











THE HAZLITTS



THE  
LAW OF  
THE  
STATE OF  
NEW YORK



GLADYS HENRIETTA CATHERINE HAZLITT

# THE HAZLITTS

## AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR ORIGIN AND DESCENT

WITH AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL PARTICULARS  
OF WILLIAM HAZLITT (1778-1830), NOTICES  
OF HIS RELATIVES AND IMMEDIATE POS-  
TERITY, AND A SERIES OF ILLUSTRATIVE  
LETTERS (1772-1865)

*William Carew Hazlitt*



WITH PORTRAITS AND FACSIMILES

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MCMXI

THE  
ANNALS  
OF THE  
ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON



TO  
THE MEMORY OF  
MY MOTHER  
I DEDICATE RESPECTFULLY  
THESE BIOGRAPHICAL COLLECTIONS  
CONCERNING  
THE HAZLITTS



## LEAF OF MOTTOES, &c.

“ Dear Hazlitt, whose tact intellectual is such  
That it seems to feel truth, as one’s fingers do touch,—  
Who in politics, arts, metaphysics, poetics,  
To critics in these times, are health to cosmetics.

“ And nevertheless—or, I should rather say,  
For that very reason—can relish boys’ play,  
And turning, on all sides through pleasures and cares,  
Find nothing more precious than laughs and fresh airs.”  
—LEIGH HUNT, 1818.

“ I should belie my own conscience, if I said less, than that I think  
W. H. to be, in his natural and healthy state, one of the wisest and finest  
spirits breathing. So far from being ashamed of that intimacy which was  
betwixt us, it is my boast that I was able for so many years to have pre-  
served it entire, and I think I shall go to my grave without finding, or  
expecting to find, such another companion.”—CHARLES LAMB, 1823.

“ I get no conversation in London that is absolutely worth attending  
to but his.”—C. LAMB.

“ Through good and ill report, honour and blame,  
Steadfast he kept his faith—firmly adhered  
To his first creed, nor slight nor censure feared.  
The cause hath triumphed—Hazlitt but a name !  
What matters it, since Hazlitt’s name shall stand,—  
Despite detraction’s venom, tyrants’ rage,—  
The Patriot, Philosopher, and Sage,  
High in the annals of his native land !  
Oh ! say not then that Hazlitt died too soon,  
Since he had fought and conquered—though the strife  
Cost him his health—his happiness—his life—  
Freely he yielded up the noble boon !  
He saw the mists of error roll away,  
And closed his eyes—but on the rising day.”  
—Mrs. BRYAN of Stowmarket, Suffolk, 1836.

“ I suspect that half which the unobservant have taken literally, he  
meant, secretly, in sarcasm. As Johnson in conversation, so Hazlitt in  
books, pushed his own theories to the extreme, partly to show his power,

partly, perhaps, from contempt of the logic of his readers. He wrote rather for himself than others, and often seems to vent all his least assured and most uncertain thoughts—as if they troubled him by the doubts they inspired, and his only anxiety was to get rid of them. He had a keen sense of the Beautiful and Subtle ; and what is more, he was deeply imbued with sympathies for the Humane. He ranks high amongst the social writers—his intuitive feeling was in favour of the multitude ;—yet had he nothing of the demagogue in literature ; he did not pander to a single vulgar passion.”—BULWER LYTTON, 1836.

“ Without the imagination and extreme facility of Coleridge, he had almost as much subtlety and far more steadfastness of mind.”—BARRY CORNWALL, 1836.

It was a saying of Robert Louis Stevenson, that some of us might think ourselves very fine fellows, but that we could not write like Hazlitt.

For W. H., 1778-1830.

“ Between the wet trees and the sorry steeple  
Keep, Time, in dark Soho what once was Hazlitt,  
Seeker of Truth, and finder oft of Beauty ;

Beauty’s a sinking light, ah ! none too faithful,  
But Truth, who leaves so here her spent outrider,  
Forgets not her great pawn : herself shall claim it.

Therefore sleep safe, thou dear and battling spirit !  
Safe also on our earth, begetting ever  
Some one love worth the ages and the nations.

Nothing falls under to thine eyes eternal,  
Sleep safe in dark Soho : the stars are shining ;  
Titian and Wordsworth live ; the People marches.”

—LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY of Norwood,  
Massachusetts.

## PREFACE

THE aim and limit of the present publication are to draw together in a convenient form and compass such documents, letters, facts, and points of character as have slowly accumulated from a variety of sources, and have, with some notable exceptions, been printed by me between 1867 and 1900. The space, to which I was bound by consideration of expense to restrict myself, has not permitted the repetition of anything approaching the whole of the textual matter already made available, unless more recent researches had necessitated a revision or recall of former views or opinions, where my stores have become what they are by a remarkably slow process of recovery. The memorials here collected do not extend, as a rule, beyond the life and times of my grandfather, but a few items of later date have gained admittance, particularly some biographical data illustrative of the career of my father just subsequently to Hazlitt's death.

A leading source for an account of the ancestors of Hazlitt, is the manuscript drawn up by his sister Margaret for the use of his only son, her nephew and my father, and comprehending within its limits, with a biographical sketch of our more immediate precursors, a rather vivid glimpse of the state of Ireland in 1780 and a yet more striking picture of the condition of the United States of America from 1783 to 1787. This valuable record may be presumed to have owed more or less to a journal kept by the

Rev. W. Hazlitt, to which an allusion occurs hereafter. For my fuller knowledge of the collateral branch of the family, that of James Hazlitt, younger son of John Hazlitt of Shronell, and my paternal great-uncle, I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Sayers of Gooldscross, co. Dublin. The Sayers family intermarried twice with the Hazlitts in the eighteenth century. But I was first prompted to institute inquiries in Ireland by the discovery at Dublin of books belonging to a Hazlitt in the seventeenth century.

A complementary undertaking, like the present, following and covering the same ground as my previous labours on the subject, and on the one hand supplying new particulars, and on the other correcting or amplifying some already published, confronts one with the dilemma, how one should deal with the somewhat extensive correspondence in type between the Hazlitts and the Lambs, which the present writer led the way in enabling those interested to peruse and study in its full and genuine state, and I have arrived at the conclusion that I must refrain from reproduction of matter so readily accessible and occupying so large a space, and take for granted that readers, solicitous of farther information, will know where to find it.

I therefore propose to introduce explanatory paragraphs where they are indispensable in order to render the sense clear.

The habit on the part of Hazlitt of repeating in different and even in casual places the same sentiment or anecdote more or less varied involved occasional collation and editorship. It was my original plan and wish to have divided the work into two sections, *Autobiography* and *Analecta*, inasmuch as Hazlitt went so far to leave his own story behind him, subject to arrangement or consolidation.

But I found such a large admixture of the two features or elements in immediate contact, each essential to the complete grasp of the facts, that I was obliged to decide in favour of the more usual treatment of the text, although, as will be manifest, the autobiographical form necessarily predominates; it is carefully distinguished by enclosure within inverted commas.

The copies made at the Louvre in 1802-3, formerly in the possession of the family, were presented, with many other paintings and miniatures by my grandfather and his brother, and heirlooms of various kinds, by the present writer in 1909, to the Museum and Library at Maidstone, Kent, my grandfather's birthplace.

W. CAREW HAZLITT.

*March 1911.*





OF the paintings executed by Hazlitt at different ages, but principally between 1802 and 1804, the subjoined list is believed to be tolerably complete:—

Twelve pictures copied at the Louvre in 1802 for Mr. Railton of Liverpool. Some of these were doubtless duplicates of those to be mentioned.

- |   |   |          |
|---|---|----------|
| The Transfiguration . . . . .   | } | Raphaël. |
| The Holy Family . . . . .   |   |          |
| Leo X. . . . .  |   |          |
| A Young Neapolitan Nobleman . . . . .   | } | Titian.  |
| Hippolito de' Medici . . . . .  |   |          |
| Young Man with the Glove . . . . .  |   |          |
| A Nymph and Satyr . . . . .   |   |          |
| Titian's Mistress . . . . .   |   |          |
| Count Ugolino, a Sketch (a Pisan story)   |   |          |
| Sketch of a Head. Tintoretto.   |   |          |
| The Deluge. Poussin.  |   |          |
| The Death of Clorinda. Lodovico Lana of Modena (1597-1646).                               |   |          |
| Portrait of a Lady. Vandyke.  |   |          |
| An Old Cottager (1803).   |   |          |
| Portrait of the Rev. W. Hazlitt.  |   |          |
| „ „ Charles Lamb.   |   |          |
| „ „ S. T. Coleridge. Painted for Sir George Beaumont in 1803.                             |   |          |
| „ „ Hartley Coleridge.  |   |          |
| „ „ W. Wordsworth (destroyed).  |   |          |
| „ „ Rev. Dr. Shepherd of Gateacre.  |   |          |
| „ „ Sir Joshua Reynolds (half-length).  |   |          |
| „ „ Himself (half-length, full face).   |   |          |
| „ „ ——— head and shoulders (coloured drawing, full face).                                 |   |          |
| A pencil drawing of Middleton Cottage, Winterslow, the residence of the Stoddarts (1808). |   |          |
| Portraits of James Sheridan Knowles and his daughter (about 1820).                        |   |          |

Peggy Hazlitt was also a successful essayist in oils, and was a good painter in landscape and of poultry and flowers. If she had had instruction she would have made an excellent artist. Several examples of her work are extant.

The extant portraits of my grandfather are tolerably numerous, and range in date between 1787 and 1825. The earliest likeness of him which the family possesses was painted by his brother on ivory in brooch-size while he was in America with his family or shortly after their return, representing a beautiful little boy, with blue eyes, and long rich brown hair falling over his shoulders. This lets us see what William Hazlitt was at an age when most children have no formed expression; and even then there are promising symptoms in the turn of the mouth and inarticulate eloquence of the eyes.<sup>1</sup> He kept this portrait by him in a case, and occasionally glanced at it, but there seemed to him, he says, a very faint trace in it of the man. The next is a miniature, three-quarter size, painted in 1791 by John Hazlitt. He was then thirteen: the resemblance between it and the former are so strikingly powerful, that each seems to corroborate the fidelity of the other. His brother also took him in oils, three-quarter size, at the ages of nineteen and thirty.

The chalk drawing by William Bewick was taken in Scotland in 1822. It exhibits him without a neck-cloth, and with his hair straggling, and just beginning to be thin over the temples.

An attempt to paint himself was made late in life. He sat opposite a looking-glass, and drew himself to the shoulders, and afterward coloured the drawing, the back of a book serving him for an easel. The likeness, which *is* in a manner like, is the most *curious*, if not the most valuable, of the por-

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced on the title-page.

traits. Here, too, the neckcloth is missing. It represents him with his hair cropped, and he did not wear it so, till it began to betray some symptoms of turning grey, about the time of his visit to France and Italy in 1824-25.

From the cast taken by Mr. Horne after the death of Hazlitt, and one or two of the portraits of him taken at different periods, Mr. Joseph Durham, the eminent sculptor, executed a bust, which Mr. and Mrs. Procter, who knew the original intimately, pronounced a happy and close likeness. There were four copies made, of which three were reserved by the family. One was accidentally destroyed.

George Daniel of Canonbury, who was introduced to him at Lamb's in 1817, and whose portrait John Hazlitt appears to have executed in miniature in 1810, characterizes him as "a pale-faced, spare man, with sharp, expressive features, and hollow, piercing eyes, who would, after his earnest and fanciful fashion, anatomize the character of Hamlet, and find in it certain points of resemblance to a peculiar class of mankind."

There is a three-quarter portrait of Hazlitt, in oils, painted by his brother about this time, which certainly bears out Daniel's sketch; you see there a person, five-and-thirty or so, thin almost to emaciation, and wan and worn with study, the expression earnest, with a touch of melancholy; the hair closely cropped, though not yet "powdered," and the coat buttoned up, as if he desired to shut himself up in his thoughts, and to keep the world at a distance.

John Hazlitt painted a miniature of him on ivory some years earlier—about the date of his marriage, I suppose; and it partakes of the same character very much: there is the same eager look and *dissecting* eye, the same anatomical physiognomy and outline.

Hazlitt was of a slight make, and of a dry, lean constitution; but his frame was wiry and compact, and down nearly to the close of his life he was capable of fully his fair share of physical exertion. He does not seem to have ever had recourse to glasses; but in late years there is a suggestion emanating from himself that he would draw up the book in his hand rather closer to his eyes.

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LIST OF BOOKS traceable to the Rev. William Hazlitt:—

*Fratres Poloni*, 5 vols. folio, 1656.

Caryl's *Commentary on Job*.

Neal's *History of the Puritans*.

Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, with Gribelin's etchings.

Priestley's Works. Presentation copies from the author.

Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*.

Calamy's *Account of the Ejected Ministers*.

Cooke's *British Novelists*. An illustrated edition, published in sixpenny numbers. It included *Tom Jones*, and was Hazlitt's first introduction to a knowledge of the book.

\* \* I have speculated whether there was not a copy of Amory's *John Bunce* at Wem. It was a book familiar to his son, and one of Unitarian interest.

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LIST OF BOOKS which belonged to William Hazlitt or passed through his hands. The titles are given in brief:—

Hazlitt's *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs*, 1806.

— *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817.

— *Letter to Gifford*, 1819.

Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*.

Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*.

- Tingry's *Painter's and Varnisher's Guide*, 1804.  
 Keats' *Poems*, 1820. A presentation copy.  
 — *Endymion*.  
 Moore's *Fudge Family in Paris*. Presentation copy.  
 Milton's *Paradise Lost*.  
 Milman's *Fazio*.  
 Schiller's *Don Carlos*, translated by John Stoddart. Probably  
 a presentation copy.  
*The Tattler*.  
*Corinne*.  
 Mrs. Inchbald and Mrs. Barbauld.  
 Richardson and Fielding.  
 Shakespear.  
 American Farmer's *Letters*, 1782.  
 Irving's *Orations*.  
 Flaxman's *Lectures on Sculpture*, 1829.  
 Hook's *Sayings and Doings*.  
 Mignet's *French Revolution*.  
*Gil Blas*.  
*Arabian Nights*.  
 Rousseau's *New Héloïse*.  
 — *Emile*.  
 — *Confessions*.  
*Paul and Virginia*.  
 Madame D'Arblay's *Camilla*.  
 Congreve's *Love for Love*.  
 Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*.  
 — *Sentimental Journey*.  
 Fielding's *Tom Jones*.  
 Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle*.  
 Richardson's *Pamela*.  
 Hobbes's *Leviathan*.  
 Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*.  
 Edwards's *Inquiry concerning Free-Will*. } (Bound  
 Priestley's *Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity*. } together.)  
 Chalmers's *Sermons on Astronomy*.  
 Holcroft's *Road to Ruin*, with Hazlitt's MSS. notes, which have  
 been printed.  
 Coleridge's *Christabel*. A MS. copy made by Miss Stoddart.  
 The blank leaves of the volume were utilized by Hazlitt  
 for reporting notes and a sketch or two.  
 Fenelon's *Telemachus*.  
 De Stutt-Tracey's *Ideologic*.  
 Petrarch and Dante. Bought at Rome in 1825.  
 Sieyes. Mentioned in a letter of 1827. Probably the pamph-  
 let, "Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat? 1789."

The successive residences of Hazlitt after quitting the paternal home were, so far as one can collect :—

- His brother's house in Rathbone Place (1793-1804).
- Great Russell Street (1804-5).
- 9 Southampton Buildings (1806-7). Intermittently.
- His wife's cottage at Winterslow (1808).
- York Street, Westminster (1812).
- King Street, Somers Town (1819).
- 34 Southampton Buildings (1820-22). Intermittently.
- Winterslow Hut (1815-28). Intermittently.
- 4 Chapel Street West, Curzon Street (1823).
- 10 Down Street, Piccadilly (1824).
- During portions of 1824-25 he was on the Continent.
- 40 Half Moon Street, Piccadilly (1826-29).
- Bouverie Street, Fleet Street (1829-30).
- 6 Frith Street, Soho (1830).

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UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA

# THE HAZLITTS

## I

### THE BEGINNINGS

It has been found a difficult task to trace the origin and descent of the Hayslett, Haslett, Hazlette, or Hazlitt family, and the process has not only involved the occasional labour of many years, but is to this moment imperfect and obscure. The same unsatisfactory conditions surround the genealogical and biographical history of our foregoers by marriage; and there seems to have been altogether an insensibility to the utility and value of preserving records owing to the not unusual absence of an interest in any circumstances outside the current concerns of daily life, and perhaps of employments leaving no incidental or indirect traces behind them. The early Hazlitts were apparently practical and incurious, and down to the second half of the eighteenth century may have been engaged in pursuits, even of a more or less lucrative and respectable character, of which the memorials have not been handed down or have perished. Our ancestors lived first in the north, and subsequently both in the north and south, of Ireland, and passed through a long period of political trouble, more particularly during the Civil War; and a quite recent discovery corroborates an opinion of long standing, that the family was at one time in the

enjoyment of superior fortunes, and suffered a prolonged eclipse under the second Stuart.

I am disposed to incline to the view, which I have heard more than once confidently expressed, that the first Hazlitt who set foot in the north of Ireland, either in Derry or in Coleraine, was a person of Scottish origin; and his advent, if such a theory be accepted, was arguably coeval with the establishment of the Ulster Plantation in 1608. It is to be concluded that two books belonging to the first decade of the seventeenth century—Lescarbot's *Nova Francia*, 1609, and *Certaine Matters Concerning the Realme of Scotland*, 1603—were once the property of a gentleman of education living at that time. They equally bear the contemporary signature of *John Hayslett*

Autograph of John Hayslett.

in a cultivated hand. One of them, at all events, is upon a subject which would naturally attract the notice of a North Briton, both such volumes as a gentleman of position might be apt to buy.<sup>1</sup> And the twofold question arises, whether this new light on our stock is capable of supporting the hypothesis that we were in Ireland at that date in the person of this gentleman, and had not then long since—perhaps with the first Stuart—left an anterior home in Scotland.

If such were absolutely the case, John Hayslett and his immediate issue may be held to represent the original and more flourishing era of the family, before it and innumerable others witnessed the ruin of their

<sup>1</sup> See my *Roll of Honour*, 1908, p. 105.

estates and the consequent decadence of their social standing, when the intestine disorders, culminating in the revolutionary struggle of 1640-48, convulsed and desolated Ireland from end to end.

Between the personage, whom I thus permit myself to regard as the founder, or at all events as the first identifiable holder, of our name on Irish ground, and the next link in the chain there is a broken continuity which I do not pretend to supply or complete, beyond the fact that in the first quarter of the eighteenth century there were Hazlitts remaining in Derry and Coleraine, and that a branch had settled at Shrone-hill or Shronell in Tipperary, and was represented in and about 1715 by John Hazlitt, who is described in official documents as a merchant. Those members of the family who stayed in the north are said to have engaged in the rather fluctuating flax trade; but the precise occupation of John Hazlitt of Shronell does not transpire, although it may be presumed that it did not comprise the industry just specified, which was not followed in the south. It still remains a staple in the north.

But if it be the case that a Hazlitt was associated in business or otherwise with John Damer, there is barely an alternative to the conclusion that this was the Damer of Damer's Court, who died in 1768 at Shronell without issue, and who had succeeded his uncle in a very large property in Queen's County and elsewhere in 1720. The acquaintance between the two men may very well have been of lengthened duration; it is more than probable that Hazlitt, on his first arrival at Shronell, found Damer already established there, and joined him in his business, ultimately and during Damer's life starting on his own account, and becoming the *Mercator*, which we find him designated in 1756 and 1762. At that date he had grown sufficiently prosperous to send two of his sons in succes-

sion to the University of Glasgow, a not unusual destination for Irish boys, on leaving school, in the eighteenth century. A third son emigrated to America, and entered the military service. John Hazlitt had at least four daughters: Elizabeth (the eldest child), who married and had a large family; Sara, Jane and Maria. The son, who became a soldier, served under Washington in the War of Independence, and attained the rank of colonel; but died shortly after the peace, from his arduous exertions in the cause, unmarried and in the prime of life. Some of the children of his sister Elizabeth, who was not happy in her marriage, also emigrated to America. The United States in their very infancy already held many of our name and lineage.

The Hazlitt who first removed to Shronell, and whose birth I have to fix conjecturally about 1710, as his second child was born in 1737, left behind him many of the same stock in Derry and Coleraine, of whom at least the latter claimed cousinhood with those of Shronell, and of whom both continue to maintain a respectable social standing; and concurrently, or nearly so, with the departure of John Hazlitt the younger of Shronell for the new country, four brothers—John, Joseph, William, and James—left Coleraine for the same ostensible purpose—the better prospect of a successful career. Of three of the number I have no farther knowledge; but John also gained distinction under Washington, and fell at the head of his regiment at the battle of Princeton in 1777. He had equally obtained the rank of colonel, and left a widow, whom our family met at Philadelphia in 1785, and at the marriage of whose daughter my great-grandmother was present. She was still in the possession of a share of her youthful beauty, and the miniaturist, though much her junior, was smitten by her personal attractions. She subse-



quently visited England, and John Hazlitt painted her portrait.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Harriet Hazlitt must have married very early in life, for the miniature, taken somewhere about the end of the century, represents her as a woman hardly beyond her prime. It was through the Coleraine branch and this lady that we acquired consanguinity with the presidential families of Quincy and Adams.

It may prove nothing beyond the reasonable fact that the Irish Haysletts passed over to England even before the time of John Hayslett, that the name of John Haslett, a vaulter, occurs in the diary of Philip Henslowe in the time of Elizabeth, and became more or less common from the eighteenth century downward in various spheres of life alike in England and Ireland. The form Haslett is retained by some of the Irish Hazlitts to the present day, and the father of Hazlitt himself at first adopted that spelling, or at all events did not rigidly adhere to the other; but in family deeds executed in Ireland between 1778 and 1818 we meet only with *Hazlitt*. In the registers of Glasgow University (1756) *Hazelitt* is found. It was my father's idea that the name is Dutch (*Haesluyt*), which is plausible, since it does not appear to be either Scottish or Irish.

I have now to return to the Hazlitt removes from the north to the south of Ireland: John Hazlitt and Margaret, his wife, who had three sons and four daughters.

Of Margaret Hazlitt her namesake the Diarist draws a very pleasing and favourable picture. The first-born child had been a daughter; but a son, who was named William, was born at Shronell, 18th April, 1737. It was the mother's particular ambition that he should be brought up with a view to the Church, and accordingly in 1756, in his nineteenth

<sup>1</sup> It is in my possession. It probably belongs to 1789-90.

year, after a preparatory course at the local grammar school, William Hazlitt of Shronell was sent to the University of Glasgow, where he was contemporary with Adam Smith. He matriculated on the 13th November the same year, and there is the following entry in the university books :—

“ Nov. 13, 1756. — Logic Class. Prof. James Clow, A.M. Gulielmus Hazelitt, filius natus maximus Joannis, mercatoris in comitatu de Tipperary.”

The books of graduates from 1730 to 1762 have disappeared, and it cannot therefore be ascertained with similar precision when he took his degree of *Artium Magister*. But it must have been about 1761. He divided his time between Divinity and Physics. “ From the pleasure,” says his daughter, “ with which he always spoke of Glasgow, and with which he remembered his college days, his time there must have passed very pleasantly.”

The very indistinct light, in which we find ourselves so far moving, makes me speak with diffidence and hesitation, where my more or less casual guides fail me ; yet there may be no harm in suggesting that the ostensible bias of Margaret Hazlitt toward the Church, in which her husband may be supposed to have at least acquiesced, lends a support to the theory, or something more, of a primary Scottish extraction and a leaning to Presbyterianism, which is just a little fortified by the evident interest of the earlier John Hayslett in Scottish affairs.

The certificates which my ancestor brought away with him from Glasgow, or at least such as appear to survive, after undergoing a satisfactory examination, in 1757–59 were as follow :—

These are to certify to all whom it may concern ; that William Hazlette, of the County of Tipperary, in Ireland, has been a Regular student of the University of Glasgow during



the present session of College, and, among other classes, has attended my Lectures on the Greek language; that his attendance has been punctual and diligent, and his behaviour in all respects sober, modest, and regular, as became a student, so far as I have had occasion to know: of all which I give him this Testimony, under my hand at the College of Glasgow. April the 28th, 1757.

J.A. Moor, Greek Prof.<sup>1</sup>

This is to certify to all whom it may concern, that William Hazlette of the County of Tipperary, in Ireland, has been a regular student at the University of Glasgow, during the present Session of College, and among other studys has attended the Greek Lectures, one hour each day; that his attendance has been regular, and his whole behaviour sober and modest as became a student, of all which I give him this testimony under my hand at the College, Glasgow. May 19th, 1758.

J.A. Moor, Greek Prof.

To all whom it may concern. William Hazlitt of the County of Tipperary, in Ireland, has been a Regular student of the University of Glasgow, in the Natural Philosophy Class, during the present session of College, being the third year of his standing in the University; and has, among other classes, attended, during the said session, the Lectures on the Greek language, punctually and assiduously, one hour each day, behaving himself in all other respects as became a student, so far as I have had occasion to know. Of all which I give him this testimony under my hand, at the College, Glasgow. April 24th, 1759.

J.A. Moor.

The expenses of an education at Glasgow at that period were about £20 of our money, and a person could live very fairly at Glasgow upon seven or eight shillings a week, as James Watt once did, but that was exclusive of rent.<sup>2</sup> The presence of two of his sons at the University therefore by no means necessarily implies that John Hazlitt of Shronell was the possessor of large means; but it does seem to imply that he wished his children to reap certain advantages

<sup>1</sup> Professor Moor projected an edition of Pappus of Alexandria and one of the Works of Plato; but neither undertaking was carried out.

<sup>2</sup> *Biography and Criticism*, 1860, p. 3.

of mental culture not to be had nearer home in his day.

The Rev. William Hazlitt, apart from his probably modest resources, however, must have fared hardly in his earlier experiences, in his removal from Ireland to Scotland, and in his ultimate settlement in England. For the conditions of travel in the middle of the eighteenth century, alike overland and by sea, were, if not costly, barbarous and primitive in the last degree for all persons of small means, and continued to be so very long after that time. In a journey from Glasgow to London by road the causeway across heath and fen was the exclusive resource until Grantham in Lincolnshire was reached, and the turnpike road system commenced, and a gentleman riding on horseback in 1739 found these causeways so narrow, that when he met a party going in an opposite direction, it was necessary to leave the track, and take his chance of regaining it.

Having graduated at Glasgow, as we may with a certainty of not being far from the truth assume, in 1761, William Hazlitt joined the Unitarians, and crossed over to England—the first of the race who had tried to find a home on English ground. He was a man of inflexible probity, solid erudition, equal charity of feeling and practice, and of a decidedly intellectual bent of mind, but of peculiarly unambitious temperament, humble in his tastes as he was in his fortunes: a very fair pattern of an old English pastor. Nearly all his long life was passed in the country in charge of Unitarian congregations here or there.

His brother James, who was born in 1748, and was therefore several years his junior, was also educated at Glasgow, to which he appears to have been sent at a very early age:—

“Nov. 13, 1762.—Logic Class. Prof. James Clow. Jacobus Hazelitt, filius natus secundus Joannis, mercatoris in par. de Shronhill in com. Tipperary.”

“[A. M.] Jacobus Hazelitt, Hibernus, Maii 21mo. 1767.”

The designation *mercator*, applied here and in the previous entry to the father, was one then well understood in Scotland in the sense of a general dealer, which to a slight extent helps to support the idea already broached of the cradle of our family.

James Hazlitt of Shronell, who had been equally intended for the Church, and who had been sent to the university with that view, when his elder brother had left or was leaving it, is stated to have been disgusted by the austere manners of the Dissenters, and to have parted from them—a dereliction his mother never could relish. Miss Hazlitt, his niece, states that when she and her parents saw him, he had taken a curacy at St. Mary's Church, Dublin, but that the living of Castle-Bar, in Mayo, was subsequently given to him. The testimony at my command may or may not exactly tally with this account (though the two are not irreconcilable), for the tradition in the family itself is that he married a Miss Anne Brazier of Limerick County, with whom the story used to go that he eloped, taking her on a pannier behind his saddle, and swimming across the Shannon. One of his sisters, Jane or Jennie, having married James Sayers of Fethard, he was perhaps induced to migrate thither, where he purchased the lease of a property in the town on July 15, 1797, and acquired in 1800 the fee for £4000. He had established a tan-yard in Fethard<sup>1</sup> and flour mills in Maryville, outside the town, and accumu-

<sup>1</sup> Existing documents prove that his business was extensive and important. The tan-yard still exists, but the pits are covered up, and the place is devoted to other purposes.

lated a considerable fortune in land and money. He was evidently a man of signal commercial ability, and was held in the highest respect. He died on the 17th April, 1808, aged sixty, and the freemen, burgesses, and general inhabitants of Fethard erected to his memory in the churchyard a marble monument commemorative of his excellent qualities in all the relations of life. The estate was assessed for duty at £17,000, which would represent upward of £20,000 of current money, especially in Ireland, and may not have included all his possessions.

Miss Hazlitt remarks: "His last days were harassed by the performance of his duty as a magistrate, which obliged him to commit to prison as rebels poor deluded wretches, whom he thought it would have been a more Christian act to feed and instruct." This gentleman's career was apparently diverted from its original course, like that of the Essayist and Critic—in this case from the Church to trade, clearly here, too, his truer bent. That the English branch was financially less successful than the Irish one must be largely set down to political agencies.

Of his sisters, Jenny, popularly known as "Mammy Jennie," is alleged to have possessed a charm for curing sprains by rubbing her hand over the joint either of man or beast.

James Hazlitt left three sons, Kilner, James, and Samuel, and two daughters. The eldest and second sons, through their profligacy and extravagance, squandered, between 1821 and 1836, the whole of the patrimony, except the freehold bought in 1800, which came to Samuel, and is still possessed by his representatives. Samuel, who married, when he was about forty, Miss Ryall of Robertstown, Co. Meath, had one son, James, and four daughters, of whom only one, married to Mr. Hugh Sayers of Gooldscross,

Co. Dublin, survived her father. He is described as a medical man, "very peculiar, very clever, a deep reader and thinker, and in monetary affairs very indifferent and careless." Like his father James, he was an expert horseman and devoted to sport. It is related of him that for a bet he rode a horse over the rectory gate at Fethard on a dark night, his sole guide being two candles, one on each side of the piers. The gate, which is still there, is 4 feet 9 inches high. He died in 1893. His daughter-in-law, the present Mrs. Hazlitt of Fethard, who was the daughter of Dr. Woodroffe of Dublin, informed me (June 12, 1910), when I called upon her, that Samuel Hazlitt was what in England formerly as well as in Ireland was understood as a general medical practitioner, but was nominally an apothecary. Some features in his character remind us of his cousin the Essayist. Heredity has a charm even in its possibilities.

John Hazlitt of Shronell and his wife lived to a very advanced age. They lie, with some of their children and descendants, in Shronell churchyard, where the remains of John Damer likewise repose. I have no means of tracing John Hazlitt after 1762.<sup>1</sup>

The Hazlitts of Shronell might well have known two generations of Damer (1632-1768); but the families appear to have lost sight of each other, and there are no longer any of the name of Damer in Tipperary. It is observable, and a subject for regret, that between the Hazlitts, who sought a new home and a better fortune in England, and those who remained behind in Ireland, the relations and intercourse appear to have suffered, so far as available

<sup>1</sup> The registers of Shronell, preserved in the Record Office, Dublin, do not go back beyond 1780. Those of Fethard were accidentally destroyed in a fire at the parsonage while the church was under repair.



records serve us, an almost absolute discontinuance. If the two sons of John Hazlitt of Shronell corresponded or exchanged visits, or if such was the case with other members of the families, there is next to nothing to shew.

## II

### THE HAZLITTS IN ENGLAND—RETURN TO IRELAND—DEPARTURE FOR AMERICA

(1760-87)

FOR a short time, subsequently to his settlement in England, my great-grandfather was chaplain to a member of the Jocelyn family of Hyde Hall, Sawbridgeworth, Herts, apparently to Sir Conyers Jocelyn, Bart., who died in 1770.<sup>1</sup> In 1764 he was invited to preach, as the usual probationary step, before an Unitarian congregation at Wisbeach, in the Isle of Ely, and held the place till 1766. It was here that a highly-important event in his own life, and, I believe, in the intellectual history of the family, occurred; for he met during his term of ministry his future wife, Grace Loftus—"a very beautiful young girl," says her daughter Margaret, "elegant in her person and manners, and beloved by all who knew her." The lady had lost her father shortly before the union, which took place at Peterborough from the house of her intended sister-in-law, Miss Coulson, on January 19, 1766. Mr. Hazlitt's wife had been born July 21, 1746, and was nine years his junior. She used to be thought so like William Pitt about the mouth that she might have passed for his sister. She had the same thinness of lip.

"My grandfather, Thomas Loftus," pursues the author of the narrative, "in the year 1725, married

<sup>1</sup> This gentleman was apparently eldest son and successor of Sir Strange Jocelyn, and came to the title in 1734. He died unmarried.

Miss Grace Pentlow, the daughter of a gentleman in Oxfordshire. Mr. Pentlow was once possessed of an estate of £400 a year . . . near Henley-on-Thames, and he lived some time at Banbury,<sup>1</sup> and afterwards at Oxford; and I have heard my grandmother tell of two yew-trees cut into the shape of giants, standing at the entrance to the Botanical Gardens there, of whom she stood in great dread. . . . He was twice married. . . . My grandmother, who was the daughter of the second wife, had nothing to recommend her but good sense, prudence, a true heart, and a fair face. She was very pale, and her hair black, and her figure very good. She was eleven years old when Queen Anne died. The news of her death came on a Sunday morning, and the Dissenters, who were waiting in fear of having their meetings shut up, went joyfully to their prayers. . . . My grandmother was twenty-two when she married Mr. Loftus. . . . They had four children, but my uncle and mother only lived to grow up. . . .”

The former appears to have had a son of the same name as his grandfather, in whom Hazlitt saw a strong likeness to himself, and both present themselves in the present narrative, Hazlitt's paternal uncle and cousin respectively. In the *Plain Speaker* the uncle is introduced as a person apt to fix on the same book, and select the same favourite passages—the writer instances *Tristram Shandy*—and in the same page there are indications of a common relish for certain pictures, of which “an old hair-brained

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Pentlow, apparently of Banbury, occurs as a member of the Northampton Committee in 1645, and he is in that capacity a signatory to a letter to an unnamed correspondent in reference to the imprisonment of Captain Eyre at Banbury.—Beesley's *Hist. of Banbury*, p. 407.

The Pentlows of Oxfordshire were possibly connected with Pentlow and Pentlow Hall, a parish and manor in Essex, of which a copious account is given by Morant. There is a Pentlow Street, Putney, Surrey.



uncle of mine" would talk, when they met, years after the first view together. This testimony appears to denote a germ or source of the feeling for art and literature on the maternal as well as on the other side.

Defoe, it appears, found the Loftus family in his time one of the leading Dissenting houses in Wisbeach. Mr. Loftus, Mrs. Hazlitt's father, was an ironmonger, like the grandfather of the first Lord Foley; his place of business was in the market-place. Miss Hazlitt notes: "He was, I have been told, very handsome, and mild and gentle in his manners, never being moved to violent anger, except when anyone told him a falsehood—a thing he never could tolerate. . . . The father of Mr. Loftus was a watchmaker, and came from Hull in Yorkshire, with the grandfather of William Godwin, author of *Political Justice*, to settle in Wisbeach.<sup>1</sup> I have heard Godwin speak of a watch in his possession made by the elder Loftus. . . . Mr. Godwin, the father of William, was the minister at Wisbeach when my mother was a little girl. I have heard her speak of going on a Saturday afternoon to draw the still younger Godwins in their little coach. They all rejoiced to see their friend Grace, and William had not yet dreamed of *Caleb Williams*."

The Godwins quitted Wisbeach in 1758, and the tie between them and the future Mrs. Hazlitt and her family had been severed for the time.

<sup>1</sup> It appears to me not improbable that Loftus of Wisbeach was originally a branch of Loftus of Fethard in Tipperary, and that it was in that way that the Hazlitts were led to bend their footsteps thither. The Loftuses appear to have had at one time considerable property in Wisbeach and the neighbourhood, a small portion only of which remained in the hands of my acquaintance, the incumbent of a parish in Wiltshire, whom I last saw in 1874. The seafaring experiences of Charles Loftus, *My Youth by Sea and Land*, 1809-16, appeared in 1876.

