Evenings at Home' – a joint work of Mrs Barbauld's and her brother's (the elder Dr Aikin).[15] Mrs Barbauld was exceedingly clever. Her mimicry of Dr Johnson's style was the best of all that exist. Her blank-verse 'Washing Day,'[16] descriptive of the discomforts attending a mistimed visit to a rustic friend, under the affliction of a family washing, is picturesquely circumstantiated. And her prose hymns for children[17] have left upon my childish recollection a deep impression of solemn beauty and simplicity. Coleridge, who scattered his sneering compliments very liberally up and down the world, used to call the elder Dr Aikin (allusively to Pope's well-known line –

> 'No craving void left aching in the breast')

an aching void; and the nephew, Dr Arthur Aikin, by way of variety, *a void aching.* Whilst Mrs Barbauld he designated as *that pleonasm of nakedness;* since, as if it were not enough to be *bare,* she was also *bald.*[18]

space in the public eye; in fact, as a writer for children, she occupied the place from about 1780 to 1805 which, from 1805 to 1835, was occupied by Miss Edgeworth.[19] Only, as unhappily Miss Edgeworth is also now very nearly forgotten, this is to explain *ignotum per ignotius*,[20] or at least one *ignotum* by another *ignotum*.[21] However, since it cannot be helped, this unknown and also most well-known woman, having occasion, in the days of her glory, to speak of the 'Arabian Nights,' insisted on Aladdin, and, secondly, on Sinbad, as the two jewels of the collection. Now, on the contrary, my sister and myself pronounced Sinbad to be very bad, and Aladdin to be pretty nearly the worst, and upon grounds that still strike me as just. For, as to Sinbad, it is not a story at all, but a mere succession of adventures, having no unity of interest whatsoever: and in Aladdin, after the possession of the lamp has been once secured by a pure accident, the story ceases to move. All the rest is a mere record of upholstery; how this saloon was finished to-day, and that window on the next day, with no fresh incident whatever, except the single and transient misfortune arising out of the advantage given to the magician by the unpardonable stupidity of Aladdin in regard to the lamp. But, whilst my sister and I agreed in despising Aladdin so much as almost to be on the verge of despising the queen of all the blue-stockings for so ill-directed a preference, one solitary section there was of that tale which fixed and fascinated my gaze, in a degree that I never afterwards forgot, and did not at that time comprehend. The sublimity which it involved was mysterious and unfathomable as regarded any key which I possessed for deciphering its law or origin. Made restless by the blind sense which I had of its grandeur, I could not for a moment succeed in finding out *why* it should be grand. Unable to explain my own impressions in 'Aladdin,' I did not the less obstinately persist in believing a sublimity which I could not understand. It was, in fact, one of those many important cases which elsewhere I have called *involutes* of human sensibility;[22] combinations in which the materials of future thought or feeling are carried as imperceptibly into the mind as vegetable seeds are carried variously combined through the atmosphere, or by means of rivers, by birds, by winds, by waters, into remote countries. But the reader shall judge for himself. At the opening of the tale, a magician living in the central depths of Africa is introduced to us as one made aware by his secret art of an enchanted lamp endowed with supernatural powers available for the service of any man whatever who should get it into his keeping. But *there* lies the difficulty. The lamp is imprisoned in subterraneous chambers, and from these it can be released only by the hands of an innocent child. But this is not enough: the child must have a special horoscope written in the stars, or else a peculiar destiny written in his constitution, entitling him to take possession of the lamp. Where shall such a child be found? Where shall he be sought? The magician knows: he applies his ear to the earth; he listens to the innumerable sounds of footsteps that at the moment of his experiment are tormenting the surface of the globe; and amongst them all, at a distance of six thousand miles, playing in the streets of Bagdad, he

distinguishes the peculiar steps of the child Aladdin. Through this mighty labyrinth of sounds, which Archimedes, aided by his *arenarius*,[23] could not sum or disentangle, one solitary infant's feet are distinctly recognised on the banks of the Tigris, distant by four hundred and forty days' march of an army or a caravan. These feet, these steps, the sorcerer knows, and challenges in his heart as the feet, as the steps of that innocent boy, through whose hands only he could have a chance for reaching the lamp.

It follows, therefore, that the wicked magician exercises two demoniac gifts. First, he has the power to disarm Babel itself of its confusion. Secondly, after having laid aside as useless many billions of earthly sounds, and after having fastened his murderous* attention upon one insulated tread, he has the power, still more unsearchable, of reading in that hasty movement an alphabet of new and infinite symbols; for, in order that the sound of the child's feet should be significant and intelligible, that sound must open into a gamut of infinite compass. The pulses of the heart, the motions of the will, the phantoms of the brain, must repeat themselves in secret hieroglyphics uttered by the flying footsteps. Even the inarticulate or brutal sounds of the globe must be all so many languages and ciphers that somewhere have their corresponding keys – have their own grammar and syntax; and thus the least things in the universe must be secret mirrors to the greatest. Palmistry has something of the same dark sublimity. All this, by rude efforts at explanation that mocked my feeble command of words, I communicated to my sister; and she, whose sympathy with my meaning was always so quick and true, often outrunning electrically my imperfect expressions, felt the passage in the same way as myself,† but not, perhaps, in the same degree. She was much beyond me in velocity of apprehension, and many other qualities of intellect. Here only, viz., on cases of the *dark* sublime, where it rested upon dim abstractions, and when no particular trait of *moral* grandeur came forward, we differed – differed, that is to say, as by more or by less. Else, even as to the sublime, and numbers of other intellectual questions which rose up to us from our immense reading, we drew together with a perfect fidelity of sympathy; and therefore I pass willingly from a case which exemplified one of our rare differences, to another, not less interesting for itself, which illustrated (what occurred so continually) the intensity of our agreement.

No instance of noble revenge that ever I heard of seems so effective, if considered as applied to a noble-minded wrong-doer, or in any case as so pathetic. From what quarter the story comes originally, was unknown to us at

* '*Murderous;*' for it was his intention to leave Aladdin immured in the subterraneous chambers.

† The reader will not understand me as attributing to the Arabian originator of Aladdin all the sentiment of the case as I have endeavoured to disentangle it. He spoke what he did not understand; for, as to sentiment of any kind, all Orientals are obtuse and impassive. There are other sublimities (some, at least) in the 'Arabian Nights,' which first become such – a gas that first kindles – when entering into combination with new elements in a Christian atmosphere.

the time; and I have never met it since; so that possibly it may be new to the reader. We found it in a book written for the use of his own children by Dr Percival,[24] the physician who attended at Greenhay. Dr P. was a literary man, of elegant tastes and philosophic habits. Some of his papers may be found in the 'Manchester Philosophic Transactions;' and these I have heard mentioned with respect, though, for myself, I have no personal knowledge of them. Some presumption meantime arises in their favour from the fact, that he had been a favoured correspondent of the most eminent Frenchmen at that time who cultivated literature jointly with philosophy. Voltaire, Diderot, Maupertuis, Condorcet, and D'Alembert,[25] had all treated him with distinction; and I have heard my mother say that, in days before I or my sister could have known him, he attempted vainly to interest her in these French luminaries by reading extracts from their frequent letters; which, however, so far from reconciling her to the letters, or to the writers of the letters, had the unhappy effect of rivetting her dislike (previously budding) to the doctor, as their receiver, and the *proneur* of their authors. The tone of the letters – hollow, insincere, and full of courtly civilities to Dr P., as a known friend of '*the tolerance*' (meaning, of toleration) – certainly was not adapted to the English taste; and in this respect was specially offensive to my mother, as always assuming of the doctor, that, by mere necessity, as being a philosopher, he must be an infidel. Dr P. left that question, I believe, '*in medio,*' neither assenting nor denying; and undoubtedly there was no particular call upon him to publish his Confession of Faith before one, who, in the midst of her rigorous politeness, suffered it to be too transparent that she did not like him. It is always a pity to see anything lost and wasted, especially love; and, therefore, it was no subject for lamentation, that too probably the philosophic doctor did not enthusiastically like *her.* But, if really so, that made no difference in his feelings towards my sister and myself. Us he *did* like; and, as one proof of his regard, he presented us jointly with such of his works as could be supposed interesting to two young literati, whose combined ages made no more at this period than a baker's dozen. These presentation copies amounted to two at the least, both *octavos,* and one of them entitled *The Father's* – something or other; what was it? – *Assistant,* perhaps.[26] How much assistance the doctor might furnish to the fathers upon this wicked little planet I cannot say. But fathers are a stubborn race; it is very little use trying to assist *them.* Better always to prescribe for the rising generation. And certainly the impression which he made upon us – my sister and myself – by the story in question, was deep and memorable: my sister wept over it, and wept over the remembrance of it; and, not long after, carried its sweet aroma off with her to heaven; whilst I, for *my* part, have never forgotten it. Yet, perhaps, it is injudicious to have too much excited the reader's expectations; therefore, reader, understand what it is that you are invited to hear – not much of a story, but simply a noble sentiment, such as that of Louis XII. when he refused, as King of France, to avenge his own injuries as Duke of Orleans[27] – such as that of

Hadrian, when he said that a Roman imperator ought to die standing,[28] meaning that Caesar, as the man who represented almighty Rome, should face the last enemy as the first in an attitude of unconquerable defiance. Here is Dr Percival's story,[29] which (again I warn you) will collapse into nothing at all, unless you yourself are able to dilate it by expansive sympathy with its sentiment.

A young officer (in what army, no matter) had so far forgotten himself, in a moment of irritation, as to strike a private soldier, full of personal dignity (as sometimes happens in all ranks), and distinguished for his courage. The inexorable laws of military discipline forbade to the injured soldier any practical redress – he could look for no retaliation by acts. Words only were at his command; and, in a tumult of indignation, as he turned away, the soldier said to his officer that he would 'make him repent it.' This, wearing the shape of a menace, naturally rekindled the officer's anger and intercepted any disposition which might be rising within him towards a sentiment of remorse; and thus the irritation between the two young men grew hotter than before. Some weeks after this a partial action took place with the enemy. Suppose yourself a spectator, and looking down into a valley occupied by the two armies. They are facing each other, you see, in martial array. But it is no more than a skirmish which is going on; in the course of which, however, an occasion suddenly arises for a desperate service. A redoubt, which has fallen into the enemy's hands, must be recaptured at any price, and under circumstances of all but hopeless difficulty. A strong party has volunteered for the service; there is a cry for somebody to head them; you see a soldier step out from the ranks to assume this dangerous leadership; the party moves rapidly forward; in a few minutes it is swallowed up from your eyes in clouds of smoke; for one half-hour, from behind these clouds, you receive hieroglyphic reports of bloody strife – fierce repeating signals, flashes from the guns, rolling musketry, and exulting hurrahs advancing or receding, slackening or redoubling. At length all is over: the redoubt has been recovered; that which was lost is found again; the jewel which had been made captive is ransomed with blood. Crimsoned with glorious gore the wreck of the conquering party is relieved, and at liberty to return. From the river you see it ascending. The plume-crested officer in command rushes forward, with his left hand raising his hat in homage to the blackened fragments of what once was a flag, whilst, with his right hand, he seizes that of the leader, though no more than a private from the ranks. *That* perplexes you not: mystery you see none in *that.* For distinctions of order perish, ranks are confounded, 'high and low' are words without a meaning, and to wreck goes every notion or feeling that divides the noble from the noble, or the brave man from the brave. But wherefore is it that now, when suddenly they wheel into mutual recognition, suddenly they pause? This soldier, this officer – who are they? O, reader! once before they had stood face to face – the soldier it is that was struck; the officer it is that struck him. Once again they are meeting; and the gaze of armies is upon them. If for a moment a doubt

divides them, in a moment the doubt has perished. One glance exchanged between them publishes the forgiveness that is sealed for ever. As one who recovers a brother whom he had accounted dead, the officer sprang forward, threw his arms around the neck of the soldier, and kissed him, as if he were some martyr glorified by that shadow of death from which he was returning; whilst, on *his* part, the soldier, stepping back, and carrying his open hand through the beautiful motions of the military salute to a superior, makes this immortal answer – that answer which shut up for ever the memory of the indignity offered to him, even whilst for the last time alluding to it: – 'Sir,' he said, 'I told you before that I would *make you repent it*.'