The name in England is not common. A George Loftus or Loftis was a popular publisher in the time of James I., and I find John Loftus the owner of an early school-book of 1631 with the date 1639 as that of acquisition or possession. The name will recur.

“My father and mother soon after their marriage went to Marshfield, in Gloucestershire.<sup>1</sup> Here they lived four years with a poor but friendly people, whom they visited in a simple, old-fashioned manner, going without an invitation, when they had leisure or inclination, to take their tea at whatever house they found to be disengaged, the hour four. . . . At Marshfield almost all the people were maltsters, and found a ready sale in Bristol and Bath for their malt. . . . At Marshfield John and Loftus were born. Loftus died at Maidstone, in Kent, at the age of two years and a half. . . . John was baptized by his father, July 6, 1767.

“In June 1770 my father removed to Maidstone, where he settled as the pastor of the Earl Street Meeting House. Here he and my mother were much beloved. When I paid a visit to Maidstone many years<sup>2</sup> after we left it, I was told by those who had known her when young, of the admiration her beauty and the elegance of her manners obtained. Here they remained ten years, and acquired the most firm and respectable friends (Dr. Priestley, Dr. Price, Dr. Kippis, &c.). . . . But my father’s nearest and most beloved friends were Mr. Wiche, a Baptist minister, who lived at Maidstone, Mr. Viny of Tenterden, and [the Rev. Samuel] Thomas, minister of Eustace Street Chapel, now Stephen’s Green Church, Dublin. For these three he bore the love of a brother, and no cloud of dissension ever cast a shade over their friendship.” The Rev. Dr. Caleb Fleming was another member of his intimate circle.

“At Mr. Viny’s Dr. Franklin was often a visitor, and here my father used to meet him. . . . Mr. Thomas was about my father’s age, and died young. He and my father took different views of the politics

<sup>1</sup> Five miles from Bath and on the confines of Wiltshire.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently in 1790.

of the time, and the American War was a fruitful source of dispute between them. . . . Besides these, my father enjoyed the friendship of many of his neighbours: Mrs. Lewis, the widow of his predecessor. . . .”

During the earlier years of his sojourn at Maidstone, Mr. Hazlitt occupied himself with contributions to the *Monthly Repository* under the *noms de plume* of Rationalis and Philaethes, and with correspondence. In 1772 Dr. Priestley was hearing from him,<sup>1</sup> and the literary intercourse between Priestley, Price, Kippis, and Franklin seems to have been considerable, although it has very imperfectly survived. Priestley's papers perished in the destruction of his house at Birmingham in 1791.

“Soon after my father's settlement at Maidstone I was born [December 10, 1770, and baptized January 30, 1771],<sup>2</sup> and seven years afterward your father [*i.e.*, her brother William, April 10, 1778].” Both were baptized by their father, the latter on the 21st June 1778. The house where the Hazlitts resided no longer exists; it was in Rose Yard, a narrow passage between the High Street and Earl Street. In the parish rating-book, 1778, it is assessed at £12 rental, and the name is spelled Hayzlett, having perhaps at the time been verbally communicated. The chapel in Bullock Lane (now a thoroughfare running by the side of the Mitre Hotel) has been somewhat modernised inside, but remains in the exterior in its original state. In front, in the brickwork, is the date 1736. When he went

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Priestley*, 1831, i. 161, 174, and comp. Correspondence *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> The name of Margaret (or Peggy), which was given to her, was arguably derived from her grandmother Margaret, wife of John Hazlitt of Shronell.

to Maidstone, the minister was thirty-three, his wife twenty-four.<sup>1</sup>

After saying that the Rev. W. Hazlitt left Maidstone solely in consequence of some schism among the congregation, his biographer continues: "Accordingly he removed to Bandon, near Cork, in Ireland. This society would have chosen him from the character they had heard of him; but he would not accept it without first going to preach to them. We left Maidstone in March (1780), and spent a week in London at the house of Mr. Lewis.<sup>2</sup> We then went on to Chester, and through Wales to Holyhead. At St. Asaph the first sight of the Welsh peasants, with their felt beaver hats and blue cloaks, struck us as singular. The road over Penmaenmawr I still recollect, and the grand and terrific appearance of the cliff that overhung the road, and the dreadful depth of the sea beneath. . . .

"At Bandon began my father's correspondence with Mr. Wiche, Mr. Viny, and the rest of his Maidstone friends . . . written during the course of the American War, and showing the steady and conscientious principles by which they were actuated both in religion and politics. . . . He presided over a Presbyterian congregation here three years." Miss Hazlitt continues:—

"But though happily situated in many respects, some events happened at this time which served to strengthen the wish he had long entertained of transporting himself and family across the Atlantic, and

<sup>1</sup> A gentleman belonging to Maidstone, N.E., informed me, that a number of Maidstonians migrated to New England many years since, and founded a cognominal township, and that there is an old inn in the place, bearing the arms of some of the original colonists.

<sup>2</sup> The family of Lewis, of which the Rev. Israel Lewis was a member, behaved in the most generous manner to the Hazlitts during many years, and probably assisted them to a larger extent, so long as their own circumstances permitted, than we shall ever know. The Rev. Israel Lewis himself was minister from 1744 to 1770.

seeking a haven of rest in the Western world. The feud between Whigs and Tories ran high, and my father, who never disguised his sentiments, gave great offence by his freedom in writing and speaking at a time when the unbridled license of the army (who took liberties in Ireland that they dared not do at home) made it dangerous to offend the haughty officers, who seemed to think wearing a sword entitled them to domineer over their fellow-subjects. The American prisoners, being considered as rebels, were most inhumanly treated, particularly in Kinsale prison, where some officers amused themselves by running their swords into the hammocks of the sick. These and similar practices my father exposed in the newspapers, and he and many friends made frequent journeys to Kinsale to see and assist the poor prisoners, and three of them, escaping, were a long time concealed among our friends.

“The conduct of the soldiers became so unbearable that Mr. Hazlitt wrote to the War Office. A court of inquiry was held, and the regiment was changed.” Miss Hazlitt notes that, when her father’s letter to headquarters was read in court, it was said, “Who could have thought a Presbyterian parson could have written such a letter?” But it appears that Mr. Hazlitt also appealed to his friends in London, Dr. Price of Newington and Mr. Palmer, and that at the request of the former, whom we know from more than a single source to have been a gentleman of considerable standing and influence in his day, the Premier, Lord Shelburne,<sup>1</sup> forwarded a letter from him to Colonel Fitzpatrick, the Commandant at Kinsale. The matter was settled for

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hazlitt may have also enlisted the sympathy of Dr. Priestley, with whom he had corresponded prior to 1772, and who had accompanied Shelburne in a continental tour in 1774. Six years later he directs a correspondent to address letters to the earl’s residence in London.



that time, but the feeling broke out again more strongly and bitterly than ever, and it was apprehended that if Mr. Hazlitt had not left Ireland, his life would have been sacrificed to the violence of party spirit. In a letter to Dr. Price, to which I have only the reply, dated from Newington Green, June 28, 1782, he seems to have given a most unfavourable picture of his position, and to have broached the idea of emigration to America, from which his correspondent dissuades him.

Miss Hazlitt does not omit, at the same time, to testify to the cordiality of the circle in which they mixed during their stay at Bandon. "Most of the young men of our society," she tells, "were enrolled in the volunteer corps, their uniforms dark green, turned up with black." While they remained here a son Thomas and a daughter Harriet were born; they both died in infancy.

One striking fact stands prominently out—it is that the Hazlitts, nearly a century and a half since, staunchly supported the cause of American independence, which they regarded as closely bound up with the question of human liberty; and we could not perhaps desire a prouder testimony to the purity of motive and singleness of purpose in my great-grandfather's case, if not in that of his kindred, than the readiness of the British Government to comply with his representations.

At Maidstone my great-grandfather had at his friend Mr. Viny's met Benjamin Franklin, and on the removal to Ireland the question of American independence once more arose, and attracted his earnest notice; and it is fairly inferrible that the design of seeking a new home in a freer land had been under discussion for some time, and the details arranged, when the step was finally taken. But, in fact, his friend Priestley entertained similar views,

although he did not carry them out till 1794. Dr. Price was adverse to the project.

The family quitted Bandon and proceeded to Cork, where they stayed a fortnight with friends; and on April 3, 1783, the whole party embarked on board the *Henry*, Captain Jeffreys, for New York, carrying a very flattering testimonial signed by Dr. Price, Dr. Kippis, Mr. Palmer, and Dr. Rees, dated March 3, 1783. There were Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt; John, a boy of fifteen; William, about five; Margaret, seven years his senior; and Harriet, an infant. On the whole a rather notable group—at least, as one looks back at it after the lapse of years by the sort of dim light which is all that one has, and glances aside at very different careers then very possible for high names in letters and art in England. Not that the members of it entertained any such impression, for they were poor, anxious, and sad at the notion of leaving, perhaps for ever, the old country; and the future was dark and full of incertitude. Still, the small band had a brave leader, a person of rare stability and sincerity of disposition, a man as strenuous and resolute in character as he was by temperament trusting and serene.

The diarist proceeds:—

“We sailed with a fair wind and fine weather, and with mingled feelings of hope and regret. I had just been reading the *American Farmer*,<sup>1</sup> a book that gives a most delightful and romantic description of that country, and though true in the most essential points, was, to say the least, too highly coloured. I had formed to myself an ideal terrestrial paradise, and, with the love of liberty I had imbibed, looked forward to a perfect land, where no tyrants were to

<sup>1</sup> St. John (Hector), *Letters from an American Farmer*, 8vo, 1782, with maps.

rule, no bigots to hate and persecute their brethren, no intrigues to feed the flame of discord and fill the land with woe. Of course, all the Americans were to be good and happy, and nothing was to hurt or destroy in all that holy mountain."



### III

#### THE FAMILY IN THE UNITED STATES— MARGARET HAZLITT'S NARRATIVE

(1783-87)

NEW YORK was not reached till May 26. The story goes that the minister's lady, still in the possession of her original comeliness, was an object of more special attention on the part of the captain of the *Henry* than her husband quite approved. Just a little flirtation to beguile the monotony of the life. She was seven-and-thirty; Mr. Hazlitt was nine years her senior. At the same time, she always entertained the highest respect for him; and in later days, when her sons were married, he was *my* Mr. Hazlitt.

“As soon as we cast anchor,” the writer observes, “we were visited by some of the British officers, who came on board eager to hear the news. Ours was the first ship that brought an account of the treaty of peace. And then how they raved and swore, cursing both the Congress and those at home, who had thus put a stop to their ravaging with fire and sword their brothers' land, and in this our most valiant captain most piously joined them. So much were their American brethren transformed in their eyes (by that little magical word *rebel*) into bands of lawless banditti, whom it would be meritorious to destroy.

“We landed at six in the evening, but it was some time before we could get a lodging. This was

owing to an oversight of a friend who had given my father a letter to Mr. Tench Cox, a gentleman of New York, who was obnoxious to the Americans on account of his favouring the British cause; and his walking about with my father and John made us to be looked on as refugees, and no one would take us in. I remember my mother sitting down in the porch of some door with me, the children, and servant, to wait with no very pleasant feeling the return of my father with his most unlucky though kindly-intentioned conductor.

“At last the mistake was cleared up, and we were admitted into the house of Mrs. Gregory. Here we stayed two days, in order to receive our goods from the ship, and then set off for Philadelphia, that beautiful city of which we had heard so much. We went to Perth Amboy, and next to Burlington, a very pretty township by the side of a fine river. On the opposite side stood Bath and Bristol, which looked beautiful with their green woods on either side.

“It was Friday when we arrived there, and on Saturday the Jersey Assembly (sitting there at that time) sent an invitation to request my father to preach to them on the morrow, which he accordingly did. By what means they knew that a minister of the Gospel, and a warm friend to liberty and to them, was come over to cast in his lot amongst them, I do not know. The room he preached in had no pews, but only benches to sit on, as I have seen in some Quakers' meetings. Here a house to let, which had belonged to a son of Dr. Franklin (who, strange to say, had been banished as a refugee), made my mother desire to settle, and she proposed to my father to open a school. It was an excellent plan, and would have succeeded well, but it was his wish to go on; and

we took our departure for Philadelphia in a stage-waggon (not unlike our long coaches), and rode two days through the Jersey woods, full of various majestic trees, mingled with the blossoms of the wild peach and apricot, and the sweet-scented yellow flowers of the locust-trees perfuming the air. We passed through many little towns where the ground was cleared away for some miles round each, and made a pleasant contrast to the neighbouring forests.<sup>1</sup>

“When we arrived at the city, we took a lodging the first week in Strawberry Alley. My father then hired a house in Union Street. This house had a parlour, with a door opening to the street, a kitchen, two bedrooms, two attics, cupboards in every room, and a good cellar; our only pantry a shelf on the cellar stairs, where a colony of ants devoured everything that did not stand in a pail of water; the kitchen had a door into a bit of a yard, and this, with a small plot of ground that had never been dug or enclosed, were the whole of our premises, and for this £50 a year of their money—about thirty English—was paid.

“As we stayed so long in Philadelphia, I have a perfect recollection of this fine city. It had nineteen straight streets from north to south, crossed by nineteen others from east to west, reaching from the Delawar to the Schuylkill. They were each two miles long, but were not all finished. Those between the rivers were called Water Street, Second, Third Street, and so on; the others were named after different fruit, as Walnut, Pine Street, &c. There were only three Episcopalian churches here, but a great many of Dutch, Presbyterians, and Quakers, and some few Catholics. A great part of

<sup>1</sup> The parts of North America visited by the Hazlitts appear to have remained substantially unchanged from their aspect in the days of the Pilgrim Fathers.

the population of this city were Irish and German. My father dined one day with the Society of the Cincinnati on the banks of the Schuylkill.

“He and John went to St. Peter’s Church on purpose to get a sight of General Washington. It was on a week-day, on some public occasion, when that great and good man was present. In July my father went to preach at New London, and here he met with some of his own name and kindred, whom we afterwards saw in Philadelphia, where also lived, with her guardians, Miss Hazlitt, a daughter of Colonel Hazlitt,<sup>1</sup> to whose wedding my mother went. She was a distant relation. From New London my father went to Carlisle, where he spent some time, and might have been settled with £300 a year, and a prospect of being president of a college that was erecting, if he would have subscribed the confession of faith which the orthodox insisted on; but he told them he would sooner die in a ditch than submit to human authority in matters of faith.

“Some of our neighbours in Union Street were very friendly. Mr. Gomez and his family were much interested about us. They were Jews, and had lost much of their property by the war, but were still rich. Late in the summer Mr. Gomez returned to New York, where his property lay, and whence he had been driven by the British troops. He often inquired what were my father’s sentiments, and why the orthodox were so bitter against him, and he thought the Unitarian doctrine the most reasonable scheme of Christianity he had ever heard. Of course the notion of a Trinity must ever be a stumbling-block in the way of Jews and Mahometans.

“I forgot to mention, among our friends here, Mr. Vaughan and his two sons, English gentlemen

<sup>1</sup> Colonel John Hazlitt of Coleraine, who had fallen at the battle of Princeton.

of large property. They wished my father to take a school at German Town, five miles from the city, and offered to advance him any money necessary to begin with ; but this he declined, as he did not think it right to give up preaching entirely. Mr. Vaughan, with his wife and daughters, afterwards returned to England ; but his sons remained here some years longer, and one, that we afterwards met at Boston, behaved to us in a very friendly manner. While he was in Philadelphia, Mr. Vaughan assisted some English ladies to open a boarding-school there. German Town is a beautiful village, and it is said the yellow fever never reached it, so that it seems a pity we did not settle there. But perhaps my father was destined to remove the rubbish and to clear the way for more fortunate Unitarians, who, coming after him, entered into his labours and reaped the fruits thereof."

The family had not been spared its sorrows since the arrival in the States. Little Harriet had been taken, and another daughter, Esther, came and went like a vision. But a more serious danger seemed at one time imminent, and it led to a sublime development of piety and heroism on the part of a mere lad.

"Soon after the death of Esther my father was invited to preach in Maryland. It was a township (as they call their scattered villages, where a field or two intervenes between every house). And here, in the midst of the forests, and at a distance from the cities on the coast, he found a respectable and polished society, with whom he would have been happy to spend his days, and they were very anxious to have him for their pastor. But on the second Sunday he was seized with the fever of that country, and fainted in the pulpit. Although he might himself, after so severe a seasoning, have been able to



bear the climate, he feared to take his family there, and a stop was put to our being settled with a people so very suitable in many respects. I forget the name of the place, but to Mr. Earl and his family our everlasting gratitude is due. At this gentleman's house my father was hospitably entertained, and but for the great care and attention with which he was nursed he must have died.

“Nothing could exceed the kindness with which they watched over him, even sending twenty miles for lemons and oranges for him, and providing him with every comfort. Two black men sat up with him every night, and he partly ascribed his recovery to a large draught of water that he prevailed on them to let him have, which, however, had been strictly forbidden. For a long time his family were ignorant of his situation, but at last Dr. Ewing and Mr. Davidson came to break the matter to my mother, who very naturally concluded he was dead, and it was some time before they could make her believe it was not the case.

“At length she was convinced that he was recovering, and the next morning my brother John set off to go to him. He went alone on horseback. He rode through woods and marshes a hundred and fifty miles in fifty-six hours, over an unknown country, and without a guide. He was only sixteen at that time, and how he performed so difficult an enterprise astonished every one who knew it. But he was wild with his fears for his father, and his affection for him made him regardless of every danger. He found him slowly recovering, but dreadfully weak, and after staying there some weeks they both returned together. How they got on I cannot think, but when they came to the door my father could not get off his horse without help. It was November, and the snow fell for the first

time that day. My father was very ill and weak for a long time after his return. I recollect he looked very yellow, and sat by the fire wrapped in a greatcoat, and taking Columbia root. The 23rd of this month we felt the shock of an earthquake.

“This winter proved very severe; the snow lay many feet on the ground, and the cold was intense, and more like a New England winter than (to speak comparatively) the usually mild frosts of Pennsylvania.

“In the spring my father was well enough to give lectures at the college of Philadelphia on the evidences of Christianity. These lectures were well attended, and were of great service to a numerous class of young men who, taking it for granted that the doctrines of Calvin were those of Christ, were ready to renounce the whole system at once. But the Unitarian doctrine, being consistent with reason and Scripture, brought many of them back to the ranks of the believers. Not but there were some few Unitarians there before my father arrived in that country. But none dared to avow their real sentiments, fearing to offend the many. And here I cannot help remarking how strange it seems that my father, who openly preached the doctrine of the Divine unity from Maryland to Kennebec, should have been so entirely overlooked, and the whole work ascribed to Dr. Priestley, who went there so many years after him.<sup>1</sup> But it is so!

“In the spring of 1784 my father had an invitation to settle at Charlestown, in North Carolina; but this he was obliged to decline, for the same reason that prevented his staying in Maryland, as the heat there is so great that for two months every summer the places of public worship are shut up.

<sup>1</sup> In 1794.

Yet some of our friends wished us to go, as they thought it would be an advantageous situation, and argued that the sea-breezes at mid-day made the heat tolerable. About the same time my father had an invitation to Pittsburg, two hundred miles from Philadelphia. But this he also declined, on account of its being at that time so far back in the wilderness. But now it is a very flourishing place, and by all accounts most beautifully situated. I remember the two farmers coming to talk the matter over with my father, and thinking to myself how much I should like to go and see those wild and beautiful forests.

“In June my father went to preach at Brattle Street meeting in Boston, where he was so much liked that no doubt was entertained by his friends of his being chosen, and they advised him to send for his family, and we, of course, prepared to follow him, hoping we should at last find a ‘resting-place for the sole of our foot.’ But in this we were again mistaken, for the persecuting zeal of the orthodox sent one of their chosen brethren after him, and thus put a stop to his settling there; but this we knew not till afterwards.

“We then bade farewell to Philadelphia and to our own friends there, whose kindness to us, strangers as we were, deserves remembrance, and casting a last look at this beautiful city of William Penn, where so many events had befallen us, and where we left my two infant sisters sleeping in their early graves, the beloved and the beautiful.

“In August 1784, having lived there fifteen months, we took our departure in the stage which brought us here the year before, and riding through the same woods, now rich with wild peaches instead of blossom, ripe grapes, and hickory and other nuts, the oak and ash raising their lofty heads above the



rest, we came the first day to Burlington, and were welcomed as old acquaintances by our host.

“And here we again admired the little towns of Bath and Bristol shining in the morning sun, whose very names brought back to my mother many sad and pleasing recollections of former days. From Burlington we went on to Perth Amboy. This is a very large inn, said to contain a hundred beds. It stands alone, and its green lawn in front gently slopes down to the river. From the rising ground on which the house stands there is a beautiful and extensive view, and more than one river is seen hence.

“Here we slept one night, my mother and William and I, in one room, with a lady and her little girl. In the night I awoke, and heard a snoring under the bed. I crept softly out to feel, and hoping it was only a dog, I made up my mind not to speak, but to watch till daylight, when seeing a large Newfoundland dog, who was come to guard us, stretched at his full length under the bed, I went quietly to sleep. Early in the morning a very large party met at breakfast on the lawn before the door. We had tea, coffee, cakes, pastry, eggs, ham, &c., for an American breakfast is like a Scotch one.

“Here what most struck me was a puritanical old gentleman, of the name of Shakespeare, on whom I looked with great reverence, thinking perhaps that with the name he inherited the talents of his immortal namesake; besides, his face bore a strong resemblance to all the prints I had seen of the great poet of whom I had heard so much. He was dressed in a sad-coloured suit, was reserved and stately, and took his coffee with the air of a prince in disguise. All our company were curious to know who he was, some affirming that he must

be a Jesuit, and others made many different conjectures. But we left him there without making any discovery.

“After breakfast we went on board a little sloop to proceed to New York. . . . We waited here two days for the packet going to Rhode Island, and took our lodging at a boarding-house. . . . We left New York on Sunday in the packet for Rhode Island. . . . We passed through Hell Gate, a dangerous whirlpool, and over the Hog’s Back, safely before sunset. It was a very fine evening, and pleasant sailing between the mainland and Long Island. The views on each side were very beautiful, and we remained on deck until a late hour, enjoying the moonlight and the fresh air. About noon the next day we arrived at Newport.

“This is a pretty, neat town, but it had not, at that time, recovered from the devastations of the British troops, who had not left a tree on the island, and many of the floors bore the marks of their axes, where they cut up the mahogany furniture of the houses for firing. My brother joined a party of gentlemen and ladies in riding round the island on horseback. It is twelve miles long, and made but a desolate appearance then. It had been pretty formerly, and I doubt not has since been well planted, and has recovered its good looks. We stayed here two days, and ate of a most delicious fish, of the size of a mackerel; they are called black fish, and seem to be peculiar to these seas, as we never met with them anywhere else.

“Our next day’s voyage brought us to Providence, a very handsome town, on the banks of the river, thirty miles from its mouth. The river itself, and the scenery on each side, the most beautiful that ever was seen, and the clear blue sky over one’s head, the sun shining in all its glory, set them off

to the best advantage. Providence, though built on the continent, belongs to Rhode Island. Here we stayed one night. . . . At six o'clock the next morning we went on in two coaches, and this day's journey brought us to Boston.

“Our road lay through woods abounding with every variety of beautiful tree, dressed in their most lovely foliage, majestic in stature, and tenanted by numberless tribes of the feathered race, whose matin and vesper hymns rose sweetly on the ear. At intervals we passed by many little townships, but I only remember the name of one. It was called Jamaica Plains; it was pleasant, and near Boston. Here lived Dr. Gordon, who wrote a history of the Revolution, and came over to London to publish it.”

## IV

### MARGARET HAZLITT'S NARRATIVE (*continued*)

“THE first object we saw at Weymouth was a very large and old picture in oil, of the meeting of Esau and Jacob. The embracing of the two brothers, the meeting of their followers on either side, with the groups of camels and other cattle, and the background winding up between the hills and seeming to vanish in the air, completed the enchantment. On this picture I used to gaze with delight, and wondered at the skill of the artist who had made so natural and lively a representation of the scene. But as John never copied or said much about it, I suspect it was not so fine a painting as I imagined. I have heard it was one of the first attempts of Copley; he was afterwards a painter of some note. He and West, who were both Americans, lived chiefly in England, and produced most of their works there.”

The house appears to have been commodious; there is a minute account of it, for which I cannot spare room; but the writer was particularly struck by a peach-tree in the garden, which the humming-birds haunted for the sake of the blossom. “The house,” she says, “stood in a most romantic spot, surrounded on three sides by very steep hills that sloped down just in sight of the windows, and were covered with locust-trees.

“These trees grow to a great height, and their yellow blossoms, somewhat like the laburnum, per-

fume the air in spring. On the green before the door stood a solitary pear-tree, beyond the shade of which in the hot days William was not allowed to go until four o'clock, when the sun was in some sort shaded by the neighbouring hills. On the pales that enclosed this sloping green the woodpeckers were wont to sit, and make a noise with their bills like a saw. Beyond the garden and lane was a large meadow, which in the summer evenings, with its myriads of fire-flies, made a brilliant appearance.

“On a little low hill to the eastward stood the house of prayer, and below it Dr. Tufts's, the road to Boston passing close by them; to the north King-Oak Hill, which in the winter, when covered with snow, reflected the golden and purple tints of the setting sun. Over this hill the road leading to Hingham was seen. How often have we stood at the window, looking at my father as he went up this road with William, in his nankeen dress, marching by his side, like one that could never be tired! The hills behind the house are very steep, and it was one of our childish exploits, when they were covered with ice, to climb up and write our names on the frozen snow.

“From the top of these hills we had a distant view of the Bay of Boston, and many of its islands and hills beyond it, with Dorchester heights, famous for the Battle of Kegs; Bunker's Hill, where so many British officers fell in the space of five minutes, singled out by the sharpshooters of the Yankees; to the south dark and frowning woods, and nearer to us the river, with a mill and two houses on its banks, and a variety of meadows, fields, and trees below. Here also was seen the house of Captain Whitman, a good friend of ours. He was so fond of William that the boy spent half his time in going with him to the woods, or to the fields to see them



plough, or attending the milking of the cows, where I, too, was often present. . . .

“ We paid frequent visits to Mrs. Whitman, and were always glad to see her and her niece Nelly, when they came to us at three in the afternoon and brought their work with them. A bright wood-fire and a clean hearth to bake the Johnny cakes on (cakes made of Indian flour without yeast, and baked on a pewter plate before the fire) were always prepared on the occasion. . . . General Lovell lived in Weymouth. He and Captain Whitman, like many of the American officers, after the war was over, retired to their farms, which in general were large, cultivating them with care, and sometimes guiding the plough with their own hands, and thus not only directing their servants, but giving them an example of industry. . . .

“ In the summer a variety of little birds flew about us, humming-birds of five or six different kinds, some of them brown, others of different colours, all of them very small, with a body an inch and a half in length, and a bill like a coarse needle, which served them to suck the honey out of the flowers. But the most beautiful were dressed in purple, green and gold, crimson, and a mixture of white and a little black about the head. Some of this sort used to enliven us by their visits to the peach-tree, and it was one of them that flew into the window, to his own great discomfiture. Besides the birds common to Europe, there are many others. The blue bird, of a pale sky colour; the scarlet bird, whose name tells of her bright plumage; and the fire-hang-bird, so called from her colour and the curious way in which she hangs her nest at the end of a bough, suspended by a string of her own making. This, it is said, she does to protect her young from the monkeys. It is also a

protection against the boys, for the bough chosen is too small to bear the least weight. This bird differs from the scarlet bird in having some black under its wings. There is also the mocking-bird, who delights in imitating every note he hears; the Bob Lincoln, a very pretty singing-bird; the red linnet; the Virginia nightingale; and the king-bird, from whom the hawk is glad to escape; the little snow-bird, and many others that I forget. The swallows are of a brighter purple than ours; the robins are much larger, but their notes and colour the same.

“This winter was also a very severe one, and my father spent it chiefly in going to and from Boston, where he was engaged to give lectures on the evidences of Christianity, the same that he had delivered at Philadelphia the winter before; and here also they were attended with great success. It was fifteen miles, and he was often obliged to walk through the snow. But he thought no labour or fatigue too much in the cause he had so much at heart. Once he and John set out to walk in a most tremendous rain.

“I do not recollect my father preaching at Weymouth more than once, and when he was with us on Sunday he had service at home. The congregation there was large, and they were Presbyterians of the old orthodox stamp. Calvin and the Kirk of Scotland had settled the faith of two out of three of the American Churches at that period. There were but few Episcopalians, and their churches but poor buildings, and often without steeples or trees; while the popular party had both. There were many Quakers (but not so many as in Pennsylvania), and here and there a very few Catholics.

“When the snow and ice melted, the lowlands were threatened with a deluge; but as I remember

no damage that ever happened from these thaws, I suppose they were properly guarded against. Here is also, about February, what they call a middle thaw, when the weather is mild for a week or two, and the snow seems to have vanished. Yet to this other and deeper snows succeed, and the frost is as sharp as ever. This winter the melted snow ran into our washhouse, and froze so hard that my father and John were obliged to cut it up with axes in pieces of half a foot thick and throw it out.

“ My father often went to Hingham to preach for Mr. (Ebenezer) Gay, a very pleasant old man above ninety years of age. He was fond of a good story, and used to tell with great glee how he cured a man of a propensity to steal. It seems this man was in the habit of making free with his master's hay, which Mr. Gay suspecting, he one evening took his pipe in his mouth, and, standing behind the stable door, softly shook out the ashes of his pipe on the hay the man was carrying away on his back, and as soon as he got out the fresh air kindled it into a flame, at which the poor fellow was so much terrified that he came the next morning to confess his trespass, saying that fire came down from heaven to consume his stolen hay, and promised never to steal again. This promise he faithfully kept, and though Mr. Gay, in compassion to his fears, kindly explained the matter to him, he never could believe but that a fire from above had fallen on him. Hingham is twenty miles from Boston, and five from Weymouth. Here my father met with society quite to his mind. He often spoke of the numbers of fine-looking old men between eighty and ninety that attended that meeting and sat together before the pulpit. This congregation was very large, but in a place where there was no other church, and where none but the



sick or infirm absented themselves from public worship, five or seven hundred people being assembled together is nothing extraordinary. At Boston, too, my father had many friends, among them Dr. Chauncy, a fine old man above ninety; he was cheerful, and retained all his faculties. In the summer of 1785 my father often went to Salem, where he sometimes preached for Mr. Barnes."

But the English minister stayed with Mr. Derby, a merchant, and the son of an acquaintance at Hingham. William often accompanied his father in his journeys, and sat inside the pulpit with him while he preached. John spent a great deal of his time at Hingham, where he painted many portraits, and perhaps some of his first pictures are to be seen there even at this present time. Mr. Hazlitt met in this neighbourhood, curiously enough, with two of the prisoners in whose cause he had interested himself at Kinsale, and they expressed the warmest gratitude to him. It had been wished that he should succeed old Mr. Ebenezer Gay at Hingham, but the latter declined to resign.

"This summer (1785) my father visited Cape Cod, and stayed there three weeks, but he could not make up his mind to settle in so desolate a place. It was a neat little town, inhabited chiefly by fishermen, but nothing was to be seen but rocks and sands and the boundless ocean. He took William with him, who, child as he was, could not help being struck with the barren and dreary look of the country, and inquired if any robins or Bob Lincolns came there, and being told there were none, he said, 'I suppose they do not like such an ugly place.' Stepping into the boat, he dropped his shoe into the sea, which he lamented because of his silver buckle.

"It was while we resided at Weymouth that my

father assisted Mr. Freeman in preparing a liturgy for his church, which had been episcopal, and furnished him with a form of prayer used by Mr. Lindsey,<sup>1</sup> in Essex Street Chapel, which they adapted to suit the Transatlantic Church. He also republished many of Dr. Priestley's Unitarian tracts, and many other little pieces to the same purpose, such as the *Trial of Eltwell*, &c., besides writing much himself. These things took up much of his time, and occasioned many journeys to Boston, where John often went with his father.

"In the autumn of this year Mr. Sam. Vaughan persuaded him to go to a new settlement on Kennebec River, called Hallowell, in the province of Maine, where Mr. Vaughan<sup>2</sup> had a large tract of land and much interest in settling the township. This was in the midst of the woods, with a few acres cleared round each farm, as usual in all their new places, which by degrees are changed from solitary woods to a fruitful land. At this time the wolves were near neighbours, and sometimes at night would come prowling about the place, making a dismal noise with their hideous barking; and as the doors were without locks, and my father slept on the ground-floor, he used to fasten his door by putting his knife over the latch to prevent a visit from these wild beasts. In this remote place he found a very respectable society, many of them genteel people. Here he preached a thanksgiving sermon, which was afterwards printed at Boston. It was a custom in New England to preach one every year after harvest. He would have had no great objection to settling with these people, but it would not have been eligible for his sons. John's profession was

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. T. Lindsey, the friend of Priestley.

<sup>2</sup> Were the Vaughans mentioned here and elsewhere the same family which so often occurs in Priestley's *Life and Correspondence*?

not wanted in the woods, where good hunters and husbandmen were more needed. He therefore, after spending the winter there, returned to us in the spring; and he narrowly escaped being lost in the Bay of Fundy, to which the sailors, for its frequent and dreadful tempests, have given the name of the Devil's Cauldron."<sup>1</sup>

After describing a tremendous storm which unexpectedly visited them on April 1, 1786, Miss Hazlitt states that her father and mother saw the necessity of moving from Weymouth nearer to Boston, where Mr. Hazlitt and John had frequent occasion to go. "Weymouth," she writes, "with its sloping hills and woods, beautiful and romantic as it was, yet had its inconveniences. The greatest, the distance from the city. There was no market or butcher's shop, or any baker, in the parish, and only one shop containing some remnants of linen, a few tapes and thread, with a small assortment of grocery. Hard sea-biscuits, butter, cheese, some salt beef and pork, were our winter's fare. In the summer it was better, as we often got a joint of fresh meat from some of the farmers, who would spare us some of what they provided for their own use. This, when not wanted directly, was kept by being suspended over the well. Sometimes we had barrels of flour, and made our own bread, and when the farmer's wife heated her oven, she would kindly bake our bread for us, or anything else, so that, on the whole, we did very well, and thought not of the fleshpots of Egypt.

"One day I observed the water in the well was red. I asked Mr. Beales the reason; he said, 'We shall have an earthquake soon; but,' he added, 'do not tell my wife.' The next morning, about seven,

<sup>1</sup> For a letter written by my great-grandfather from Hallowell in 1785, see Correspondence, *infra*.

we felt a smart shock, but not bad enough to throw anything down; yet it made the handles of the drawers rattle. To the eastward it was worse, and, indeed, it came from the east. It was in February, and the weather was very close and cloudy, and not a breath of air stirring.

“New England abounds more in maize (Indian corn) than wheat, and in the country it is much used, and is not unpleasant to the taste, though rather too sweet; and it is very convenient, as it requires no yeast. Besides maize they have buckwheat, barley, and rye, and from the other States they have plenty of the finest wheat. With the West Indies they carry on a considerable traffic, exchanging their cattle and lumber for rum and molasses. On the Southern States the West Indies chiefly depend for corn and other food, and send them in return the finest fruit, sugar, rum, pepper, &c. I once saw a cartload of pineapples, that were just landed in Philadelphia market, that were sold for a half-pistoreen each, about ninepence.

“The woods are filled with a variety of game; the number of pigeons are incredible; and the wild turkeys are very large and fine, and their colours very beautiful; and they make a grand appearance when seen standing, being from four to five feet in height. They have also plenty of wild geese, ducks, teal, and all the wild and tame fowl that we have in Europe; many kinds of parrots, and the Virginia nightingale, of a bright crimson; snakes and monkeys more than enough; foxes, wolves, and bears; and the tiger-cat,<sup>1</sup> very fierce and strong for its size—about two feet high, I think. The moose deer is peculiar to North America.

“Once while we were there, an animal they call

<sup>1</sup> Or puma. It is noticed below.

a cat-a-mount<sup>1</sup> (or puma) made its appearance near Falmouth. It was said to be five feet long; besides, the tail was as much more; and it could mount trees, whence its name. It was hunted by eighteen dogs, killed six of them, and got off. It was said that only one of these animals had been seen before. But no one knows what, or how many, unknown creatures may be concealed in those endless forests.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps a corruption of *cat-o-mountain*. It seems to have been widely distributed over the American continent.