CHAPTER IV.

THE FEMALE INFIDEL.

There is no known manuscript.

De Quincey produced this chapter by considerably expanding the sketch of 'Mrs L.' which occurs in the first of his 'Sketches of Life and Manners: From the Autobiography of an English Opium Eater', *Tait's*, I, February 1834 (see Vol. 10). Much of the text was written afresh for *AS*, abstracted portions from *Tait's* are indicated in the textual notes below.

AT the time of my father's death, I was nearly seven years old. In the next four years, during which we continued to live at Greenhay, nothing memorable occurred, except, indeed, that troubled parenthesis in my life which connected me with my brother William – this certainly was memorable to myself – and, secondly, the visit of a most eccentric young woman,[1] who, about nine years later, drew the eyes of all England upon herself, by her unprincipled conduct in an affair affecting the life of two Oxonian undergraduates. She was the daughter of Lord le Despencer[2] (known previously as Sir Francis Dashwood); and at this time (meaning the time of her visit to Greenhay) she was about twenty-two years old; with a face and a figure classically beautiful, and with the reputation of extraordinary accomplishments; these accomplishments being not only eminent in their degree, but rare and interesting in their kind. In particular, she astonished every person by her *impromptu* performances on the organ, and by her powers of disputation. These last she applied entirely to attacks upon Christianity; for she openly professed infidelity in the most audacious form; and at my mother's table she certainly proved more than a match for all the clergymen of the neighbouring towns, some of whom (as the most intellectual persons of that neighbourhood) were daily invited to meet her. It was a mere accident which had introduced her to my mother's house. Happening to hear from my sister Mary's governess* that she and her pupil were going on a visit to an old Cath-

* '*My sister Mary's governess:*' – This governess was a Miss Wesley, niece to John Wesley,[3] the founder of Methodism. And the mention of *her* recalls to me a fact, which was recently revived and mis-stated by the whole newspaper press of the island. It had been always known that some relationship existed between the Wellesleys and John Wesley. Their names had, in fact, been originally the same; and the Duke of Wellington[4] himself, in the earlier part of his career, when sitting in the Irish House of Commons, was always known to the Irish journals as Captain

olic family in the county of Durham (the family of Mr Swinburne, who was known advantageously to the public by his 'Travels in Spain and Sicily,'[8] &c.), Mrs Lee, whose education, in a French convent, aided by her father's influence, had introduced her extensively to the knowledge of Catholic families in England, and who had herself an invitation to the same house at the same time, wrote to offer the use of her carriage to convey all three – *i.e.,* herself, my sister, and her governess – to Mr Swinburne's. This naturally drew forth from my mother an invitation to Greenhay; and to Greenhay she came. On the imperial of her carriage, and elsewhere, she described herself as the *Hon.* Antonina Dashwood Lee. But, in fact, being only the illegitimate daughter of Lord le Despencer, she was not entitled to that designation. She had, however, received a bequest even more enviable from her father, viz., not less than forty-five thousand pounds. At a very early age, she had married a young Oxonian,[9] distinguished for nothing but a very splendid person, which had procured him the distinguishing title of *Handsome Lee;* and from him she had speedily separated, on the agreement of dividing the fortune.

My mother little guessed what sort of person it was whom she had asked into her family. So much, however, she had understood from Miss Wesley – that Mrs Lee was a bold thinker; and that, for a woman, she had an astonishing command of theological learning. This it was that suggested the clerical invitations, as in such a case likely to furnish the most appropriate society. But this led to a painful result. It might easily have happened that a very learned clergyman should not specially have qualified himself for the service of a theological tournament: and my mother's range of acquaintance was not very extensive amongst the clerical body. But of these the two leaders, as regarded

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Wesley. Upon this arose a natural belief, that the aristocratic branch of the house had improved the name into Wellesley. But the true process of change had been precisely the other way.[5] Not Wesley had been expanded into Wellesley – but, inversely, Wellesley had been contracted by household usage into Wesley. The name must have been *Wellesley* in its earliest stage, since it was founded upon a connection with Wells Cathedral. It had obeyed the same process as prevails in many hundreds of other names; St Leger, for instance, is always pronounced as if written Sillinger; Cholmondeley as Chumleigh; Marjoribanks as Marchbanks; and the illustrious name of Cavendish was for centuries familiarly pronounced Candish; and Wordsworth has even introduced this name into verse so as to compel the reader, by a metrical coercion, into calling it Candish.[6] Miss Wesley's family had great musical sensibility and skill. This led the family into giving musical parties, at which was constantly to be found Lord Mornington, the father of the Duke of Wellington. For these parties it was, as Miss Wesley informed me, that the earl composed his most celebrated glee. Here also it was, or in similar musical circles gathered about himself by the first Lord Mornington, that the Duke of Wellington had formed and cultivated his unaffected love for music of the highest class, *i.e.,* for the impassioned music of the serious opera. And it occurs to me as highly probable, that Mrs Lee's connection with the Wesleys, through which it was that she became acquainted with my mother, must have rested upon the common interest which she and the Wesleys had in the organ and in the class of music suited to that instrument. Mrs Lee herself was an improvisatrice of the first class upon the organ; and the two brothers of Miss Wesley, Sam. and Charles,[7] ranked for very many years as the first organists in Europe.

public consideration, were Mr H—, my guardian, and Mr Clowes,[10] who for more than fifty years officiated as rector of St John's Church in Manchester. In fact the *golden** jubilee of his pastoral connection with St John's was celebrated many years after with much demonstrative expression of public sympathy on the part of universal Manchester – the most important city in the island next after London. No men could have been found who were less fitted to act as champions in a duel on behalf of Christianity. Mr H— was dreadfully commonplace; dull, dreadfully dull; and, by the necessity of his nature, incapable of being in deadly earnest, which his splendid antagonist at all times was. His encounter, therefore, with Mrs Lee, presented the distressing spectacle of an old, toothless, mumbling mastiff, fighting for the household to which he owed allegiance, against a young leopardess fresh from the forests. Every touch from her, every velvety pat, drew blood. And something comic mingled with what my mother felt to be paramount tragedy. Far different was Mr Clowes: holy, visionary, apostolic, he could not be treated disrespectfully. No man could deny him a qualified homage. But for any polemic service he wanted the taste, the training, and the particular sort of erudition required. Neither would such advantages, if he had happened to possess them, have at all availed him in a case like this. Horror, blank horror, seized him upon seeing a woman, a young woman, a woman of captivating beauty, whom God had adorned so eminently with gifts of person and of mind, breathing sentiments that to him seemed fresh from the mintage of hell. He could have apostrophised her (as long afterwards he himself told me) in the words of Shakspere's Juliet –

'Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!'[11]

for he was one of those who never think of Christianity as the subject of defence. Could sunshine, could light, could the glories of the dawn, call for defence? Not as a thing to be defended, but as a thing to be interpreted, as a thing to be illuminated, did Christianity exist for *him*. He, therefore, was even more unserviceable as a champion against the deliberate impeacher of Christian evidences, than my reverend guardian.

Thus it was that he himself explained his own position, in after days, when I had reached my sixteenth year, and visited him upon terms of friendship as close as can ever have existed between a boy and a man already grey-headed. Him and his noiseless parsonage, the pensive abode for sixty years of religious reverie and anchoritish self-denial, I have described further on. In some limited sense he belongs to our literature; for he was, in fact, the introducer of Swedenborg[12] to this country; as being himself partially the translator of Swedenborg; and still more as organising a patronage to other people's translations; and also, I believe, as republishing the original Latin works of

* *'The golden jubilee:'* – This, in Germany, is used popularly as a technical expression: a married couple, when celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage-day, are said to keep their *golden* jubilee; but on the 25th anniversary they have credit only for a *silver* jubilee.

Swedenborg. To say *that* of Mr Clowes, was, until lately, but another way of describing him as a delirious dreamer. At present (1853), I presume the reader to be aware that Cambridge has, within the last few years, unsettled and even revolutionised our estimates of Swedenborg as a philosopher. That man, indeed, whom Emerson[13] ranks as one amongst his inner consistory of intellectual potentates, cannot be the absolute trifler that Kant (who knew him only by the most trivial of his pretensions), eighty years ago, supposed him.[14] Assuredly, Mr Clowes was no trifler, but lived habitually a life of power, though in a world of religious mysticism and of apocalyptic visions. To him, being such a man by nature and by habit, it was in effect the lofty Lady Geraldine from Coleridge's 'Christabelle' that stood before him in this infidel lady. A magnificent witch she was, like the Lady Geraldine; having the same superb beauty; the same power of throwing spells over the ordinary gazer; and yet at intervals unmasking to some solitary, unfascinated spectator the same dull blink of a snaky eye; and revealing through the most fugitive of gleams, a traitress couchant beneath what else to all others seemed the form of a lady, armed with incomparable pretensions – one that was

> 'Beautiful exceedingly,
> Like a lady from a far countrie.'[15]