## V

### MARGARET HAZLITT'S NARRATIVE (*continued*)— RETURN TO ENGLAND

“IN July we took our leave of Weymouth, where we had spent a year and eight months, and bade farewell to our good friends the Whitmans, and others with whom we had begun a friendly intercourse, and left our romantic hills and groves, never to see them more; but we did not then know that it was a last farewell.

“We removed to a small house in Upper Dorchester. It was pleasantly situated, but not to be compared to the one we had left. It was five miles from Boston, and in the highroad to it. In front, on the other side of the road, were some large meadows, and beyond, at the distance of a few miles, the blue mountains rose to our view. Covered with thick woods, they are said to be famous for rattlesnakes. It is observed that the rattlesnake is never found near the sea-shore.

“Behind, and on each side of the house, there was a very large orchard, and ascending a little way, we had a fine view of Boston, its bay and many islands, the same we saw at Weymouth, but nearer and more distinct. To the eastward, Fort William and its lighthouse, and to the north, a vast extent of country; and behind the city the hill of battle, where so many fell in the beginning of that quarrel which in the end gave liberty and happiness to millions, who still regard England as the land of Father.

“The last summer my father passed in frequent

visits to Boston, to Hingham, and to Salem. At length he made up his mind to return to England in the autumn, and try to get settled before we arrived, and we were to follow him in the spring. Oh, most unfortunate resolve! for but a few months after he had sailed, old Mr. Gay died, and Dr. Gordon came over to London to publish his book; and at either of these places my father would have been chosen.

“This last summer passed quickly away, and October came; and the time of my father’s departure drew near. I recollect his coming to fetch me home from Boston, a few days before he sailed. He talked to us of our separation and the hope of meeting again, and charged me, above all things, to be careful of and attentive to my mother, and endeavour by every means in my power to keep up her spirits and soften every care.

“From my father’s journal<sup>1</sup> it appears that he sailed from the Long Wharf, Boston, on October 23 (1786), on board the *Rebecca*.” His son John saw him off. He described the passage to England as terrible. The vessel did not sight Plymouth till December 9, but did not make for it. On the 14th, after beating about, and a good deal more heavy weather, the *Rebecca* was in sight of Dover at noon. Mr. Hazlitt spent nine months in London, at the house of his old and good friend, Mr. David Lewis.

After his father’s departure John Hazlitt was busy in the pursuit of his professional studies, and our narrative says that he painted a picture of two wild turkeys for Mr. Vaughan, to send to Germany. He also taught his brother William Latin grammar, at first, it seems, not with much success, but eventually so much so that William nearly killed himself through excessive application.

It was while the Hazlitts were near Boston that

<sup>1</sup> I have not traced this.

John painted the portrait of Mr. Gay, a pastel two-thirds life-size, for a parishioner, who had asked the old man to grant him a favour without saying what it was. Mr. Gay had a strong aversion from having his likeness taken, but was obliged to keep his promise. It represents the head and shoulders only, and is stated by a Boston correspondent, a great-nephew of General Lincoln, to be rather hard and stiff in execution, and to betray the hand of a novice. But the fact may be that it was an experiment in a new direction. Yet the painter was, of course, quite a youth. Ebenezer Gay was the first minister at Hingham, and held the living, or charge, from 1718 to his death in 1787. He relaxed the more austere and uncompromising tenets of Calvinism, which the first settlers had followed, and embraced the milder and more cheerful doctrines of the Unitarians.

“Dorchester was a very pleasant place to live in. It stood high, and commanded a fine prospect on all sides. We had some good neighbours, and were so near to Boston as to be able to go there at any time. . . . We stayed there until the summer, preparing for our departure. At the last the time came, and there were some we regretted to leave, but from none was I so sorry to part as from Susan Butt. She was a good and kind-hearted girl, and much attached to me. She persuaded my brother to give her a picture he had done of me in crayons. . . . How often we have looked back with regret on the pleasant evenings John and I used to spend with them! Our games and songs, and the tumbles we got in the snow, coming home by moonlight, when the rain, freezing on the ice, made the road slippery as glass. ’Twas then who best could keep their feet. How delightful a ride in a sleigh was then! How swift we cut through the air, going over hedge and ditch! For the snow made all level.



“This last Christmas I spent at Mr. Boot’s. There we had a constant round of visits, and I was more expert at cards than I have been since; for I was pleased to do as grown-up people did, though often tired and weary of cards and sitting up late. Whist and palm loo were the games most in fashion; but chess was a favourite with all. . . . At the end of three weeks my brother came to take me home, and I did not see Boston again till the summer.

“On April 10 this year (1787) a most tremendous fire broke out in Boston. It made a very grand appearance as we viewed it from the orchard, and, though at five miles’ distance, the light was so great that the least thing was visible. The column of fire and smoke that rose to the clouds resembled a volcano. John got a horse and attempted to go in to assist our friends, and bring away anything for them. He soon returned, saying it was impossible to get into the town, as South Street, the only entrance, was burning on both sides. About a hundred houses were burnt, and a church. But the damage was not so great as we supposed. Some rum-stills had served to increase the splendour of the blaze.

“Boston is built on a peninsula, and joins the mainland by a narrow neck of land, four, or perhaps five furlongs in length. I know not if it is a natural isthmus, or the work of man, but from the swampy meadows on either side I should think it to be natural. South Street is part of it. The bay in which it stands surrounds it on every other side. The entrance into the bay is defended by Fort William, and no ship can come into the port without passing under its guns. The Government keep a small garrison here and a chaplain. Mr. Isaac Smyth was the chaplain when we were there. He

was in England during the war, and settled in Sidmouth in Devonshire.

“Fort William is nine miles from Boston. The bay is very extensive, and contains many beautiful islands, most of them small and wooded to the top. Those we saw from Weymouth and Dorchester had two or three hills of a sugar-loaf form, adding to the beauty of the scene by the deep indigo of their firs, mixed with the bright and ever-varying green of the other trees. Perhaps when the country is more filled, these untenanted islets will be studded with neat cottages and farms. At Cambridge, two miles from Boston, there is a very flourishing college, and, I believe, it is the oldest in the United States. A ferry divides Cambridge from Boston.

“Boston is more like an English town in the irregularity of its streets and houses than any other that I saw on that continent. It had its government or state house, and other public buildings, and churches of every denomination, more than I can recollect. The people were then in everything English; their habits, their manners, their dress, their very names, spoke their origin; and the names given to their towns prove that they still regard the land of their fathers. Beacon Hill, just at the edge of the common, was a pretty object at a distance, and the house of Governor Hancock stood close to it. He was an old man then. His lady was of the Quincy family, but we did not know it then, though my father often visited at the house.

“The spring brought letters from my father, full of hope and anxiety to see us again; and with mingled feelings of expectation and regret we prepared to follow him.

“In June (1787) we left Dorchester, and spent a fortnight in Boston, paying farewell visits to our friends there. More than one inquired of my

brother if anything was wanted by my mother for our voyage, offering to supply her with money or other needful assistance. These offers were declined with grateful thanks, as we had money enough to take us home, and we trusted the future to that kind Providence which had guided and supplied us hitherto. After passing these last days with our friends in Boston as pleasantly as the prospect of so soon parting with them would allow, we went on board the *Nonpareil*, ready to sail the next morning, July 4, the grand anniversary of American Independence."

The home voyage to England was prosperous on the whole, although the vessel had to avoid the Algerine pirates, who at that time seized all American vessels which had not a passport from them. Among their fellow-passengers was a Mr. Millar, son of a farmer in Hampshire, of whom Miss Hazlitt tells the following story: "At the age of fourteen he had run away from home and listed for a soldier, and being sent off with the first troops to America, had settled (after the war was over) in Nova Scotia, where he had left his wife and children, and was to return there as soon as the object of his present voyage was completed. His chief business in England was to implore the blessing and forgiveness of his father, whom he had not seen since the day that his boyish folly had so unhappily estranged him from the paternal roof. We heard afterwards that his father had died two days before he reached home."

On Sunday, August 12, 1787, the Hazlitts disembarked at Portsmouth, and on the following morning set out for London in the stage. "On arriving in London," Miss Hazlitt tells us, "my father met us at the inn, and before I had time to see him, took me in his arms out of the coach,

and led us to our very good friend, David Lewis; and from him and Mrs. Lewis we received the greatest attention and kindness. With them we stayed some weeks; but, my mother's health being very indifferent, we took a lodging at Walworth, and she was in some measure revived by the fresh air. This is near Camberwell, where your father saw the garden he speaks of in his works,<sup>1</sup> and which had made so strong an impression on his young mind, and being the first gardens he had seen after our long voyage, were of course doubly valued. After staying there a fortnight, David Williams proposed our taking part of a house in Percy Street, which was to be had cheap, as it would be more convenient for my father to attend to anything that might occur. Here we stayed eleven weeks, and my grandmother came up from Wisbeach to see us. She stayed with us a month. She could walk about two miles, yet she must have been eighty-four at that time, and she lived about fourteen years after. This was a meeting she at one time did not hope for, as she was very old when we went to America, and our return to England was not intended. I never saw her after this time, but my mother paid her a visit of nine weeks in 1792."

<sup>1</sup> The Montpelier Tea Gardens at Walworth, not Camberwell.

## VI

### SETTLEMENT AT WEM IN SHROPSHIRE— HAZLITT'S CHILDHOOD

ON their return to England in 1787, Mr. Hazlitt obtained a professional settlement at Wem in Shropshire,<sup>1</sup> where Hazlitt, a lad of ten or so, proceeded to devote his time to those pursuits and amusements which were congenial to his age, relieving now and then the monotony of a dull country town by trips to the Tracys of Liverpool or elsewhere.

Miss Hazlitt writes: "Mrs. Tracy was a West Indian and a widow, who having taken up her abode some years at Wem, to be near her daughters, whom she had placed at school there, was now passing a year with them in Liverpool, before returning to Jamaica. William made the best use of his time while here in learning French, which he had not an opportunity to learn at home."

Besides the Tracys our family made other acquaintances at Liverpool, particularly the Railtons, descendants of an ancient Border family, an

<sup>1</sup> In 1905 my friend M. Jules Douady, author of the admirable French *Life of Hazlitt*, 1906, visited Wem. The chapel, he told me, has been let to the Salvation Army, and the house was rented at £13 by a house-painter, before whose time the fine panelling of the parlour, where the Rev. W. Hazlitt received Coleridge in 1798, had been painted over. The residence consists of two storeys of four rooms each, with a small garden behind. The old brass locks and keys have been kept. There was an apple-tree in the garden, which the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt might have seen or even planted, and in which the robin redbreast sang, while his son was finishing his father's portrait in the year of Austerlitz. The Unitarians here have merged in the Congregationalists.



account of the relations at a somewhat later period of John and William with whom is given elsewhere. My grandfather and the Misses Tracy studied together, and in some things one of them was his pupil, he having begun to teach her Latin,<sup>1</sup> before they left Wem. He here met with Fénelon's *Telemachus*, which on his return home he persuaded his sister the Diarist to read. "The book is still a favourite with me," writes the latter in 1835, "and perhaps for that reason."

Speaking of 1787, she remarks: "This autumn was dry and pleasant. At Walworth there was a great common, and Camberwell Green was near. I never feel the morning air of an October day without thinking of that autumn and the difference we found between our English fogs and the American fall."

The garden, to which there has been a reference by his sister in her American narrative, is that described by himself in later life:—

"When I was quite a boy my father used to take me to the Montpellier tea-gardens at Walworth. Do I go there now? No; the place is deserted, and its borders and its beds o'erturned. I unlock the casket of memory, and draw back the warders of the brain; and there this scene of my infant wanderings still lives unfaded, or with fresher dyes. I see the beds of larkspur with purple eyes; tall hollyhocks, red and yellow; the broad sun-flowers, caked in gold, with bees buzzing round them; wildernesses of pinks and hot-glowing peonies; poppies run to seed; the sugared lily and faint mignonette, all ranged in order, and as thick as they can grow; the box-tree borders; the gravel walks; the painted alcove, the confectionery, the clotted cream—I think I see them now."

Miss Hazlitt, while she stayed for a few weeks in

<sup>1</sup> His brother had already given him lessons in America.

1787 with her family in London, had the opportunity, almost for the first time, of seeing the shops and other sights of the Metropolis; but she seems to have been particularly impressed and interested by Moltino's print-shop in Pall Mall, which preceded Graves's now long-established concern. In 1821 the four principal London printsellers were Woodburn, Moltino, Colnaghi, and the Smiths. My grandfather would say that the study of Colnaghi's window was a liberal education. The firm had not been long established in Cockspur Street—it was in 1760—when the Hazlitts were in London in 1787. But there was also Boydell's at the Shakespeare Gallery, Pall Mall, and it is notable how the taste for art was resident in the minister and in his daughter. The latter writes: "Boydell's shop had great attractions for me, and I was quite delighted when my father took me there to buy a print. It was the *Fish-Stealers by Moonlight*."

Boydell's place of business was afterward occupied by Moltino and Graves, and is now Graves's.

Miss Hazlitt notes:—

"The first six years subsequent to our settlement at Wem he [her brother William] devoted to study, and under his father's guidance he made a rapid progress. He was at this time the most active, lively, and happiest of boys; his time, divided between his studies and his childish sports, passed smoothly on. Beloved by all for his amiable temper and manners, pleasing above his years. The delight and pride of his own family. William always liked this old house at Wem better than many superior ones that we have lived in since; but he liked Wem better than any of us, for it was the scene of his childhood, and where he first began to show those talents which have since shone so brightly." He himself says:—

"When I was a boy I lived within sight of a



range of lofty hills,<sup>1</sup> whose blue tops blending with the setting sun had often tempted my longing eyes and wandering feet. At last I put my project in execution, and on a nearer approach, instead of glimmering air woven into fantastic shapes, found them huge lumpish heaps of discoloured earth. If I see a row of cabbage-plants, or of peas or beans coming up, I immediately think of those I used so carefully to water of an evening at Wem, when my day's tasks were done, and of the pain with which I saw them droop and hang down their leaves in the morning's sun. If a drizzling shower patters against the windows, it puts me in mind of a mild spring rain, from which I retired twenty years ago into a little public-house at Wem, and while I saw the plants and shrubs before the door imbibe the dewy moisture, quaffed a glass of sparkling ale, and walked home in the dusk of evening, brighter to me than noon-day suns at present are. The taste of barberries, which have hung out in the snow during the severity of a North American winter, I have in my mouth still, after an interval of thirty years; for I have met with no other taste, in all that time, at all like it. It remains by itself, almost like the impression of a sixth sense."

It is to the Wem epoch that we have to refer the little glimpse of the arrival of a theatrical company there, and the performance of a piece called *The West Indian*, followed by Hoare's farce of *No Song, No Supper*. The manager himself called at the houses, the Hazlitts' included, and handed in a play-bill. My grandfather as a boy may have seen him—most probably did.

A similar character, if not the identical one, was encountered by Hazlitt in later life. In a paper in the *London Magazine*, 1820, his portrait is painted for us: "We remember one, who once overtook us loitering

<sup>1</sup> The Wrekin.

by 'Severn's sedgy side' on a fine May morning with a score of play-bills streaming from his pockets, for the use of the neighbouring villages, and a music-score in his hand, which he sang blithe and clear, advancing with a light step and a loud voice. With a sprightly *bon jour* he passed on, carolling to the echo of the bubbling stream, brisk as a bird, gay as a mote, swift as an arrow from a twanging bow, heart-whole, and with shining face that shot back the sun's broad rays."

The Unitarian minister was far, as I have elsewhere suggested, from limiting his choice of books to such as were professionally or even personally interesting. Besides a popular edition of the British novelists we seem to discern traces of certain other works, which may be thought to evince a width of sympathy and a consideration for the taste of his younger children. The *Pilgrim's Progress* strikes one as a probable tenant on the shelves at the parental roof, for, in referring to the long line of blue hills near the place where he spent his early youth, he says: "A golden sunset hovers over them, the dwarf oaks rustle their red leaves in the evening breeze, and the road by which I first set out on my journey through life stares me in the face as plain, but from time and change not less visionary and mysterious, than the pictures in the *Pilgrim's Progress*." In a passage just below that quoted, he introduces as an illustration the Valley of the Shadow of Death. I do not know whether Walton's *Angler* was, if not an actual possession, an early acquaintance. He says in his paper on *Merry England*:—

"I should suppose no other language than ours can show such a book as an often-mentioned one, Walton's *Complete Angler*—so full of *naïveté*, of unaffected sprightliness, of busy trifling, of dainty songs, of refreshing brooks, of shady arbours, of

happy thoughts and of the herb called *Heart's Ease!* Some persons can see neither the wit nor wisdom of this genuine volume, as if a book as well as a man might not have a personal character belonging to it, amiable, venerable from the spirit of joy and thorough goodness it manifests, independently of acute remarks or scientific discoveries; others object to the cruelty of Walton's theory and practice of trout-fishing—for my part, I should as soon charge an infant with cruelty for killing a fly, and I feel the same sort of pleasure in reading his book as I should have done in the company of this happy, child-like old man, watching his ruddy cheek, his laughing eye, the kindness of his heart, and the dexterity of his hand in seizing his finny prey."

In his essay on *Patronage and Puffing*, he mentions that he used to recite the speech of Douglas out of Enfield's *Speaker* "with emphasis and discretion," and entered about the same age (1790-93) into the wild sweetness of Mrs. Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest*.

And, again, we have a suggestion of the survival of a sense of youthful enjoyment at a performance of *Jack and the Bean Stalk*: "The wonders of the necromancer are equalled by the surprising arts of the mechanist. The favoured Bean Stalk grows and ascends the skies, as it did to our infant imaginations, and as if it would never have done growing; and Ogres and Ogresses become familiar to our sense, as to our early fears, in the enchanted palace of Drury Lane Theatre. Seeing is sometimes believing."

"We have an interest in *John Gilpin*;<sup>1</sup> aye, almost as great an interest as we have in ourselves; for we remember him almost as long. We remember the prints of him and his travels hung round a little parlour where we used to visit when we were

<sup>1</sup> *Examiner*, May 4, 1817. An after-piece at Drury Lane.

children—just about the time of the beginning of the French Revolution. While the old ladies were playing at whist, and the young ones at forfeits, we crept about the sides of the room and tracked *John Gilpin* from his counter to his horse, from his own door to the turnpike, and far beyond the turnpike gate and the Bell at Edmonton, with loss of wig and hat, but with an increasing impetus and reputation, the further he went from home.

‘The turnpike men their gates wide open threw,  
He carries weight, he rides a race ;  
'Tis for a thousand pounds.’

What an impression was here made, never to be effaced! . . . *John Gilpin* delighted us when we were children, and were we to die to-morrow the name of *John Gilpin* would excite a momentary sense of pleasure. The same feeling of delight, with which at ten years old we read the story, makes us thirty years after go, laughing, to see the play. In all that time the remembrance has been cherished at the heart, like the pulse that sustains our life. ‘That ligament, fine as it was, was never broken!’

“I knew *Tom Jones* by heart, and was deep in *Peregrine Pickle*. I was intimately acquainted with all the heroes and heroines of Richardson’s romances, and could turn from the one to the other as I pleased. I could con over that single passage in *Pamela* about her ‘lumpish heart,’ and never have done admiring the skill of the author and the truth of nature.

“For my part I have doubts of his (*Tom Jones*) being so very handsome, from the author’s always talking about his beauty; and I suspect that he was a clown, from being constantly assured that he was so very genteel.

“I am no friend to repeating-watches. The only

pleasant association I have with them is the account given by Rousseau of one French lady, who sat up reading the *New Héloïse*, when it first came out—and ordering her maid to sound the repeater, found it was too late to go to bed, and continued reading on till morning. . . . In general, I have heard repeating-watches sounded in stage-coaches at night, when some fellow-traveller, suddenly awaking and wondering what was the hour, another has very deliberately taken out his watch, and pressing the spring, it has counted out the time.

“I remember, as long ago as the year 1798, going to a neighbouring town (Shrewsbury, where Farquhar has laid the plot of his *Recruiting Officer*), and bringing home with me, ‘at one proud swoop,’ a copy of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, and another of Burke’s *Reflections on the French Revolution*.”

But then, once more, Hazlitt retained and expressed a fervent admiration for Jeremy Taylor as a writer and a man. He says of one of his works, perhaps his best:—

“His *Holy Living and Dying* is a divine pastoral. He writes to the faithful followers of Christ, as the shepherd pipes to his flock. He introduces touching and heartfelt appeals to familiar life; condescends to men of low estate; and his pious page blushes with modesty and beauty. His style is prismatic. It unfolds the colours of the rainbow; it floats like the bubble through the air; it is like innumerable dew-drops that glitter on the face of morning, and tremble as they glitter. He does not dig his way underground, but slides upon ice, borne on the winged car of fancy. The dancing light he throws upon objects is like an Aurora Borealis, playing betwixt heaven and earth—

‘Where pure Niemi’s faëry banks arise,  
And fringed with roses ‘Tenglio rolls its stream.’



His exhortations to piety and virtue are a gay *memento mori*. He mixes up death's-heads and amaranthine flowers; makes life a procession to the grave, but crowns it with gaudy garlands, and 'rains sacrificial roses' on its path. In a word, his writings are more like fine poetry than any other prose whatever; they are a choral song in praise of virtue, and a hymn to the Spirit of the Universe."

After quoting Bishop Taylor's dissertation on the fallen grandeur of the Assyrian Ninus, Hazlitt concludes:—

"He who wrote in this manner also wore a mitre, and is now a heap of dust; but when the name of Jeremy Taylor is no longer remembered with reverence, genius will have become a mockery, and virtue an empty shade!

"The first poetess I can recollect is Mrs. Barbauld, with whose works I became acquainted before those of any other author, male or female, when I was learning to spell words of one syllable in her story-books for children. I became acquainted with her poetical works long after in Enfield's *Speaker*; and remember being much divided in my opinion at that time between her *Ode to Spring* and Collins's *Ode to Evening*. I wish I could repay my childish debt of gratitude in terms of appropriate praise. She is a very pretty poetess; and, to my fancy, strews the flowers of poetry most agreeably round the borders of religious controversy. She is a neat and pointed prose-writer. Her *Thoughts on the Inconsistency of Human Expectations* is one of the most ingenious and sensible essays in the language. There is the same idea in one of Barrow's sermons."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Other youthful recollections may be found elsewhere. But one may just add that the copy of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, with the cuts by Gribelin, which was to be found in the book-room or parlour at Wem, doubtless prepared the way for his own essay on the same lines in after years.

He almost as much as admits this in the preface to the volume, 1823.

## VII

### COMMENCEMENT OF AN INTELLECTUAL EVOLUTION—REVOLT FROM HOME-TRAINING

HAZLITT, however, was already beginning to ruminate on certain abstract metaphysical speculations and problems, the development of which from their embryonic stage occupied some years of laborious thought. This may well have originated in conversation with his father and his father's friends; and in his paper, *On Liberty and Necessity*, he even challenged the pretensions of Dr. Priestley as a thinker and reasoner, as his sister had, in justice to her father, challenged the Doctor's claims as an apostle of Unitarianism in New England.

But there was more than this. For from a letter to his father while he was at Hackney College, a lad of fifteen,<sup>1</sup> the sole possible conclusion to be drawn is that at this time he was not only overtaxed by the precocious endeavour to master profound and intricate points in metaphysics, outside the normal course of studies, but was brooding over a sense of unfulfilled hopes and a wasted youth in the training, which his parents had so near at heart for him. The dejection and disappointment at his inability, after reiterated efforts, to put his ideas into anything like shape extended to matters in general and to life as a whole, and he saw "the idle and illusive dreams

<sup>1</sup> See Correspondence *infra* (letter of October 23, 1793).



of boyish expectation dissipated," and his "wounded spirit soothed" only by the feeling "that one or two persons in the world cared for him."

It was more than probably the case that Hazlitt's parents, and those by whom he was surrounded at Wem, failed to appreciate the gravity of the error and mischief bound to accrue from a persistence in trying to divert such a mind and character from its unchangeable bias. Relief from this damaging tension arrived not a whit too early, and the parents—at all events the father—had to yield. The Church as a profession was forsworn. Coleridge and the Louvre were looming in the horizon, though he yet saw them not.

"It was my misfortune perhaps to be bred up among Dissenters, who look with too jaundiced an eye at others, and set too high a value on their own peculiar pretensions. From being proscribed themselves, they learn to proscribe others, and come in the end to reduce all integrity of principle and soundness of opinion within the pale of their own little communion. Those who were out of it, and did not belong to the class of *Rational Dissenters*, I was led erroneously to look upon as hardly deserving the name of rational beings.

"When I was about fourteen (as long ago as the year 1792), in consequence of a dispute, one day after coming out of meeting, between my father and an old lady of the congregation, respecting the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts and the limits of religious toleration, I set about forming in my head (the first time I ever attempted to think) a new system of political rights and general jurisprudence. It was this circumstance that decided the fate of my future life; or rather I would say it was from an original bias or craving to be satisfied of the reason of things, that I seized hold of this

accidental opportunity to indulge in its uneasy and unconscious determination.

“I was present, when I was sixteen, at a party composed of men, women, and children, in which two persons of remarkable candour and ingenuity were labouring (as hard as if they had been paid for it) to prove that all prayer was a mode of dictating to the Almighty and an arrogant assumption of superiority. A gentleman present said with great simplicity and *naïveté*, that there was one prayer which did not strike him as coming exactly under this description; and being asked what that was, made answer, ‘The Samaritan’s—Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.’ This appeal by no means settled the sceptical dogmatism of the two disputants, and soon after the proposer of the objection went away; at which one of them observed, with great marks of satisfaction and triumph—‘I am afraid we have shocked that gentleman’s prejudices.’ This did not appear to me at that time quite the thing, and this happened in the year 1794.

“For my own part I started in life with the French Revolution, and I have lived, alas! to see the end of it. But I did not foresee this result. My sun arose with the first dawn of liberty, and I did not think how soon both must set. The new impulse to ardour given to men’s minds imparted a congenial warmth and glow to mine; we were strong to run a race together, and I little dreamed that long before mine was set, the sun of liberty would turn to blood, or set once more in the night of despotism. Since then, I confess, I have no longer felt myself young, for with that my hopes fell.

“The Revolution had considerable influence on my early feelings, as on those of others. Youth was then doubly such. It was the dawn of a new era, a new impulse had been given to men’s

minds, and the sun of Liberty rose upon the sun of Life in the same day, and both were proud to run their race together. Little did I dream, while my first hopes and wishes went hand in hand with those of the human race, that long before my eyes should close, that dawn would be overcast, and set once more in the night of despotism—‘total eclipse!’ Happy that I did not. I felt for years, and during the best part of my existence, *heart-whole* in that cause, and triumphed in the triumphs over the enemies of man! At that time while the fairest aspirations of the human mind seemed about to be realised, ere the image of man was defaced and his breast mangled in scorn, philosophy took a higher, poetry could afford a deeper, range. At that time, to read the *Robbers* was indeed delicious, and to hear—

‘From the dungeon of the tower time-rent,  
That fearful voice, a famished father’s cry,’

could be borne only amidst the fulness of hope, the crash of the fall of the strongholds of power, and the exulting sounds of the march of human freedom. What feelings the death-scene in *Don Carlos* sent into the soul! In that headlong career of lofty enthusiasm, and the joyous opening of the prospects of the world and our own, the thought of death crossing it, smote doubly cold upon the mind; there was a stifling sense of oppression and confinement, an impatience of our present knowledge, a desire to grasp the whole of our existence in one strong embrace, to sound the mystery of life and death, and in order to put an end to the agony of doubt and dread, to burst through our prison-house, and confront the King of Terrors in his grisly palace! . . . As I was writing out this passage, my miniature picture when a child lay on the mantel-piece, and I

took it out of the case to look at it.<sup>1</sup> I could perceive few traces of myself in it; but there was the same placid brow, the dimpled mouth, the same timid, inquisitive glance as ever. But its careless smile did not seem to reproach me with having become a recreant to the sentiments that were then sown in my mind, or with having written a sentence that could call up a blush in this image of ingenuous youth!

“I am by education and conviction inclined to republicanism and puritanism. In America they have both; but I confess I feel a little staggered in the practical efficacy and saving grace of *first principles*, when I ask myself, ‘Can they throughout the United States, from Boston to Baltimore, produce a single head like one of Titian’s Venetian nobles, nurtured in all the pride of aristocracy and all the blindness of Popery?’ Of all the branches of political economy the human face is perhaps the best criterion of *value*.

“For many years of my life I did nothing but think. I had nothing else to do but solve some knotty point, or dip in some abstruse author, or look at the sky, or wander by the pebbled sea-side—

‘To see the children sporting on the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.’

I cared for nothing, I wanted nothing. I took my time to consider whatever occurred to me, and was in no hurry to give a sophistical answer to a question—there was no printer’s devil waiting for me. I used to write a page or two perhaps in half a year, and remember laughing heartily at the celebrated experimentalist, Nicholson, who told me that in twenty years he had written as much as would

<sup>1</sup> That reproduced as a vignette on the title-page of the present volume.

make three hundred octavo volumes. If I was not a great author, I could read with ever fresh delight, 'never ending, still beginning,' and had no occasion to write a criticism when I had done. If I could not paint like Claude, I could admire 'the witchery of the soft blue sky,' as I walked out, and was satisfied with the pleasure it gave me. . . . I had no relations to the State, no duty to perform, no ties to bind me to others; I had neither friend nor mistress, wife or child. I lived in a world of contemplation, and not of action. This sort of dreaming existence is the best.

"I never could make much of Cicero, except his two treatises on *Friendship* and *Old Age*, which are most amiable gossiping. I see that Canning borrowed his tautology from Cicero, who runs on with such expressions, 'I will bear, I will suffer, I will endure.' This is bad enough in the original; it is inexcusable in the copy. Cicero's style, however, answered to the elegance of his finely-turned features; and in his long, graceful neck you may trace his winding and involuted periods.<sup>1</sup>

"Many people are wretched, because they have not money to buy a fine horse, or to hire a fine house, or to keep a carriage, or to purchase a diamond necklace, or to go to a race-ball, or to give their servants new liveries. I cannot myself enter into all this. If I can *live to think, and think to live*, I am satisfied. Some want to possess pictures, others to collect libraries. All I wish is, sometimes to see the one and read the other.

"The greatest pleasure in life is that of reading, while we are young. I have had as much of this pleasure as perhaps any one. As I grow older, it

<sup>1</sup> In *them* he said that he did not believe "more than he could help."



fades; or else the stronger stimulus of writing takes off the edge of it.

“At present I have neither time nor inclination for it; yet I should like to devote a year’s entire leisure to a course of the English novelists, and perhaps clap on that old sly knave, Sir Walter, to the end of the list.

“It is astonishing how I used formerly to relish the style of certain authors, at a time when I myself despaired of ever writing a single line. Probably this was the reason. . . . My three favourite writers about the time I speak of were Burke, Junius, and Rousseau. I was never weary of admiring and wondering at the felicities of the style, the turns of expression, the refinements of thought and sentiment. I laid the book down to find out the secret of so much strength and beauty, and took it up again in despair, to read on and admire.

“So I passed whole days, months, and I may add, years.

“My little boy said the other day, ‘He could not tell what to do without a book to read—he should wander about without knowing what to do with himself.’ So have I wandered about till now, and, waking from the dream of books at last, don’t know what to do with myself. My poor little fellow: may’st thou dream long amidst thy darling books, and never wake!”

There are distinct evidences of the extensive and multifarious perusal of books by Hazlitt, whom some of his critics improperly charged with a deficiency in this direction. In the old home he dipped into volumes of execrating dulness and ineptitude; he refers to such literary petrifications as Paley’s *Evidences* and Chubb’s *Tracts*; but, on the other hand, his juvenile love, Cooke’s *British Essayists*, was “a perpetual gala-day,” and of Keats’s *Eve of*

*St. Agnes* he says that it made him regret that he was not young again. Yet, as he himself allows, books in later life lost in great measure their power over him.

The principle, if there was one, pursued by Hazlitt in his use of other men's books was as different and remote from that, which I elsewhere take to have been Shakespear's, as two things can possibly be. Hazlitt certainly glanced in something resembling the manner and plan of the great national poet, whom he did so much to illustrate, at an untold number of volumes, and carried away a general impression of the book as a whole, or of some features in it; but my grandfather cherished through life, from boyhood to old age, a domineering affection for a handful of works, and not only read them and read them again, but imbued himself with them, and never ceased to scatter through his own pages the beauties of which he had become so enamoured. Shakespear largely treated other men's labours—even their thoughts—as material, and his own to some extent, perchance to too great an one, as stepping-stones to material prosperity.

“Any one who has passed through the regular gradations of a classical education and is not made a fool by it, may consider himself as having had a very narrow escape. You will hear more good things on the outside of a coach from London to Oxford than if you were to pass a twelvemonth with the undergraduates or heads of colleges of that famous University. Do not catch the din of scholars and teachers, or dine or sup with them, or speak a word to any of the privileged inhabitants, for if you do, the spell will be broken, the poetry and religion gone, and the palace of enchantment will melt from your embrace into thin air.”



He presently refers to the Jardin des Plantes at Paris as he saw it in 1824.

“A prodigious number of animals, wild and tame, are enclosed in separate divisions, feeding on the grass and shrubs, and leading a life of learned leisure. At least they have as good a title to this ironical compliment as most members of colleges and seminaries of learning, for they grow fat and sleek on it.

“How much ingenuity has been thrown away in the defence of creeds and systems! How much time and talents have been wasted in theological controversy, in law, in politics, in verbal criticism, in judicial astrology, and in finding out the art of making gold! What actual benefit do we reap from the writings of a Laud or a Whitgift, or of Bishop Hall or Bishop Waterland, or Prideaux's *Connections*, or Beausobre, or Calmet, or St. Augustine, or Puffendorf, or Vattel, or from the more literal but equally learned and unprofitable labours of Scaliger, Cardan, and Schioppius? How many grains of sense are there in their thousand folio or quarto volumes? What would the world lose if they were committed to the flames to-morrow?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See more on this point in chap. xxix. *infra*.

## VIII

### MEETING WITH COLERIDGE

“IN the year 1798 Mr. Coleridge came to Shrewsbury to succeed Mr. Rowe in the spiritual charge of a Unitarian congregation there. He did not come till late on the Saturday afternoon before he was to preach; and Mr. Rowe, who himself went down to the coach in a state of anxiety and expectation to look for the arrival of his successor, could find no one at all answering the description but a round-faced man, in a short black coat (like a shooting-jacket) which hardly seemed to have been made for him, but who seemed to be talking at a great rate to his fellow-passengers. Mr. Rowe had scarce returned to give an account of his disappointment when the round-faced man in black entered, and dissipated all doubts on the subject by beginning to talk. He did not cease while he stayed; nor has he since, that I know of. He held the good town of Shrewsbury in delightful suspense for three weeks that he remained there, ‘fluttering the *proud Salopians* like an eagle in a dove-cote’; and the Welsh mountains, that skirt the horizon with their tempestuous confusion, agree to have heard no such mystic sounds since the days of—

‘High-born Hoel’s harp or soft Llewelyn’s lay!’

As we passed along between Wem and Shrewsbury, and I eyed their blue tops seen through the wintry branches, or the red rustling leaves of the

sturdy oak trees by the roadside, a sound was in my ears as of a Siren's song; I was stunned, startled with it, as from deep sleep; but I had no notion then that I should ever be able to express my admiration to others in motley imagery or quaint allusion, till the light of his genius shone into my soul, like the sun's rays glittering in the puddles of the road. I was at that time dumb, inarticulate, helpless, like a worm by the wayside, crushed, bleeding, lifeless; but now, bursting from the deadly bands that bound them,—

‘With Styx nine times round them.’

my ideas float on winged words, and as they expand their plumes, catch the golden light of other years. . . .

“My father lived [at Wem] ten miles from Shrewsbury, and was in the habit of exchanging visits with Mr. Rowe, and with Mr. Jenkins of Whitchurch<sup>1</sup> (nine miles farther on), according to the custom of dissenting ministers in each other's neighbourhood. A line of communication is thus established, by which the flame of civil and religious liberty is kept alive, and nourishes its smouldering fire unquenchable, like the fires in the *Agamemnon* of *Æschylus*, placed at different stations, that waited for ten long years to announce with their blazing pyramids the destruction of Troy. Coleridge had agreed to come over and see my father, according to the courtesy of the country, as Mr. Rowe's probable successor; but, in the meantime, I had

<sup>1</sup> My highly valued and respected friend, the Rev. Thomas Corser, Rector of Stand, near Manchester, told me that he recollected Mr. Jenkins, and had always regretted not taking notes of his conversation, which was remarkably instructive and entertaining. Mr. Corser was a native of Whitchurch, and possibly met Mr. Jenkins at his father's house there. A very favourable and even flattering account of Jenkins is given by Hazlitt in a later section.

gone to hear him preach the Sunday after his arrival. A poet and a philosopher getting up into a Unitarian pulpit to preach the gospel, was a romance in these degenerate days, a sort of revival of the primitive spirit of Christianity, which was not to be resisted.

“It was in January, 1798, that I rose one morning before daylight, to walk ten miles in the mud, to hear this celebrated person preach. Never, the longest day I have to live, shall I have such another walk as this cold, raw, comfortless one, in the winter of the year 1798.—*Il y a des impressions que ni le tems ni les circonstances peuvent effacer. Dusse-je vivre des siècles entiers, le doux tems de ma jeunesse ne peut renaître pour moi, ni s’effacer jamais dans ma mémoire.* When I got there the organ was playing the 100th Psalm, and when it was done Mr. Coleridge rose<sup>1</sup> and gave out his text, ‘And he went up into the mountain to pray, HIMSELF, ALONE.’ As he gave out this text, his voice ‘rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,’ and when he came to the last two words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe. The idea of St. John came into my mind, ‘of one crying in the wilderness, who had his loins girt about, and whose food was locusts and wild honey.’ The preacher then launched into his subject, like an eagle dallying with the wind. The sermon was upon peace and war; upon Church and State—not their alliance, but their separation—on the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christianity, not as the same, but

<sup>1</sup> The pulpit and lectern which he used are still there, but the building was restored in 1851.

as opposed to one another. He talked of those who had 'inscribed the cross of Christ on banners dripping with human gore.' He made a poetical and pastoral excursion,—and to show the fatal effects of war, drew a striking contrast between the simple shepherd boy, driving his team afield, or sitting under the hawthorn, piping to his flock, 'as though he should never be old,' and the same poor country lad, crimped, kidnapped, brought into town, made drunk at an alehouse, turned into a wretched drummer-boy, with his hair sticking on end with powder and pomatum, a long cue at his back, and tricked out in the loathsome finery of the profession of blood.

'Such were the notes our once-loved poet sang.'

And for myself I could not have been more delighted if I had heard the music of the spheres. Poetry and Philosophy had met together, Truth and Genius had embraced, under the eye and with the sanction of Religion. This was even beyond my hopes. I returned home well satisfied. The sun that was still labouring pale and wan through the sky, obscured by thick mists, seemed an emblem of the *good cause*; and the cold dank drops of dew, that hung half melted on the beard of the thistle, had something genial and refreshing in them; for there was a spirit of hope and youth in all nature, that turned everything into good. The face of nature had not then the brand of *JUS DIVINUM* on it:

'Like to that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe.'

"On the Tuesday following the half-inspired speaker came. I was called down into the room where he was, and went half hoping, half afraid. He received me very graciously, and I listened for a long



time without uttering a word. I did not suffer in his opinion by my silence. 'For those two hours,' he afterwards was pleased to say, 'he was conversing with William Hazlitt's forehead!' His appearance was different from what I had anticipated from seeing him before. At a distance, and in the dim light of the chapel, there was to me a strange wildness in his aspect, a dusky obscurity, and I thought him pitted with the smallpox. His complexion was at that time clear, and even bright—

'As are the children of yon azure sheen.'

His forehead was broad and high, light as if built of ivory, with large projecting eyebrows, and his eyes rolling beneath them, like a sea with darkened lustre. 'A certain tender bloom his face o'erspread,' a purple tinge as we see it in the pale, thoughtful complexions of the Spanish portrait-painters, Murillo and Velasquez. His mouth was gross, voluptuous, open, eloquent; his chin good-humoured and round; but his nose, the rudder of the face, the index of the will, was small, feeble, nothing—like what he has done. It might seem that the genius of his face as from a height surveyed and projected him (with sufficient capacity and huge aspiration) into the world unknown of thought and imagination, with nothing to support or guide his veering purpose—as if Columbus had launched his adventurous course for the New World in a scallop without oars or compass. So at least I comment on it after the event. Coleridge, in his person, was rather above the common size, inclining to the corpulent, or like Lord Hamlet, 'somewhat fat and porsy.' His hair (now, alas! grey) was then black and glossy as the raven's, and fell in smooth masses over his forehead. This long, pendulous hair is peculiar to enthusiasts, to those whose minds tend heavenward, and is



traditionally inseparable (though of a different colour) from the pictures of Christ. It ought to belong, as a character, to all who preach *Christ crucified*, and Coleridge was at that time one of those!

“It was curious to observe the contrast between him and my father, who was a veteran in the cause, and then declining into the vale of years. He had been carefully brought up by his parents, and sent to the University of Glasgow . . . to prepare him for his future destination. . . . So, if we look back to past generations (as far as eye can reach), we see the same hopes, fears, wishes, followed by the same disappointments, throbbing in the human heart; and so we may see them (if we look forward) rising up for ever, and disappearing like vapourish bubbles in the human breast! . . . He was to spend the last years of his life, far from the only converse that he loved, the talk about disputed texts of Scripture, and the cause of civil and religious liberty. So he passed his days, repining, but resigned, in the study of the Bible, and the perusal of the commentators,—huge folios, not easily got through, one of which would outlast a winter! Why did he pore on these from morn to night (with the exception of a walk in the fields or a turn in the garden to gather broccoliplants or kidney-beans of his own rearing with no small degree of pride and pleasure)? Here were ‘no figures nor no fantasies,’—neither poetry nor philosophy—nothing to dazzle, nothing to excite modern curiosity; but to his lack-lustre eyes there appeared, within the pages of the ponderous, unwieldy, neglected tomes, the sacred name of JEHOVAH in Hebrew capitals.<sup>1</sup> Pressed down by the weight of the style, worn to the last fading thinness of the understanding, there were glimpses, glimmering notions of the patriarchal wanderings, with palm trees hovering

<sup>1</sup> Rather, *characters*.

in the horizon, and processions of camels at the distance of three thousand years; there was Moses with the Burning Bush, the number of the Twelve Tribes, types, shadows, glosses on the law and the prophets; there were discussions (dull enough) on the age of Methuselah, a mighty speculation! there were outlines, rude guesses at the shape of Noah's Ark and of the riches of Solomon's Temple; questions as to the date of the creation, predictions of the end of all things; the great lapses of time, the strange mutations of the globe, were unfolded with the voluminous leaf, as it turned over; and though the soul might slumber with an hieroglyphic veil of inscrutable mysteries drawn over it, yet it was in a slumber ill-exchanged for all the sharpened realities of sense, wit, fancy, or reason. My father's life was comparatively a dream; but it was a dream of infinity and eternity, of death, the resurrection, and a judgment to come!

"No two individuals were ever more unlike than were the host and his guest. A poet was to my father a sort of nondescript; yet whatever added grace to the Unitarian cause was to him welcome. He could hardly have been more surprised or pleased if our visitor had worn wings. Indeed, his thoughts had wings; and as the silken sounds rustled round our little wainscoted parlour, my father threw back his spectacles over his forehead, his white hairs mixing with its sanguine hue, and a smile of delight beamed across his rugged cordial face, to think that Truth had found a new ally in Fancy! Besides, Coleridge seemed to take considerable notice of me, and that of itself was enough. He talked very familiarly, but agreeably, and glanced over a variety of subjects. At dinner-time he grew more animated, and dilated in a very edifying manner on Mary Wolstonecraft and Mackintosh. The last, he said, he considered

(on my father's speaking of his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* as a capital performance) as a clever scholastic man—a master of the topics,—or as the ready warehouseman of letters, who knew exactly where to lay his hand on what he wanted, though the goods were not his own. He thought him no match for Burke, either in style or matter. Burke was a metaphysician, Mackintosh a mere logician. Burke was an orator (almost a poet) who reasoned in figures, because he had an eye for nature: Mackintosh, on the other hand, was a rhetorician, who had only an eye to common-places. On this I ventured to say that I had always entertained a great opinion of Burke, and that (as far as I could find) the speaking of him with contempt might be made the test of a vulgar democratical mind. This was the first observation I ever made to Coleridge, and he said it was a very just and striking one. I remember the leg of Welsh mutton and the turnips on the table that day had the finest flavour imaginable. Coleridge added that Mackintosh and Tom Wedgwood (of whom, however, he spoke highly) had expressed a very indifferent opinion of his friend Mr. Wordsworth, on which he remarked to them—‘He strides on so far before you, that he dwindles in the distance!’ Godwin had once boasted to him of having carried on an argument with Mackintosh for three hours with dubious success. Coleridge told him—‘If there had been a man of genius in the room, he would have settled the question in five minutes.’ He asked me if I had ever seen Mary Wolstonecraft, and I said I had once for a few moments, and that she seemed to me to turn off Godwin's objections to something she advanced with quite a playful, easy air. He replied, that ‘this was only one instance of the ascendancy which people of imagination exercised over those of mere intellect.’ He did not rate Godwin very high

(this was caprice or prejudice, real or affected), but he had a great idea of Mrs. Wolstonecraft's powers of conversation; none at all of her talent for book-making. He complained in particular of the presumption of Godwin attempting to establish the future immortality of man, 'without' (as he said) 'knowing what Death was or what Life was'—and the tone in which he pronounced these two words seemed to convey a complete image of both.<sup>1</sup> We talked a little about Holcroft. He had been asked if he was not much struck *with* him; and he said, he thought himself in more danger of being struck *by* him. I complained that he would not let me get on at all, for he required a definition of even the commonest word, exclaiming, 'What do you mean by a *sensation*, sir? What do you mean by an *idea*?' This, Coleridge said, was barricading the road to truth—it was setting up a turnpike-gate at every step we took. I forget a great number of things, many more than I remember; but the day passed off pleasantly, and the next morning Mr. Coleridge was to return to Shrewsbury. When I came down to breakfast, I found that he had just received a letter from his friend T. Wedgwood,<sup>2</sup> making him an offer of £150 a-year if he chose to waive his present pursuit, and devote himself entirely to the study of poetry and philosophy. Coleridge seemed to make up his mind to close with this proposal in the act of tying on one of his shoes. It threw an additional damp on his departure. It took the wayward enthusiast quite from us to cast him into Deva's winding vales, or by the shores of old romance. Instead of living at ten miles' distance, of being the

<sup>1</sup> I see that in a letter of 1822 respecting the Shelleys, Horatio Smith does not draw a very favourable character of Godwin. He says: "As to Godwin, he is a selfish, unfeeling coxcomb, whom I have never liked since I heard him abuse Shelley, who had done so much for him."

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Wedgwood, brother of the Potter.

pastor of a dissenting congregation at Shrewsbury, he was henceforth to inhabit the Hill of Parnassus, to be a Shepherd on the Delectable Mountains. Alas! I knew not the way thither, and felt very little gratitude for Mr. Wedgwood's bounty. I was presently relieved from this dilemma; for Mr. Coleridge, asking for a pen and ink, and going to a table to write something on a bit of card, advanced towards me with undulating step, and giving me the precious document, said that that was his address, *Mr. Coleridge, Nether-Stowey, Somersetshire*; and that he should be glad to see me there in a few weeks' time, and, if I chose, would come half-way to meet me. I was not less surprised than the shepherd-boy (this simile is to be found in *Cassandra*) when he sees a thunderbolt fall close at his feet. I stammered out my acknowledgments and acceptance of this offer (I thought Mr. Wedgwood's annuity a trifle to it) as well as I could; and, this mighty business being settled, the poet-preacher took leave, and I accompanied him six miles on the road. It was a fine morning in the middle of winter, and he talked the whole way. The scholar in Chaucer is described as going

‘—Sounding on his way.’

So Coleridge went on his.



## IX

### HAZLITT'S THOUGHTS ON COLERIDGE

“IN digressing, in dilating, in passing from subject to subject, he appeared to me to float in air, to slide on ice. He told me in confidence (going along) that he should have preached two sermons before he accepted the situation at Shrewsbury, one on Infant Baptism, the other on the Lord's Supper, showing that he could not administer either, which would have effectually disqualified him for the object in view. I observed that he continually crossed me on the way by shifting from one side of the footpath to the other. This struck me as an odd movement; but I did not at that time connect it with any instability of purpose or involuntary change of principle, as I have done since. He seemed unable to keep on in a straight line. He spoke slightly of Hume (whose *Essay on Miracles* he said was stolen from an objection started in one of South's sermons—*Credat Judæus Apella!*). I was not very much pleased at this account of Hume, for I had just been reading with infinite relish that completest of all metaphysical *choke-pears*, his *Treatise on Human Nature*, to which the *Essays*, in point of scholastic subtilty and close reasoning, are mere elegant trifling, light summer reading. Coleridge even denied the excellence of Hume's general style, which I think betrayed a want of taste or candour. He, however, made me amends by the manner in which he spoke of Berkeley. He dwelt particularly on his *Essay on*



*Vision* as a masterpiece of analytical reasoning. So it undoubtedly is. He was exceedingly angry with Dr. Johnson for striking the stone with his foot, in allusion to this author's *Theory of Matter and Spirit*, and saying, 'Thus I confute him, sir.' Coleridge drew a parallel (I don't know how he brought about the connection) between Bishop Berkeley and Tom Paine. He said the one was an instance of a subtle, the other of an acute mind, than which no two things could be more distinct. The one was a shop-boy's quality, the other the characteristic of a philosopher. He considered Bishop Butler as a true philosopher, a profound and conscientious thinker, a genuine reader of nature and of his own mind. He did not speak of his *Analogy*, but of his *Sermons at the Rolls' Chapel*, of which I had never heard. Coleridge somehow always contrived to prefer the *unknown* to the *known*. In this instance he was right. The *Analogy* is a tissue of sophistry, of wire-drawn, theological special-pleading; the *Sermons* (with the Preface to them) are in a fine vein of deep, matured reflection, a candid appeal to our observation of human nature, without pedantry and without bias. I told Coleridge I had written a few remarks, and was sometimes foolish enough to believe that I had made a discovery on the same subject (the 'Natural Disinterestedness of the Human Mind')—and I tried to explain my view of it to Coleridge, who listened with great willingness, but I did not succeed in making myself understood. I sat down to the task shortly afterwards for the twentieth time, got new pens and paper, determined to make clear work of it, wrote a few meagre sentences in the skeleton-style of a mathematical demonstration, stopped half-way down the second page; and, after trying in vain to pump up any words, images, notions, apprehensions, facts, or

observations, from that gulf of abstraction in which I had plunged myself for four or five years preceding, gave up the attempt as labour in vain, and shed tears of helpless despondency on the blank unfinished paper. . . .

“If I had the quaint muse of Sir Philip Sidney to assist me, I would write a *Sonnet to the Road between Wem and Shrewsbury*, and immortalise every step of it by some fond enigmatical conceit. I would swear that the very milestones had ears, and that Harmer Hill stooped with all its pines, to listen to a poet, as he passed! I remember but one other topic of discourse in this walk. He mentioned Paley, praised the naturalness and clearness of his style, but condemned his sentiments; thought him a mere time-serving casuist, and said that ‘the fact of his work on *Moral and Political Philosophy* being made a text-book in our universities was a disgrace to the national character.’ We parted at the six-mile stone; and I returned home, pensive but much pleased. I had met with unexpected notice from a person whom I believed to have been prejudiced against me. ‘Kind and affable to me had been his condescension, and should be honoured ever with suitable regard.’ He was the first poet I had known, and he certainly answered to that inspired name. I had heard a great deal of his powers of conversation, and was not disappointed. In fact, I never met with anything at all like them, either before or since. I could easily credit the accounts which were circulated of his holding forth to a large party of ladies and gentlemen, an evening or two before, on the Berkeleyian Theory, when he made the whole material universe look like a transparency of fine words; and another story (which I believe he has somewhere told himself) of his being asked to a party at Birmingham, of his smoking tobacco and

going to sleep after dinner on a sofa, where the company found him to their no small surprise, which was increased to wonder when he started up of a sudden, and rubbing his eyes, looked about him, and launched into a three hours' description of the third heaven, of which he had had a dream. . . .

“On my way back I had a sound in my ears—it was the voice of Fancy: I had a light before me—it was the face of Poetry. The one still lingers there, the other has not quitted my side! Coleridge in truth met me half-way on the ground of philosophy, or I should not have been won over to his imaginative creed. I had an uneasy, pleasurable sensation all the time, till I was to visit him. During those months the chill breath of winter gave me a welcoming; the vernal air was balm and inspiration to me. The golden sunsets, the silver star of evening, lighted me on my way to new hopes and prospects. *I was to visit Coleridge in the Spring.* This circumstance was never absent from my thoughts, and mingled with all my feelings. I wrote to him at the time proposed, and received an answer postponing my intended visit for a week or two, but very cordially urging me to complete my promise then. This delay did not damp, but rather increased my ardour. In the meantime I went to Llangollen Vale, by way of initiating myself in the mysteries of natural scenery; and I must say I was enchanted with it. I had been reading Coleridge's description of England, in his fine *Ode on the Departing Year*, and I applied it *con amore* to the objects before me. That valley was to me (in a manner) the cradle of a new existence: in the river that winds through it, my spirit was baptized in the waters of Helicon!

“I returned home, and soon after set out on my journey with unworn heart and untried feet. My

way lay through Worcester and Gloucester, and by Upton, where I thought of *Tom Jones* and the adventure of the muff. I remember getting completely wet through one day, and stopping at an inn (I think it was at Tewkesbury),<sup>1</sup> where I sat up all night to read *Paul and Virginia*. Sweet were the showers in early youth that drenched my body, and sweet the drops of pity that fell upon the books I read! I recollect a remark of Coleridge's upon this very book,—that nothing could show the gross indelicacy of French manners and the entire corruption of their imagination more strongly than the behaviour of the heroine in the last fatal scene, who turns away from a person on board the sinking vessel, that offers to save her life, because he has thrown off his clothes to assist him in swimming. Was this a time to think of such a circumstance? I once hinted to Wordsworth, as we were sailing in his boat on Grasmere Lake, that I thought he had borrowed the idea of his *Poems on the Naming of Places* from the local inscriptions of the same kind in *Paul and Virginia*. He did not own the obligation, and stated some distinction without a difference, in defence of his claim to originality. Any the slightest variation would be sufficient for this purpose in his mind; for whatever *he* added or altered would inevitably be worth all that any one else had done, and contain the marrow of the sentiment. I was still two days before the time fixed for my arrival, for I had taken care to set out early enough. I stopped these two days at Bridgewater, and when I was tired of sauntering on the banks of its muddy river, returned to the inn, and read *Camilla*.

“I arrived, and was well received. The country about Nether-Stowey is beautiful, green and hilly,

<sup>1</sup> I think that it was at Bridgewater.

and near the seashore. I saw it but the other day, after an interval of twenty years, from a hill near Taunton.<sup>1</sup> How was the map of my life spread out before me, as the map of the country lay at my feet! In the afternoon Coleridge took me over to All-Foxden,<sup>2</sup> a romantic old family mansion of the St. Aubins, where Wordsworth lived. It was then in the possession of a friend of the poet, who gave him the free use of it. Somehow that period (the time just after the French Revolution) was not a time when *nothing was given for nothing*. The mind opened, and a softness might be perceived coming over the heart of individuals, beneath 'the scales that fence' our self-interest. Wordsworth himself was from home, but his sister kept house, and set before us a frugal repast; and we had free access to her brother's poems, the *Lyrical Ballads*, which were still in manuscript, or in the form of 'Sibylline leaves.' I dipped into a few of these with great satisfaction, and with the faith of a novice. I slept that night in an old room with blue hangings, and covered with the round-faced family portraits of the age of George I. and II., and from the wooded declivity of the adjoining park that overlooked my window, at the dawn of day, could

' — hear the loud stag speak.'

"That morning, as soon as breakfast was over, we strolled out into the park, and seating ourselves on the trunk of an old ash tree that stretched along the ground, Coleridge read aloud, with a sonorous and musical voice, the ballad of *Betty Foy*. I was not critically or sceptically inclined. I saw touches of truth and nature, and took the rest for granted. But in the *Thorn*, the *Mad Mother*, and the

<sup>1</sup> Probably in 1819, when he paid a visit to John Hunt.

<sup>2</sup> Two miles from Stowey.



*Complaint of a Poor Indian Woman*, I felt that deeper power and pathos which have been since acknowledged,—

‘ In spite of pride, in erring reason’s spite,’

as the characteristics of this author; and the sense of a new style and a new spirit in poetry came over me. It had to me something of the effect that arises from the turning up of the fresh soil, or of the first welcome breath of Spring,—

‘ While yet the trembling year is unconfirmed.’

Coleridge and myself walked back to Stowey that evening, and his voice sounded high—

‘ Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,  
Fix’d fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,’

as we passed through echoing grove, by fairy stream or waterfall, gleaming in the summer moonlight! He lamented that Wordsworth was not prone enough to believe in the traditional superstitions of the place, and that there was a something corporeal, a *matter-of-fact-ness*, a clinging to the palpable, or often to the petty, in his poetry, in consequence. His genius was not a spirit that descended to him through the air; it sprang out of the ground like a flower, or unfolded itself from a green spray, on which the goldfinch sang. He said, however (if I remember right), that this objection must be confined to his descriptive pieces; that his philosophic poetry had a grand and comprehensive spirit in it, so that his soul seemed to inhabit the universe like a palace, and to discover truth by intuition, rather than by deduction. The next day Wordsworth arrived from Bristol at Coleridge’s cottage. I think I see him now. He answered in some degree to his friend’s description of him, but was more gaunt and Don



Quixote-like. He was quaintly dressed (according to the *costume* of that unconstrained period) in a brown fustian jacket and striped pantaloons. There was something of a roll, a lounge in his gait, not unlike his own *Peter Bell*.<sup>1</sup> There was a severe, worn pressure of thought about his temples, a fire in his eye (as if he saw something in objects more than the outward appearance), an intense, high, narrow forehead, a Roman nose, cheeks furrowed by strong purpose and feeling, and a convulsive inclination to laughter about the mouth, a good deal at variance with the solemn, stately expression of the rest of his face. Chantrey's bust wants the marking traits, but he was teased into making it regular and heavy. Haydon's head of him, introduced into the *Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem*, is the most like his drooping weight of thought and expression. He sat down and talked very naturally and freely, with a mixture of clear gushing accents in his voice, a deep guttural intonation, and a strong tincture of the northern *burr*, like the crust on wine. He instantly began to make havoc of the half of a Cheshire cheese on the table, and said triumphantly that 'his marriage with experience had not been so productive as Mr. Southey's in teaching him a knowledge of the good things of this life.' He had been to see the *Castle Spectre* by Monk Lewis, while at Bristol, and described it very well. He said 'it fitted the taste of the audience like a glove.' This *ad captandum* merit was, however, by no means a recommendation of it, according to the severe principles of the new school, which reject rather than court popular effect. Wordsworth, looking out of the low latticed window, said, 'How beautifully the sun sets on that yellow bank!' I thought within myself,

<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt was also said to present this characteristic. His political adversaries pronounced it in *his* case a blemish.

‘With what eyes these poets see nature!’ and ever after, when I saw the sunset stream upon the objects facing it, conceived I had made a discovery, or thanked Mr. Wordsworth for having made one for me! We went over to All-Foxden again the day following, and Wordsworth<sup>1</sup> read us the story of *Peter Bell* in the open air; and the comment made upon it by his face and voice was very different from that of some later critics! Whatever might be thought of the poem, ‘his face was as a book where men might read strange matters,’ and he announced the fate of his hero in prophetic tones. There is a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment. Coleridge’s manner is more full, animated, and varied; Wordsworth’s more equable, sustained, and internal. The one might be termed more *dramatic*, the other more *lyrical*. Coleridge has told me that he himself liked to compose in walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the straggling branches of a copse-wood; whereas Wordsworth always wrote (if he could) walking up and down a straight gravel-walk, or in some spot where the continuity of his verse met with no collateral interruption. Returning that same evening, I got into a metaphysical argument with Wordsworth, while Coleridge was explaining the different notes of the nightingale to his sister, in which we neither of us succeeded in making ourselves perfectly clear and intelligible.

<sup>1</sup> “I first became acquainted with your father [through meeting him] in Somersetshire, in the autumn of 1797 or the summer of 1798. He was then remarkable for analytical power and for acuteness and originality of mind; and that such intellectual qualities characterised him through life, his writings, as far as I am acquainted with them, sufficiently prove.”—*Letter from W. Wordsworth to W. Hazlitt, Jun., May 23, 1831.*

“Thus I passed three weeks at Nether-Stowey and in the neighbourhood, generally devoting the afternoons to a delightful chat in an arbour made of bark by the poet’s friend Tom Poole, sitting under two fine elm trees, and listening to the bees humming round us, while we quaffed our *flip*. It was agreed, among other things, that we should make a jaunt down the Bristol Channel, as far as Lynton. We set off together on foot, Coleridge, John Chester, and I. This Chester was a native of Nether-Stowey, one of those who were attracted to Coleridge’s discourse as flies are to honey, or bees in swarming-time to the sound of a brass pan. He ‘followed in the chace, like a dog who hunts, not like one that made up the cry.’ He had on a brown cloth coat, boots, and corduroy breeches, was low in stature, bow-legged, had a drag in his walk like a drover, which he assisted by a hazel switch, and kept on a sort of trot by the side of Coleridge, like a running footman by a state coach, that he might not lose a syllable or sound that fell from Coleridge’s lips. He told me his private opinion, that Coleridge was a wonderful man. He scarcely opened his lips, much less offered an opinion, the whole way; yet of the three, had I to choose during that journey, I would be John Chester. He afterwards followed Coleridge into Germany, where the Kantean philosophers were puzzled how to bring him under any of their categories. When he sat down at table with his idol, John’s felicity was complete. . . .

“We passed Dunster on our right, a small town between the brow of a hill and the sea. I remember eyeing it wistfully as it lay below us; contrasted with the woody scene around, it looked as clear, as pure, as *embrowned* and ideal, as any landscape I have seen since of Gaspar Poussin’s or Domenichino’s. We had a long day’s march—(our feet kept time to the

echoes of Coleridge's tongue)—through Minehead and by the Blue Anchor, and on to Lynton, which we did not reach till near midnight, and where we had some difficulty in making a lodgment. We, however, knocked the people of the house up at last, and we were repaid for our apprehensions and fatigue by some excellent rashers of fried bacon and eggs. The view in coming along had been splendid. We walked for miles and miles on dark-brown heaths overlooking the Channel, with the Welsh hills beyond, and at times descended into little sheltered valleys close by the seaside, with a smuggler's face scowling by us; and then had to ascend conical hills with a path winding up through a coppice to a barren top, like a monk's shaven crown, from one of which I pointed out to Coleridge's notice the bare masts of a vessel on the very edge of the horizon and within the red-orbed disk of the setting sun, like his own spectre-ship in the *Ancient Mariner*. At Lynton the character of the sea coast becomes more marked and rugged. There is a place called the *Valley of Rocks* (I suspect this was only the poetical name for it), bedded among precipices overhanging the sea, with rocky caverns beneath, into which the waves dash, and where the seagull for ever wheels its screaming flight. On the top of these are huge stones thrown transverse, as if an earthquake had tossed them there, and behind these is a fretwork of perpendicular rocks, something like the *Giant's Causeway*. A thunder-storm came on while we were at the inn, and Coleridge was running out bareheaded to enjoy the commotion of the elements in the *Valley of Rocks*; but, as if in spite, the clouds only muttered a few angry sounds and let fall a few refreshing drops. Coleridge told me that he and Wordsworth were to have made this place the scene of a prose tale, which was



to have been in the manner of, but far superior to, the *Death of Abel*, but they had relinquished the design.

“In the morning of the second day we breakfasted luxuriously in an old-fashioned parlour, on tea, toast, eggs, and honey, in the very sight of the beehives from which it had been taken and a garden full of thyme and wild flowers that had produced it. On this occasion Coleridge spoke of Virgil's *Georgics*, but not well. I do not think he had much feeling for the classical or elegant. It was in this room that we found a little worn-out copy of the *Seasons* lying in a window-seat, on which Coleridge exclaimed, ‘*That is true fame!*’ He said Thomson was a great poet rather than a good one; his style was as meretricious as his thoughts were natural. He spoke of Cowper as the best modern poet. He said the *Lyrical Ballads* were an experiment about to be tried by him and Wordsworth, to see how far the public taste would endure poetry written in a more natural and simple style than had hitherto been attempted; totally discarding the artifices of poetical diction, and making use only of such words as had probably been common in the most ordinary language since the days of Henry II. Some comparison was introduced between Shakspeare and Milton. He said ‘he hardly knew which to prefer. Shakspeare seemed to him a mere stripling in the art; he was as tall and as strong, with infinitely more activity than Milton, but he never appeared to have come to man's estate; or if he had, he would not have been a man, but a monster.’ He spoke with contempt of Gray and with intolerance of Pope. He did not like the versification of the latter. He observed that ‘the ears of these couplet-writers might be charged with having short memories, that could not retain the

harmony of whole passages.' He thought little of Junius as a writer; he had a dislike of Dr. Johnson; and a much higher opinion of Burke, as an orator and politician, than of Fox or Pitt. He, however, thought him very inferior in richness of style and imagery to some of our elder prose writers, particularly Jeremy Taylor. He liked Richardson, but not Fielding; nor could I get him to enter into the merits of *Caleb Williams*. He had no idea of pictures, of Claude or Raphael, and at this time I had as little as he. He somewhere gives a striking account of the Cartoons at Pisa, by Buffamalco and others; of one in particular, where Death is seen in the air, brandishing his scythe, and the great and mighty of the earth shudder at his approach, while the beggars and the wretched kneel to him as their deliverer. He would of course understand so broad and fine a moral as this at any time. In short, he was profound and discriminating with respect to those authors whom he liked, and where he gave his judgment fair play; capricious, perverse, and prejudiced in his antipathies and distastes. We loitered on the 'ribbed sea-sand,' in such talk as this a whole morning, and I recollect met with a curious seaweed, of which John Chester told us the country name! A fisherman gave Coleridge an account of a boy that had been drowned the day before, and that they had tried to save him at the risk of their own lives. He said 'he did not know how it was that they ventured, but, sir, we have a *nature* towards one another.' This expression, Coleridge remarked to me, was a fine illustration of that theory of disinterestedness which I (in common with Butler) had adopted. I broached to him an argument of mine to prove that *likeness* was not mere association of ideas. I said that the mark in the sand put one in mind of a man's foot, not



because it was part of a former impression of a man's foot (for it was quite new), but because it was like the shape of a man's foot. He assented to the justness of this distinction (which I have explained at length elsewhere, for the benefit of the curious), and John Chester listened; not from any interest in the subject, but because he was astonished that I should be able to suggest anything to Coleridge that he did not already know. We returned on the third morning, and Coleridge remarked the silent cottage-smoke curling up the valleys where, a few evenings before, we had seen the lights gleaming through the dark.

“In a day or two after we arrived at Stowey we set out, I on my return home, and he for Germany. It was a Sunday morning, and he was to preach that day for Dr. Toulmin of Taunton. I asked him if he had prepared anything for the occasion? He said he had not even thought of the text, but should, as soon as we parted. I did not go to hear him—this was a fault—but we met in the evening at Bridgewater. The next day we had a long day's walk to Bristol, and sat down, I recollect, by a well-side on the road, to cool ourselves and satisfy our thirst, when Coleridge repeated to me some descriptive lines from his tragedy of *Remorse*:—

‘Oh memory! shield me from the world's poor strife,  
And give those scenes thine everlasting life.’

“I saw no more of him for a year or two, during which period he had been wandering in the Hartz Forest in Germany; and his return was cometary, meteorous, unlike his setting out.

## X

RECOLLECTIONS OF COLERIDGE—HAZLITT'S  
OBLIGATIONS TO HIM—FAWCETT

(1798-99)

“ I REMEMBER once saying to Coleridge, a great while ago, that I did not seem to have altered any of my ideas since I was sixteen years old. ‘ Why then,’ said he, ‘ you are no wiser now than you were then!’ I might make the same confession, and the same retort would apply still. He used to tell me that this pertinacity was owing to a want of sympathy with others. What he calls *sympathising with others* is their admiring him; and it must be admitted that he varies his battery pretty often, in order to accommodate himself to this sort of mutual understanding.

“ But I do not agree in what he says of me. On the other hand, I think that it is my *sympathising beforehand* with the different views and feelings that may be entertained on a subject, that prevents me retracting my judgment, and flinging myself into the contrary extreme *afterwards*. . . . I cannot say that, from my own experience, I have found that the persons most remarkable for sudden and violent changes of principle have been cast in the softest and most susceptible mould. . . .

“ He, I recollect, once asked me whether I thought that the different members of a family really liked one another so well, or had so much attachment as was generally supposed; and I said

that I conceived the regard they had towards each other was expressed by the word *interest*, rather than by any other; which he said was the true answer.

“I can hardly consider him a deserter from the cause he first espoused, unless one could tell what cause he ever heartily espoused, or what party he ever belonged to in downright earnest. . . . I have been delighted to hear him expatiate with the most natural and affecting simplicity on a favourite passage or picture, and all the while afraid of agreeing with him, lest he should instantly turn round and unsay all that he had said, for fear of my going away with too good an opinion of my own taste, a too great an admiration of my idol—and his own. I dare not ask his opinion twice, if I have got a favourable sentence once, lest he should belie his own sentiments to stagger mine. I have heard him talk divinely (like one inspired) of Boccaccio and the story of the *Pot of Basil*, describing ‘how it grew, and it grew, and it grew,’ till you saw it spread its tender leaves in the light of his eye, and wave in the tremulous sound of his voice; and yet, if you asked him about it another time, he would, perhaps, affect to think little of it, or to have forgotten the circumstance. When I ceased to hear him quite, other tongues, tuned to what accents they may be of praise or blame, would sound dull, ungrateful, out of tune, and harsh, in the comparison.

“Lamb said that Coleridge had lately given up all his opinions respecting German literature; that all their high-flown pretensions were in his present estimate sheer cant and affectation; and that none of their works were worth anything but Schiller’s and the early ones of Goethe. ‘What!’ I said, ‘my old friend *Werter*? How many battles have I had in my own mind, and compunctious visitings

of criticism to stick to my old favourite, because Coleridge thought nothing of it. It is hard to find one's self right at last.'

"It vexes me beyond all bearing to see children kill flies for sport; for the principle is the same as in the most deliberate and profligate acts of cruelty they can afterwards exercise upon their fellow-creatures. And yet I let moths burn themselves to death in the candle, for it makes me mad; and I say it is in vain to prevent fools from rushing upon destruction. The author of the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (who sees farther into such things than most people) could not understand why I should bring a charge of *wickedness* against an infant before it could speak, merely for squalling and straining its lungs a little. He once asked me if I had ever known a child of a naturally wicked disposition? and I answered, 'Yes; that there was one in the house with me, that cried from morning to night, *for spite*.' I was laughed at for this answer, but still I do not repent it. It appeared to me that the child took a delight in tormenting itself and others; that the love of tyrannising over others and subjecting them to its caprices was a full compensation for the beating it received. . . . I was supposed to magnify and overrate the symptoms of the disease, and to make a childish humour into a bugbear; but indeed I have no other idea of what is commonly understood by wickedness than that perversion of the will, or love of mischief for its own sake, which constantly displays itself (though in trifles and on a ludicrously small scale) in early childhood. I have often been reproached with extravagance for considering things only in their abstract principles, and with heat and ill-temper, for getting into a passion about what no ways concerned me.

"If any one wishes to see me quite calm, they may

cheat me in a bargain, or tread upon my toes; but a truth repelled, a sophism repeated, totally disconcerts me, and I lose all patience. I am not, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, a *good-natured man*; that is, many things annoy me besides what interferes with my own ease and interest. I hate a lie; a piece of injustice wounds me to the quick, though nothing but the report of it reach me. Therefore I have made many enemies and few friends; for the public know nothing of well-wishers, and keep a wary eye on those who would reform them. Coleridge used to complain of my irascibility in this respect, and not without reason. Would that he had possessed a little of my tenaciousness and jealousy of temper; and then, with his eloquence to paint the wrong, and acuteness to detect it, his country and the cause of liberty might not have fallen without a struggle. I care little what any one says of me, particularly behind my back, and in the way of critical and analytical discussion; it is looks of dislike and scorn that I answer with the worst venom of my pen. The expression of the face wounds me more than the expressions of the tongue. If I have in one instance mistaken this expression, or resorted to this remedy where I ought not, I am sorry for it. But the face was too fine over which it mantled, and I am too old to have misunderstood it."