The scene, as I heard it sketched long years afterwards by more than one of those who had witnessed it, was painful in excess. And the shock given to my mother was memorable. For the first and the last time in her long and healthy life, she suffered an alarming nervous attack. Partly this arose from the conflict between herself in the character of hostess, and herself as a loyal daughter of Christian faith; she shuddered, in a degree almost incontrollable and beyond her power to dissemble, at the unfeminine intrepidity with which 'the leopardess' conducted her assaults upon the sheep-folds of orthodoxy; and, partly also, this internal conflict arose from concern on behalf of her own servants, who waited at dinner, and were inevitably liable to impressions from what they heard. My mother, by original choice, and by early training under a very aristocratic father, recoiled as austerely from all direct communication with her servants, as the Pythia[16] at Delphi from the attendants that swept out the temple. But not the less her conscience, in all stages of her life, having or *not* having any special knowledge of religion, acknowledged a pathetic weight of obligation to remove from her household all confessedly corrupting influences. And here was one which she could not remove. What chiefly she feared, on behalf of her servants, was either, 1st, the danger from the simple *fact,* now suddenly made known to them, that it was possible for a person unusually gifted to deny Christianity: such a denial and haughty abjuration could not but carry itself more profoundly into the reflective mind, even of servants, when the arrow came winged and made buoyant by the gay feathering of so many splendid accomplishments. This general fact was appreciable by those who would forget, and never could have understood, the particular

arguments of the infidel. Yet, even as regarded these particular arguments, 2dly, my mother feared that some one – brief, telling, and rememberable – might be singled out from the rest, might transplant itself to the servants' hall, and take root for life in some mind sufficiently thoughtful to invest it with interest, and yet far removed from any opportunities, through books or society, for disarming the argument of its sting. Such a danger was quickened by the character and pretensions of Mrs Lee's footman, who was a daily witness, whilst standing behind his mistress's chair at dinner, to the confusion which she carried into the hostile camp, and might be supposed to renew such discussions in the servants' hall with singular advantages for a favourable attention. For he was a showy and most audacious Londoner, and what is *technically* known in the language of servants' hiring-offices, as 'a man of figure.' He might, therefore, be considered as one dangerously armed for shaking religious principles, especially amongst the female servants. Here, however, I believe that my mother was mistaken. Women of humble station, less than any other class, have any tendency to sympathise with boldness that manifests itself in throwing off the yoke of religion. Perhaps a natural instinct tells them, that levity of that nature will pretty surely extend itself contagiously to other modes of conscientious obligation; at any rate, my own experience would warrant me in doubting whether any instance were ever known of a woman, in the rank of servant, regarding infidelity or irreligion as something brilliant, or interesting, or in any way as favourably distinguishing a man. Meantime, this conscientious apprehension on account of the servants applied to contingencies that were remote. But the pity on account of the poor lady herself applied to a danger that seemed imminent and deadly. This beautiful and splendid young creature, as my mother knew, was floating, without anchor or knowledge of any anchoring grounds, upon the unfathomable ocean of a London world, which, for *her,* was wrapt in darkness as regarded its dangers, and thus for *her* the chances of shipwreck were seven times multiplied. It was notorious that Mrs Lee had no protector or guide; natural or legal. Her marriage had, in fact, instead of imposing new restraints, released her from old ones. For the legal separation of Doctors' Commons (technically called a divorce, but a divorce simply *à mensâ et thoro* (from bed and board), and not *à vinculo matrimonii* (from the very tie and obligation of marriage), had removed her by law from the control of her husband; whilst, at the same time, the matrimonial condition, of course, enlarged that liberty of action which else is unavoidably narrowed by the reserve and delicacy natural to a young woman, whilst yet unmarried. Here arose one peril more; and, 2dly, arose this most unusual aggravation of that peril – that Mrs Lee was deplorably ignorant of English life; indeed, of life universally. Strictly speaking, she was even yet a raw untutored novice turned suddenly loose from the twilight of a monastic seclusion. Under any circumstances, such a situation lay open to an amount of danger that was afflicting to contemplate. But one dreadful exasperation of these fatal auguries lay in the peculiar *temper* of Mrs Lee, as

connected with her infidel thinking. Her nature was too frank and bold to tolerate any disguise: and my mother's own experience had now taught her that Mrs Lee would not be content to leave to the random call of accident the avowal of her principles. No passive or latent spirit of free-thinking was hers – headlong it was, uncompromising, almost fierce, and regarding no restraints of place or season. Like Shelley,[17] some few years later, whose day she would have gloried to welcome, she looked upon her principles, not only as conferring rights, but also as imposing duties of active proselytism. From this feature in her character it was, that my mother foresaw an *instant* evil, which she urged Miss Wesley to press earnestly on her attention, viz., the inevitable alienation of all her female friends. In many parts of the Continent (but too much we are all in the habit of calling by the wide name of 'the Continent' – France, Germany, Switzerland, and Belgium), my mother was aware that the most flagrant proclamation of infidelity would not stand in the way of a woman's favourable reception into society. But in England at that time this was far otherwise. A display such as Mrs Lee habitually forced upon people's attention, would at once have the effect of banishing from her house all women of respectability. She would be thrown upon the society of *men* – bold and reckless, such as either agreed with herself, or, being careless on the whole subject of religion, pretended to do so. Her income, though diminished now by the partition with Mr Lee, was still above a thousand per annum; which, though trivial for any purpose of display in a place so costly as London, was still important enough to gather round her unprincipled adventurers, some of whom might be noble enough to obey no attraction but that which lay in her marble beauty, in her Athenian grace and eloquence, and the wild impassioned nature of her accomplishments: by her acting, her dancing, her conversation, her musical improvisations, she was qualified to attract the most intellectual men – but baser attractions would exist for baser men; and my mother urged Miss Wesley, as one, whom Mrs Lee admitted to her confidence, above all things to act upon her pride by forewarning her, that such men, in the midst of lip homage to her charms, would be sure to betray its hollowness by declining to let their wives and daughters visit her. Plead what excuses they would, Mrs Lee might rely upon it, that the true ground for this insulting absence of female visiters would be found to lie in her profession of infidelity. This alienation of female society would, it was clear, be precipitated enormously by Mrs Lee's frankness. A result, that might by a dissembling policy have been delayed indefinitely, would now be hurried forward to an immediate crisis. And in this result went to wreck the very best part of Mrs Lee's securities against ruin.

It is scarcely necessary to say, that all the evil followed which had been predicted, and through the channels which had been predicted. Some time was required on so vast a stage as London to publish the fact of Mrs Lee's free-thinking – that is, to publish it as a matter of systematic purpose. Many persons had at first made a liberal allowance for her, as tempted by some

momentary impulse into opinions that she had not sufficiently considered, and might forget as hastily as she had adopted them. But no sooner was it made known as a settled fact, that she had deliberately dedicated her energies to the interests of an anti-Christian system, and that she hated Christianity, than the whole body of her friends within the pale of social respectability fell away from her, and forsook her house. To *them* succeeded a clique of male visiters, some of whom were doubtfully respectable, and others (like Mr Frend,[18] memorable for his expulsion from Cambridge on account of his public hostility to Trinitarianism) were distinguished by a tone of intemperate defiance to the spirit of English society. Thrown upon such a circle, and emancipated from all that temper of reserve which would have been impressed upon her by habitual anxiety for the good opinion of virtuous and high-principled women, the poor lady was tempted into an elopement with two dissolute brothers; for what ultimate purpose on either side, was never made clear to the public. Why a lady should elope from her own house, and the protection of her own servants, under whatever impulse, seemed generally unintelligible. But apparently it was precisely this protection from her own servants which presented itself to the brothers in the light of an obstacle to their objects. What these objects might ultimately be, I do not *entirely* know; and I do not feel myself authorised, by anything which of my own knowledge I know, to load either of them with mercenary imputations. One of them (the younger) was, or fancied himself, in love with Mrs Lee. It was impossible for him to marry her: and possibly he may have fancied that in some rustic retirement, where the parties were unknown, it would be easier than in London to appease the lady's scruples in respect to the sole mode of connection which the law left open to them. The frailty of the will in Mrs Lee was as manifest in this stage of the case as subsequently, when she allowed herself to be over-clamoured by Mr Lee and his friends into a capital prosecution of the brothers. After she had once allowed herself to be put into a post-chaise, she was persuaded to believe (and such was her ignorance of English society, that possibly she *did* believe) herself through the rest of the journey liable at any moment to summary coercion in the case of attempting any resistance. The brothers and herself left London in the evening. Consequently, it was long after midnight when the party halted at a town in Gloucestershire, two stages beyond Oxford. The younger gentleman then persuaded her, but (as she alleged) under the impression on her part that resistance was unavailing, and that the injury to her reputation was by this time irreparable, to allow of his coming to her bedroom. This was perhaps not entirely a fraudulent representation in Mrs Lee. The whole circumstances of the case made it clear, that, with any decided opening for deliverance, she would have caught at it; and probably would again, from wavering of mind, have dallied with the danger.

Perhaps at this point, having already in this last paragraph shot ahead by some nine years of the period when she visited Greenhay, allowing myself this license in order to connect my mother's warning through Miss Wesley with

the practical sequel of the case, it may be as well for me to pursue the arrears of the story down to its final incident. In 1804, at the Lent Assizes for the county of Oxford, she appeared as principal witness against two brothers, L—t G—n, and L—n G—n,[19] on a capital charge of having forcibly carried her off from her own house in London, and afterwards of having, at some place in Gloucestershire, by collusion with each other and by terror, enabled one of the brothers to offer the last violence to her person. The circumstantial accounts published at the time by the newspapers, were of a nature to conciliate the public sympathy altogether to the prisoners; and the general belief accorded with what was, no doubt, the truth – that the lady had been driven into a false accusation by the overpowering remonstrances of her friends, joined, in this instance, by her husband, all of whom were willing to believe, or willing to have it believed by the public, that advantage had been taken of her little acquaintance with English usages. I was present at the trial. The court was opened at eight o'clock in the morning: and such was the interest in the case, that a mob, composed chiefly of gownsmen, besieged the doors for some time before the moment of admission. On this occasion, by the way, I witnessed a remarkable illustration of the profound obedience which Englishmen under all circumstances pay to the law. The constables, for what reason I do not know, were very numerous, and very violent. Such of us as happened to have gone in our academic dress, had our caps smashed in two by the constables' staves: *why,* it might be difficult for the officers to say, as none of us were making any tumult, nor had any motive for doing so, unless by way of retaliation. Many of these constables were bargemen or petty tradesmen, who in their ex-official character had often been engaged in rows with undergraduates, and usually had had the worst of it. At present, in the service of the blindfold goddess, these equitable men were no doubt taking out their vengeance for past favours. But, under all this wanton display of violence, the gownsmen practised the severest forbearance. The pressure from behind made it impossible to forbear pressing ahead; crushed, you were obliged to crush; but, beyond that, there was no movement or gesture on our part to give any colourable warrant to the brutality of the officers. For nearly a whole hour, I saw this expression of reverence to the law triumphant over all provocations. It may be presumed, that, to prompt so much crowding, there must have been some commensurate interest. There was so, but that interest was not at all in Mrs Lee. She was entirely unknown; and even by reputation or rumour, from so vast a wilderness as London, neither her beauty nor her intellectual pretensions had travelled down to Oxford. Possibly, in each section of 300 men, there might be one individual whom accident had brought acquainted, as it had myself, with her extraordinary endowments. But the general and academic interest belonged exclusively to the accused. They were both Oxonians, one belonging to University College, and the other, perhaps, to Baliol; and, as they had severally taken the degree of A.B., which implies a residence of *at least* three years, they were pretty extensively known. But, known or not