A good deal of the estrangement between Hazlitt and his early friends Coleridge and Wordsworth had a political origin. Both perceived that they were no longer what they had been in the days of Jacobinism; but it was only in his bearing toward men, whom he regarded as apostates, that Hazlitt had changed. His views remained unshaken. Yet how deep was the obligation alike of Coleridge and Wordsworth to him in a literary respect! while the intellectual gain to Hazlitt was undoubtedly



very considerable. Much lay, however, in the receptivity of the hearer, for he did not by any means invariably agree with their arguments or conclusions. Wordsworth made out that Hazlitt had from him an anecdote about a strange will, which he made stranger by over-colouring.<sup>1</sup> But he was by far the minor creditor of the two.

Not only was the *Essay on Human Action*, in the reduction of which to form Coleridge had taken a sort of initiative, the result of an early and deep study of Helvetius and others; but other writings of his, belonging to a later epoch of his life, were more or less direct emanations of the books he had read, and become intellectually imbued with, in his youth. One source of objection and dislike on my grandfather's part to Helvetius and his school, was their opposition in some essential particulars to the philosophical opinions of Rousseau.

Hazlitt's paper on *Self-Love* and *Benevolence* in the shape of an interlocution between the Lambs, Hazlitt himself, and others, has been traced to some talk at Lamb's about 1814, and should be regarded as a sort of sequel to the earlier treatise of 1805, which was evidently elaborated by Hazlitt at his own table; and something of the same kind may be said of the *Lectures on English Philosophy*, delivered at the Russell Institution in 1812, when he was quite a new-comer in the field of regular literary activity in the metropolis, and had had absolutely no experience as a public speaker. A fairly ample account of the delivery and acceptance of these Lectures has already been given; they extended over two months; and the original MSS. no longer exist in a textual sense and form, although more than probably not much of the substance has been lost.

He frankly admits, in a note, that for a portion

<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt's works, vi. 117, 481.



of the contents of his *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs*, 1806, he also lay under obligations to Coleridge, who in these early days acted as a tutelary genius to one not more than six years his junior, and who was equally in due time in a different way to become a teacher of men.

Coleridge was my grandfather's earliest literary acquaintance, as he was Lamb's. The friendship of Lamb and Coleridge (not reckoning their school-day connection) dated from 1796; the friendship of my

1812.

Admit the bearer to  
Mr. Hazlitt's lectures  
on English philosophy.  
W. Hazlitt

CARD OF ADMISSION IN HAZLITT'S AUTOGRAPH.

grandfather and Coleridge commenced in 1798. In the case of Lamb the tie was a life-tie, but in my grandfather's not so. My grandfather was a politician, and Lamb was none. Lamb had no feelings or resentments of party; and Coleridge the *Jacobin*, and Coleridge the friend of Quarterly Reviewers, was the same "dearest friend" to him. But Coleridge's secession from Liberalism estranged him from my grandfather, as it also estranged Southey. Perhaps the bond of union between him and Elia was weakened by the catholicism of Elia's attachments, irrespectively of political opinions. I suspect strongly

that Lamb gained very largely in my grandfather's estimation by his letter in the *London Magazine* to Robert Southey, Esq., but Lamb was not himself in that letter; he was sorry for it; it was an outburst of indignation, which quickly subsided; and Southey was at Lamb's side, within a few days, as warm a friend as ever.

My grandfather would have liked Lamb all the better, if he had been a man of stauncher mind, a person who had set out with convictions from which there was to be no swerve. Lamb sinned in my grandfather's eyes in having too much *good-fellowship*, in shaking everybody round by the hand with a sincerity which a careful study of his correspondence, *in its entire and undiluted state*, leaves painfully questionable.

Yet my grandfather was fond of reverting to these old reminiscences to the very last, of thinking of Coleridge as he knew and saw him, when they were young together.

“To give way to our feelings before company seems extravagance or affectation; and on the other hand, to have to unravel this mystery of our being at every turn, and to make others take an equal interest in it (otherwise the end is not answered) is a task, to which few are competent. We must ‘give it an understanding, but no tongue.’ My old friend, Coleridge, however, could do both. He could go on in the most delightful explanatory way over hill and dale a summer's day, and convert a landscape into a didactic poem or a Pindaric ode. He talked far above singing.

“Coleridge always talks to people about what they don't understand; I, for one, endeavour to talk to them about what they do understand, and find I only get the more ill-will by it. They conceive I do not think them capable of anything better, that I do

not think it worth while, as the vulgar saying is, *to throw a word to a dog*. I once complained of this to Coleridge, thinking it hard I should be sent to Coventry for not making a prodigious display. He said, ‘As you assume a certain character, you ought to produce your credentials.’”

In some remarks on the *Living Poets* in 1818, my grandfather let his audience at a lecture know that “no one had a better right to say what he thought of Coleridge than he had.” “Is there here any dear friend of Cæsar?” he exclaimed. “To him I say, that Brutus’s love to Cæsar was no less than his.”

How generously and how eloquently he apostrophized him in one of the *Table-Talks* in 1821! “Oh thou, who did lend me speech, when I was dumb, to whom I owe it that I have not crept on my belly all the days of my life like the serpent, but sometimes lift my forked crest or tread the empyrean, wake thou out of thy mid-day slumbers! Shake off the heavy honey-dew of thy soul, no longer lulled with that Circean cup, drinking thy own thoughts with thy own ears, but start up in thy promised likeness, and shake the pillared rottenness of the world! Leave not thy sounding words in air, write them in marble, and teach the coming age heroic truths! Up, and wake the echoes of time! Rich in deepest lore, die not the bed-rid churl of knowledge, leaving the survivors unblest! Set, as thou didst rise, in pomp and gladness. Dart, like the sunflower, one dark, golden flash of light, and ere thou ascendest thy native sky, show us the steps by which thou didst scale the Heaven of philosophy, with Truth and Fancy for thy equal guides, that we may catch thy mantle, rainbow-dipped, and still read thy words, dear to Memory, dearer to Fame!”

When Hazlitt visited Wordsworth for the second time in 1803, the latter read to him his *White Doe of*

*Rylstone*: how few escaped that species of ordeal! The two seem to have been on excellent terms.

“The person of the most refined and least contracted taste I ever knew was the late Joseph Fawcett, the friend of my youth.<sup>1</sup> He was almost the first literary acquaintance I ever made, and I think the most candid and unsophisticated. He had a masterly perception of all styles and of every kind and degree of excellence, sublime or beautiful, from Milton’s *Paradise Lost* to Shenstone’s *Pastoral Ballad*; from Butler’s *Analogy* down to *Humphrey Clinker*. If you had a favourite author, he had read him too, and knew all the best morsels, the subtle *traits*, the capital touches. ‘Do you like Sterne?’—‘Yes, to be sure,’ he would say, ‘I should deserve to be hanged if I didn’t.’ His repeating some parts of *Comus*, with his fine, deep, mellow-toned voice, particularly the lines,—

‘I have heard my mother Circe with the Sirens three, &c.,’

and the enthusiastic comments he made afterwards, were a feast to the ear and to the soul. He read the poetry of Milton with the same fervour and spirit of devotion that I have since heard others read their own. ‘That is the most delicious feeling of all,’ I have heard him exclaim, ‘to like what is excellent, no matter whose it is.’ In this respect he practised what he preached. He was incapable of harbouring a sinister motive, and judged only from what he felt. There was no flaw or mist in the clear mirror of his mind. He was open to impressions as he was strenuous in maintaining them. He did not care a rush whether a writer was old or

<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt was apparently introduced to him by Godwin. Fawcett was also a friend of Basil Montagu, who had a high regard for him. He may be viewed as one of the early formative intellectual agencies in my grandfather’s case.

new; in prose or in verse. 'What he wanted,' he said, 'was something to make him think.'

"Most men's minds are to me like musical instruments out of tune. Touch a particular key, and it jars and makes harsh discord with your own. They like *Gil Blas*, but can see nothing to laugh at in *Don Quixote*; they adore Richardson, but are disgusted with Fielding. Fawcett had a taste accommodated to all these. He was not exceptious. He gave a cordial welcome to all sorts, provided they were the best in their kind. He was not fond of counterfeits or duplicates. His own style was laboured and artificial to a fault, while his character was frank and ingenuous in the extreme. He was not the only individual whom I have known to counteract their natural disposition in coming before the public; and in avoiding what they perhaps thought an inherent infirmity, debar themselves of their real strength and advantages.

"A heartier friend or honester critic I never coped withal. He has made me feel (by contrast) the want of genuine sincerity and generous sentiment in some that I have listened to since. . . . I would rather be a man of disinterested taste and liberal feeling, to see and acknowledge truth and beauty wherever I found it, than a man of greater and more original genius, to hate, envy, and deny all excellence but my own—but that poor scanty pittance of it (compared with the whole) which I had myself produced.

"It was he who delivered the Sunday evening lectures at the Old Jewry, which were so popular about twenty years ago. He afterwards retired to Hedgegrove, in Hertfordshire. It was here that I first became acquainted with him, and passed some of the pleasantest days of my life. He was the first person of literary eminence whom I had



then known; and the conversations I had with him on subjects of taste and philosophy (for his taste was as refined as his powers of reasoning were profound and subtle) gave me a delight such as I can never feel again. The writings of Sterne, Fielding, Cervantes, Richardson, Rousseau, Godwin, Goethe, &c., were the usual subjects of our discourse, and the pleasure I had had in reading these authors seemed more than doubled.

“Of all the persons I have ever known, he was the most perfectly free from every taint of jealousy or narrowness. Never did a mean or sinister motive come near his heart. He was one of the most enthusiastic admirers of the French Revolution; and I believe that the disappointment of the hopes he had cherished of the freedom and happiness of mankind preyed upon his mind, and hastened his death. He used to say that if Sir Isaac Newton himself had lisped, he could not have thought anything of him.

“Fawcett (an old friend and fellow-student of our author, and who always spoke of his writings with admiration tinged with wonder) used to mention a circumstance with respect to his *Life of Chatham*, which may throw some light on the history and progress of Mr. Godwin's mind. He was anxious to make his biographical account as complete as he could, and applied for this purpose to many of his acquaintance to furnish him with anecdotes or to suggest criticisms. Among others, Mr. Fawcett repeated to him what he thought a striking passage on *general warrants*, delivered by Lord Chatham, at which he (Fawcett) had been present. ‘Every man's house’ (said this emphatic thinker and speaker) ‘has been called his castle. And why is it called his castle? Is it because it is defended by a wall, because it is surrounded by a moat? No; it may be nothing more than a straw-built shed. It



may be open to all the elements, the wind may enter in, the rain may enter in, but the king cannot enter in.' His friend thought that the point here was palpable enough; but when he came to read the printed volumes he found it thus *transposed*. 'Every man's house is his castle. And why is it called so? Is it because it is defended by a wall, because it is surrounded with a moat? No, it may be nothing more than a straw-built shed. It may be exposed to all the elements, the rain may enter into it, *all the winds of heaven may whistle round it*, but the king cannot, &c.' This was what Fawcett called a defect of *natural imagination*.<sup>1</sup>

"It always struck me as a singular proof of good taste, good sense, and liberal thinking in Fawcett, who had Paine's *Rights of Man*, and Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* bound up in one volume; and who said that, both together, they made a very good book."

From his own favourable and friendly account of Mackintosh in the *Spirit of the Age*, it may be assumed that Hazlitt attended that gentleman's Lectures in 1799, or at least some of them. Fawcett, Godwin and Stoddart were there, and Stoddart's MSS. notes are in my possession. My grandfather refers to something, which Fawcett told him about them: "We remember," he says, "an excellent man and a sound critic<sup>2</sup> going to hear one of these elaborate effusions; and on his want of enthusiasm being accounted for, from its not being one of the orator's brilliant days, he replied, 'he did not think a man of genius could speak for two hours without saying something by which he would have been electrified.'"

<sup>1</sup> Fawcett lived finally, and died (before 1825) at Walthamstow in Essex.

<sup>2</sup> *The late Rev. Joseph Fawcett of Walthamstow*—Hazlitt's note.

## XI

### WAYS AND MEANS—AT THE LOUVRE

(1802-3)

THERE has been some speculation as to the means of support at this period, when his old Maidstone friends—rather those of his father than of himself—seem to have disappeared, and he was still without any ostensible resources, since his family was not in a pecuniary position to assist him. But two detached passages in the paper *On the Want of Money* strike me as lifting the veil from this mystery, and in warranting the agreeable belief, that in common with Coleridge, and perhaps even through him, he was substantially befriended by Thomas Wedgwood, who advanced him money without any thought of its reimbursement. This may be in fact what Lamb humorously intended in a letter to Joseph Hume of Bayswater in 1808. Let us hear what my grandfather himself has to say:—

“I never knew but one man who would lend his money freely and fearlessly in spite of circumstances (if you were likely to pay him, he grew peevish, and would pick a quarrel with you). I can only account for this from a certain sanguine buoyancy and magnificence of spirit, not deterred by distant consequences, or damped by untoward appearances. I have been told by those,<sup>1</sup> who shared of the same bounty, that it was not owing to generosity, but ostentation—

<sup>1</sup> I hope that Coleridge is not meant.

if so, he kept his ostentation a secret from me, for I never received a hint or a look from which I could infer that I was not the lender, and he the person obliged. Neither was I expected to keep in the background or play an under-part. On the contrary, I was encouraged to do my best; my dormant faculties roused, the ease of my circumstances was on condition of the freedom and independence of my mind, my lucky hits were applauded, and I was paid to shine. I am not ashamed of such patronage as this, nor do I regret any circumstance relating to it but its termination."

No name is here given; but a page or so farther on that of Wedgwood is introduced in a way, which tempts us to identify him with the person described above:—

"It was an hypothesis of the late Mr. Thomas Wedgwood, that there is a principle of compensation in the human mind which equalises all situations, and by which the absence of anything only gives us a more intense and intimate perception of the reality; that insult adds to pride, that pain looks forward to ease with delight, that hunger already enjoys the unsavoury morsel that is to save it from perishing; that want is surrounded with imaginary riches, like the poor poet in Hogarth, who has a map of the mines of Peru hanging on his garret walls; in short, that 'we can hold a fire in our hand by thinking on the frosty Caucasus'—but this hypothesis, though ingenious and to a certain point true, is to be admitted only in a limited and qualified sense."

Here there is more than presumptive evidence of help from the same Wedgwood, who behaved so liberally to Coleridge, for we have an absolute indication of personal and repeated interviews; and there is, besides, quite enough to convince us that the kindness, to whatever it amounted and for whatever

length of time it continued in a practical shape, was uniformly proffered in the most delicate manner. In such case, if the introduction was directly or otherwise due to Coleridge, the latter was a benefactor, under the circumstances, to an infinitely larger extent than we have been so far entitled to consider.

It was, I take it, this resource which made possible certain early rambles of Hazlitt subsequently to the meeting with Coleridge at Wem, and which enabled him to proceed abroad and remain there nearly three months. Preliminary expenses, at all events, had to be met, and his father was scarcely in a position to give or advance money for the purpose. It is to this interval of about three years (1798-1802), and after a visit to Burleigh House to see the pictures there, that he met with the episode narrated by himself:—

“The first head I ever tried to paint was an old woman’s, with the upper part of the face shaded by her bonnet, and I certainly laboured [at] it with great perseverance. It took me numberless sittings to do it. I have it by me still [1821], and sometimes look at it with surprise, to think how much pains were thrown away to little purpose; yet not altogether in vain, if it taught me to see good in everything, and to know that there is nothing vulgar in nature seen with the eye of science or of true art. . . . I spared no pains to do my best. If art was long, I thought that life was so too at that moment. I got in the general effect the first day, and pleased and surprised enough I was at my success. The rest was a work of time—of weeks and months (if need were) of patient toil and careful finishing. I had seen an old head by Rembrandt at Burleigh House; and if I could produce a head at all like Rembrandt in a year, it would be glory and felicity, and wealth and fame enough for me. The head I had seen at Burleigh was an exact and wonderful facsimile of nature, and I resolved to

make mine (as nearly as I could) an exact facsimile of nature. . . . The picture was never finished, and I might have gone on with it to the present hour."<sup>1</sup>

In 1802 Hazlitt had renounced for some time the idea of joining the Dissenters and following in his excellent father's footsteps, and the commencing success of his brother as an artist, and his close intercourse with him during his stay at Hackney and on his occasional visits to London, stimulated a desire, and eventually produced a resolution, to devote himself to art. After some preliminary experiments he succeeded in obtaining from Mr. Railton of Liverpool a commission to execute ten copies from the old masters at the Louvre for £105. He accordingly crossed to Calais, and was away from England from October 1802 to January 1803. His sister says in her *Diary*: "He spent the winter in Paris, working in the Louvre from ten in the morning until four in the afternoon, suffering much from cold and many other deprivations. But he cared little for these things while he had those noble specimens of genius before his eyes."

The abrupt and fundamental change in my grandfather's career naturally affected to a not inconsiderable extent the tie with the home and the concord in feeling between his parents (especially the Unitarian minister) and himself. He states his own case where he says: "The son is brought up to the Church, and nothing can exceed the pride and pleasure the father takes in him while all goes well in this favourite direction. His notions change, and he imbibes a taste for the fine arts. From this

<sup>1</sup> The person who sat to him for this picture (nearly destroyed by megilp) was an old cottager he met near Manchester. She died very soon after her likeness was taken. The picture used for a long time to hang in Mr. John Hunt's room, when he was in Coldbath Fields Prison, and Mr. Hazlitt would go there and gaze at it fondly. It is now at Maidstone.



moment there is an end of anything like the same unreserved communication between them."

He left England, with some excellent introductions from his brother, Holcroft, Freebairn, and perhaps Northcote, in the middle of October 1802,<sup>1</sup> and proceeded by Calais. "Calais was peopled with novelty and delight. The confused, busy murmur of the place was like oil and wine poured into my ears; nor did the mariners' hymn, which was sung from the top of an old crazy vessel in the harbour as the sun went down, send an alien sound into my soul. I only breathed the air of general humanity.

"My first initiation in the mysteries of the art was at the Orleans Gallery; it was there I formed my taste. . . . I was staggered when I saw the works there collected, and looked at them with wondering and with longing eyes. A mist passed away from my sight: the scales fell off. . . . This was the more remarkable, as it was but a short time before that I was not only totally ignorant of, but insensible to, the beauties of art. As an instance, I remember that one afternoon I was reading the *Provoked Husband* with the highest relish, with a green woody landscape of Ruysdael or Hobbema just before me, at which I looked off the book now and then, and wondered what there could be in that sort of work to satisfy or delight the mind—at the same time asking myself, as a speculative question, whether I should ever feel an interest in it like what I took in reading Vanbrugh and Cibber?

"I had made some progress in painting when I went to the Louvre to study, and I never did anything afterwards. I shall never forget conning over the catalogue, which a friend lent me just before I set out. The pictures, the names of the painters, seemed to relish in the mouth. . . . The first day I

<sup>1</sup> See Correspondence.



got there I was kept for some time in the French Exhibition-room, and thought I should not be able to get a sight of the old masters. I just caught a peep at them through the door. . . . At last, by much importunity, I was admitted, and lost not an instant in making use of my new privilege—it was *un beau jour* to me.

“ You see a Frenchman in the Louvre copying the finest pictures, standing on one leg, with his hat on ; or after copying a Raphael, thinking David much finer, more truly one of themselves, more a combination of the Greek sculptor and the French posture-master. Even if a French artist fails, he is not disconcerted ; there is something else he excels in : if he cannot paint, he can dance ! If an Englishman, God save the mark ! fails in anything, he thinks he can do nothing. Enraged at the mention of his ability to do anything else, and at any consolation offered him, he banishes all other thought but of his disappointment ; and discarding hope from his breast, neither eats nor sleeps (it is well if he does not cut his throat), will not attend to any other thing in which he before took an interest and pride, and is in despair till he recovers his good opinion of himself in the point in which he has been disgraced ; though, from his very anxiety and disorder of mind, he is incapacitated from applying to the only means of doing so, as much as if he were drunk with liquor instead of pride and passion. The character I have here drawn of an Englishman I am clear about, for it is the character of myself, and, I am sorry to add, no exaggerated one. As my object is to paint the varieties of human nature, and, as I can have it best from myself, I will confess a weakness. I lately tried to copy a Titian (after many years’ want of practice), in order to give a friend in England some idea of the picture. I floundered on for several days,

but failed, as might be expected. My sky became overcast. Everything seemed of the colour of the paint I used. Nature was one great daub. I had no feeling left but a sense of want of power, and of an abortive struggle to do what I could not do. I was ashamed of being seen to look at the picture with admiration, as if I had no right to do so. I was ashamed even to have written or spoken about the picture or about art at all: it seemed a piece of presumption and affectation in me, whose whole notions and refinements on the subject ended in an inexcusable daub. Why did I think of attempting such a thing heedlessly, of exposing my presumption and incapacity? It was blotting from my memory, covering with a dark veil all that I remembered of those pictures formerly, my hopes when young, my regrets since; it was wresting from me one of the consolations of my life and of my declining years. I was even afraid to walk out by the barrier of Neuilly, or to recall to memory that I had ever seen the picture; all was turned to bitterness and gall: to feel anything but a sense of my own helplessness and absurdity seemed a want of sincerity, a mockery, and a piece of injustice. The only comfort I had was in the excess of pain I felt: this was at least some distinction. I was not insensible on that side. No Frenchman, I thought, would regret the not copying a Titian so much as I did, or so far show the same value for it. Besides, I had copied this identical picture very well formerly. If ever I got out of this scrape, I had received a lesson, at least, not to run the same risk of gratuitous vexation again, or even to attempt what was uncertain and unnecessary."

He watched a Frenchman engaged in a mechanical copy of Titian's *Mistress*. He tells us that:—

"After getting in his chalk-outline one would think he might have been attracted to the face

—that heaven of beauty (as it appears to some), clear, transparent, open, breathing freshness, that ‘makes a sunshine in the shady place’; or to the lustre of the golden hair; or some part of the poetry of the picture (for with all its materiality this picture has a poetry about it); instead of which he began to finish a square he had marked out in the right-hand corner of the picture, containing a piece of board and a bottle of some kind of ointment. He set to work like a cabinet-maker or an engraver, and appeared to have no sympathy with the soul of the picture. On a Frenchman (generally speaking) the distinction between the great and the little, the exquisite and the indifferent, is in a great measure lost: his self-satisfied egotism supplies whatever is wanting up to a certain point, and neutralizes whatever goes beyond it. Another young man, at the time I speak of, was for eleven weeks daily employed in making a black-lead pencil drawing of a small Leonardo: he sat with his legs balanced across a rail to do it, kept his hat on, and every now and then consulted with his friends about his progress, rose up, went to the fire to warm himself, talked of the styles of the different masters—praising Titian *pour les coloris*, Raphael *pour l’expression*, Poussin *pour la composition*—all being alike to him, provided they had each something to help him on in his harangue (for that was all he thought about),—and then returned to *perfectionate* (as he called it) his copy.

“ M. Merrimée,<sup>1</sup> to whom I owed a grateful sense of many friendly attentions and many useful suggestions, asked me what I thought of a landscape in their Exhibition. I said I thought it too clear. He made answer that he should have conceived that to be impossible. I replied, that what I meant was,

<sup>1</sup> His brother had given him a letter of introduction to this gentleman.

that the parts of the several objects were made out with too nearly equal distinctness all over the picture ; that the leaves of the trees in shadow were as distinct as those in light, the branches of trees at a distance as plain as of those near. The perspective arose only from the diminution of objects, and there was no interposition of air. I said one could not see the leaves of a tree a mile off ; but this, I added, appertained to a question in metaphysics. He shook his head, thinking that a young Englishman could know as little of abstruse philosophy as of fine art, and no more was said.

“ I myself have heard Charles Fox engaged in familiar conversation. It was in the Louvre.<sup>1</sup> He was describing the pictures to two persons that were with him. He spoke rapidly, but very unaffectedly. I remember his saying : ‘ All these blues and greens and reds are the Guercinos ; you may know them by the colours.’ He set Opie right as to Domenichino’s *Saint Jerome*. ‘ You will find,’ he said, ‘ though you may not be struck with it at first, that there is a great deal of truth and good sense in that picture.’

“ As I look at my long-neglected copy of the *Death of Clorinda*, golden gleams play upon the canvas, as they used when I painted it. . . . The years that are fled knock at the door and enter. The rainbow is in the sky again. I see the skirts of the departed years. All that I have thought and felt has not been in vain. It is now seventeen years<sup>2</sup> since I was studying in the Louvre ; but long after I returned, and even still, I sometimes dream of being there again.

“ I have in my own mind made the excuse for

<sup>1</sup> He also met John Rickman, a friend of his brother, during this visit to Paris, and formed the acquaintance of Edwards, a fellow-student, of whom we shall hear again.

<sup>2</sup> This was written in 1821.



—<sup>1</sup> that he could only make a first sketch, and was obliged to lose the greatest part of his time in waiting for *windfalls* of heads and studies. I have sat to him twice, and each time I offered to come again; and he said he would let me know, but I heard no more of it. The sketch went as it was—of course in a very unfinished state.”

In the essay on the *Portrait of an English Lady*, by Vandyke, he says: “I have in this essay mentioned one or two of the portraits in the Louvre that I like best. The two landscapes which I should most covet are the one with a rainbow, by Rubens, and the *Adam and Eve in Paradise*, by Poussin. . . . I should be contented with these four or five pictures, the *Lady*, by Vandyke, the Titian [his *Mistress*], the *Presentation in the Temple*, the Rubens, and the Poussin, or even with faithful copies of them, added to the two which I have of a young Neapolitan nobleman and the Hippolito de Medici; and which, when I look at them, recall other times and the feelings with which they were done. . . .

“My taste in pictures is, I believe, very different from that of rich and princely collectors. I would not give twopence for the whole gallery at Fonthill. I should like to have a few pictures hung round the room, that speak to me with well-known looks, that touch some spring of memory—not a number of varnished, smooth, glittering gewgaws. The taste of the great in pictures is singular, but not unaccountable. The King<sup>2</sup> is said to prefer the Dutch to the Italian school of painting. . . .

“Could I have had my will, I should have been born a lord; but one would not be a booby lord, neither. I am haunted by an odd fancy of driving down the great North Road in a chaise and four,

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps Haydon.

<sup>2</sup> George III.

about fifty years ago, and coming to the inn at Ferry-bridge, with outriders, white favours, and a coronet on the panels; and then, too, I choose my companion in the coach. . . . Perhaps I should incline to draw lots with Pope, but that he was deformed, and did not sufficiently relish Milton and Shakespeare. As it is, we can enjoy his verses and theirs too. . . . Goldsmith is a person whom I considerably affect, notwithstanding his blunders and his misfortunes. . . . But then I could never make up my mind to his preferring Rowe and Dryden to the worthies of the Elizabethan age; nor could I, in like manner, forgive Sir Joshua—whom I number among those whose existence was marked with a *white stone*—his treating Nicholas Poussin with contempt.

“Who would have missed the sight of the Louvre in all its glory to have been one of those, whose works enriched it? Would it not have been giving a certain good for an uncertain advantage? No: I am as sure (if it is not presumption to say so) of what passed through Raphael’s mind as of what passes through my own; and I know the difference between seeing (though that is a rare privilege) and producing such perfection. At one time I was so devoted to Rembrandt that I think if the Prince of Darkness had made me the offer in some rash mood, I should have been tempted to close with it, and should have become (in happy hour and in downright earnest) the great master of light and shade.”

One of his fellow-students was Dr. Edwards, who accompanied him in many of his visits to the sights of Paris. They frequented the fruit and flower market together, and my grandfather was enchanted by the politeness of the people with whom he came in contact. “What must the higher classes be, if



these are so polished?" he remarked to his newly-discovered acquaintance. "You shall judge for yourself, if you like," the other replied; and he mentioned that he had a card for the Duchesse de Noaille's reception that very evening at her house in the Rue St. Honoré, and would take my grandfather with him. The former agreed, and they proceeded together. But Hazlitt was not so greatly struck—did not discern a proportionate difference. The duchess received in her bedroom, sitting at a card-table near her bed, a four-post one with a good deal of gilding about it. The adjoining apartments full of company and lacqueys, who also played at cards. There was none of the stiffness of an English ceremony of the same class. My grandfather was introduced to the duchess, and stayed till he was tired.

He brought away the annexed certificate from the Louvre:—

Mr. W. Hazlitt, the bearer of this, is an English painter, who has been studying for his improvement in the National Museum at Paris, and has made copies of the following pictures: 1<sup>st</sup>. Copy of the death of Clorinda, containing two figures as described in the Catalogue No. 852.—2<sup>dly</sup>. Copy of a portrait of a man in black, by Titian, No. 942.—3<sup>dly</sup>. Two sketches from the portrait of Hippolite de Medicis, by the same, No. 76.—4<sup>thly</sup>. Copy of two of the figures in the picture of the Marquis del Guasto, No. 70.—5<sup>thly</sup>. Titian's mistress, No. 74.—6<sup>thly</sup>. Sketch of three of the figures in the Transfiguration of Raphael.—7. A holy family, from Raphael, No. 935.—8. Another head from the Transfiguration.—9. Sketch of a head, from Tintoret.—10. The deluge, by Poussin, No. 82.



Le Directeur Général du Musée certifie que M. Hazlitt s'est occupé dans la Galerie de la Copie mentionnée dans la présente Déclaration.

Fait au bureau du Musée le 12 Pluivoise an 11.

Le Directeur Général,  
DERRON.

## XII

### PAINTERS AND PAINTING—A SECOND IMPENDING TRANSITION

“WHEN I was young, I made one or two studies of strong contrasts of light and shade in the manner of Rembrandt with great care and (as it was thought) with some success. But after I had once copied some of Titian’s portraits in the Louvre, my ambition took a higher flight. Nothing would serve my turn but heads like Titian—Titian expressions, Titian complexions, Titian dresses; and as I could not find these where I was, after one or two abortive attempts to engraft Italian art on English nature, I flung away my pencil in disgust and despair. Otherwise I might have done as well as others, I dare say, but from a desire to do too well.

“I remember to have looked at a print of Rembrandt for hours together without being conscious of the flight of time, trying to resolve it into its component parts, to connect its strong and sharp gradations, to learn the secret of its reflected lights, and found neither satiety nor pause in the prosecution of my studies. The point, over which I was posing, would last long enough; why should the idea in my mind, which was finer, more impalpable, perish before it? At this I redoubled the ardour of my pursuit, and by the very subtlety and refinement of my inquiries seemed to bespeak for them an exemption from corruption and the rude grasp of Death.

“ I once lived on coffee (as an experiment) for a fortnight together, while I was finishing the copy of a half-length portrait of a Manchester manufacturer, who died worth a plum. I rather slurred over the coat, which was a reddish brown, ‘ of formal cut,’ to receive my five guineas, with which I went to market myself, and dined on sausages and mashed potatoes, and while they were getting ready, and I could hear them hissing in the pan, read a volume of *Gil Blas*, containing the account of the fair Aurora. This was in the days of my youth. Gentle reader, do not smile! Neither Monsieur de Véry, nor Louis XVIII., over an oyster-pâté, nor Apicius himself, ever understood the meaning of the word *luxury* better than I did at that moment!

“ I remember well being introduced to a patron of art and rising merit at a little distance from Liverpool, and was received with every mark of attention and politeness, till, the conversation turning on Italian literature, our host remarked that there was nothing in the English language corresponding to the severity of the Italian ode, except, perhaps, Dryden’s *Alexander’s Feast* and Pope’s *St. Cecilia!* I could no longer contain my desire to display my smattering in criticism, and began to maintain that Pope’s *Ode* was, as it appeared to me, far from an example of severity in writing. I soon perceived what I had done. . . .”

In the course of a professional tour in the Midlands in 1803, he paid a visit to Daniel Stringer the artist at Knutsford.

“ I saw some spirited sketches,” he says. “ One of the blacksmith swallowing the tailor’s news, from Shakespeare, in an unfinished state, and a capital female figure by Cignani. All his skill and love of art had, I found, been sacrificed to his delight in Cheshire ale and the company of country squires.

Tom Kershaw of Manchester used to say that he would rather have been Dan Stringer than Sir Joshua Reynolds at twenty years of age."

"I remember being once driven by a shower of rain into a picture-dealer's shop in Oxford Street, where there stood on the floor a copy of Gainsborough's *Shepherd Boy*, with the thunder-storm coming on. What a truth and beauty were there! He stands with his hands clasped, looking up with a mixture of timidity and resignation, eyeing a magpie chattering over his head, while the wind is rustling in the branches. It was like a vision breathed on the canvas." From that day dated Hazlitt's fondness for Gainsborough.

"I have heard an anecdote connected with the reputation of Gainsborough's pictures, which rests on pretty good authority. Sir Joshua Reynolds, at one of the Academy dinners, speaking of Gainsborough, said to a friend, 'He is undoubtedly the best English landscape-painter.' 'No,' said Wilson, who overheard the conversation, 'he is not the best landscape-painter, but he is the best portrait-painter in England.'

"Of all the pictures, prints, or drawings I ever saw, none ever gave me such satisfaction as the rude etchings at the top of Rousseau's *Confessions*.<sup>1</sup> . . . It is not even said anywhere that such is the case, but I had got it in my head that the rude sketches of old-fashioned houses, stone walls, and stumps of trees, represented the scenes at Annecy and Vevey, where he who relished all more sharply than others, and by his own intense aspirations after good, had nearly delivered mankind from the yoke of evil, first drew the breath of hope.

<sup>1</sup> We shall hear more of Rousseau. Hazlitt was by no means a solitary disciple. Others were Thomas Day, author of *Sandford and Merton*, and Richard Lovell Edgeworth.

“ I confess I never liked Westall. It was one of the errors of my youth that I did not think him equal to Raphael and Rubens united, as Payne Knight contended; and I have fought many a battle with numbers (if not odds) against me on that point.

“ I never, in the whole course of my life, heard one artist speak in hearty praise of another. . . . I once knew a very remarkable instance of this. A friend of mine had written a criticism of an exhibition. In this were mentioned, in terms of the highest praise, the works of two brothers; sufficiently so, indeed, to have satisfied, one would have thought, the most insatiate. I was going down into the country to the place where these two brothers lived, and I was asked to be the bearer of the work in which the critique appeared. I was so, and sent a copy to each of them.

“ Some days afterwards I called on one of them, who began to speak of the review of his pictures. He expressed some thanks for what was said of them, but complained that the writer of it had fallen into a very common error—under which he had often suffered—the confounding, namely, his pictures with his brother’s. ‘ Now, my dear sir,’ continued he, ‘ what is said of me is all very well; but here,’ turning to the high-wrought panegyric on his brother, ‘ this is all in allusion to my style; this is all in reference to my pictures; this is all meant for me!’ I could hardly help exclaiming before the man’s face.

“ Opie used to remark that the most sensible people made the best sitters; and I incline to his opinion, especially as I myself am an excellent sitter. Indeed it seems to me as mere impertinence not to sit as still as one can in these circumstances. I put the best face I can upon the matter, as well



out of respect to the artist as to myself. I appear on my trial in the court of physiognomy, and am as anxious to make good a certain ideal I have of myself, as if I were playing a part on the stage.

“Portrait-painting is in truth a sort of cement of friendship and a clue to history. That blockhead, Mr. Croker of the Admiralty, the other day blundered upon some observations of mine relating to this subject, and made the House of Commons stare by asserting that portrait-painting was history or history portrait, as it happened; but went on to add, that ‘those gentlemen who had seen the ancient portraits lately exhibited in Pall-Mall, must have been satisfied that they were strictly historical.’”

In the early days, when painting occupied the foreground, and later, when the artist, turned author, sought the picture-gallery, not as a source of inspiration or a theatre of study, but as a judge and critic of others, there were, from his personal admission in the essay on *Thought and Action* in *Table-Talk*, many occasions where he had to exercise some self-command to overcome the difficulties and vexations caused by the owners or curators of collections; but he lets us understand that his earnestness and enthusiasm enabled him always in the end to succeed. “I could always get,” he writes, “to see a fine collection of pictures myself. The fact is, I was set upon it. Neither the surliness of porters nor the impertinence of footmen could keep me back. I had a portrait of Titian in my eye, and nothing could put me out in my determination.

“Statuary does not affect me like painting. I am not, I allow, a fair judge, having paid a great deal more attention to the one than to the other. Nor did I ever think of the first as a profession; and it is that perhaps which adds the sting to our love of excellence, the hope of attaining it ourselves

in any particular walk. . . . One reason, however, why I prefer painting to sculpture is, that painting is more like nature. It gives one an entire and satisfactory view of an object at a particular moment of time, which sculpture never does. It is not the same in reality, I grant; but it is the same in appearance, which is all we are concerned with."