known personally, in virtue of the *esprit de corps,* the accused parties would have benefited in any case by a general brotherly interest. Over and above which, there was in this case the interest attached to an almost unintelligible accusation. A charge of personal violence, under the roof of a respectable English posting-house, occupied always by a responsible master and mistress, and within call at every moment of numerous servants – what could that mean? And, again, when it became understood that this violence was alleged to have realised itself under a delusion, under a pre-occupation of the victim's mind, that resistance to it was hopeless, how, and under what profound ignorance of English society, had such a pre-occupation been possible? To the accused, and to the incomprehensible accusation, therefore, belonged the whole weight of the interest; and it was a very secondary interest indeed, and purely as a reflex interest from the main one, which awaited the prosecutress. And yet, though so little curiosity 'awaited' her, it happened of necessity that, within a few moments after her first coming forward in the witness-box, she had created a separate one for herself – first, through her impressive appearance; secondly, through the appalling coolness of her answers. The trial began, I think, about nine o'clock in the morning: and, as some time was spent on the examination of Mrs Lee's servants, of postilions, hostlers, &c., in pursuing the traces of the affair from London to a place seventy miles north of London, it was probably about eleven in the forenoon before the prosecutress was summoned. My heart throbbed a little as the court lulled suddenly into the deep stillness of expectation, when that summons was heard: – 'Rachael Frances Antonina Dashwood Lee' resounded through all the passages: and immediately in an adjoining ante-room, through which she was led by her attorney, for the purpose of evading the mob that surrounded the public approaches, we heard her advancing steps. Pitiable was the humiliation expressed by her carriage, as she entered the witness-box. Pitiable was the change, the world of distance between, this faltering and dejected accuser, and that wild leopardess that had once worked her pleasure amongst the sheep-folds of Christianity, and had cuffed my poor guardian so unrelentingly, right and left, front and rear, when he attempted the feeblest of defences. However, she was not long exposed to the searching gaze of the court, and the trying embarrassments of her situation. A single question brought the whole investigation to a close. Mrs Lee had been sworn. After a few questions, she was suddenly asked by the counsel for the defence whether she believed in the Christian religion? Her answer was brief and peremptory, without distinction or circumlocution – *No.* Or, perhaps, not in God? Again she replied, *No;* and again her answer was prompt and *sans phrase.* Upon this the judge declared that he could not permit the trial to proceed. The jury had heard what the witness said: she only could give evidence upon the capital part of the charge; and she had openly incapacitated herself before the whole court. The jury instantly acquitted the prisoners. In the course of the day I left my name at Mrs Lee's lodgings; but her servant assured me that she was too much agitated to see anybody till the

evening. At the hour assigned I called again. It was dusk, and a mob had assembled. At the moment I came up to the door, a lady was issuing, muffled up, and in some measure disguised. It was Mrs Lee. At the corner of a adjacent street a post-chaise was drawn up. Towards this, under the protection of the attorney who had managed her case, she made her way as eagerly as possible. Before she could reach it, however, she was detected; a savage howl was raised; and a rush made to seize her. Fortunately, a body of gownsmen formed round her, so as to secure her from personal assault; they put her rapidly into the carriage; and then, joining the mob in their hootings, sent off the horses at a gallop. Such was the mode of her exit from Oxford.

Subsequently to this painful collision with Mrs Lee at the Oxford Assizes, I heard nothing of her for many years, excepting only this – that she was residing in the family of an English clergyman distinguished for his learning and piety. This account gave great pleasure to my mother – not only as implying some chance that Mrs Lee might be finally reclaimed from her unhappy opinions, but also as a proof that, in submitting to a rustication so mortifying to a woman of her brilliant qualifications, she must have fallen under some influences more promising for her respectability and happiness than those which had surrounded her in London. Finally, we saw by the public journals that she had written and published a book. The title I forget; but by its subject it was connected with political or social philosophy.[20] And one eminent testimony to its merit I myself am able to allege, viz., Wordsworth's.[21] Singular enough it seems, that he who read so very little of modern literature, in fact, next to nothing, should be the sole critic and reporter whom I have happened to meet upon Mrs Lee's work. But so it was: accident had thrown the book in his way during one of his annual visits to London, and a second time at Lowther Castle. He paid to Mrs Lee a compliment which certainly he paid to no other of her contemporaries, viz., that of reading her book very nearly to the end; and he spoke of it repeatedly as distinguished for vigour and originality of thought.

CHAPTER V.

I AM INTRODUCED TO THE WARFARE OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL.

There is no known manuscript.

De Quincey produced this chapter by considerably elaborating on his experiences at the Bath grammar school. The germ of this chapter, dealing with his encounter with Sir Sidney Smith, occurs in the first of his 'Sketches of Life and Manners: From the Autobiography of an English Opium Eater', *Tait's*, I, February 1834 (see Vol. 10). Much of the text was written afresh for *AS*; abstracted portions from *Tait's* are indicated in the textual notes below.

FOUR years after my father's death, it began to be perceived that there was no purpose to be answered in any longer keeping up the costly establishment of Greenhay. A head-gardener, besides labourers equal to at least two more, were required for the grounds and gardens. And no motive existed any longer for being near to a great trading town, so long after the commercial connection with it had ceased. Bath seemed, on all accounts, the natural station for a person in my mother's situation; and thither, accordingly, she went. I, who had been placed under the tuition of one of my guardians, remained some time longer under his care. I was then transferred to Bath. During this interval the sale of the house and grounds took place. It may illustrate the subject of *guardianship,* and the ordinary execution of its duties, to mention the result. The year was in itself a year of great depression, and every way unfavourable to such a transaction; and the particular night for which the sale had been fixed turned out remarkably wet; yet no attempt was made to postpone it, and it proceeded. Originally the house and grounds had cost about £6000. I have heard that only one offer was made, viz., of £2500. Be that as it may, for the sum of £2500 it was sold; and I have been often assured that, by waiting a few years, four to six times that sum might have been obtained with ease. This is not improbable, as the house was then out in the country; but since then the town of Manchester has gathered round it and enveloped it. Meantime, my guardians were all men of honour and integrity; but their hands were filled with their own affairs. One (my tutor) was a clergyman, rector of a church, and having his parish, his large family, and three pupils to attend. He was, besides, a very sedentary and indolent man, loving books – hating business. Another was a merchant. A third was a country magistrate, overladen with official business: him we rarely saw. Finally, the fourth was a banker in a

distant county, having more knowledge of the world, more energy, and more practical wisdom, than all the rest united, but too remote for interfering effectually.[1]

Reflecting upon the evils which befell me, and the gross mismanagement, under my guardians, of my small fortune, and that of my brothers and sisters, it has often occurred to me that so important an office, which, from the time of Demosthenes,[2] has been proverbially mal-administered, ought to be put upon a new footing, plainly guarded by a few obvious provisions. As under the Roman laws, for a long period, the guardian should be made responsible in law, and should give security from the first for the due performance of his duties. But, to give him a motive for doing this, of course he must be paid. With the new obligations and liabilities will commence commensurate emoluments. If a child is made a ward in Chancery, its property is managed expensively, but always advantageously. Some great change is imperatively called for: no duty in the whole compass of human life being so scandalously neglected as this.

In my twelfth year it was that first of all I entered upon the arena of a great public school, viz., the Grammar School* of Bath,[5] over which at that time presided a most accomplished Etonian – Mr (or was he as yet Doctor?) Morgan.[6] If he was not, I am sure he ought to have been; and, with the reader's concurrence, will therefore create him a doctor on the spot. Every man has reason to rejoice who enjoys the advantage of a public training. I condemned, and *do* condemn, the practice of sending out into such stormy exposures those who are as yet too young, too dependent on female gentleness, and endowed with sensibilities originally too exquisite for such a warfare. But at nine or ten the masculine energies of the character are beginning to develop themselves;

* '*Grammar School:*' – By the way, as the grammar-schools of England are amongst her most eminent distinctions, and, with submission to the innumerable wretches (gentlemen I should say) that hate England 'worse than toad or asp,'[3] have never been rivalled by any corresponding institutions in other lands, I may as well take this opportunity of explaining the word *grammar,* which most people misapprehend. Men suppose a grammar-school to mean a school where they teach grammar. But this is not the true meaning, and tends to calumniate such schools by ignoring their highest functions. Limiting by a false limitation the earliest object contemplated by such schools, they obtain a plausible pretext for representing all beyond grammar as something extraneous and casual that did not enter into the original or normal conception of the founders, and that may therefore have been due to alien suggestion. But now, when Suetonius writes a little book, bearing this title, 'De Illustribus Grammaticis,'[4] what does he mean? What is it that he promises? A memoir upon the eminent *grammarians* of Rome? Not at all, but a memoir upon the distinguished *literati* of Rome. *Grammatica* does certainly mean sometimes grammar; but it is also the best Latin word for literature. A *grammaticus* is what the French express by the word *litterateur.* We unfortunately have no corresponding term in English: a *man of letters* is our awkward periphrasis in the singular (too apt, as our jest-books remind us, to suggest the postman); whilst in the plural we resort to the Latin word *literati.* The school which professes to teach *grammatica,* professes, therefore, the culture of literature in the widest and most liberal extent, and is opposed *generically* to schools for teaching mechanic arts; and, within its own *sub-genus* of schools dedicated to liberal objects, is opposed to schools for teaching mathematics, or, more widely, to schools for teaching science.

or, if not, no discipline will better aid in their development than the bracing intercourse of a great English classical school. Even the selfish are *there* forced into accommodating themselves to a public standard of generosity; and the effeminate into conforming to a rule of manliness. I was myself at two public schools, and I think with gratitude of the benefits which I reaped from both; as also I think with gratitude of that guardian in whose quiet household I learned Latin so effectually. But the small private schools, of which I had opportunities for gathering some brief experience – schools containing thirty to forty boys – were models of ignoble manners as regarded part of the juniors, and of favouritism as regarded the masters. Nowhere is the sublimity of public justice so broadly exemplified as in an English public school on the old Edward the Sixth or Elizabeth foundation. There is not in the universe such an Areopagus[7] for fair play, and abhorrence of all crooked ways, as an English mob, or one of the time-honoured English 'foundation' schools. But my own first introduction to such an establishment was under peculiar and contradictory circumstances. When my 'rating,' or graduation in the school, was to be settled, naturally my altitude (to speak astronomically) was taken by my proficiency in Greek. But here I had no advantage over others of my age. My guardian was a feeble Grecian, and had not excited my ambition; so that I could barely construe books as easy as the Greek Testament and the Iliad. This was considered quite well enough for my age; but still it caused me to be placed under the care of Mr Wilkins, the second master out of four, and not under Dr Morgan himself. Within one month, however, my talent for Latin verses, which had by this time gathered strength and expansion, became known. Suddenly I was honoured as never was man or boy since Mordecai the Jew.[8] Without any colourable relation to the doctor's jurisdiction, I was now weekly paraded for distinction at the supreme tribunal of the school; out of which, at first, grew nothing but a sunshine of approbation delightful to my heart. Within six weeks all this had changed. The approbation indeed continued, and the public expression of it. Neither would there, in the ordinary course, have been any painful reaction from jealousy, or fretful resistance, to the soundness of my pretensions; since it was sufficiently known to such of my school-fellows as stood on my own level in the school, that I, who had no male relatives but military men, and those in India, could not have benefited by any clandestine aid. But, unhappily, Dr Morgan was at that time dissatisfied with some points in the progress of his head class;* and, as it soon appeared, was continually throwing in their teeth the brilliancy of my verses at eleven or twelve, by comparison with theirs at seventeen, eighteen, and even nineteen. I had observed him sometimes pointing to myself, and was perplexed at seeing this gesture followed by gloomy looks, and what French reporters call 'sensation,'[9] in these young men, whom naturally I viewed with awe as my leaders,

* '*Class*' or '*form:*' – One knows not how to make one's-self intelligible, so different are the terms locally.