But literature had from the outset been the earliest worship and study, and continued to be so side by side with other cognate and sympathetic pursuits. In his *Diary*, Crabb Robinson under 1799 notes: "I was under great obligations to Hazlitt as the director of my taste. It was he who first made me acquainted with the *Lyrical Ballads* and the poems generally of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, and Southey." Of what man just of age could such a thing at present be predicated? The testimony, too, is all the more precious, since it comes from a quarter which was rather grudging of praise or compliment in this case, and in common with too many others, was not sparing of censure or even calumny on sufficiently slight provocation or even none at all. There were cowardly sneaks and backbiters.

The testimony of Robinson remained, so to speak, a dead letter, however, till the comparatively recent publication of the *Diary*, and the name of Hazlitt was during a series of years almost exclusively associated with works appealing to a very limited circle of readers and critics—indeed down to 1805, when the metaphysical *Essay* appeared, scarcely to any outside his own family and intimate circle. It must, therefore, have been a matter of somewhat agreeable surprise to relatives and friends alike, when in 1807 Longmans & Co. announced in flattering terms his forthcoming refutation of Malthus.<sup>1</sup> Whether the

<sup>1</sup> "A Reply to Mr. Malthus's Remarks on the Poor, by a person of eminence, is in the press."

paragraph was submitted to Hazlitt beforehand, I know not.

There was a contemporary expression of opinion, that the style of the *Reply* was too flowery and diffuse, and Hazlitt fairly pleaded that in introducing extraneous anecdote he had endeavoured to comply with public taste. But the prospective recognition was a clear and solid asset, while the stricture on the work might be a matter of opinion. So far, so good.

## XIII

### EARLIEST EXPERIENCE OF THE THEATRE— ACTORS AND ACTING

“ It is no insignificant epoch in one’s life the first time that odd-looking thing, a play-bill, is left at our door in a little market-town in the country such as Wem in Shropshire.<sup>1</sup> The manager, somewhat fatter and more erect, as ‘manager beseems,’ than the rest of his company, with more of the man of business, and not less of the coxcomb, in his strut and manner, knocks at the door with the end of a walking cane (a badge of office!) and a bundle of papers under his arm; presents one of them, printed in large capitals, with a respectful bow and a familiar shrug; hopes to give satisfaction in the town, hints at the liberal encouragement they received at Whitchurch, the last place they stopped at; had every possible facility afforded by magistrates; supped one evening with the Rev. Mr. Jenkins, a dissenting clergyman, and really a very well-informed, agreeable, sensible man, full of anecdote, no illiberal prejudices against the profession:<sup>2</sup>—then talks of the strength of his company, with a careless mention of his favourite line—his benefit fixed for an early day, but would do himself the honour to leave further particulars at a future opportunity—speaks of the stage as an elegant amusement that most agreeably enlivened a spare evening or two in a week, and, under proper management (to

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 54–5, *suprà*.

<sup>2</sup> This gentleman has been already mentioned in the account of the visit of Coleridge to Wem in 1798.

which he himself paid the most assiduous attention) might be made of the greatest assistance to the cause of virtue and humanity—had seen Mr. Garrick act the last night but one before his retiring from the stage—had himself had offers from the London boards, and indeed could not say he had given up all thoughts of one day surprising them—as it was, had no reason to repine—Mrs. F. tolerably advanced in life—his eldest son, a prodigious turn for the higher walks of tragedy—had said perhaps too much of himself—had given universal satisfaction—hoped that the young gentleman and lady, at least, would attend on the following evening, when the *West Indian* would be performed at the Market-hall with the farce of *No Song, No Supper*<sup>1</sup>—and so having played his part, withdraws in the full persuasion of having made a favourable impression, and of meeting with every encouragement the place affords! Thus he passes from house to house, and goes through the routine of topic after topic with that sort of modest assurance, which is indispensable in the manager of a country theatre.

“The custom of going to the play night after night becomes a relief, a craving, a necessity—one cannot do without it. To sit alone is intolerable, to be in company is worse; we are attracted with pleasing force to the spot where ‘all that mighty heart is beating still.’ It is not that perhaps there is anything new or fine to see—if there is, we attend to it—but at any time, it kills time and saves the trouble of thinking. O, Covent Garden! ‘thy *freedom* hath made me effeminate!’ It has hardly left me power for this description of it. I am become its slave, I have no other sense or interest left. There I sit and lose the hours I live beneath the sky, without the power

<sup>1</sup> He mentioned to Northcote that the latter was the first piece—that is, of the kind—he had ever seen on a stage.



to stir, without any determination to stay. *Teddy the Tyler* is become familiar to me, and, as it were, a part of my existence; *Robert the Devil* has cast his spell over me. I have seen both thirty times at least (no offence to the management!), and could sit them out thirty times more. I am bed-rid in the lap of luxury; am grown callous and inert with perpetual excitement.

‘—What avails from iron chains  
Exempt, if rosy fetters bind as fast?’

“I have my favourite box too, as Beau Brummell had his favourite leg; one must decide on something, not to be always deciding. Perhaps I may have my reasons too—perhaps into the box next to mine a Grace enters; perhaps from thence an air divine breathes a glance (of heaven’s own brightness), kindles contagious fire; but let us turn all such thoughts into the lobbies. . . . ‘Oh! leave me to my repose,’ in my beloved corner at Covent Garden Theatre! ‘This (and not ‘the arm-chair at an inn,’ though that too, at other times and under different circumstances, is not without its charms) is to me ‘the throne of felicity.’ If I have business that would detain me from this, I put it off till the morrow; if I have friends that call in just at the moment, let them go away under pain of bearing my maledictions with them. What is there in their conversation to atone to me for the loss of one quarter of an hour at the ‘witching time of night’? If it is on indifferent subjects, it is flat and insipid; if it grows animated and interesting, it requires a painful effort, and begets a feverish excitement. But let me once reach, and fairly establish myself in this favourite seat, and I can bid a gay defiance to mischance, and leave debts and duns, friends and foes, objections and arguments, far behind me. I would, if I could, have

it surrounded with a balustrade of gold, for it has been to me a palace of delight. There golden thoughts unbidden betide me, and golden visions come to me. There the dance, the laugh, the song, the scenic deception, greet me; there are wafted Shakespear's winged words, or Otway's plaintive lines; and there how often have I heard young Kemble's voice, trembling at its own beauty, and prolonging its liquid tones, like the murmur of the billowy surge on sounding shores! There I no longer torture a sentence or strain a paradox: the mind is full without an effort, pleased without asking why. It inhales an atmosphere of joy, and is steeped in all the luxury of woe.

"I had not till about 1812 been in the habit of writing at all, or had been a long time about it; but I perceived that with the necessity the fluency came. Something I did, *took*, and I was called upon to do a number of things all at once. I was in the middle of the stream, and must sink or swim. I had, for instance, often a theatrical criticism to write after midnight, which appeared the next morning. There was no fault found with it—at least it was as good as if I had had to do it for a weekly paper. I only did it at once, and recollected all I had to say on the spot, because I could not put it off for three days, when perhaps I should have forgotten the best part of it. Besides, when one is pressed for time, one saves it. I might set down nearly all I had to say in my mind while the play was going on. I know I did not feel at a loss for matter—the difficulty was to compress, and write it out fast enough. When you are tied to time, you can come to time."

It was in the case of this fresh and important departure much as it had been, when entirely new ground was broken in 1812 by the Lectures at the

Russell Institution. Hazlitt was affording successive evidence, when a vital and at the same time compatible task was to be undertaken and surmounted, that he, even as a novice in practice, possessed the requisite intellectual and physical fibre for carrying it successfully out. On the contrary, the engagement on the *Morning Chronicle* as a parliamentary reporter had soon proved unpalatable to a man of such original bent; he was not a shorthand writer, and was prone to substitute what speakers ought to have said for what they really delivered. Years before—in 1807—he had published the *Eloquence of the British Senate*; but there he dealt with literary material, with records of passed achievements in the Senate, on which he could pronounce his critical judgment in the ordinary course. Nevertheless, the reporting business was momentarily serviceable, and his footing on the *Chronicle* proved the stepping-stone to an offer from Perry the editor, rather perhaps at a venture, possibly on some recommendation to which the key is wanting, of the post of theatrical critic to the paper. This must have been about the turn of the year 1813–14. There is an only too speaking gap in the Hazlitt Bibliography of M. Jules Douady, 1906, between 1810 and 1813, betraying an absence of paid employment which had prompted my grandfather to appeal to Lamb, who wrote on his behalf to Collier, and secured him the original berth on the *Chronicle*. But he was now in smoother water and in a pleasanter atmosphere. Perry soon saw his choice justified—the gain was at least mutual.

“I went to see Mr. Kean the first night of his appearing in *Shylock*.<sup>1</sup> I remember it well. The boxes were empty, and the pit not half full; ‘some quantity of barren spectators and idle renters were thinly scattered to make up a show.’ The whole

<sup>1</sup> January 26, 1814, at Drury Lane.

presented a dreary, hopeless aspect. I was in considerable apprehension for the result. From the first scene in which he came on, my doubts were at an end.

“I had been told to give as favourable an account as I could. I gave a true one. I am not one of those who, when they see the sun breaking from behind a cloud, stop to ask others whether it is the moon. Mr. Kean’s appearance was the first gleam of genius breaking athwart the gloom of the stage, and the public have since gladly basked in its ray, in spite of actors, managers, and critics.

“I cannot say that my opinion has much changed since that time. Why should it? I had the same eyes to see with that I have now.<sup>1</sup> . . . My opinions have been sometimes called singular; they are merely sincere. I say what I think: I think what I feel. I cannot help receiving certain impressions from things; and I have sufficient courage to declare (somewhat abruptly) what they are. This is the only singularity I am conscious of. . . . I did not endeavour to persuade Mr. Perry that Mr. Kean was an actor that would not last, merely because he had not lasted; nor that Miss Stephens knew nothing of singing because she had a sweet voice.”

Yet in criticising Kemble’s *King John*, as it was performed at Covent Garden, December 7, 1816, Mr. Hazlitt observes: “We wish we had never seen Mr. Kean. He has destroyed the Kemble religion; and it is the religion in which we were brought up.

“I was once talking with an intelligent man in the pit, and criticising Mr. Knight’s performance of *Filch*. ‘Ah!’ he said, ‘little Simmons was the fellow to play that character.’ He added, ‘There was a most excellent remark made upon his acting in the *Examiner*<sup>2</sup> (I think it was)—that he looked as if he

<sup>1</sup> This was written in or about 1821.

<sup>2</sup> Hazlitt’s notice in the *Examiner*, November 6, 1815.



*had the gallows in one eye and a pretty girl in the other.* I said nothing, but was in remarkably good humour the rest of the evening.

“I (not very long ago) had the pleasure,” he says, writing in 1821, “of spending an evening with Mr. Betty, when we had some ‘good talk’ about the good old times of acting. I wanted to insinuate that I had been a sneaking admirer, but could not bring it in. As, however, we were putting on our greatcoats downstairs, I ventured to break the ice by saying, ‘There is one actor of that period of whom we have not made honourable mention: I mean Master Betty.’ ‘Oh!’ he said, ‘I have forgot all that.’ I replied that he might, but that I could not forget the pleasure I had had in seeing him. On which he turned off, and shaking his sides heartily, and with no measured demand upon his lungs, called out, ‘Oh, memory, memory!’ in a way that showed the full force of the allusion. I found afterwards that the subject did not offend, and we were to have drunk some Burton ale<sup>1</sup> together the following evening, but were prevented.”

After the return of Coleridge from abroad in 1806, Hazlitt had a conversation with him, apropos of Master Betty, about the performances or exploits of youths of precocious genius, which Coleridge treated with ridicule, although as Hazlitt contends, “the Westminster boys are a better company of comedians than we find at most of our theatres.” Coleridge immediately proceeded to eulogise the son of an English artist who had wandered all over the Campagna with him, whose early designs had almost the grace and purity of Raphael’s, whereupon a third

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Patmore of April 22, 1822, from Scotland, he says, “Be it known to you that while I write this I am drinking ale at the Black Bull celebrated in Blackwood.” He had not, it thus seems, at this date abjured alcoholic or fermented beverages.



party intervening said, "Why, just now you would not let us believe our own eyes and ears about young Betty, and now you start a boy phenomenon that nobody knows anything about but yourself."

"What I have said of any actor has never arisen from private pique of any sort. Indeed, the only person on the stage with whom I have ever had any personal intercourse is Mr. Liston, and of him I have not spoken 'with the malice of a friend.'

"I have heard that once, when Garrick was acting *Lear*, the spectators in the front row of the pit, not being able to see him well in the kneeling scene, where he utters the curse, rose up; when those behind them, not willing to interrupt the scene by remonstrating, immediately rose up too, and in this manner the whole pit rose up, without uttering a syllable, and so that you might hear a pin drop. At another time, the crown of straw which he wore in the same character fell off, or was decomposed, which would have produced a burst of laughter in any common actor to whom such an accident had happened; but such was the deep interest in the character, and such the power of riveting the attention possessed by the actor, that not the slightest notice was taken of the circumstance, but the whole audience remained bathed in silent tears.

"An incident in my own history, that delighted or tormented me very much at the time, I may have long since blotted from my memory, or have great difficulty in calling to mind after a certain period; but I can never forget the first time of my seeing Mrs. Siddons act—which is as if it happened yesterday; and the reason is because it has been something for me to think of ever since.

"I have heard the late Mr. Curran say, that when he was a young man studying the law at the

Temple, his supreme delight was to see Mrs. Siddons in her great parts, and all he wanted was a couple of *pails* on each side of him to fill them with his tears! Such things have been.

“I met Dignum the singer in the street the other day; he was humming a tune, and his eye, though quenched, was smiling. I could scarcely forbear going up to speak to him.

“One of the most affecting things we know is to see a favourite actor take leave of the stage. We were present not long ago, when Mr. Bannister quitted it. We do not wonder that his feelings were overpowered on the occasion: ours were nearly so, too. We remembered him in the first heyday of our youthful spirits, in the *Prize*, in which he played so delightfully with that fine old croaker Suett and Madame Storace—in the farce of *My Grandmother*, in the *Son-in-Law*, in *Autolytus*, and in *Scrub*, in which our satisfaction was at its height.

“There was a dance in the pantomime at Covent Garden two years ago [1824] which I could have gone to see every night. I did go to see it every night that I could make an excuse for that purpose. It was nothing; it was childish. Yet I could not keep away from it. Some young people came out of a large twelfth-cake, dressed in full court costume, and danced a quadrille, and then a minuet, to some divine air. Was it that it put me in mind of my schoolboy days, and of the large bunch of lilac that I used to send as a present to my partner? or of times still longer past, the court of Louis XIV., the Duc de Nemours, and the Princess of Cleves? or of the time when she who was all grace<sup>1</sup> moved in measured steps before me, and wafted me into Elysium? I know not how it was, but it came over the senses with a power not to be resisted.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Windham.

## XIV

### THE THEATRES—THE OPERA—THE FIVES-COURT

“MRS. SIDDONS was in the meridian of her reputation, when I first became acquainted with the stage. She was an established veteran when I was an unfledged novice; and, perhaps, played those scenes without emotion which filled me and so many others with delight and awe. So far I had the advantage of her, and of myself, too. . . . I was stunned and torpid after seeing her in any of her great parts. I was uneasy, and hardly myself; but I felt (more than ever) that human life was something very far from being indifferent, and I seemed to have got a key to unlock the springs of joy and sorrow in the human heart. This was no mean possession, and I availed myself of it with no sparing hand. . . . The very sight of her name in the playbills, in *Tamerlane* or *Alexander the Great*, threw a light upon the day, and drew after it a long trail of eastern glory, a joy and felicity unutterable, that has since vanished in the mists of criticism and the glitter of idle distinctions.

“I fancied that I had a triumph some time ago over a critic and connoisseur in music, who thought little of the minuet in *Don Giovanni*; but the same person redeemed his pretensions to musical taste, in my opinion, by saying of some passage in Mozart, ‘This is a soliloquy equal to any in *Hamlet*.’

“I remember a very genteel young couple in the boxes of Drury Lane being much scandalised, some

years ago, at the phrase in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*—‘an insolent piece of paper,’ applied to the contents of a letter: it wanted the modern lightness and indifference.

“When I formerly had to do with these sort of critical verdicts, I was generally sent out of the way, when any *débutant* had a friend at court, and was to be tenderly handled. For the rest, or those of robust constitutions, I had *carte blanche* given me. Sometimes I ran out of the course, to be sure. Poor Perry! what bitter complaints he used to make, that by running amuck at lords and Scotchmen, I should not leave him a place to dine out at! The expression of his face at these moments, as if he should shortly be without a friend in the world, was truly pitiable. What squabbles we used to have about Kean and Miss Stephens; the only theatrical favourites I ever had.

“Mrs. Billington had got some notion that Miss Stephens would never make a singer; and it was the torment of Perry’s life (as he told me in confidence) that he could not get any two people to be of the same opinion on any one point.

“I shall not easily forget bringing him my account of her first appearance in the *Beggar’s Opera*. I have reason to remember that article; it was almost the last I ever wrote with any pleasure to myself. I had been down on a visit to my friends near Chertsey, and, on my return, had stopped at an inn at Kingston-upon-Thames, where I had got the *Beggar’s Opera*, and had read it over night. The next day I walked cheerfully to town. It was a fine sunny morning in the end of autumn, and as I repeated the beautiful song, ‘Life knows no return of spring,’ I meditated my next day’s criticism, trying to do all the justice I could to so inviting a subject. I was not a little proud of it by anticipation. I had

just then begun to stammer out my sentiments on paper, and was in a kind of honeymoon of authorship. . . . I deposited my account of the play at the *Morning Chronicle* office in the afternoon, and went to see Miss Stephens as Polly. . . . When I got back, after the play, Perry called out, with his cordial, grating voice, 'Well, how did she do?' and on my speaking in high terms, answered that 'he had been to dine with his friend the Duke; that some conversation had passed on the subject; he was afraid it was not the thing; it was not the true *sostenuto* style; but as I had written the article (holding my peroration on the *Beggar's Opera* carelessly in his hand), it might pass.'

"I could perceive that the rogue licked his lips at it, and had already in imagination 'bought golden opinions of all sorts of people' by this very criticism; and I had the satisfaction the next day to meet Miss Stephens coming out of the editor's room, who had been to thank him for his very flattering account of her.

"I cannot gain an admission to Drury Lane Theatre because I do not lounge into the lobbies or sup at the Shakespeare. Nay, having written upwards of sixty columns of original matter, on politics, criticism, *belles-lettres*, and *virtu* in a respectable morning paper, in a single half-year, I was, at the end of that period, on applying for a renewal of my engagement, told by the editor 'I might give in a specimen of what I could do.' One would think sixty columns of the *Morning Chronicle* were a sufficient specimen of what a man could do. But while I was thinking of my next answer to *Vetus*, or my account of Mr. Kean's performance of *Hamlet*, I had neglected 'to point the toe,' to hold up my head higher than usual (having acquired a habit of poring over books when young), and to get a new



velvet collar to an old-fashioned greatcoat. These are 'the graceful ornaments to the columns of a newspaper—the Corinthian capitals of a polished style.' This unprofitable servant of the press found no difference in himself before or after he became known to the readers of the *Morning Chronicle*, and it accordingly made no difference in his appearance or pretensions."

The paper in the *Yellow Dwarf*, 1818, on the Opera, makes it tolerably clear that that class of entertainment was viewed by Hazlitt in a very different and a far less favourable light from the ordinary theatrical performances, which awakened in him such a sustained interest, and on which he had constituted himself the adjudicator. He once remarked that he had been there, and did not think that he should care to renew the experience. His criticism deserves perusal as a whole; but his judgment may be summed up in a sentence or two: "The Opera is a fine thing; the only question is, whether it is not too fine." "The Opera is the most artificial of all things." "It may serve to assist the euthanasia of the British character, of British liberty, and British morals—by hardening the heart, while it softens the senses, and dissolving every manly and generous fancy in an atmosphere of voluptuous effeminacy.

"For my part, I am shy even of actresses, and should not think of leaving my card with Madame Vestris. I am for none of these *bonnes fortunes*; but for a list of humble beauties, servant-maids and shepherd-girls, with their red elbows, hard hands, black stockings, and mobcaps, I could furnish out a gallery equal to Cowley's, and paint them half as well."

In the *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817, Hazlitt observes, in speaking of *Much Ado about*

*Nothing*, that "Mrs. Jordan, we have understood, played Beatrice very delightfully"—that is, in Garrick's time and prior to his. Possibly his father may have seen her in the part. But it is curious that in an unpublished MS. fragment before me of a paper on this drama, Hazlitt refers to Mrs. Jordan as "likely [= apt] to make a good Beatrice."

A view diametrically opposite to that propounded by the Tory writers of the day has long since been taken and accepted of the *Characters*, and I do not think that the annexed estimate by an early anonymous pen is either unjust or extravagant: "A masterly analysis of Shakespeare's characters, which, though ostensibly dramatic criticism, is in point of fact a work on the philosophy of life and human nature, more suggestive and legitimate than many approved text-books on the subject."

It was Hazlitt who advised Leigh Hunt to print in the *Indicator* the song out of Lyly's *Campaspe* as a favourable specimen of the kind of composition. It is in the number for February 28, 1821, with the remark by Mr. Hunt: "We cannot refer to what Mr. Hazlitt has said of it; his books, as we are always having reason to find, when we most want them, being of that description of property which may be called borrowable; but we remember his advising us to do the very thing we are now doing with it."

Payne Collier often joined Hazlitt in his box at the theatre, and would ask his opinion about the piece in course of performance—what he thought of this or of that—and "then the next morning," said my grandfather, "what I had told him appeared in the newspaper as his." Peter Patmore did much the same thing.

When we recollect that Hazlitt's chief delight and only recreation of the kind was the theatre, and that his health was never very excellent, we cannot

be excessively surprised that, when he happened to be in London, and not otherwise engaged, he went to the play, and lay in bed the next morning, all the worse for stopping out late, and perhaps a hot supper at the "Southampton," where he liked to go, because it was there that he met Hone, Procter, and other friends and acquaintances. If there had not been a kind of mania for detecting motives, or *inventing* them for him, on the part of people with whom he mixed, much that he did might have been thought not so particularly strange perhaps, and have been accounted for as naturally as much that other literary men did, could have been.

A visit to the theatre in his company was, however, not always the most comfortable thing in the world. He had a slow way of moving on such occasions, which to less habitual playgoers was highly trying. He took my mother to the play one evening, when he was in Half-Moon Street—it must have been in 1828: there was a great crowd, but he was totally unmoved by that circumstance. At the head of the staircase he had to sign the Free Admission Book, and perfectly unconscious that he was creating a blockade, he looked up at the attendant in the middle of the operation—a rather lengthy one with him—and said, "What sort of a house is there to-night, sir?"

A good deal has been heard of Hazlitt's liking for fives; we gain a glimpse of him playing at cribbage, and as a child he had his marbles, his ball, and his kite.

"He who takes to playing at fives is twice young. . . . He has no other wish, no other thought, from the moment the game begins, but that of striking the ball, of placing it, or *making* it. This Cavanagh<sup>1</sup> was sure to do. Whenever he touched the ball, there

<sup>1</sup> He died at his house in Burbage Street, St. Giles's, in 1819.

was an end of the chase. His eye was certain, his hand fatal, his presence of mind complete. He could do what he pleased, and he always knew exactly what to do. He saw the whole game, and played it; took instant advantage of his adversary's weakness, and recovered balls, as if by a miracle and from sudden thought, that every one gave for lost. He had equal power and skill, quickness and judgment. His style of play was as remarkable as his power of execution. He had no affectation, no trifling. He did not throw away the game to show off an attitude, or try an experiment. He was a firm, sensible, manly player, who did what he could, but that was more than any one else could even affect to do. He did his work with the greatest ease, never took more pains than was necessary, and while others were fagging themselves to death, was as cool and collected as if he had just entered the court. He could not have shown himself in any ground in England but he would have been immediately surrounded with inquisitive gazers, trying to find out in what part of his frame his unrivalled skill lay, as politicians wonder to see the balance of Europe suspended in Lord Castlereagh's face, and admire the trophies of the British navy lurking under Mr. Croker's hanging brow. Now, Cavanagh was as good-looking a man as the Noble Lord, and much better looking than the Right Hon. Secretary. He had a clear, open countenance, and did not look sideways or down, like Mr. Murray the book-seller.

“There was Jack Spines the racket-player excelled in what is called the *half-volley*. Some amateurs of the game were one day disputing what this term of art meant. Spines was appealed to. ‘Why, gentlemen,’ says he, ‘I really can’t say exactly; but I should think the half-volley is something between

the volley and the half-volley.' This definition was not quite the thing.

"The celebrated John Davies, the finest [racket-] player in the world, could give no account of his proficiency that way. It is a game which no one thinks of playing without putting on a flannel jacket, and after you have been engaged in it for ten minutes, you are just as if you had been dipped in a mill-pond. John Davies never pulled off his coat; and merely buttoning it that it might not be in his way, would go down into the fives-court and play two of the best players of the day, and at the end of the match you could not perceive that a hair of his head was wet. He was also a first-rate tennis-player. Powell, the keeper of the court in St. Martin's Street, said he never seemed to follow the ball, but that it came to him—he did everything with such ease."

But he was through life, if not an actual participator in other sports, an interested looker-on. He says :

"I never see a child's kite in the air, but it seems to pull at my heart. It is to me a 'thing of life.' I feel the twinge at my elbow, the flutter and palpitation with which I used to let go the string of my own, as it rose in the air and towered among the clouds.

"There is no place where trap-ball, fives, prison-base, football, quoits, bowls are better understood or more successfully practised than in England; and the very names of a cricket bat and ball make English fingers tingle. What happy days must 'Long Robinson' have passed in getting ready his wickets and mending his bats, who, when two of the fingers of his right hand were struck off by the violence of a ball, had a screw fastened to it to hold the bat, and with the other hand still sent the ball thundering against the boards that bounded *Old Lord's cricket-*



*ground!* What delightful hours must have been his in looking forward to the matches that were to come, in recounting the feats he had performed in those that were past! I have myself whiled away whole mornings in seeing him strike the ball (like a countryman mowing with a scythe) to the farthest extremity of the smooth, level, sun-burnt ground; and with long, awkward strides count the notches that made victory sure!

“My old friend and pleasant ‘Companion’ [Leigh Hunt] remarks it, as an anomaly in my character, that I crawl about the fives-court like a cripple till I get the racket in my hand, when I start up as if I was possessed with a devil. I have then a motive for exertion; I lie by for difficulties and extreme cases. *Aut Cæsar aut nullus.* I have no notion of doing nothing with an air of importance, nor should I ever take a liking to the game of battledoor and shuttlecock.”

Hunt was of course not the only acquaintance who looked in to watch the game. Payne Collier told me that he sometimes went there, and that my grandfather excelled in volley.<sup>1</sup>

Hazlitt objected to be teased with such questions as, “Which do you think, Mr. Hazlitt, was the greater man, Sir Isaac Newton or Mr. Sarratt the chess-player?” Yet he did not dislike to be pointed out in the street, or to overhear people in the fives-court asking, *Which is Mr. Hazlitt?* for this, he considered, was “an extension of one’s personal identity.” “I have seldom been in a company where fives-playing has been talked of, but some one has asked in the course of it, ‘Pray did any one ever see an account of one Cavanagh, that appeared some time back in most of the papers? Is it known who wrote it?’ These are trying moments.”

<sup>1</sup> See Correspondence (letter of July 16, 1821).

In one of the essays there is a sketch of a game at cribbage between my grandfather and a Mr. *Dunster*, whose real name was Fisher. Mr. H. describes Fisher winning three half-crown rubbers of him, and putting them in a canvas pouch, out of which he had produced, just before, first a few half-pence, then half-a-dozen pieces of silver, then a handful of guineas, and lastly, lying *perdu* at the bottom, a fifty pound bank-note. Fisher was a poulterer in Duke Street, and Hazlitt met him at some Christmas party or Twelfth-Night celebration. There is a story of Mr. H. saying to Mr. Fisher, when they had done playing at cribbage, "I'll tell you what; I should like to play you a game at marbles;" whereupon Fisher's eyes sparkled with childish glee. Fisher was a man of some literary taste, and an admirer of Sterne and Le Sage. He was a true Cockney.

## XV

### HAZLITT'S POLITICAL BIAS—HIS POLITICAL WRITINGS—DEFENCE OF HIMSELF

HAZLITT inherited from his paternal grandfather, John Hazlitt of Shronell, a fervent passion for individual liberty, and from his progenitor in the same degree on the other side an equally strong love of truth and religious toleration. But at the same time with his theological studies the Unitarian minister, who was one step nearer to him and to us, combined a taste for the classics, in which he gained honours at college, and for miscellaneous literature. The partiality for Sterne as a writer, which betrays itself in so many passages of my grandfather's books, might well have been acquired under the paternal roof,<sup>1</sup> and Miss Hazlitt expressly cites Shakespeare as the great poet, whom they all knew so well, and testifies to her father's affection for the London print-shops.

At the same time, it is bare justice to Samuel Hazlitt of Fethard, of whom there is mention elsewhere, to point out that, judging from the character given by one who knew him, he might have proved under more favourable and sympathetic environment a man of high literary culture.

The *Political Essays* represent the occasional contributions to the press between 1813 and the date of issue (1819). They constitute as proud a monument to the writer's name as anything which

<sup>1</sup> See Correspondence under 1808.

he left behind him; for, considering the state of society and feeling under which they were given to the world, their freedom of language and tone is remarkable, if we bear in mind that William Hone, who was the responsible publisher of these papers, and the Hunts, who founded the *Examiner*, where many of them were originally inserted, suffered cruel and cowardly persecution for their opinions. This was the case with Cobbett, in whose *Register* Hazlitt wrote, and whose *Rural Rides* form a necessary introduction to the Reform Bill of 1832. Never was there such a fearless and scathing exposure of villainy, cruelty, and cowardice in high places, such a humiliating, disillusionising picture of our aristocracy, titled and otherwise, as in the pages of those *Rides*, where we see so many of our greatest names brought forward to be branded as the enemies of their country and their species, and the younger Pitt let lightly off, when he is dismissed in company with his sovereign as a fool, and is himself characterised as a "snorting bawler."

Hazlitt imbibed from his father, with a sympathy for the cause of American independence, a steadfast faith in the beneficial effects on human happiness of the first Revolution in France—a view not without its share of truth and reality, when we regard the old system which the new one superseded, but too Utopian and optimistic when we judge its merits in retrospect. The theological school to which the Unitarian minister belonged was all along at heart Republican. My grandfather has been charged with inconsistency in worshipping Napoleon; but Hazlitt had in fact transferred the allegiance, which he inherited from his father, to the principles of the French Revolution, so far as its mission of political enfranchisement went, to the man who stepped out of the crowd, and by his superlative and dazzling

genius erected on the ruins of the former absolutism a new one of his own.

Hazlitt saw with chagrin and anger the secession of so many of the Liberal party from the cause—Coleridge, Southey, Stoddart, and others whom he had known, or with whom he was connected, and he and they consequently exchanged not very complimentary criticism; he barely tolerated the indifference of Lamb. Cobbett, Hone, and my grandfather remained staunch to the old flag.

Men of the present day can form no adequate conception of the kind of life-and-death struggle it was for people of honest principles and advanced opinions a century ago. There were men whom Hazlitt and the Hunts knew, who were ready to answer for their political faith with their personal liberty, nay, with their necks, if need had been. The need has ceased, and the men have gone. It would not be possible now to assemble such a circle as Mr. John Hunt assembled in his house at Maida Hill; the times are altered, and the type is extinct. Of Lamb's evenings the same may be said, not altogether from any paucity of intellect and wit amongst modern Englishmen, but from a complete alteration in the intellectual temperature and atmosphere.

Authors in clover pasturage are perhaps too apt to give the contemptuous go-by to the members of the fraternity still quartered on the stubble:—

*'Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum.'*

It is not everybody who wielded a pen in his youth who can spend the afternoon and evening of life in an elegant, purple-tinted ease. My grandfather depended upon his literary earnings for his subsistence to the last. If he had placed himself on the right hand of the Speaker it might have been



otherwise; but, unfortunately for those whom he left behind him, and for himself, he owned principles for which he had a value, and which in those days were not Government principles. He was too honest a man to leave his creed because it did not pay. He says:—

“An old friend of mine, when he read the abuse poured out in certain Tory publications, used to congratulate himself upon it as a favourable sign of the times and of the progressive improvement of our manners. Where we now called names we formerly burnt each other at a stake.

“To have all the world against us is trying to a man’s temper and philosophy. It unhinges even our opinion of our own motives and intentions. It is like striking the actual world from under our feet: the void that is left, the death-like pause, the chilling suspense, is fearful. The growth of an opinion is like the growth of a limb; it receives its actual support and nourishment from the general body of the opinions, feelings, and practice of the world; without that it soon withers, festers, and becomes useless. To what purpose write a good book if it is sure to be pronounced a bad one, even before it is read?

“When the editor of a respectable morning paper reproached me for having called Mr. Gifford a cat’s paw, I did not tell him that he was a glove upon that cat’s paw. I might have done so.

“Once asking a friend why he did not bring forward an explanation of a circumstance in which his conduct had been called in question, he said, ‘His friends were satisfied on the subject, and he cared very little about the opinion of the world.’ I made answer that I did not consider this a good ground to rest his defence upon, for that a man’s friends seldom thought better of him than the world did. I see no reason to alter this opinion.”

His abstinence from stimulants, he said, was the reason why Blackwood's people called him "pimpled Hazlitt"—thus holding him up to the world as a dram-drinker. Had they told nothing but the truth of him they would not have made him out to the world as anything worse than he really was; and he did not desire to pass for anything better. Whereas, by ascribing to him that vice which was the farthest removed from his actual habits, they gained a great point against him. "Had I really been a gin-drinker and a sot," a friend has heard him say, "they would have sworn I was a milksop."<sup>1</sup>

His diet was usually spare and plain. I have before me one of the bills of Mr. Carter, his landlord at Winterslow Hut. It is for the month of August 1821, and among the items *tea* and *rice* are conspicuous. His breakfast seems to have cost him eighteen pence, his supper the same, and his dinner from eighteen pence to four shillings. There is one entry of wine, "twelve shillings": he must have had company on the 25th of the month, for he did not take wine.

He met my mother one day in Piccadilly, and as he looked more out of spirits than usual she asked him if anything was the matter. He said, "Well, you know, I've been having some hot boiled beef for my dinner, Kitty—a most *uncomfortable* dish."

He had had a pheasant for dinner one day when my mother saw him, and it turned out that he had been at a total loss to know what to order, and so had ordered this—pheasants that day being ten shillings a-piece in the market. "Don't you think it was a good deal to give?" she asked. "Well, I don't know but what it was, Kitty," he replied, opening his eyes in his way, and tucking his chin into his shirt-collar.

<sup>1</sup> *Palmore*, ii. 314.

He would eat nobody's apple-pies but my mother's, and no puddings but Mrs. Armstead's, of Winterslow. Mrs. A. contrived to persuade him that she had the art of making egg puddings *without eggs*.

As regards the delicate and rather shirked question of intemperance in drinking among our more immediate forefathers, one rises from a study of the club and coffee-house life of the 18th century and the opening years of the next with an inclination to view that question in another and more lenient light. During their earlier life, Lamb and the two Hazlitts (John and William) were in the midst of a society which still preserved the old toping traditions; and the modern domestic hospitality, only modified by a more refined and limited use of the club, had yet to come. Allusively to the too prevalent infirmity, of which he was not wholly guiltless, Lamb drily observed, "It is a blemish in the greatest characters," and Mary Lamb made no secret of her brother's propensity. During 1815 Talfourd depicts Hazlitt as staggering under the blow of Waterloo, and somebody assures us that he drank heavily at the same point of time.<sup>1</sup> Probably Lamb and Hazlitt, so far from drinking more than others, drank much less, if merely for the reason that in both instances a slight amount went a long way. Latterly at the Southampton Arms it was a complaint that my grandfather took only water, which might set a bad example, moreover. Lamb adhered to his porter and weak diluted gin to the last; his friend during many years partook exclusively of water and tea. The decline of coffee-house, and of the original type of club, life, may be ascribed to the changes in

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Correspondence under October 1815, and see Douady, *Liste Chronologique*, 1906, pp. 9-12, where the volume of work seems to tell a different tale.

our social habits. Convivial institutions, which necessitate attendance at stated hours, have almost ceased to be in harmony with our average habits.