– boys that were called young men, men that were reading Sophocles[10] (a name that carried with it the sound of something seraphic to my ears), and who never had vouchsafed to waste a word on such a child as myself. The day was come, however, when all that would be changed. One of these leaders strode up to me in the public play-ground; and, delivering a blow on my shoulder, which was not intended to hurt me, but as a mere formula of introduction, asked me, 'What the devil I meant by bolting out of the course, and annoying other people in that manner? Were "other people" to have no rest for me and my verses, which, after all, were horribly bad?' There might have been some difficulty in returning an answer to this address, but none was required. I was briefly admonished to see that I wrote worse for the future, or else —. At this *aposiopesis*[11] I looked inquiringly at the speaker, and he filled up the chasm by saying, that he would 'annihilate' me. Could any person fail to be aghast at such a demand? I was to write worse than my own standard, which, by his account of my verses, must be difficult; and I was to write worse than himself, which might be impossible. My feelings revolted against so arrogant a demand, unless it had been far otherwise expressed; if death on the spot had awaited me, I could not have controlled myself; and, on the next occasion for sending up verses to the head-master, so far from attending to the orders issued, I double-shotted my guns; double applause descended on myself; but I remarked with some awe, though not repenting of what I had done, that double confusion seemed to agitate the ranks of my enemies. Amongst them, loomed out in the distance my 'annihilating' friend, who shook his huge fist at me, but with something like a grim smile about his eyes. He took an early opportunity of paying his respects to me again, saying, 'You little devil, do you call this writing your worst?' 'No,' I replied; 'I call it writing my best.' The annihilator, as it turned out, was really a good-natured young man; but he was on the wing for Cambridge; and with the rest, or some of them, I continued to wage war for more than a year. And yet, for a word spoken with kindness, how readily I would have resigned (had it been altogether at my own choice to do so) the peacock's feather in my cap as the merest of baubles. Undoubtedly, praise sounded sweet in *my* ears also; but that was nothing by comparison with what stood on the other side. I detested distinctions that were connected with mortification to others; and, even if I could have got over *that,* the eternal feud fretted and tormented my nature. Love, that once in childhood had been so mere a necessity to me, *that* had long been a reflected ray from a departed sunset. But peace, and freedom from strife, if love were no longer possible (as so rarely it is in this world), was the clamorous necessity of my nature. To contend with somebody was still my fate; how to escape the contention I could not see; and yet, for itself, and for the deadly passions into which it forced me, I hated and loathed it more than death. It added to the distraction and internal feud of my mind, that I could not *altogether* condemn the upper boys. I was made a handle of humiliation to them. And, in the meantime, if I had an undeniable advantage in one solitary

accomplishment, which is all a matter of accident, or sometimes of peculiar direction given to the taste, they, on the other hand, had a great advantage over me in the more elaborate difficulties of Greek, and of choral Greek poetry. I could not altogether wonder at their hatred of myself. Yet still, as they had chosen to adopt this mode of conflict with me, I did not feel that I had any choice but to resist. The contest was terminated for me by my removal from the school, in consequence of a very threatening illness affecting my head; but it lasted more than a year, and it did not close before several among my public enemies had become my private friends. They were much older, but they invited me to the houses of their friends, and showed me a respect which affected me – this respect having more reference, apparently, to the firmness I had exhibited, than to any splendour in my verses. And, indeed, these had rather drooped from a natural accident; several persons of my own class had formed the practice of asking me to write verses for *them.* I could not refuse. But, as the subjects given out were the same for the entire class, it was not possible to take so many crops off the ground without starving the quality of all.

The most interesting public event which, during my stay at this school, at all connected itself with Bath, and indeed with the school itself, was the sudden escape of Sir Sidney Smith[12] from the prison of the Temple in Paris. The mode of his escape was as striking as its time was critical. Having accidentally thrown a ball beyond the prison bounds in playing at tennis, or some such game, Sir Sidney was surprised to observe that the ball thrown back was not the same. Fortunately, he had the presence of mind to dissemble his sudden surprise. He retired, examined the ball, found it stuffed with letters; and, in the same way, he subsequently conducted a long correspondence, and arranged the whole circumstances of his escape; which, remarkably enough, was accomplished exactly eight days before the sailing of Napoleon with the Egyptian expedition; so that Sir Sidney was just in time to confront, and utterly to defeat, Napoleon in the breach of Acre.[13] But for Sir Sidney, Bonaparte would have overrun Syria, *that* is certain. What would have followed from that event, is a far more obscure problem.

Sir Sidney Smith, I must explain to readers of this generation, and Sir Edward Pellew[14] (afterwards Lord Exmouth), figured as the two* Paladins of the first war with revolutionary France. Rarely were these two names mentioned but in connection with some splendid, prosperous, and unequal contest. Hence the whole nation was saddened by the account of Sir Sidney's capture; and this must be understood, in order to make the joy of his sudden return perfectly intelligible. Not even a rumour of Sir Sidney's escape had or

* To *them* in the next stage of the war succeeded Sir Michael Seymour, and Lord Cochrane (the present Earl of Dundonald), and Lord Camelford.[15] The two last were the regular fire-eaters of the day. Sir Horatio Nelson being already an admiral, was no longer looked to for insulated exploits of brilliant adventure: his name was now connected with larger and combined attacks, less dashing and adventurous, because including heavier responsibilities.

could have run before him; for, at the moment of reaching the coast of England, he had started with post-horses to Bath. It was about dusk when he arrived: the postilions were directed to the square in which his mother lived: in a few minutes he was in his mother's arms, and in fifty minutes more the news had flown to the remotest suburb of the city. The agitation of Bath on this occasion was indescribable. All the troops of the line then quartered in that city, and a whole regiment of volunteers, immediately got under arms, and marched to the quarter in which Sir Sidney lived. The small square overflowed with the soldiery; Sir Sidney went out, and was immediately lost to us, who were watching for him, in the closing ranks of the troops. Next morning, however, I, my younger brother, and a school-fellow of my own age, called formally upon the naval hero. *Why,* I know not, unless as *alumni* of the school at which Sir Sidney Smith had received his own education, we were admitted without question or demur; and I may record it as an amiable trait in Sir Sidney, that he received us then with great kindness, and took us down with him to the pump-room. Considering, however, that we must have been most afflicting bores to Sir Sidney – a fact which no self-esteem could even then disguise from us it puzzled me at first to understand the principle of his conduct. Having already done more than enough in courteous acknowledgement of our fraternal claims as fellow-students at the Bath Grammar School, why should he think it necessary to burden himself further with our worshipful society? I found out the secret, and will explain it. A very slight attention to Sir Sidney's deportment in public revealed to me that he was morbidly afflicted with nervous sensibility and with *mauvaise honte.*[16] He that had faced so cheerfully crowds of hostile and threatening eyes, could not support without trepidation those gentle eyes, beaming with gracious admiration, of his fair young countrywomen. By accident, at that moment Sir Sidney had no acquaintances in Bath,* a fact which is not at all to be wondered at. Living so much abroad and at sea, an English sailor, of whatever rank, has few opportunities for making friends at home. And yet there was a necessity that Sir Sidney should gratify the public interest, so warmly expressed, by presenting himself somewhere or other to the public eye. But how trying a service to the most practised and otherwise most callous veteran on such an occasion – that he should step forward, saying in effect – 'So you are wanting to see me: well, then, here I am: come and look at me!' Put it into what language you please, such a summons was written on all faces, and countersigned by his worship the mayor, who began to whisper insinuations of riots if Sir Sidney did not comply. Yet, if he *did,* inevitably his own act of obedience to the public pleasure took the shape of an ostentatious self-parading under the construction of those numerous persons who knew nothing of the public importunity, or of Sir Sidney's unaffected and even morbid reluctance to obtrude himself upon

* Lord Camelford was, I believe, his first cousin: Sir Sidney's mother and Lady Camelford being sisters. But Lord Camelford was then absent from Bath.

the public eye. The thing was unavoidable; and the sole palliation that it admitted was – to break the concentration of the public gaze, by associating Sir Sidney with some alien group, no matter of what cattle. Such a group would relieve both parties – gazer and gazee – from too distressing a consciousness of the little business on which they had met. We, the schoolboys, being three, intercepted and absorbed part of the enemy's fire, and, by furnishing Sir Sidney with real *bonâ fide* matter of conversation, we released him from the most distressing part of his sufferings, viz., the passive and silent acquiescence in his own apotheosis – holding a lighted candle, as it were, to the glorification of his own shrine. With our help, he weathered the storm of homage silently ascending. And we, in fact, whilst seeming to ourselves too undeniably a triad of bores, turned out the most serviceable allies that Sir Sidney ever had by land or sea, until several moons later, when he formed the invaluable acquaintance of the Syrian 'butcher,' viz., Djezzar, the pacha of Acre.[17] I record this little trait of Sir Sidney's constitutional temperament, and the little service through which I and my two comrades contributed materially to his relief, as an illustration of that infirmity which besieges the nervous system of our nation. It is a sensitiveness which sometimes amounts to lunacy, and sometimes even tempts to suicide. It is a mistake, however, to suppose this morbid affection unknown to Frenchmen, or unknown to men of the world. I have myself known it to exist in both, and particularly in a man that might be said to live in the street, such was the American publicity which circumstances threw around his life; and so far were his habits of life removed from reserve, or from any predisposition to gloom. And at this moment I recall a remarkable illustration of what I am saying, communicated by Wordsworth's accomplished friend, Sir George Beaumont.[18] To *him* I had been sketching the distressing sensitiveness of Sir Sidney pretty much as I have sketched it to the reader; and how he, the man that on the breach at Acre valued not the eye of Jew, Christian, or Turk, shrank back – *me ipso teste*[19] – from the gentle, though eager – from the admiring, yet affectionate – glances of three very young ladies in Gay Street, Bath, the oldest (I should say) not more than seventeen. Upon which Sir George mentioned, as a parallel experience of his own, that Mr Canning,[20] being ceremoniously introduced to himself (Sir George) about the time when he had reached the meridian of his fame as an orator, and should therefore have become *blasé* to the extremity of being absolutely seared and case-hardened against all impressions whatever appealing to his vanity or egotism – did absolutely *(credite posteri!*[21]*)* blush like any roseate girl of fifteen. And that this was no accident growing out of a momentary agitation, no sudden spasmodic pang, anomalous and transitory, appeared from other concurrent anecdotes of Canning, reported by gentlemen from Liverpool, who described to us most graphically and picturesquely the wayward fitfulness (not coquettish, or wilful, but nervously overmastering and most unaffectedly distressing) which besieged this great artist in oratory, as the time approached – was coming – was going, at which the private signal

should have been shown for proposing his health. Mr P.[22] (who had been, I think, the mayor on the particular occasion indicated) described the restlessness of his manner; how he rose, and retired for half a minute into a little parlour behind the chairman's seat; then came back; then whispered, *Not yet, I beseech you, I cannot face them yet;* then sipped a little water, then moved uneasily on his chair, saying, *One moment, if you please: stop, stop: don't hurry: one moment, and I shall be up to the mark:* in short, fighting with the necessity of taking the final plunge, like one who lingers on the scaffold.

Sir Sidney was at that time slender and thin; having an appearance of emaciation, as though he had suffered hardships and ill-treatment, which, however, I do not remember to have heard. Meantime, his appearance, connected with his recent history, made him a very interesting person to women; and to this hour it remains a mystery with me, why and how it came about, that in every distribution of honours Sir Sidney Smith was overlooked. In the Mediterranean he made many enemies, especially amongst those of his own profession, who used to speak of him as far too fine a gentleman, and above his calling. Certain it is that he liked better to be doing business on shore, as at Acre, although he commanded a fine 80-gun ship, the Tiger. But however that may have been, his services, whether classed as military or naval, were memorably splendid. And, at that time, his connection, of whatsoever nature, with the late Queen Caroline[23] had not occurred. So that altogether, to me, his case is inexplicable.

From the Bath Grammar School I was removed, in consequence of an accident, by which at first it was supposed that my skull had been fractured, and the surgeon who attended me[24] at one time talked of trepanning. This was an awful word: but at present I doubt whether in reality anything very serious had happened. In fact, I was always under a nervous panic for my head; and certainly exaggerated my internal feelings without meaning to do so; and this misled the medical attendants. During a long illness which succeeded, my mother, amongst other books past all counting, read to me, in Hoole's translation, the whole of the 'Orlando Furioso;' meaning by *the whole* the entire twenty-four books into which Hoole had condensed the original forty-six of Ariosto;[25] and, from my own experience at that time, I am disposed to think that the homeliness of this version is an advantage from not calling off the attention at all from the narration to the narrator. At this time also I first read the 'Paradise Lost;' but, oddly enough, in the edition of Bentley,[26] that great παζαδιοζθωτης (or pseudo-restorer of the text). At the close of my illness, the head-master called upon my mother, in company with his son-in-law, Mr Wilkins, as did a certain Irish Colonel Bowes,[27] who had sons at the school, requesting earnestly, in terms most flattering to myself, that I might be suffered to remain there. But it illustrates my mother's moral austerity, that she was shocked at my hearing compliments to my own merits, and was altogether disturbed at what doubtless these gentlemen expected to see received with maternal pride. She declined to let me continue at the Bath School; and

I went to another, at Winkfield, in the County of Wilts, of which the chief recommendation lay in the religious character of the master.

CHAPTER VI.

I ENTER THE WORLD.

There is no known manuscript.

De Quincey produced this chapter largely by abstracting his experience of meeting George III from 'Sketches of Life and Manners: From the Autobiography of an English Opium Eater', *Tait's*, I, February, March 1834 (see Vol. 10). Abstracted portions from *Tait's* as well as significant additions are indicated in the textual notes below.

YES, at this stage of my life, viz., in my fifteenth year, and from this sequestered school, ankle-deep I first stepped into the world. At Winkfield I had staid about a year, or not much more, when I received a letter from a young friend of my own age, Lord Westport,* the son of Lord Altamont,[1] inviting me to accompany him to Ireland for the ensuing summer and autumn. This invitation was repeated by his tutor; and my mother, after some consideration, allowed me to accept it.

In the spring of 1800, accordingly, I went up to Eton, for the purpose of joining my friend. Here I several times visited the gardens of the queen's villa at Frogmore; and, privileged by my young friend's introduction, I had opportunities of seeing and hearing the queen and all the princesses; which at that time was a novelty in my life, naturally a good deal prized. Lord Westport's mother had been, before her marriage, Lady Louisa Howe, daughter to the great admiral, Earl Howe,[2] and intimately known to the Royal Family, who, on her account, took a continual and especial notice of her son.

On one of these occasions I had the honour of a brief interview with the king. Madame de Campan mentions, as an amusing incident in her early life,[3] though terrific at the time, and overwhelming to her sense of shame, that not long after her establishment at Versailles, in the service of some one amongst the daughters of Louis XV., having as yet never seen the king, she was one day suddenly introduced to his particular notice, under the following circumstances: – The time was morning; the young lady was not fifteen: her spirits were as the spirits of a fawn in May; her *tour* of duty for the day was either not

* My acquaintance with Lord Westport was of some years' standing. My father, whose commercial interests led him often to Ireland, had many friends there. One of these was a country gentleman connected with the west; and at his house I first met Lord Westport.

come, or was gone; and, finding herself alone in a spacious room, what more reasonable thing could she do than amuse herself with *making cheeses;* that is, whirling round, according to a fashion practised by young ladies both in France and England, and pirouetting until the petticoat is inflated like a balloon, and then sinking into a curtsy.

Mademoiselle was very solemnly rising from one of these curtsies, in the centre of her collapsing petticoats, when a slight noise alarmed her. Jealous of intruding eyes, yet not dreading more than a servant at worst, she turned; and, oh heavens! whom should she behold but his most Christian Majesty advancing upon her, with a brilliant suite of gentlemen, young and old, equipped for the chase, who had been all silent spectators of her performances. From the king to the last of the train, all bowed to her, and all laughed without restraint, as they passed the abashed amateur of cheese-making. But she, to speak Homerically, wished in that hour that the earth might gape and cover her confusion. Lord Westport and I were about the age of mademoiselle, and not much more decorously engaged, when a turn brought us full in view of a royal party coming along one of the walks at Frogmore. We were, in fact, theorising and practically commenting on the art of throwing stones. Boys have a peculiar contempt for female attempts in that way. For, besides that girls fling wide of the mark, with a certainty that might have won the applause of Galerius,[*4] there is a peculiar sling and rotary motion of the arm in launching a stone, which no girl ever *can* attain. From ancient practice, I was somewhat of a proficient in this art, and was discussing the philosophy of female failures, illustrating my doctrines with pebbles, as the case happened to demand; whilst Lord Westport was practising on the peculiar whirl of the wrist with a shilling; when suddenly he turned the head of the coin towards me with a significant glance, and in a low voice he muttered some words, of which I caught '*Grace of God,*' '*France*[†] *and Ireland,*' '*Defender of the Faith, and so*

[*] 'Sir,' said that emperor to a soldier who had missed the target in succession I know not how many times (suppose we say fifteen), 'allow me to offer my congratulations on the truly admirable skill you have shown in keeping clear of the mark. Not to have hit once in so many trials, argues the most splendid talents for missing.'

[†] *France* was at that time among the royal titles, the act for altering the king's style and title not having then passed. As connected with this subject, I may here mention a project (reported to have been canvassed in council at the time when that alteration *did* take place) for changing the title from king to emperor. What then occurred strikingly illustrates the general character of the British policy as to all external demonstrations of pomp and national pretension, and its strong opposition to that of France under corresponding circumstances. The principle of *esse quam videri*,[5] and the carelessness about names when the thing is unaffected, generally speaking, must command praise and respect. Yet, considering how often the reputation of power becomes, for international purposes, nothing less than power itself, and that words, in many relations of human life, are emphatically things, and sometimes are so to the exclusion of the most absolute things themselves, men of all qualities being often governed by names; the policy of France seems the wiser, viz., *se faire valoir*,[6] even at the price of ostentation. But, at all events, no man is entitled to exercise that extreme candour, forbearance, and spirit of ready concession *in re aliena,* and, above all, *in re politica*,[7] which, on his own account, might be alto-

forth.' This solemn recitation of the legend on the coin was meant as a fanciful way of apprising me that the king was approaching; for Lord W. had himself

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gether honourable. The council might give away their own honours, but not yours and mine. On a public (or at least on a foreign) interest, it is the duty of a good citizen to be lofty, exacting, almost insolent. And, on this principle, when the ancient style and title of the kingdom fell under revision, if – as I do not deny – it was advisable to retrench all obsolete pretensions as so many memorials of a greatness that in that particular manifestation was now extinct, and therefore, *pro tanto*,[8] rather presumptions of weakness than of strength, as being mementos of our losses: yet, on the other hand, all countervailing claims which had since arisen, and had far more than equiponderated the declension in that one direction, should have been then adopted into the titular heraldry of the nation. It was neither wise nor just to insult foreign nations with assumptions which no longer stood upon any basis of reality. And on that ground *France* was, perhaps, rightly omitted. But why, when the crown was thus remoulded, and its jewellery unset, if this one pearl were to be surrendered as an ornament no longer ours, why, we may ask, were not the many and gorgeous jewels, achieved by the national wisdom and power in later times, adopted into the recomposed tiara? Upon what principle did the Romans, the wisest among the children of this world, leave so many inscriptions, as records of their power or their triumphs, upon columns, arches, temples, *basilicae,* or medals? A national act, a solemn and deliberate act, delivered to history, is a more imperishable monument than any made by hands: and the title, as revised, which ought to have expressed a change in the dominion simply as to the mode and form of its expansion, now remains as a false, base, abject confession of absolute contraction: once we had A, B, and C; now we have dwindled into A and B: true, most unfaithful guardian of the national honours, we had lost C, and that you were careful to remember. But we happened to have gained D, E, F – and so downwards to Z – all of which duly you forgot.

On this argument, it was urged at the time, in high quarters, that the new re-cast of the crown and sceptre should come out of the furnace *equably* improved; as much for what they were authorised to claim, as for what they were compelled to disclaim. And, as one mode of effecting this, it was proposed that the king should become an emperor. Some, indeed, alleged that an emperor, by its very idea, as received in the Chancery of Europe, pre-supposes a king paramount over vassal or tributary kings. But it is a sufficient answer to say, that an emperor is a prince, uniting in his own person the *thrones* of several distinct kingdoms: and in effect we adopt that view of the case in giving the title of imperial to the parliament, or common assembly of the three kingdoms. However, the title of the prince was a matter trivial in comparison of the title of his *ditio,* or extent of jurisdiction. This point admits of a striking illustration: in the 'Paradise Regained,' Milton has given us, in close succession, three matchless pictures of civil grandeur, as exemplified in three different modes by three different states. Availing himself of the brief Scriptural notice – 'The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them' – he causes to pass, as in a solemn pageant before us, the two military empires then co-existing, of Parthia and Rome, and finally (under another idea of political greatness) the intellectual glories of Athens. From the picture of the Roman grandeur, I extract, and beg the reader to weigh, the following lines: –

> 'Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
> What conflux issuing forth or entering in;
> Praetors, proconsuls, to their provinces
> Hasting, or on return in robes of state;
> Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power;
> Legions or cohorts, turms of horse and wings;
> Or embassies from regions far remote,
> In various habits on the Appian road,
> Or on the Emilian; some from farthest south,
> Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,

lost somewhat of the awe natural to a young person in a first situation of this nature, through his frequent admissions to the royal presence. For my own

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Meroë, Nilotic isle: and, more to west,
The realm of Bocchus to the Blackmoor Sea;
From India and the Golden Chersonese,
And utmost Indian isle, Taprobane,
– Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreathed;
From Gallia, Gades, and the British, west,
Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians, north,
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.'[9]