“ I am no politician, and still less can I be said to be a party-man ; but I have a hatred for tyranny, and a contempt for its tools ; and this feeling I have expressed as often and as strongly as I could. . . . The question with me is, whether I and all mankind are born slaves or free. That is the one thing necessary to know and to make good : the rest is *flocci, nauci, nihili, pili*.

“ Poets do not approve of what I have said of their turning prose-writers ; nor do the politicians approve of my tolerating the fooleries of the fanciful tribe at all ; so they make common cause to *damn* me between them. . . . Mr. Wordsworth is not satisfied with the praise I have heaped on himself, and still less, that I have allowed Mr. Moore to be a poet at all. I do not think that I have ever set my face against the popular idols of the day. I have been foremost in crying up Mrs. Siddons, Kean, Sir Walter Scott, Madame Pasta, and others. . . . I have been more to blame in trying to push certain Illustrious Obscure into notice ; they have not forgiven the obligation, nor the world the tacit reproach.

“ I remember Mr. Wordsworth saying that he thought we had pleasanter days in the outset of life, but that our years glid on pretty even one with another ; as we gained in variety and richness what we lost in intensity. I remember my old friend Peter Finnerty laughing very heartily at something I had written about the Scotch ; but it was followed up by a sketch of the Irish, on which he closed the book, looked grave, and said he disapproved entirely of all national reflections. I had done something (more than any one except Schlegel) to vindicate the *Characters of Shakspeare's Plays* from the stigma

of French criticism ; but our anti-Jacobin and anti-Gallican writers soon found out that I had said and written that Frenchmen, Englishmen, men, were not slaves by birthright. This was enough to *damn* the work. Such has been the head and front of my offending.

“ While my friend Leigh Hunt was writing the *Descent of Liberty*, and strewing the march of the allied sovereigns with flowers, I sat by the waters of Babylon, and hung my harp upon the willows. I knew all along there was but one alternative—the cause of kings or of mankind. This I foresaw, this I feared ; the world see it now, when it is too late. . . . There is but one question in the hearts of monarchs, whether mankind are their property or not. There was but this one question in mine. I had made an abstract metaphysical principle of this question. I was not the dupe of the voice of the charmers. By my hatred of tyrants I knew what their hatred of the freeborn spirit of man must be, of the semblance of the very name of Liberty and Humanity. . . .

“ Two half-friends of mine, who would not make a whole one between them, agreed the other day that the indiscriminate, incessant abuse of what I write, was mere prejudice and party-spirit ; and that what I do in periodicals without a name does well, pays well, and is ‘ cried out upon in the top of the compass.’

“ It is this, indeed, that has saved my shallow skiff from quite foundering on Tory spite and rancour ; for when people have been reading and approving an article in a miscellaneous journal, it does not do to say, when they discover the author afterwards (whatever might have been the case before), it is written by a blockhead ; and even Mr. Jerdan recommends the volume of *Characteristics* as an excellent little work, because there is no cabal-



istic name in the title-page; and swears 'there is a first-rate article of forty pages in the last number of the *Edinburgh* from Jeffrey's own hand'; though when he learns, against his will, that it is mine, he devotes three successive numbers of the *Literary Gazette* to abuse 'that *strange* article in the last number of the *Edinburgh Review*.'

"I remember Mr. Railton of Liverpool (a very excellent man and a good patriot)<sup>1</sup> saying many years ago, in reference to Buonaparte and George III., that the 'superiority of rank was quite enough for him (the King) without the intellectual superiority.'

"I have heard Sir Francis Burdett say things in the House of Commons, which I could not enough admire; and which he could not have ventured upon saying, if, besides his honesty, he had not been a man of fortune, of family, of character, ay, and a very good-looking man into the bargain!

"I have a sneaking kindness for a popish priest in this country; and to a Catholic peer I would willingly bow in passing. What are national antipathies, individual attachments, but so many expressions of the *moral* principle in forming our opinions?

"I remember several years ago<sup>2</sup> a conversation in the *diligence* coming from Paris, in which, on its being mentioned that a man had married his wife after thirteen years' courtship, a fellow-countryman of mine observed that 'then at least he would be acquainted with her character,' when a Monsieur — made answer, 'No, not at all, for that the very next day she might turn out the very reverse of the character that she had appeared in during all the preceding time.'

<sup>1</sup> The same gentleman, for whom Hazlitt executed in 1802 the copies at the Louvre.

<sup>2</sup> Probably on his return in 1803 from the visit to the Louvre.

“ He who can truly say *Nihil humani a me alienum puto*, has a world of cares on his hands, which nobody knows anything of but himself. That is not one of the least miseries of a studious life. The common herd do not by any means give him full credit for his gratuitous sympathy with their concerns, but are struck with his lack-lustre eye and wasted appearance. They cannot translate the expression of his countenance out of the vulgate; they mistake the knitting of his brows for the frown of displeasure, the paleness of study for the languor of sickness, the furrows of thought for the regular approaches of old age. They read his looks, not his books, have no clue to penetrate the last recesses of the mind, and attribute the height of abstraction to more than an ordinary share of stupidity.

“ I remember hearing a lady of great sense and acuteness speak of it as a painful consequence of the natural shyness of scholars, that from the want of a certain address, or an acquaintance with the common forms of society, they despair of making themselves agreeable to women of education and a certain rank in life, and throw away their fine sentiments and romantic tenderness on chambermaids and mantua-makers. Not daring to hope for success where it would be most desirable, yet anxious to realise in some way the dream of books and of their youth, they are willing to accept a return of affection which they count upon as a tribute of gratitude in those of lower circumstances (as if gratitude were ever bought by interest), and take up with the first *Dulcinea del Toboso* that they meet with, when, would they only try the experiment, they might do much better.

“ I do not think there is anything deserving the name of society to be found out of London; and that for the two following reasons. First, there is *neigh-*

*bourhood* elsewhere, accidental or unavoidable acquaintance; people are thrown together by chance, or grow together like trees: you can pick your society nowhere but in London. Secondly, London is the only place in which each individual in company is treated according to his value in company, and to that only. . . . It is known in Manchester or Liverpool what every man in the room is worth in land or money.

“When I was young, I spent a good deal of my time at Manchester and Liverpool, and I confess I give the preference to the former. There you were oppressed only by the aristocracy of wealth; in the latter by the aristocracy of wealth and letters by turns. . . .

## XVI

### UPON HIMSELF—SOME RETROSPECTIONS

“If my ideas, which I do not avouch, but suppose, lie below the surface, why am I to be always attempting to dazzle superficial people with them, or smiling, delighted, at my own want of success ?

“What I have here stated is only the excess of the common and well-known English and scholastic character. I am neither a buffoon, a fop, nor a Frenchman, which Mr. Hunt would have me to be. He finds it odd that I am a close reasoner and a loose dresser. I have been (among other follies) a hard liver as well as a hard thinker ; and the consequences of that will not allow me to dress as I please. People in real life are not like players on a stage, who put on a certain look or *costume*, merely for effect. I am aware, indeed, that the gay and airy pen of the author does not seriously probe the errors or misfortunes of his friends—he only glances at their seeming peculiarities, so as to make them odd and ridiculous ; for which forbearance few of them will thank him. Why does he assert that I was vain of my hair when it was black, and am equally vain of it now it is grey, when this is true in neither case ? This transposition of motives makes me almost doubt whether Lord Byron was thinking so much of the rings on his fingers as his biographer was. These sort of criticisms should be left to women. I am made to wear a little hat, stuck on the top of my head the wrong way.

Nay, I commonly wear a large slouching hat over my eyebrows; and if ever I had another, I must have twisted it about in any shape to get rid of the annoyance. This probably tickled Mr. Hunt's fancy, and retains possession of it, to the exclusion of the truism, that I naturally wear 'a melancholy hat' [allusively to Ford the dramatist].

"I am charged with using strange gestures and contortions of features in argument, in order to 'look energetic.' One would rather suppose that the heat of the argument produced the extravagance of the gestures, as I am said to be calm at other times. It is like saying that a man in a passion clenches his teeth, not because he is, but in order to seem, angry. Why should everything be construed into air and affectation? With Hamlet, I may say, 'I know not *seems*.'

"The craniologists give me the organ of *local memory*, of which faculty I have not a particle: though they say that my frequent allusions to conversations that occurred many years ago prove the contrary. I once spent a whole evening with Dr. Spurzheim, and I utterly forget all that passed, except that the doctor *waltzed* before we parted! The only faculty I do possess is that of a certain morbid interest in things, which makes me equally remember or anticipate by nervous analogy whatever touches it; and for this our nostrum-mongers have no specific organ, so that I am quite left out of their system. No wonder that I should pick a quarrel with it.

"I have never had a plaster cast<sup>1</sup> taken of myself. In truth, I rather shrink from the experiment; for I know I should be very much mortified if it did not turn out well, and should never forgive the unfor-

<sup>1</sup> One was taken in 1830. It is at Maidstone. Some of the hair still adheres to the brow.



tunate artist who had lent his assistance to prove that I looked like a blockhead.

“Civility is with me a jewel. I like a little comfortable cheer, and careless, indolent chat. I hate to be always wise, or aiming at wisdom. I have enough to do with literary cabals, questions, critics, actors, essay-writing, without taking them out with me for recreation and into all companies. I wish at these times to pass for a good-humoured fellow; and goodwill is all I ask in return to make good company. I do not desire to be always posing myself or others with the question of fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute, &c. I must unbend sometimes. I must occasionally lie fallow. The kind of conversation that I affect most is what sort of day it is, and whether it is likely to rain or hold up fine for to-morrow. This I consider as enjoying the *otium cum dignitate*—as the end and privilege of a life of study. ‘Mr. Hazlitt never seems to take the slightest interest in anything,’ is a remark I have often heard made in a whisper. I protest (if required) against having a grain of wit.

“When I told Jeffrey that I had composed a work in which I had ‘in some sort handled’ about a score of leading characters,<sup>1</sup> he said, ‘Then you will have one man against you and the remaining nineteen for you.’ I have not found it so.”

There is a highly agreeable yet affecting description of a visit to John Wolcot (Peter Pindar) at Somers’ Town, where he resided many years, and where he died in 1819. Hazlitt and he had been at one time neighbours. The former tells us that he lodged in King Street:—

“He sat and talked familiarly and cheerfully, asking you whether you thought his head would not make a fine bust. He had a decanter of rum placed

<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit of the Age*, 1825.

on the table before him, from which he poured out a glass-full as he wanted it and drank it pure, taking no other beverage, but not exceeding in this. His infirmities had made no alteration in his conversation, except perhaps a little more timidity and hesitation; for blindness is the *lameness* of the mind. He could not see the effect of what he said lighting up the countenances of others; and in this case, the tongue may run on the faster, but hardly so well. After coffee, which he accompanied with the due quantity of *merum sal*, he would ask to be led down into a little parlour below, which was hung round with some early efforts of his own in landscape-painting, and with some of Wilson's unfinished sketches. Though he could see them no longer, otherwise than in his mind's eye,<sup>1</sup> he was evidently pleased to be in the room with them, as they brought back former associations. Youth and age seem glad to meet as it were on the last hill-top of life, to shake hands once more and part for ever! He spoke slightly of his own performances (though they were by no means contemptible), but launched out with great fervour in praise of his favourite Wilson, and in disparagement of Claude,<sup>2</sup> enlarging on the fine broad manner and bold effects of the one, and on the finical littleness of the other, and 'making the worse appear the better reason.' It was here we last parted with this fine old man, and it is with mixed pleasure and regret we turn to the subject. Peter Pindar, besides his vein of comic humour, excelled when he chose in the serious and pathetic; and his *Lines to a Fly drowned in Treacle* and *To an Expiring Taper* are among his best pieces."

<sup>1</sup> His blindness was apt to put a keener edge on his mental perception.

<sup>2</sup> Hazlitt's remark elsewhere about people who preferred Wilson to Claude perhaps pointed to Wolcot.

When Gifford heaped in type on Wolcot all the terms of abuse which he could command, some one remarked :—

“What a different story,  
If Peter had been Tory.”

“The French emigrants were formerly peculiarly situated in England. The priests were obnoxious to the common people on account of their religion ; both they and the nobles for their politics. Their poverty and dirt subjected them to many rebuffs ; but their privations being voluntarily incurred, and also borne with the characteristic patience and good-humour of the nation, screened them from contempt. I little thought, when I used to meet them walking out in the summer evening at Somers' Town, in their long great-coats, their beards covered with snuff, and their eyes gleaming with mingled hope and regret in the rays of the setting sun, and regarded them with pity bordering on respect, as the last filmy vestige of the ancient *régime*, as shadows of loyalty and superstition still flitting about the earth and shortly to disappear from it for ever, that they would one day return over the bleeding corpse of their country, and sit like harpies, a polluted triumph, over the tomb of human liberty !”

“Mr. Britton<sup>1</sup> once offered me £2, 2s. for a *Life and Character of Shakespeare*, with an admission to his *conversazioni*. I went once. There was a collection of antiquaries, lexicographers, and other Illustrious Obscure, and I had given up the day for lost, when in dropped Jack Taylor of the *Sun*, and I had nothing now to do but to hear and laugh. Mr. T. knows most of the good things that have been said in the metropolis for the last thirty years, and is in

<sup>1</sup> The late Mr. John Britton, co-author of the *History of Surrey*, and writer or editor of many other publications.

particular an excellent retailer of the humours and extravagancies of his old friend Peter Pindar.

“I many years ago looked into the Duke of Newcastle’s *Treatise on Horsemanship*; all I remember of it is some quaint cuts of the Duke and his riding-master, introduced to illustrate the lessons. Had I myself possessed a stud of Arabian coursers, with grooms and master of the horse to assist me in reducing these precepts to practice, they would have made a stronger impression on my mind; and what interested myself from vanity or habit, I could have made interesting to others. I am sure I could have learnt to *ride the Great Horse*, and do twenty other things, in the time I have employed in endeavouring to make something out of nothing, or in conning the same problem fifty times over, as monks count over their beads! I have occasionally in my life bought a few prints, and hung them up in my room with great satisfaction; but is it to be supposed possible, from this casual circumstance, that I should compete in taste or in the knowledge of *virtu* with a peer of the realm, who has in his possession the costly designs, or a wealthy commoner, who has spent half his fortune in learning to distinguish copies from originals?

“Mr. Lamb has lately taken it into his head to read St. Evremont and works of that stamp. I neither praise nor blame him for it. He observed that St. Evremont was a writer half-way between Montaigne and Voltaire, with a spice of the wit of the one and the sense of the other. I said I was always of opinion that there had been a great many clever people in the world, both in France and England, but I had been sometimes rebuked for it. Lamb took this as a slight reproach, for he has been a little exclusive and national in his tastes.

“It is Gray who cries out: ‘Be mine to read

eternal new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon! I could say the same of those of Madame la Fayette and the Duke de la Rochefoucauld. *The Princess of Cleves* is a most charming work of this kind; and *The Duc de Nemours* is a great favourite with me. . . . I prefer him, I own, vastly to Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*, whom I look upon as the prince of coxcombs.

“Mr. Curran was lively and animated in convivial conversation, but dull in argument; nay, averse to anything like reasoning or serious observation, and had the worst taste I ever knew. His favourite critical topics were to abuse Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

“I happened in 1815 to be suggesting a new translation of *Don Quixote* to an enterprising bookseller, and his answer was, ‘We want new *Don Quixotes*.’ I believe I deprived the same active-minded person of a night's rest by telling him there was the beginning of a new novel by Goldsmith in existence.

“I know an admirer of *Don Quixote* who can see no merit in *Gil Blas*, and an admirer of *Gil Blas* who could never get through *Don Quixote*. I myself have great pleasure in reading both these works, and in that respect think I have an advantage over both these critics.

“I happen to have Edwards's *Inquiry Concerning Free-will* and Dr. Priestley's *Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity* bound up in the same volume; and I confess that the difference in the manner of these two writers is rather striking. The plodding, persevering, scrupulous accuracy of the one, and the easy, cavalier, verbal fluency of the other, form a complete contrast. Dr. Priestley's whole aim seems to be to evade the difficulties of his subject, Edwards's to answer them. The one is employed, according to



Berkeley's allegory, in flinging dust in the eyes of his adversaries, while the other is taking true pains in digging into the mine of knowledge. All Dr. Priestley's arguments on this subject are mere hackneyed commonplaces. He had in reality no opinions of his own, and truth, I conceive, never takes very deep root in those minds on which it is merely engrafted.

"Each person should do that, not which is best in itself, even supposing this could be known, but that which he can do best, which he will find out, if left to himself. Spenser could not have written *Paradise Lost*, nor Milton *The Faerie Queene*."

My grandfather met Mr. Nollekens the sculptor only once, and then at Mr. Northcote's. "He sat down on a low stool (from being rather fatigued), rested with both hands on a stick, as if he clung to the solid and tangible, had an habitual twitch in his limbs and motions, as if catching himself in the act of going too far in chiselling a lip or a dimple in a chin;<sup>1</sup> was *bolt*-upright, with features hard and square, but finely cut, a hooked nose, thin lips, an indented forehead; and the defect in his sight completed the resemblance to one of his own masterly busts. He seemed by time and labour to have '*wrought* himself to stone.' Northcote stood by his side—all air and spirit—stooping down to speak to him. The painter was in a loose morning-gown, with his back to the light; his face was like a pale fine piece of colouring, and his eye came out and glanced through the twilight of the past, like an old eagle from its eyrie in the clouds."

Once he met Elphinstone, who wrote the mottoes to the *Rambler*, first published eight-and-twenty years before he was born. He says: "We saw this

<sup>1</sup> As when in preparing his bust of George III., he had to take exact measurements of the lineaments of the royal nose.

gentleman, since the commencement of the present [nineteenth] century, looking over a clipped hedge in the country, with a broad flapped hat, a venerable countenance, and his dress cut out with the same formality as his evergreens. His name had not only survived half a century, in conjunction with that of Johnson, but he had survived with it. . . .”

## XVII

### POLITICAL JEALOUSIES AND HOSTILITIES— NOTICES OF EMINENT CONTEMPORARIES

HE admired Burke, whose speeches and pamphlets were among his earliest studies, but neither trusted nor liked him. He thought him a mere brilliant sophist, a "half-bred reasoner," and a dishonest man. "It so happens that I myself have played all my life with his forked shafts unhurt; because I had a metaphysical clue to carry off the noxious particles, and let them sink into the earth like drops of water." Yet as a young man he envied his power of speech and expression, and wondered if he should ever attain anything of the sort.

"I happened to be saying something about Burke, and was expressing my opinion of his talents in no measured terms, when a gentleman interrupted me by saying he thought, for his part, that Burke had been greatly overrated, and then added in a careless way, 'Pray, did you read a character of him in the last number of the ——?' 'I wrote it.'"<sup>1</sup> Priestley spoke most unfavourably, almost contemptuously, about Burke.

He complained of the style of criticism adopted in the *Monthly Review*, which had proved so great a success in the hands of Dr. Ralph Griffith, the friend of Josiah Wedgwood, and of which Mr. Rose and Dr. Kippis were the chief supporters for many

<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt's *Political Essays* (Works, iii. 325). But the character was written in 1807.

years, and in which Byron wrote. Mrs. Rose, as Hazlitt was told by his father, contributed the monthly catalogue. It was in this publication that Gray's *Elegy* was spoken of as "a little poem, however humble its pretensions," which was "not without elegance or merit."

"Some years ago a periodical paper was published in London under the title of the *Pic-Nic*. It was got up under the auspices of a Mr. Fulke Greville, and several writers of that day contributed to it, among whom were Mr. Horace Smith, Mr. Dubois, Mr. Prince Hoare, Mr. Cumberland, and others. On some question arising between the proprietor and the gentleman contributors on the subject of an advance in the remuneration for articles, Mr. Fulke Greville grew heroic, and said: 'I have got a young fellow just come from Ireland, who will undertake to do the whole, verse and prose, politics and scandal, for two guineas a week; and if you will come and sup with me to-morrow night you shall see him, and judge whether I am not right in closing with him.' Accordingly, they met the next evening, and the WRITER OF ALL WORK was introduced. He began to make a display of his native ignorance and impudence on all subjects immediately, and no one else had occasion to say anything. When he was gone Mr. Cumberland exclaimed, 'A Talking Potato, by God!' The talking potato was Mr. Croker of the Admiralty.

"I am much surprised at Lord Byron's haste to return a volume of Spenser, which was lent him by Mr. Hunt, and at his apparent indifference to the progress and (if he pleased) *advancement* of poetry up to the present day.

"At the time that Lord Byron thought proper to join with Mr. Leigh Hunt and Mr. Shelley in the publication called the *Liberal, Blackwood's Magazine*

overflowed, as might be expected, with tenfold gall and bitterness; the *John Bull* was outrageous, and Mr. Jerdan black in the face at this unheard-of and disgraceful disunion. But who would have supposed that Mr. Thomas Moore and Mr. Hobhouse, those stanch friends and partisans of the people, should also be thrown into almost hysterical agonies of well-bred horror at the coalition between their noble and ignoble acquaintance, between the patrician and the 'newspaper-man.' Mr. Moore darted backwards and forwards from Coldbath Fields Prison to the *Examiner* office, from Mr. Longman's to Mr. Murray's shop, in a state of ridiculous trepidation, to see what was to be done to prevent this degradation of the aristocracy of letters, this indecent encroachment of plebeian pretensions, this undue extension of patronage and compromise of privilege.

"The Tories were shocked that Lord Byron should grace the popular side by his direct countenance and assistance; the Whigs were shocked that he should share his confidence and counsels with any one who did not unite the double recommendations of birth and genius—but themselves. Mr. Moore had lived so long among the great that he fancied himself one of them, and regarded the indignity as done to himself. Mr. Hobhouse had lately been black-balled by the clubs, and must feel particularly sore and tenacious on the score of public opinion.

"Mr. Shelley's father, however, was an older baronet than Mr. Hobhouse's. Mr. Leigh Hunt was 'to the full as genteel a man' as Mr. Moore, in birth, appearance, and education. The pursuits of all four were the same—the Muse, the public favour, and the public good. Mr. Moore was himself invited to assist in the undertaking, but he professed an utter aversion to, and warned Lord



Byron against having any concern with, *joint publications*, as of a very neutralising and levelling description. He might speak from experience. He had tried his hand at that Ulysses' bow of critics and politicians, the *Edinburgh Review*, though his secret had never transpired. Mr. Hobhouse, too, had written *Illustrations of Childe Harold* (a sort of partnership concern)—yet, to quash the publication of the *Liberal*, he seriously proposed that his noble friend should write once a week, *in his own name*, in the *Examiner*—the *Liberal* scheme, he was afraid, might succeed: the newspaper one, he knew, could not.

“The cabal, the bustle, the significant hints, the confidential rumours were at the height when, after Mr. Shelley's death, I was invited to take part in this obnoxious publication (obnoxious alike to friend and foe); and when the *Essay on the Spirit of Monarchy* appeared (which must indeed have operated like a bombshell thrown into the *coteries* that Mr. Moore frequented, as well as those that he had left) this gentleman wrote off to Lord Byron to say that ‘there was a taint in the *Liberal*, and that he should lose no time in getting out of it.’ And this from Mr. Moore to Lord Byron—the last of whom had just involved the publication, against which he was cautioned as having a taint in it, in a prosecution for libel by his *Vision of Judgment*; and the first of whom had scarcely written anything all his life that had not a taint in it.

“It is true that the Holland House party might be somewhat staggered by a *jeu d'esprit* that set their Blackstone and De Lolme theories at defiance, and that they could as little write as answer. But it was not that. Mr. Moore also complained that ‘I had spoken against *Lalla Rookh*, though he had just before sent me his *Fudge Family*.’ Still it was

not that. But at the time he sent me that very delightful and spirited publication, my little bark was seen 'hulling on the flood' in a kind of dubious twilight; and it was not known whether I might not prove a vessel of gallant trim. Mr. Blackwood had not then directed his Grub-street battery against me; but as soon as this was the case, Mr. Moore was willing to 'whistle me down the wind,' and let me prey at fortune: not that I 'proved haggard,' but the contrary. It is sheer cowardice and want of heart. The sole object of this set is not to stem the tide of prejudice and falsehood, but to get out of the way themselves. The instant another is assailed (however unjustly), instead of standing manfully by him, they cut the connection as fast as possible. . . .

"Mr. Moore is bound to advise a noble poet to get as fast as he can out of a certain publication, lest he should not be able to give an account, at Holland or at Lansdowne House, how his friend Lord Byron had associated himself with his friend Leigh Hunt. Is he afraid that the *Spirit of Monarchy* will eclipse the *Fables for the Holy Alliance* in virulence and plain speaking?"

He was severe upon Byron on account of the sources of his poetry being (in his estimation) traceable to Byron's passionate nature—his being in a rage with everybody. And he censured Lamb, because Lamb evinced an undue sympathy with the low classes. Yet in both these respects he was himself peculiarly vulnerable and open to criticism. Byron was scarcely to be counted as a political advocate outside his generous fight for Greek freedom; but Hazlitt and he were never cordial. His lordship refers to Hazlitt's mode of writing as not gentlemanly; and the other dubbed the author of *Childe Harold* "a sublime coxcomb."

“ I have been whispered that the member for Westminster (for whom I once gave an ineffectual vote)<sup>1</sup> has also conceived some distaste for me. I do not know why, except that I was at one time named as the writer of the famous ‘ *Trecenti Juravimus* Letter,’ to Mr. Canning, which appeared in the *Examiner*, and was afterwards suppressed. He might feel the disgrace of such a supposition; I confess I did not feel the honour.”

He frequently dined at Haydon’s on Sundays. It was a resource, if he did not happen to be going to the Reynells’ or Humes’ at Bayswater, to the Hunts’ at Maida Hill, or to the Lambs’. He would say to his little boy, after breakfast, as a way of introducing his intentions, “ Well, sir; shall we go and eat Haydon’s mutton?” Once, when they resorted to Lambs’, Lamb made out that there was roast *kid* for dinner, and my grandfather left in a huff; but his son remained, and subsequently announced that the mutton was excellent. Boswell says that Johnson and he had *kid* in the Highlands, and that Johnson liked it.

He knew Colonel Colebrooke’s widow slightly, and interested himself in her case. He wrote to Mr. Fonblanque, who was then editor of the *Examiner*, and asked him to insert a statement in that paper. I do not know what F.’s reply was, but Hazlitt was much vexed at it, and remarked that Fonblanque was the sort of man, he thought, who would take you at a disadvantage if he could. He wrote back to him, coming to Broad Street to do so, and Miss Reynell was deputed to seal the letter for

<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Bentham. It is extremely creditable to Hazlitt’s judicial treatment of his contemporaries, Bentham included, in the *Spirit of the Age*, that he did not suffer personal or party bias to influence him to any extent in his literary portraiture. A more impartial series of verdicts has seldom been pronounced.

him. My mother was by at the moment, and she heard him say of Fonblanque, that he was the best political paragraph-writer we had, meaning to imply that he was nothing better.

While he was seeing through the press the *Memoirs of Holcroft*, 1816, he had formed the acquaintance of the printer, Mr. J. McCreery, whose printing offices were then in Black Horse Court, Fleet Street, but were subsequently removed to Whitefriars. McCreery lived in Stamford Street, Blackfriars, and had hot suppers, which strengthened my grandfather's inducement to favour the house. I will not be positive that McCreery's two daughters, who were handsome girls and accomplished, did not contribute something to the attraction. My father recollects very well accompanying him thither.

I think it was Mr. Huntly Gordon who said that he was never more astonished than when he saw Mr. Hazlitt accoutred in readiness to go to dinner at Mr. Curran's. He wore a blue coat and gilt buttons, black smalls, silk stockings, and a white cravat, and he looked the gentleman. But he did not often do himself justice; the processes of the toilet proved irksome. Patmore and the Procters bore similar testimony. Mr. Gordon told me fifty years ago that he recollected an evening he spent with him, and the "long, eloquent, and enthusiastic" dissertation on Salisbury Plain and Stonehenge with which he indulged him. This was not long before his death.

Hazlitt was to be seen to best advantage where he was least seen by his literary acquaintances—at Winterslow. There in the maturity of his genius and fame he spent many a happy month, living his youth over again in spirit and memory.

He said of Bulwer's *Paul Clifford* that "it had

the singular advantage of being written by a gentleman, and not about his own class.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Barry Cornwall was once pleased to say of his *Effigies Poeticæ* that the best thing he knew of them was, that they had been spoken well of by Mr. Hazlitt.

Hazlitt thought a periodical might be started to be called *The Bystander*, with this motto: *Bystanders see most of the game.*

“It is a good remark in *Vivian Grey*,<sup>2</sup> that a bankrupt walks the streets the day before his name is in the *Gazette* with the same erect and confident brow as ever, and only feels the mortification of his situation after it becomes known to others.”

<sup>1</sup> He was evidently pleased with this book. He mentions it more than once.

<sup>2</sup> See the trenchant paper by Hazlitt on the *Dandy School*, to which B. Disraeli belonged (Hazlitt's Works, xi. 343-48); and W. C. Hazlitt's *Prose Writings*, 1st series, p. 152.



## XVIII

### SURVEY OF HIS LITERARY ACQUAINTANCES— THE MONTAGUS, BARRY CORNWALL, LEIGH HUNT, KEATS, THE REYNELLS AND THE LAMBS, THE PATMORES

“ I HAVE observed that few of those whom I have formerly known most intimately continue on the same friendly footing, or combine the steadiness with the warmth of attachment. I have been acquainted with two or three knots of inseparable companions, who saw each other ‘ six days in the week,’ that have broken up and dispersed. I have quarrelled with almost all my old friends (they might say this is owing to my bad temper, but they have also quarrelled with one another). What is become of that ‘ set of whist-players,’ celebrated by ELIA in his notable *Epistle to Robert Southey, Esq.* (and now I think of it—that I myself have celebrated), ‘ that for so many years called Admiral Burney friend ’ ? They are scattered, like last year’s snow. Some of them are dead—or gone to live at a distance—or pass one another in the street like strangers ; or if they stop to speak, do it coolly, and try to *cut* one another as soon as possible. Some of us have grown rich—others poor. Some have got places under Government—others a *niche* in the *Quarterly Review*. Some of us have dearly earned a name in the world, whilst others remain in their original privacy. . . . I think I must be friends with Lamb again, since he

has written that magnanimous letter to Southey, and told him a piece of his mind!"

"I don't know what it is that attaches me to Hone<sup>1</sup> so much, except that he and I, whenever we meet, sit in judgment on another set of old friends, and 'carve them as a dish fit for the gods!' There was Leigh Hunt, John Scott, Mrs. Novello, whose dark raven locks make a picturesque background to our discourse; Barnes, who is grown fat, and is they say married; Rickman—these had all separated long ago, and their foibles are the common link that holds us together. . . . For my own part, as I once said, I like a friend the better for having faults that one can talk about. 'Then,' said Mrs. Novello, 'you will never cease to be a philanthropist.' . . .

"I sometimes go up to Montagu's, and as often as I do, resolve never to go again. I do not find the old homely welcome. The ghost of friendship meets me at the door, and sits with me all dinner-time. They have got a set of fine notions and new acquaintance. Allusions to past occurrences are thought trivial, nor is it always safe to touch upon more general subjects. Montagu does not begin, as he formerly did every five minutes, 'Fawcett used to say,' &c.

"That topic is something worn. The girls are grown up, and have a thousand accomplishments. I perceive there is a jealousy on both sides. They think I give myself airs, and I fancy the same of them. Every time I am asked 'If I do not think

<sup>1</sup> I recollect my father taking down a volume of Hone's *Table or Year Book* in my study at Barnes, and referring to the compiler or editor almost affectionately as "friend Hone," as if he cherished a remembrance of kindnesses received after his father's death in 1830, and held the set of books one to be cherished for the sake of old associations.

Mr. Washington Irving a very fine writer?' I shall not go again till I receive an invitation for Christmas Day, in company with Mr. Liston."

Montagu lodged in early life in a house in Gloucester Street, Queen's Square, kept by Mrs. Sheppen, whom Hazlitt would sometimes call Skipper.<sup>1</sup> A daughter lived with her. Montagu, a natural son of Lord Sandwich, was made a Commissioner of Bankrupts, and about 1806-7 he married his landlady. It was about 1830 that they first knew Bryan Waller Procter, who married Miss Sheppen, and spent his early married life at Merton. Montagu, when Hazlitt visited him, had removed to 25 Bedford Square, and Procter and his wife resided with him. His granddaughter, Adelaide Anne, was born there in 1825. Hazlitt entertained an unfeigned respect for Mrs. Montagu, and I believe that he thoroughly relished and enjoyed the society of Mrs. Procter, then Miss Sheppen, who inherited a fair portion of her mother's talents and conversational powers.

"I once met Thomas Taylor the Platonist at George Dyer's chambers, in Clifford's Inn, where there was no exclusion of persons or opinions. I remember he showed with some triumph two of his fingers, which had been bent so that he had lost the use of them, in copying out the manuscripts of Proclus and Plotinus in a fair Greek hand! Such are the trophies of human pride! . . . I endeavoured (but in vain) to learn something from the heathen philosopher as to Plato's doctrine of abstract ideas being the foundation of

<sup>1</sup> Miss Lamb, in a letter of 1814, calls her *Skepper*. But in a reference to her in a letter of April 21, 1822, where Hazlitt speaks of putting Procter on his guard against her in connection with some ineligible match between her and another man, "one of the nastiest scrubs in the city of London," she is obviously indicated under the initials *A. Sh.*

particular ones, which I suspect has more truth in it than we moderns are willing to admit.

“We had a pleasant party one evening at Barry Cornwall’s. A young literary bookseller—Ollier—who was present went away delighted with the elegance of the repast, and spoke in raptures of a servant in green livery and a patent lamp. I thought myself that the charm of the evening consisted in some talk about Beaumont and Fletcher and the old poets, in which every one took part or interest; and in a consciousness that we could not pay our host a better compliment than in thus alluding to studies in which he excelled, and in praising authors whom he had imitated with feeling and sweetness.

“It was at Godwin’s that I met with Lamb, with Holcroft, and Coleridge, where they were disputing fiercely which was the best—man as he *was*, or man as he *is to be*. ‘Give me,’ said Lamb, ‘man as *he is not to be!*’ This saying was the beginning of a friendship between us which I believe still continues.

“There is no end of the Burney family or its pretensions. It produces wits, scholars, novelists, musicians, artists, in ‘numbers numberless.’ The name is alone a passport to the Temple of Fame. Those who bear it are free of Parnassus by birth-right. The founder of it was himself an historian and a musician, but more of a courtier and man of the world than either. . . .

“I prefer Leigh Hunt’s conversation almost to any other person’s, because, with a familiar range of subjects, he colours it with a totally new and sparkling light, reflected from his own character. Elia, the grave and witty, says things not to be surpassed in essence; but the manner is more painful, and less a relief to my own thoughts.

“Hunt once said to me—‘I wonder I never

heard you speak upon this subject before, which you seem to have studied a good deal.' I answered, 'Why, we were not reduced to that, that I know of.'

I believe that Hazlitt entertained a sincere regard for Hunt, with the slightest possible jealousy of his personal accomplishments, while for John Hunt, the elder brother, he had, and always expressed, unqualified respect and esteem.

"Lamb has a knack of tasting (or, as he would say, *palating*) the insipid. Leigh Hunt has a trick of turning away from the relishing morsels you put on his plate. I once showed a person (with no small triumph, I confess) a letter of a very flattering description I had received from the celebrated Count Stendhal, dated Rome. He returned it with a smile of indifference, and said he had had a letter from Rome himself the day before from his friend Severn. Godwin pretends I never wrote anything worth a farthing but my answers to 'Vetus.'"

Of Keats my grandfather was a strong admirer, and he thought highly of his *Endymion* and his *Isabella*. As for the persecution with which he was hunted to so early a grave, it was then characterised by Hazlitt as it ever since has been. On his part the author of *Endymion* gave expression to the opinion that there were three absolutely fine things: Wordsworth's *Excursion*, Haydon's pictures, and Hazlitt's depth of taste. But in a letter of 1819, after a perusal of the *Letter to Gifford*, he exclaims: "He hath a demon"—the exact term which he had heard Hazlitt apply to Byron except that he stopped short at the remainder of the sentence—"and this is the next thing to being full of the God." In the May of 1818 Keats met him at Haydon's, and the conversation turned on the Duke of Wellington, for whom Hazlitt had an exceptional dislike. Keats



sent Hazlitt his *Endymion* and his *Poems*, 1820, of which both still survive. In the latter there is the inscription: "To William Hazlitt, Esq. With the Author's sincere respects."