With this superb picture, or abstraction of the Roman pomps and power, when ascending to their utmost altitude, confront the following representative sketch of a great English levee on some high solemnity, suppose the king's birth-day: – 'Amongst the presentations to his majesty, we noticed Lord O.S., the Governor-General of India, on his departure for Bengal; Mr U.Z., with an address from the Upper and Lower Canadas; Sir L.V., on his appointment as Commander of the Forces in Novia Scotia; General Sir — , on his return from the Burmese war ['the Golden Chersonese'], the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean fleet; Mr B.Z., on his appointment to the Chief-Justiceship at Madras; Sir R.G., the late Attorney-General at the Cape of Good Hope; General Y.X., on taking leave for the Governorship of Ceylon ['the utmost Indian isle, Taprobane']; Lord F.M., the bearer of the last despatches from head-quarters in Spain; Col. P., on going out as Captain-General of the Forces in New Holland; Commodore St L., on his return from a voyage of discovery towards the North Pole; the King of Owhyhee, attended by chieftains from the other islands of that cluster; Col. M'P., on his return from the war in Ashantee, upon which occasion the gallant colonel presented the treaty and tribute from that country; Admiral — , on his appointment to the Baltic Fleet; Captain O.N, with despatches from the Red Sea, advising the destruction of the piratical armament and settlements in that quarter, as also in the Persian Gulf; Sir T. O'N., the late resident in Nepaul, to present his report of the war in that territory, and in adjacent regions – names as yet unknown in Europe; the Governor of the Leeward Islands, on departing for the West Indies; various deputations, with petitions, addresses, &c., from islands in remote quarters of the globe, amongst which we distinguished those from Prince Edward Island in the Gulf of St Lawrence, from the Mauritius, from Java, from the British settlement in Terra del Fuego, from the Christian Churches in the Society, Friendly, and Sandwich Islands – as well as other groups less known in the South Seas; Admiral H.A., on assuming the command of the Channel Fleet; Major-Gen. X.L., on resigning the Lieut.-Governorship of Gibraltar; Hon. G.F.,[10] on going out as secretary to the Governor of Malta,' &c.

This sketch, too hastily made up, is founded upon a base of a very few years; *i.e.*, we have, in one or two instances, placed in juxtaposition, as co-existences, events separated by a few years. But, if (like Milton's picture of the Roman grandeur) the abstraction had been made from a base of thirty years in extent, and had there been added to the picture (according to his precedent) the many and remote embassies to and from independent states, in all quarters of the earth, with how many more groups might the spectacle have been crowded, and especially of those who fall within that most picturesque delineation –

'Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreathed?'

As it is, I have noticed hardly any places but such as lie absolutely within our jurisdiction. And yet, even under that limitation, how vastly more comprehensive is the chart of British dominion than of the Roman! To this gorgeous empire, some corresponding style and title should have been adapted at the revision of the old title, and should yet be adapted.

Apropos of the proposed change in the king's title: Coleridge, on being assured that the new title of the king was to be Emperor of the British Islands and their dependencies, and on the coin *Imperator Britanniarum,* remarked, that, in this re-manufactured form, the title might be

part, I was as yet a stranger even to the king's person. I had, indeed, seen most or all the princesses in the way I have mentioned above; and occasionally, in the streets of Windsor, the sudden disappearance of all hats from all heads had admonished me that some royal personage or other was then traversing (or, if not traversing, was crossing) the street; but either his majesty had never been of the party, or, from distance, I had failed to distinguish him. Now, for the first time, I was meeting him nearly face to face; for, though the walk we occupied was not that in which the royal party were moving, it ran so near it, and was connected by so many cross-walks at short intervals, that it was a matter of necessity for us, as we were now observed, to go and present ourselves. What happened was pretty nearly as follows: – The king, having first spoken with great kindness to my companion, inquiring circumstantially about his mother and grandmother, as persons particularly well known to himself, then turned his eye upon me. My name, it seems, had been communicated to him; he did not, therefore, inquire about that. Was I of Eton? this was his first question. I replied that I was not, but hoped I should be. Had I a father living? I had not: my father had been dead about eight years. 'But you have a mother?' I had. 'And she thinks of sending you to Eton?' I answered, that she had expressed such an intention in my hearing; but I was not sure whether *that* might not be in order to waive an argument with the person to whom she spoke, who happened to have been an Etonian. 'Oh, but all people think highly of Eton; everybody praises Eton. Your mother does right to inquire; there can be no harm in that; but the more she inquires, the more she will be satisfied – that I can answer for.'

Next came a question which had been suggested by my name. Had my family come into England with the Huguenots at the revocation of the Edict of Nantz?[12] This was a tender point with me: of all things I could not endure to be supposed of French descent; yet it was a vexation I had constantly to face, as most people supposed that my name argued a French origin; whereas a Norman origin argued pretty certainly an origin *not* French. I replied, with some haste, 'Please your majesty, the family has been in England since the Conquest.' It is probable that I coloured, or showed some mark of discomposure, with which, however, the king was not displeased, for he smiled, and said, 'How do you know that?' Here I was at a loss for a moment how to answer: for I was sensible that it did not become me to occupy the king's attention with any long stories or traditions about a subject so unimportant as my own family; and yet it was necessary that I should say something, unless I would be thought to have denied my Huguenot descent upon no reason or authority. After a moment's hesitation, I said in effect, that the family from which I traced my descent had certainly been a great and leading one at the

said to be *japanned;* alluding to this fact, that, amongst *insular* sovereigns, the only one known to Christian diplomacy by the title of emperor is the Sovereign of Japan.[11]

era of the Barons' Wars, as also in one at least of the Crusades; and that I had myself seen many notices of this family, not only in books of heraldry, &c., but in the very earliest of all English books. 'And what book was that?' 'Robert of Gloucester's "Metrical Chronicle," which I understood, from internal evidence, to have been written about 1280.'[13] The king smiled again, and said, 'I know, I know.' But what it was that he knew, long afterwards puzzled me to conjecture. I now imagine, however, that he meant to claim a knowledge of the book I referred to – a thing which at that time I thought improbable, supposing the king's acquaintance with literature not to be very extensive, nor likely to have comprehended any knowledge at all of the black-letter period. But in this belief I was greatly mistaken, as I was afterwards fully convinced by the best evidence from various quarters. That library of 120,000 volumes, which George IV. presented to the nation, and which has since gone to swell the collection at the British Museum, had been formed (as I was often assured by persons to whom the whole history of the library, and its growth from small rudiments, was familiarly known), under the direct personal superintendence of George III. It was a favourite and pet creation; and his care extended even to the dressing of the books in appropriate bindings, and (as one man told me) to their health; explaining himself to mean, that in any case where a book was worm-eaten, or touched however slightly with the worm, the king was anxious to prevent the injury from extending, or from infecting others by close neighbourhood; for it is supposed by many that such injuries spread rapidly in favourable situations. One of my informants was a German bookbinder of great respectability,[14] settled in London, and for many years employed by the Admiralty as a confidential binder of records or journals containing secrets of office, &c. Through this connection he had been recommended to the service of his majesty, whom he used to see continually in the course of his attendance at Buckingham House, where the books were deposited. This artist had (originally in the way of his trade) become well acquainted with the money value of English books; and that knowledge cannot be acquired without some concurrent knowledge of their subject and their kind of merit. Accordingly, he was tolerably well qualified to estimate any man's attainments as a reading man; and from him I received such circumstantial accounts of many conversations he had held with the king, evidently reported with entire good faith and simplicity, that I cannot doubt the fact of his majesty's very general acquaintance with English literature. Not a day passed, whenever the king happened to be at Buckingham House, without his coming into the binding-room, and minutely inspecting the progress of the binder and his allies – the gilders, toolers, &c. From the outside of the book the transition was natural to its value in the scale of bibliography; and in that way my informant had ascertained that the king was well acquainted, not only with Robert of Gloucester, but with all the other early chronicles, published by Hearne,[15] and, in fact, possessed that entire series which rose at one period to so enormous a price. From this person I learnt afterwards that the

king prided himself especially upon his early folios of Shakspere; that is to say, not merely upon the excellence of the individual copies in a bibliographical sense, as '*tall* copies' and having large margins, &c., but chiefly from their value in relation to the most authentic basis for the text of the poet. And thus it appears, that at least two of our kings, Charles I. and George III.,[16] have made it their pride to profess a reverential esteem for Shakspere. This bookbinder added his attestation to the truth (or to the generally reputed truth) of a story which I had heard from other authority – viz., that the librarian, or, if not officially the librarian, at least the chief director in everything relating to the books, was an illegitimate son of Frederick, prince of Wales (son to George II.),[17] and therefore half-brother of the king. His own taste and inclinations, it seemed, concurred with his brother's wishes in keeping him in a subordinate rank and an obscure station; in which, however, he enjoyed affluence without anxiety, or trouble, or courtly envy, and the luxury, which he most valued, of a superb library. He lived and died, I have heard, as plain Mr Barnard.[18] At one time I disbelieved the story (which possibly may have been long known to the public), on the ground that even George III. would not have differed so widely from princes in general as to leave a brother of his own, however unaspiring, wholly undistinguished by public honours. But having since ascertained that a naval officer, well-known to my own family, and to a naval brother of my own in particular, by assistance rendered to him repeatedly when a midshipman in changing his ship, was undoubtedly an illegitimate son of George III., and yet that he never rose higher than the rank of post captain, though privately acknowledged by his father and other members of the royal family,[19] I found the insufficiency of that objection. The fact is, and it does honour to the king's memory, he reverenced the moral feelings of his country, which are, in this and in all points of domestic morals, severe and high-toned (I say it in defiance of writers, such as Lord Byron, Mr Hazlitt,[20] &c., who hated alike the just and the unjust pretensions of England), in a degree absolutely incomprehensible to *Southern* Europe. He had his frailties like other children of Adam; but he did not seek to fix the public attention upon them, after the fashion of Louis Quatorze, or our Charles II.,[21] and so many other Continental princes. There were living witnesses (more than one) of *his* aberrations as of theirs; but he, with better feelings than they, did not choose, by placing these witnesses upon a pedestal of honour, surmounted by heraldic trophies, to emblazon his own transgressions to coming generations, and to force back the gaze of a remote posterity upon his own infirmities. It was his ambition to be the *father* of his people in a sense not quite so literal. These were things, however, of which at that time I had not heard.

During the whole dialogue, I did not even once remark that hesitation and iteration of words, generally attributed to George III.; indeed, *so* generally, that it must often have existed; but in this case, I suppose that the brevity of his sentences operated to deliver him from any embarrassment of utterance,

such as might have attended longer and more complex sentences, where some anxiety was natural to overtake the thoughts as they arose. When we observed that the king had paused in his stream of questions, which succeeded rapidly to each other, we understood it as a signal of dismissal; and making a profound obeisance, we retired backwards a few steps. His majesty smiled in a very gracious manner, waved his hand towards us, and said something (I did not know what) in a peculiarly kind accent; he then turned round, and the whole party along with him; which set us at liberty without impropriety to turn to the right about ourselves, and make our egress from the gardens.

This incident, to me at my age, was very naturally one of considerable interest. One reflection it suggested afterwards, which was this: Could it be likely that much truth of a general nature, bearing upon man and social interests, could ever reach the ear of a king, under the etiquette of a court, and under that one rule which seemed singly sufficient to foreclose all natural avenues to truth – the rule, I mean, by which it is forbidden to address a question to the king. I was well aware, before I saw him, that in the royal presence, like the dead soldier in Lucan,[22] whom the mighty necromancing witch tortures back into a momentary life, I must have no voice except for *answers:* –

> 'Vox illi linguaque tantum
> *Responsura* datur.'*

I was to originate nothing myself; and at my age, before so exalted a personage, the mere instincts of reverential demeanour would at any rate have dictated such a rule. But what becomes of that man's general condition of mind in relation to all the great objects moving on the field of human experience, where it is a law generally for almost all who approach him, that they shall confine themselves to replies, absolute responses, or, at most, to a prosecution or carrying forward of a proposition delivered by the *protagonist,* or supreme leader of the conversation? For it must be remembered that, generally speaking, the effect of putting no question, is to transfer into the other party's hands the entire *originating* movement of the dialogue; and thus, in a musical metaphor, the great man is the sole modulator and determiner of the key in which the conversation proceeds. It is true, that sometimes, by travelling a little beyond the question in your answer, you may enlarge the basis, so as to bring up some new train of thought which you wish to introduce; and may suggest fresh matter as effectually as if you had the liberty of more openly guiding the conversation, whether by way of question or by direct origination of a topic; but this depends on skill to improve an opening, or vigilance to seize it at the instant; and, after all, much upon accident: to say nothing of the crime (a sort of petty treason, perhaps, or, what is it?), if you

* For the sake of those who are no classical scholars, I explain: Voice and language are restored to him only to the extent of *replying.*

should be detected in your 'improvements' and 'enlargements of basis.' The king might say, – 'Friend, I must tell my attorney-general to speak with you; for I detect a kind of treason in your replies. They go too far. They include something which tempts my majesty to a notice; which is, in fact, for the long and the short of it, that you have been circumventing me half unconsciously into answering a question which has silently been insinuated by *you*.' Freedom of communication, unfettered movement of thought, there can be none under such a ritual, which tends violently to a Byzantine, or even to a Chinese result of freezing,[23] as it were, all natural and healthy play of the faculties under the petrific mace of absolute ceremonial and fixed precedent. For it will hardly be objected, that the privileged condition of a few official councillors and state ministers, whose hurry and oppression of thought from public care will rarely allow them to speak on any other subject than business, *can* be a remedy large enough for so large an evil. True it is, that a peculiarly frank or jovial temperament in a sovereign may do much for a season to thaw this punctilious reserve and ungenial constraint; but *that* is an accident, and personal to an individual. And, on the other hand, to balance even this, it may be remarked, that, in all noble and fashionable society, where there happens to be a pride in sustaining what is deemed a good *tone* in conversation, it is peculiarly aimed at (and even artificially managed), that no lingering or loitering upon one theme, no protracted discussion, shall be allowed. And, doubtless, as regards merely the treatment of convivial or purely *social* communication of ideas (which also is a great art), this practice is right. I admit willingly that an uncultured brute, who is detected at an elegant table in the atrocity of absolute discussion or disputation, ought to be summarily removed by a police officer; and possibly the law will warrant his being held to bail for one or two years, according to the enormity of his case. But men are not always enjoying, or seeking to enjoy, social pleasure; they seek also, and have need to seek continually, both through books and men, intellectual growth, fresh power, fresh strength, to keep themselves ahead or abreast of this moving, surging, billowing world of ours; especially in these modern times, when society revolves through so many new phases, and shifts its aspects with so much more velocity than in past ages. A king, especially of this country, needs, beyond most other men, to keep himself in a continual state of communication, as it were by some vital and organic sympathy, with the most essential of these changes. And yet this punctilio of etiquette, like some vicious forms of law, or technical fictions grown too narrow for the age, which will not allow of cases coming before the court in a shape desired alike by the plaintiff and the defendant, is so framed as to defeat equally the wishes of a prince disposed to gather knowledge wherever he can find it, and of those who may be best fitted to give it.

For a few minutes on three other occasions, before we finally quitted Eton, I again saw the king; and always with renewed interest. He was kind to everybody – condescending and affable in a degree which I am bound to remember with personal gratitude: and one thing I *had* heard of him, which even then,

and much more as my mind opened to a wider compass of deeper reflection, won my respect. I have always reverenced a man of whom it could be truly said, that he had once, and once only (for more than once implies another unsoundness in the quality of the passion), been desperately in love; in love, that is to say, in a terrific excess, so as to dally, under suitable circumstances, with the thoughts of cutting his own throat, or even (as the case might be) the throat of her whom he loved above all this world. It will be understood that I am not justifying such enormities; on the contrary, they are wrong, exceedingly wrong; but it evident that people in general feel pretty much as I do, from the extreme sympathy with which the public always pursue the fate of any criminal who has committed a murder of this class, even though tainted (as generally it is) with jealousy, which, in itself, wherever it argues habitual mistrust, is an ignoble passion.*

Great passions (do not understand me, reader, as though I meant great appetites), passions moving in a great orbit, and transcending little regards, are always arguments of some latent nobility. There are, indeed, but few men and few women capable of great passions, or (properly speaking) of passions at all. Hartley,[25] in his mechanism of the human mind, propagates the sensations by means of vibrations, and by miniature vibrations; which, in a Roman form for such miniatures, he terms *vibratiuncles.* Now, of men and women generally, parodying that terminology, we ought to say – not that they are governed by passions, or at all capable of passions, but of *passiuncles.* And thence it is that few men go, or can go, beyond a little *love-liking,* as it is called; and hence also, that, in a world where so little conformity takes place between the ideal speculations of men and the gross realities of life, where marriages are governed in so vast a proportion by convenience, prudence, self-interest – anything, in short, rather than deep sympathy between the parties – and, consequently, where so many men must be crossed in their inclinations, we yet hear of so few tragic catastrophes on that account. The king, however, was certainly among the number of those who are susceptible of a deep passion, if everything be true that is reported of him. All the world has heard that he was passionately devoted to the beautiful sister of the then Duke of Richmond.[26] That was before his marriage: and I believe it is certain, that he not only wished, but sincerely meditated, to have married her. So much is matter of notoriety. But other circumstances of the case have been sometimes reported, which imply great distraction of mind and a truly profound possession of his heart by that early passion: which, in a prince whose feelings are liable so much to the dispersing and dissipating power of endless interruption

* Accordingly, Coleridge has contended, and I think with truth, that the passion of Othello is *not* jealousy. So much I know by report, as the *result* of a lecture which he read at the Royal Institution.[24] His arguments I did not hear. To me it is evident that Othello's state of feeling was not that of a degrading, suspicious rivalship, but the state of perfect misery, arising out of this dilemma, the most affecting, perhaps, to contemplate of any which *can* exist, viz., the dire necessity of loving without limit one whom the heart pronounces to be unworthy of that love.

from new objects and fresh claims on the attention, coupled also with the fact, that he never, but in this one case, professed anything amounting to extravagant or frantic attachment, do seem to argue that the king was truly and passionately in love with Lady Sarah Lennox.[27] He had a *demon* upon him, and was under a real *possession.* If so, what a lively expression of the mixed condition of human fortunes, and not less of another truth equally affecting, viz., the dread conflicts with the will – the mighty agitations which silently and in darkness are convulsing many a heart, where, to the external eye all is tranquil – that this king, at the very threshold of his public career, at the very moment when he was binding about his brows the golden circle of sovereignty; when Europe watched him with interest, and the kings of the earth with envy, not one of the vulgar titles to happiness being wanting – youth, health, a throne the most splendid on this planet, general popularity amongst a nation of freemen, and the hope which belongs to powers as yet almost untried – that, even under these most flattering auspices, he should be called upon to make a sacrifice the most bitter of all to which human life is liable! He made it; and he might then have said to his people – 'For you, and to my public duties, I have made a sacrifice, which none of you would have made for me.' In years long ago, I have heard a woman of rank recurring to the circumstances of Lady Sarah's first appearance at court after the king's marriage. If I recollect rightly, it occurred after that lady's own marriage with Sir Charles Bunbury.[28] Many eyes were upon both parties at that moment – female eyes, especially – and the speaker did not disguise the excessive interest with which she herself observed them. Lady Sarah was not agitated, but the king *was.* He seemed anxious, sensibly trembled, changed colour, and *shivered* as Lady S.B. drew near. But, to quote the one single eloquent sentiment, which I remember after a lapse of thirty years, in Monk Lewis's Romantic Tales[29] – 'In this world all things pass away; blessed be Heaven, and the bitter pangs by which sometimes it is pleased to recall its wanderers, even our passions pass away!' And thus it happened that this storm also was laid asleep and forgotten, together with so many others of its kind that have been, and that shall be again, so long as man is man, and woman woman. Meantime, in justification of a passion so profound, one would be glad to think highly of the lady that inspired it; and, therefore, I heartily hope that the insults offered to her memory in the scandalous 'Memoirs of the Duc de Lauzun'[30] are mere calumnies, and records rather of his presumptuous wishes, than of any actual successes.*

* That book, I am aware, is generally treated as a forgery; but internal evidence, drawn from the tone and quality of the revelations there made, will not allow me to think it altogether such. There is an *abandon* and carelessness in parts which mark its sincerity. Its authenticity I cannot doubt. But *that* proves nothing for the truth of the particular stories which it contains. A book of scandalous and defamatory stories, especially where the writer has had the baseness to betray the confidence reposed in his honour by women, and to boast of favours alleged to have been granted him, it is always fair to consider as *ipso facto* a tissue of falsehoods; and on the

However, to leave dissertation behind me, and to resume the thread of my narrative, an incident, which about this period impressed me even more profoundly than my introduction to a royal presence, was my first visit to London.

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following argument, that these are exposures which, even if true, none but the basest of men would have made. Being, therefore, on the hypothesis most favourable to his veracity, the basest of men, the author is self-denounced as vile enough to have forged the stories, and cannot complain if he should be roundly accused of doing that which he has taken pains to prove himself capable of doing. This way of arguing might be applied with fatal effect to the Duc de Lauzun's 'Memoirs,' supposing them written with a view to publication. But, by possibility, that was not the case. The Duc de L. terminated his profligate life, as is well known, on the scaffold, during the storms of the French Revolution; and nothing in his whole career won him so much credit as the way in which he closed it; for he went to his death with a romantic carelessness, and even gaiety of demeanour.[31] His 'Memoirs' were not published by himself: the publication was posthumous; and by whom authorised, or for what purpose, is not exactly known. Probably the manuscript fell into mercenary hands, and was published merely on a speculation of pecuniary gain. From some passages, however, I cannot but infer that the writer did not mean to bring it before the public, but wrote it rather as a series of private memoranda, to aid his own recollection of circumstances and dates. The Duc de Lauzun's account of his intrigue with Lady Sarah goes so far as to allege, that he rode down in disguise, from London to Sir Charles B.'s country-seat, agreeably to a previous assignation, and that he was admitted, by that lady's confidential attendant, through a back staircase, at the time when Sir Charles (a foxhunter, but a man of the highest breeding and fashion) was himself at home, and occupied in the duties of hospitality.