It is to be suspected that the too tardy article in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1820 on Keats was partly from the pen of Hazlitt. In 1825 Macaulay was privately performing similar offices for Jeffrey.

The Reynells and the Lambs occupy the first rank as sources of consolation and encouragement on the one hand, and of intellectual pleasure on the other. Both, besides, presented the characteristic in common of having been loyal to Hazlitt from first to last; Lamb and his sister were living witnesses to the rise of four successions of our name and blood. From the first hour of their friendship to the sad moment when he beheld the committal of his remains to the earth, Lamb was true to the man. There is that far from unnoteworthy passage in Knowles's dedication of his *Alfred* to Hazlitt, 1826, where he alludes to the latter reciting to him from Lamb's writings proofs "of the solid strength that gives sinews to simplicity." Knowles probably had *John Woodvil* before him.

Whatever Hazlitt might in one of his moods say, as he does, for instance, in that long letter to Hunt, 1821, about the dislike of people to him, his circle of friends was, in fact, remarkably wide and varied, but not unnaturally he shewed a preference for those houses, where there was no undue measure of ceremony and constraint. Such were the Lambs, the Reynells, the Hunts, the Haydons, the Humes of Bayswater, the McCreerys, at all of which the doors were open to him. One or two of these were a special Sunday resource; one or two were earmarked for pleasant early suppers.

The friendship of Lamb and his sister, Procter

and the Montagus, the Reynells and the Hunts, with the zest received from the continental tour of 1824-25, had their value and use, without question, in contributing very importantly to strengthen Hazlitt's interest in life latterly; but if I were to name the person whose intimacy, in my own opinion, was of the greatest practical service to him from 1820 to 1830, I should name Patmore, whom I believe that he first met, when he was arranging his Lectures at the Russell Institution in 1812.

There was a striking intellectual disparity between the two, and it was this very inequality which cemented the union—an union which, after all, it is not so difficult to understand. Hazlitt tolerated Patmore, till he liked him; and I cannot help feeling, that I believe Patmore to have entertained at bottom an honest respect and regard for one whose familiar relations with himself were assuredly something not to be looked back upon with regret. Yet between these two the relations were purely personal, and so far differed from the rest.

Montaigne had a cloak which he prized as having belonged to his father. It was on his part a piece of fine and fanciful enthusiasm that when he put it on he felt as if he was wrapping himself up in his father. There was lately preserved in our family just such another, in which Hazlitt went habitually to the play. I have understood that this garment (of blue cloth with a red lining and a cape) was made on the supposed model of one worn by Patmore. Hazlitt found, however, to his surprise and vexation, that although Patmore's passed unquestioned at the doors of the opera, his own, on some technical ground, was refused admittance.

One of the trivial circumstances about Patmore, when he was a comparatively young man, I suppose, was his assumption of the airs of a dandy and his

propriatorship, in addition to a canonical opera-cloak, of walking-out trousers and sitting-down ones; and I retain the fact in my mind, because on one occasion he paid a call in the walking-out variety with calamitous results.

As regards the orthography of Patmore's name, I observe that in the list of contributors to *Blackwood's Magazine*, drawn up about 1825, and printed in Willis's *Current Notes* for October 1851, occurs: "Pattmore, Charles, Pawnbroker, Ludgate Hill." This was, of course, the father of Peter George, and his enrolment must have been a *jeu d'esprit*—a piece of hostile derision. It has been said that the Patmores or Pattmores originally came from Dublin, and that Charles Pattmore had been in the same business there. P. described his father as a goldsmith, and Hazlitt, after his share in the Scott duel, as a *djeweller*.

The Patmores, when my father and I visited them, lived at Mill-hill, near Hendon, and the pawnbroker's widow was still living. It has been my fortune to mingle much with my seniors, and I once surprised and amused some one who was speaking to me of Mr. Coventry Patmore by saying: "Yes, I knew his father and mother, and his grandmother." This gentleman, who, when I first saw him, was a clerk in the British Museum, married a Miss Orme, daughter of Orme the distiller, of Blackfriars. She was the *Angel in the House*. But he lived to enter thrice into the married state, and his third lady, a Romanist, made him independent of literature. When his poems originally appeared, while I was a young man, he was viewed as a disciple of the namby-pamby school by many who reckoned themselves judges.

Concurrently with the association with the *Morning Chronicle*, which had a run of more than a

twelvemonth, when Hazlitt transferred his services to the *Champion* and *Examiner*, there came to him a second piece of good fortune within a brief interval from his settlement in London, in the shape of a place on the staff of the *Edinburgh Review*, which was lifelong and financially lucrative, and other organs of the press on the Liberal side began to exhibit even an eagerness to open their columns to his pen. There was henceforward no apparent danger of want of employment, and the usual experience of literary adventurers was precisely his, that he was apt to find his hands too full. He was in the prime of life. His energy seemed inexhaustible. His studies and thought had led him in turn into several channels or branches of inquiry. He could discuss philosophy with one man, painting with another, the drama with a third, politics with Holcroft, Godwin, Cobbett, or Hone, and his mind was as original as it was versatile. His notions, even where they might be challenged, were his own, and when he had formed them, he never swerved. The pace at which his pen began to move, when he perceived a flow of the tide in his favour, was rather gravely exacting, but he imagined that he saw his reward. Side by side with his contributions to periodical literature he had published in 1817 his *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, and made himself a target for the Tory press, and while this now classical volume was yet fresh in the public mind, he took a step, for which the prior experiment had done good service as an introduction and a test, by arranging to give a new series of Lectures at the Surrey Institution on the English Poets, to be followed by others on the Comic Writers<sup>1</sup> and the Elizabethan Drama. Early reading at home and the preparation of the book on Shakespear went some way in bestowing on the later venture "a pro-

<sup>1</sup> Prototype, if not something more, of Thackeray's *English Humorists*.



perty of easiness," where there was on the part of the lecturer no lack of grit and verve.

Among those of his literary acquaintance who attended this certainly more popular entertainment were Lamb, Keats, John and Thomas Landseer, Ritchie the African explorer, Mrs. W. J. Fox, wife of the member for Oldham, if not her husband, Haydon, the Montagus, the Procters, Patmore, and Talfourd.<sup>1</sup>

A lady, probably Mrs. Montagu or her daughter, who was present, described the appearance of Keats to Monckton Milnes, and spoke of his eyes as blue, whereas they were brown. Mr. Cowden Clarke says that his hair was lightish brown and wavy. In a letter to his two brothers, Keats says that he heard Hazlitt's lectures regularly, and met many whom he knew there. This was under date of February 21, 1818. In another to Severn, of November 1819, he mentions his desire even to make an exertion to attend the lectures, although he felt rather lazy, and the lecture-room was seven miles from the Brawnes at Wentworth Place. He seems to have thought that he would find Severn among the audience. Perhaps he did. Keats was disappointed at the treatment of Chatterton.<sup>2</sup> The origin of the acquaintance between the Fox family and our own was possibly the Unitarian sympathy. Mr. and Mrs. Fox also knew the Reynells and the Hunts.

Leigh Hunt, it appears, did not go—at all events, to the later series in 1818—and the reason, if it was one, transpires in the letter from Hazlitt to Hunt in 1821 on the Shelley business.

<sup>1</sup> See Lamb's *Letters*, by W. C. Hazlitt, 1886, i. 38, for an unique account of the matter and of the audience.

<sup>2</sup> But the lecturer might perhaps have pointed out the obligations of Wordsworth to Burns, whom he (W.) roundly and rather adroitly abused for his indiscretions in private life. Yet precisely where Hazlitt deemed that Wordsworth was characteristically excellent—the investment of trivial things with sublimity—the English poet was indebted to the Scottish one without excelling him.



Such arduous and many-sided exertion might have been borne, while the stress was necessary to consolidate a reputation, and the differences among the Liberal writers themselves might not have operated so seriously, had not in the present instance the venomous political element interposed itself, and so cruelly tended to embitter the mind of Hazlitt, and to shake his naturally robust constitution.

## XIX

### ON HIS OWN WORK.—HIS MSS.—KEY TO SOME OF HIS PRODUCTIONS

“WHAT is it to me that I can write these *Table-Talks*? It is true I can by a reluctant effort rake up a parcel of half-forgotten observations, but they do not float on the surface of my mind, nor stir it with any sense of pleasure, nor even of pride. Others have more property in them than I have: they may reap the benefit, *I* have only had the pain. Otherwise they are to me as if they had never existed, nor should I know that I had ever thought at all, but that I am reminded of it by the strangeness of my appearance and my unfitness for everything else. Look in Coleridge’s face while he is talking. His words are such as might ‘create a soul under the ribs of death.’ His face is a blank. . . . His lips move mechanically.

“I have not much pleasure in writing these Essays, or in reading them afterwards; though I own I now and then meet with a phrase that I like, or a thought that strikes me as a true one. But after I begin them I am only anxious to get to the end of them, which I am not sure I shall do, for I seldom see my way a page or even a sentence beforehand; and when I have as by a miracle escaped, I trouble myself little more about them. I sometimes have to write them twice over; then it is necessary to read the *proof*, to prevent mistakes by the printer; so that by the time they

appear in a tangible shape, and one can con them over with a conscious, sidelong glance to the public approbation, they have lost their gloss and relish.

“I will venture to say that no one but a pedant ever read his own works regularly through. They are not *his*—they are become mere words, waste-paper, and have none of the glow, the creative enthusiasm, the vehemence, and natural spirit with which he wrote them. When we have once committed our thoughts to paper, written them fairly out, and seen that they are right in the printing, if we are in our right wits we have done with them for ever.

“I sometimes try to read an article I have written in some magazine or review—(for when they are bound up in a volume I dread the very sight of them)—but stop after a sentence or two, and never return to the task. I know pretty well what I have to say on the subject, and do not want to go to school to myself. . . .

“I can easily understand how the old divines and controversialists produced their folios. I could write folios myself if I rose early and sat up late at this kind of occupation. But I confess I should be soon tired of it.

“If what I write at present is worth nothing, at least it costs me nothing. But it cost me a good deal twenty years ago. I have added little to my stock since then, and taken little from it. I ‘unfold the book and volume of the brain,’ and transcribe the characters I see there as mechanically as any one might copy the letters in a sampler. I do not say they came there mechanically.

“If I am assured that I never wrote a sentence of common English in my life, how can I know that this is not the case? If I am told at one time that my writings are as heavy as lead, and at

another that they are more light and flimsy than the gossamer—what resource have I but to choose between the two? I could say, if this were the place, what these writings are. ‘Make it the place, and never stand upon punctilio!’

“They are not, then, so properly the works of an author by profession as the thoughts of a metaphysician expressed by a painter.<sup>1</sup> They are subtle and difficult problems translated into hieroglyphics. I thought for several years on the hardest subjects without ever making use of words or images at all; and that has made them come in such throngs and confused heaps, when I burst from that void of abstraction. In proportion to the tenuity to which my ideas had been drawn, and my abstinence from ornament and sensible objects, was the tenaciousness with which actual circumstances and picturesque imagery laid hold of my mind, when I turned my attention to them, and had to look round for illustrations.

“Till I began to paint, or till I became acquainted with the author of *The Ancient Mariner*, I could neither write nor speak. He encouraged me to write a book, which I did according to the original bent of my mind, making it as dry and meagre as I could, so that it fell still-born from the press; and none of those who abuse me for a shallow *catch-penny* writer have so much as heard of it. Yet, let me say, that work contains an important metaphysical discovery, supported by a continuous and severe train of reasoning, nearly as subtle and original as anything in Hume or Berkeley.

“I am not accustomed to speak of myself in this manner, but impudence may provoke modesty to justify itself.

<sup>1</sup> Haydon affirmed that his friend's paintings betrayed a literary source.

“Finding this method did not answer, I despaired for a time: but some trifle I wrote in the *Morning Chronicle* meeting the approbation of the editor and the town, I resolved to turn over a new leaf—to take the public at its word, to master all the tropes and figures I could lay my hands on; and, though I am a plain man, never to appear abroad but in an embroidered dress.

“Still old habits will prevail; and I hardly ever set about a paragraph or a criticism but there was an under-current of thought or some generic distinction on which the whole turned. Having got my clue, I had no difficulty in stringing pearls upon it; and the more recondite the point the more I laboured to bring it out and set it off by a variety of ornaments and allusions. This puzzled the scribes whose business it was to crush me. They could not see the meaning: they would not see the colouring, for it hurt their eyes. One cried out, it was dull; another, that it was too fine by half. My friends took up this last alternative as the most favourable; and since then it has been agreed that I am a florid writer, somewhat flighty and paradoxical. Yet, when I wished to unburthen my mind in the *Edinburgh* by an article on English metaphysics, the editor, who echoes this *florid* charge, said he preferred what I wrote for effect, and was afraid of its being thought heavy.

“I have been sometimes accused of a fondness for paradoxes, but I cannot in my own mind plead guilty to the charge. I do not indeed swear by an opinion because it is old; but neither do I fall in love with every extravagance at first sight, because it is new. I conceive that a thing may have been repeated a thousand times without being a bit more reasonable than it was the first time; and I also conceive that an argument or an observation



may be very just, though it may so happen that it was never stated before. But I do not take it for granted that every prejudice is ill-founded, nor that every paradox is self-evident, merely because it contradicts the vulgar opinion. . . .

“I do not see much use in dwelling on a commonplace, however fashionable or well-established; nor am I very ambitious of starting the most specious novelty, unless I imagine I have reason on my side. Originality implies independence of opinion, but differs as widely from mere singularity as from the tritest truism.

“I have accounted for the flowers—the paradoxes may be accounted for in the same way. All abstract reasoning is in extremes, or only takes up one view of a question, or what is called the principle of the thing; and if you want to give this popularity and effect, you are in danger of running into extravagance and hyperbole.

“I have had to bring out some obscure distinction, or to combat some strong prejudice, and in doing this with all my might may have often overshoot the mark. It was easy to correct the excess of truth afterwards. . . . The personalities I have fallen into have never been gratuitous. If I have sacrificed my friends it has always been to a theory.

“I have been found fault with for repeating myself, and for a narrow range of ideas. To a want of general reading I plead guilty, and am sorry for it; but perhaps if I had read more I should have thought less.

“As to my barrenness of invention, I have at least glanced over a number of subjects—painting, poetry, prose, plays, politics, parliamentary speakers, metaphysical lore, books, men, and things. There is some point, some fancy, some feeling, some taste, shown in treating of these. Which of my conclu-

sions has been reversed? Is it what I said of the Bourbons, ten years ago, that raised the war-whoop against me? Surely all the world are of that opinion now. . . . If the editor of the *Atlas* will do me the favour to look over my *Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, will dip into any essay I ever wrote, and will take a sponge and clear the dust from the face of my *Old Woman*, I hope he will, upon second thoughts, acquit me of an absolute dearth of resources and want of versatility in the direction of my studies.

“I have come to this determination in my own mind, that a work is as good as *manuscript*, and is invested with all the same privileges, till it appears in a second edition—a rule which leaves me at liberty to make what use I please of what I have hitherto written, with the single exception of the CHARACTERS OF SHAKESPEARE’S PLAYS.”

Captain Medwin says: “Hazlitt’s MSS. were the most beautiful I ever saw. He told me there was a rivalry between himself and Leigh Hunt on this score; that he would not allow of an erasure or interlineation; nor in running my eye over the MS. of the *Plain Speaker*, did I perceive a single one.” At the back of the autograph MS. of one of his *Table-Talks*, where he has come to an end—the always to him welcome *Finis*—he has written in his most *majestic* hand, “Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.”

There is an heredity in handwriting. But Hazlitt’s autograph less resembled that of his father than that of James Hazlitt of Shronell, his paternal uncle.

Hazlitt left extracts very commonly to his wife (the first Mrs. H.), who wrote, as has been said, a capital hand, and had an astonishing memory. She could repeat, upon invitation, a good deal of Scott’s poetry, and the same of Byron’s and of Wordsworth’s.

She made a commonplace *Book of Extracts* from poets and prose-writers, and among the former are Charlotte Smith, Lord Lyttelton, Southey, Dr. Johnson, Bowles, Thomson, Akenside; among earlier writers, Cartwright and Quarles, Cotton and Ford, Chapman and Wither. Some of the prose authors to whom she resorted, and of whom her book contains

## SIGNATURES OF JAMES HAZLITT.

1778.

1797.

specimens, are Bacon, Burton, Jeremy Taylor, and Sterne. She was a person, indeed, of extraordinary reading, and what she read, she kept.

Speaking of his *Essay on the Beggar's Opera*, he says: "We have begun this essay on a very coarse sheet of damaged foolscap, and we find that we are going to write it, whether for the sake of contrast or from having a very fine pen, in a remarkably nice hand."

gether, & of which are  
instruments. Now  
our identifying our  
being, of feeling  
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al substance, &  
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31  
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does in... future  
is an in... self  
ratio w... actual-  
ighted up... pulses  
self the... A proof  
of the pow... of imagin  
actual word upon... by <sup>fact</sup> ~~negativity~~  
the very fo... what  
forget the... acts at  
our perso... others  
ality.  
lowever wi... a  
the judgen... He.



He usually, indeed, employed foolscap paper, and wrote in what Leigh Hunt once called a *majestic* hand. He reckoned a page of his MS. as equal to the page of an ordinary octavo printed book, and he therefore knew at any time, to a remarkable nicety, what progress he had made in his work. It was not an uncommon thing when he saw his way clearly, and the subject was well mapped out, to get through fifteen sides of foolscap in a day; but, on the other hand, if he was in indifferent health, or, worse than that, in bad *cue*, he occupied two or three weeks upon a single essay. His MSS. are unequal in respect to alterations and erasures. Some are scored through and through, while in others there is not a blot, and the whole is as clear as copper-plate. The theme, and the mood in which he happened to approach it, and other surroundings, had a great deal to do with this part of the matter.

The folio specimen of his writing here exhibited was not chosen on account of the excellence of the execution, but by reason of the specially interesting circumstances under which it was solicited and offered.

From the copy of Flaxman's *Lectures*, which Hazlitt employed for his article in the *Edinburgh Review*, some of his preparatory marginalia may be worth printing side by side with the paragraphs of the work in which they refer, as shedding a light on his literary methods:—

## FLAXMAN'S TEXT.

## HAZLITT'S NOTES.

- P. 72. "From the style of extreme antiquity in these statues [some bronzes in the Brit. Mus.], we shall find reason to believe they are copied from the above-mentioned statue [by Dædalus]."
- P. 75. "Dipœnis, and Scyllis the Cretan, were celebrated for their marble statues about 776 years before Christ, still retaining much of the ancient manner in the advancing position of the legs," &c.

"Faith."

"Scientific abstract."

our outward organs are but  
this very circumstance of  
deals with our future  
an imaginary self  
ratio with our actual  
light upon the pulses  
of the strongest proof  
of the power of imagin  
that would upon her actual <sup>fact</sup> ~~negativity~~  
the very force with which  
forget that it acts at  
our personal motions  
lity.

own width a  
the judgement." &c.

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## FLAXMAN'S TEXT.

## HAZLITT'S NOTES.

- Pp. 80-1. "But the battles of Marathon and Salamis, which destroyed the Persian army, whose myriads, like locusts," &c.
- P. 83. [He is speaking of Phidias] "the character of whose figures were stiff rather than dignified . . . the folds of drapery parallel, poor, and resembling geometrical lines," &c.
- P. 91. "The Discobolus of Naucides is universally admired for its form and momentary balance."
- P. 99. "From this little island [Rhodes] the Roman conquerors brought away 3000 statues!"
- P. 107. "The writings of Hippocrates and Galen instruct us in the science of anatomy among the Greeks, from the time of Phidias to the age of Antoninus Pius, when sculpture had sensibly declined," &c.
- P. 111. "As a natural and certain consequence of the sculptor's intelligence being formed on the physician's instructions, the system was the simplest and boldest division of parts," &c.
- "A line divides the front of the body from the gullet to the navel. This is intersected at right angles by curve lines," &c.
- Pp. 115-6. "These comparative observations are introduced as a further confirmation that the excellence of the Grecian theory was the real foundation of excellent practice."
- P. 138. "Their view is *downwards*." [The italic is marked by Mr. H.]
- P. 139. "The preparation, secretion, and fermentation of the juices are chemical," &c.
- "But we *must remember* [the italics are the reviewer's] that man, even in the structure of his body," &c.
- P. 155. "The character and actions of these goddesses [the Graces] have given the epithet *graceful* to easy, undulating motion."
- P. 167. "The Roman compositions . . . are the mere paragraphs of military gazettes!" &c.
- "The Rev. Mr. Flaxman."
- "Mem."
- "'Minutes, not hours.'"
- "Mem."
- "Had anatomy declined? Warped bias. Grain in wood."
- "Against evidence."
- "Is not all this visible to the eye?"
- "How?"
- "How so? Their body is downwards."
- "Quackery."
- "Orthodoxy."
- "*Quid pro quo*."
- "Antigallican."

## FLAXMAN'S TEXT.

## HAZLITT'S NOTES.

- P. 179. "The sublime represents all supernatural acts and appearances," &c.
- P. 189. "To these graces of benevolence we owe those lovely groups—the Holy Family of Raphael and Correggio," &c.
- P. 190. "All those monuments of the later Italian school, in which entire figures are mingled with those of low relief," &c.
- P. 193. "Sentiment is the life and soul of fine art! without, it is all a dead letter!" &c.
- "But it [the scaffolding] is the workman's indispensable help in erecting the walls which enclose the apartments, and which may afterwards be enriched with the most splendid ornaments."
- P. 207. "We partake in the culture of their fields, and the abundance of their harvests, and the still, clear evening," &c.
- P. 288. "The study of these [compositions from the great poets of antiquity] will give the young artist the true principles of composition . . . by carefully observing them he will accustom himself to a noble habit of thinking, and consequently choose whatever is beautiful, elegant, and grand, rejecting all that is mean and vulgar——"
- P. 336. "Shall we not say with Dr. Young, in his 'Essay on Composition,' . . . that we are properly the ancients, because these our mental riches are more abundant than have ever been enjoyed before?" &c.

"A gratis dictum."

"The cart before the horse."

"Good."

"Now you speak like a sensible man."

"Great, dry, good sense."

"Pretty."

"Query: what is mean and vulgar?"

"I dare say."

Hazlitt more than once discloses the precise circumstances, under which he wrote a paper. He is speaking of 1820:—

"In that part of the country, where we now write, there are wild woods and banks covered with primroses and hyacinths for miles together, so that you cannot put your foot between, and with a gaudy show empurpling all the ground, and branches loaded with nightingales, whose leaves tremble with their liquid notes: yet the air does not resound, as in



happier climes, with shepherd's pipe or roundelay, nor are the village maids adorned with wreaths of vernal flowers, ready to weave the braided dance, or 'returning with a choral song when evening has gone down.' What is the reason? 'We also are not Arcadians!'"<sup>1</sup>

"I never was in a better place or humour than I am at present for writing on this subject.<sup>2</sup> I have a partridge getting ready for supper, my fire is blazing on the hearth, the air is mild for the season of the year, I have had but a slight fit of indigestion to-day (the only thing that makes me abhor myself). I have three hours good before me, and therefore I will attempt it. It is as well to do it at once as to have to do it for a week to come.

"If the writing on this subject is no easy task, the thing itself is a harder one. It asks a troublesome effort to ensure the admiration of others; it is a still greater one to be satisfied with one's own thoughts. As I look from the window at the wide bare heath before me, and through the misty moonlight see the woods that wave over the top of Winterslow—

'While Heaven's chancel-vault is blind with sleet'—

my mind takes its flight through too long a series of years, supported only by the patience of thought and secret yearnings after truth and good, for me to be at a loss to understand the feeling I intend to write about. . . ."

[In the paper *Whether Genius is conscious of its Powers*, he writes:]

"I am not in the humour to pursue this argument any farther at present, but to write a digression. If

<sup>1</sup> He elsewhere describes the same scene, as it appeared to him in February 1828, and as he remembered it in 1810.

<sup>2</sup> *On Living to Oneself*, written at Winterslow Hut, 18-19 January 1821.

the reader is not already apprised of it, he will please to take notice that I write this at Winterslow. My style there is apt to be redundant and excursive. At other times it may be cramped, dry, abrupt; but here it flows like a river, and overspreads its banks. I have not to seek for thoughts or hunt for images—they come of themselves. I inhale them with the breeze, and the silent groves are vocal with a thousand recollections.

“Here I came fifteen years ago, a willing exile; and as I trod the lengthened greensward by the low woodside, repeated the old line—

‘My mind to me a kingdom is.’

I found it so then, before, and since; and shall I faint now that I have poured out the spirit of that mind to the world, and treated many subjects with truth, with freedom, and power, because I have been followed by one cry of abuse ever since, *for not being a government-tool?*

“Here I returned a few years after to finish some works I had undertaken—doubtful of the event, but determined to do my best—and wrote that character of Millimant, which was once transcribed by fingers fairer than Aurora’s; but no notice was taken of it, because I was not a government-tool, and must be supposed devoid of taste and elegance by all who aspired to these qualities in their own persons.

“Here I sketched my account of that old honest Signor Orlando Friscobaldo, which, with its fine, racy, acrid tone, that old crab-apple Gifford would have relished, or pretended to relish, had I been a government-tool!

“Here too I have written *Table-Talks* without number, and as yet without a falling off, till now they are done, or I should not make this boast. I could swear (were they not mine) the thoughts in

many of them are founded as the rock, free as air, the tone like an Italian picture. What then? Had the style been like polished steel, as firm and as bright, it would have availed me nothing, for I am not a government-tool.

“I had attempted to guide the taste of the English people to the best old English writers; but I had said that English kings did not reign by right divine, and that his present Majesty was descended from an Elector of Hanover in a right line; and no loyal subject would after this look into Webster and Decker, because I had pointed them out.”

“In the field opposite the window where I write this,” he says, “there is a country girl picking stones; in the one next it there are several poor women weeding the blue and red flowers from the corn; farther on are two boys tending a flock of sheep. What do they know or care about what I am writing about them, or ever will—or what would they be the better for it, if they did? . . . And though we have cried our eyes out over the *New Héloïse* a poor shepherd-lad, who hardly knows how to spell his own name, may ‘tell his tale under the hawthorn in the dale,’ and prove a more thriving wooer.”

In another case the scene was different:—

“I look out of my window and see that a shower has just fallen: the fields look green after it, and a rosy cloud hangs over the brow of the hill; a lily expands its petals in the moisture, dressed in its lovely green and white; a shepherd-boy has just brought some pieces of turf, with daisies and grass, for his young mistress to make a bed for her skylark, not doomed to dip his wings in the dappled dawn—my cloudy thoughts draw off—the storm of angry politics has blown over—Mr. Blackwood, I am yours—Mr. Croker, my service to you—Mr. T. Moore, I am alive and well. Really it is

wonderful how little the worse I am for fifteen years' wear and tear. . . ."

Again:—

"There is a spider crawling along the matted floor of the room where I sit (not the one which has been so well allegorized in the admirable *Lines to a Spider*, but another of the same edifying breed). He runs with heedless, hurried haste, he hobbles awkwardly towards me, he stops—he sees the giant shadow before him, and, at a loss whether to retreat or proceed, meditates his huge foe—but as I do not start up and seize upon the straggling caitiff, as he would upon a hapless fly within his toils, he takes heart, and ventures on with mingled cunning, impatience, and fear. As he passes me I lift up the matting to assist his escape, am glad to get rid of the unwelcome intruder, and shudder at the recollection after he has gone. A child, a woman, a clown, or a moralist a century ago, would have crushed the little reptile to death—my philosophy has got beyond that—I bear the creature no ill-will, but still I hate the very sight of it."

And, once more, take this:—

"As I write this, the letter-bell passes: it has a lively, pleasant sound with it, and not only fills the street with its importunate clamour, but rings clear through the length of many half-forgotten years. It strikes upon the ear, it vibrates to the brain, it wakes me from the dream of time, it flings me back upon my first entrance into life, the period of my first coming up to town, when all around was strange, uncertain, adverse . . . and when this sound alone, startling me with the recollection of a letter I had to send to the friends I had lately left, brought me as it were to myself, made me feel that I had links still connecting me with the universe, and gave me hope and patience to persevere. At that loud,

tinkling, interrupted sound, the long line of blue hills near the place where I was brought up waves in the horizon; a golden sunset hovers over them, the dwarf-oaks rustle their red leaves in the evening breeze, and the road from Wem to Shrewsbury, by which I first set out on my journey through life, stares me in the face as plain—but from time and change not less visionary and mysterious than the pictures in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Or if the letter-bell does not lead me a dance into the country, it fixes me in the thick of my town recollections, I know not how long ago. It was a kind of alarm to break off from my work when there happened to be company to dinner, or when I was going to the play. *That* was going to the play, indeed, when I went twice a year, and had not been more than half-a-dozen times in my life. Even the idea that any one else in the house was going was a sort of reflected enjoyment, and conjured up a lively anticipation of the scene. I remember a Miss D——, a maiden lady from Wales (who in her youth was to have been married to an earl), tantalized me greatly in this way, by talking all day of going to see Mrs. Siddons' 'airs and graces' at night in some favourite part; and when the letter-bell announced that the time was approaching, and its last receding sound lingered on my ear, or was lost in silence, how anxious and uneasy I became, lest she and her companion should not be in time to get good places—lest the curtain should draw up before they arrived—and lest I should lose one line or look in the intelligent report, which I should hear the next morning."

I conclude with a notice relative to the essay called *Merry England* written in Italy in December 1824:—

"The English, when they go abroad, do not take away the prejudice against them by their looks.



We seem duller and sadder than we are. As I write this I am sitting in the open air in a beautiful valley, near Vevey: Clarens is on my left, the Dent de Jamant is behind me, the rocks of Meillerie opposite; under my feet is a green bank, enamelled with white and purple flowers, in which a dewdrop here and there still glitters with pearly light—

‘And gaudy butterflies flutter around.’

Intent upon the scene and upon the thoughts that stir within me, I conjure up the cheerful passages of my life, and a crowd of happy images appear before me. No one would see it in my looks—my eyes grow dull and fixed, and I seem rooted to the spot, as all this phantasmagoria passes in review before me, glancing a reflex lustre on the face of the world and nature. But the traces of pleasure, in my case, sink into an absorbent ground of thoughtful melancholy, and require to be brought out by time and circumstances, or (as the critics tell you) by the *varnish* of style!

## XX

### PLEASANT REMINISCENCES OF INNS AND JOURNEYS—EARLY ROMANTIC ADVENTURES

“THE *incognito* of an inn is one of its striking privileges—‘lord of one’s self, uncumbered by a name!’ Oh! it is great to shake off the trammels of the world and of public opinion—to lose our importunate, tormenting, everlasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become a creature of the moment, clear of all ties—to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweetbreads, and to owe nothing but the score of the evening—and no longer seeking for applause and meeting with contempt, to be known by no other title than *the Gentleman in the Parlour!*”

“I have certainly spent some enviable hours at inns—sometimes when I have been left entirely to myself, and have tried to solve some metaphysical problem; as once at Witham Common, where I found out the proof that likeness is not a case of the association of ideas—at other times, when there have been pictures in the room, as at St. Neots (I think it was), where I first met with Gribelin’s engravings of the Cartoons, into which I entered at once; and at a little inn on the borders of Wales, where there happened to be hanging some of Westall’s drawings, which I compared triumphantly (for a theory that I had, not for the admired artist) with the figure of a girl who had ferried me over the Severn, standing up in the boat between me and the twilight—at other

times I might mention luxuriating in books, with a peculiar interest in this way, as I remember sitting up half the night to read *Paul and Virginia*, which I picked up at an inn at Bridgewater, after being drenched in the rain all day; and at the same place I got through two volumes of Madame D'Arblay's *Camilla*. It was on the 10th of April 1798, that I sat down to a volume of the *New Héloïse*, at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken. The letter I chose was that in which St. Preux describes his feelings as he first caught a glimpse from the heights of the Jura of the Pays de Vaud, which I had brought with me as a *bonne bouche* to crown the evening with. It was my birthday, and I had for the first time come from a place in the neighbourhood to visit this delightful spot.<sup>1</sup> . . . How proud, how glad I was to walk along the high road that overlooks the delicious prospect, repeating the lines from Mr. Coleridge's poems. . . . I would return some time or other to this enchanted spot, but I would return to it alone. What other self could I find to share that influx of thoughts, of regret, and delight, the fragments of which I could hardly conjure up to myself? . . . I could stand on some tall rock and overlook the precipice of years that separates me from what I then was. I was at that time going shortly to visit the poet I have above named.

“The best part of our lives we pass in counting on what is to come, or in fancying what may have happened, in real or fictitious story, to others. I have

<sup>1</sup> A passage found elsewhere seems to belong to the same experience, where he says: “I once sat on a sunny bank in a field, in which the green blades of corn waved in the fitful northern breeze, and read the letter in the *New Héloïse* in which St. Preux describes the Pays de Vaud. I never felt what Shakspeare calls my ‘glassy essence’ so much as then. My thoughts were pure and free. . . . I wished I could have written such a letter.”

had more pleasure in reading the adventures of a novel (and perhaps changing situations with the hero) than I ever had in my own. I do not think any one can feel much happier—a greater degree of heart's ease—than I used to feel in reading *Tristram Shandy* and *Peregrine Pickle*, and *Tom Jones*, and the *Tatler*, and *Gil Blas of Santillane*, and *Werter*, and *Boccaccio*. It was some years after that I read the last, but his tales—

‘Dallied with the innocence of love,  
Like the old time.’

The story of Federigo Alberigi<sup>1</sup> affected me as if it had been my own case; and I saw his hawk upon her perch, in the clear, cold air, and ‘how fat and fair a bird she was,’ as plain as ever I saw a picture of Titian's; and felt that I should have served her up, as he did, as a banquet for his mistress, who came to visit him at his own poor farm. . . . Mrs. Inchbald was always a great favourite with me. There is the true soul of woman breathing from what she writes, as much as if you heard her voice. It is as if Venus had written books. I first read her *Simple Story* (of all places in the world) at Mr. ——'s. No matter where it was, for it transported me out of myself. I recollect walking out to escape from one of the tenderest parts, in order to return to it again with double relish. An old crazy hand organ was playing *Robin Adair*, a summer shower dropped manna on my head, and slaked my feverish thirst of happiness. Her heroine, Miss Milner, was at my side. My dream has since been verified—how like it was to the reality!

“The last time I tasted the luxury of an inn in its full perfection was one day after a sultry day's walk

<sup>1</sup> See the letter of 1803 to Miss Stoddart.

in summer between Farnham and Alton: I was fairly tired out; I walked into an inn-yard (I think at the latter place); I was shown by the waiter to what looked at first like common outhouses at the other end of it, but they turned out to be a suite of rooms, probably a hundred years old. The one I entered opened into an old-fashioned garden, embellished with beds of larkspur and a leaden Mercury; it was wainscoted, and there was a grave-looking, dark-coloured portrait of Charles II. hanging up on the tiled chimney-piece. I had *Love for Love* in my pocket, and began to read. Coffee was brought in in a silver coffee-pot; the cream, the bread and butter, everything was excellent, and the flavour of Congreve's style prevailed over all.

"I prolonged the entertainment till a late hour, and relished this divine comedy better even than when I used to see it played by Miss Mellon as *Miss Prue*, Bob Palmer as *Tattle*, and Bannister as honest *Ben*. This circumstance happened just five years ago, and it seems like yesterday. If I count my life so by lustres, it will soon glide away; yet I shall not have to repine, if, while it lasts, it is enriched with a few such recollections!

"One of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey, but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room, but out of doors nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone. . . . I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country, I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticising hedgerows and black cattle. I go out of town to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room and fewer incumbrances. . . . Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the



green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking. It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sun-burnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore.

“Then long-forgotten things, like ‘sunken wrack and sunless treasures,’ burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull commonplaces, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, argument, and analysis better than I do; but I sometimes had rather be without them. . . . I like to be either entirely to myself or entirely at the disposal of others; to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary. . . . I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy. . . . I grant there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey; and that is, what we shall have for supper when we get to an inn at night.

“The sight of the setting sun does not affect me so much from the beauty of the object itself, as from the glory kindled through the glowing skies, the rich broken columns of light, or the dying streaks of day, as that it indistinctly recalls to me numberless thoughts and feelings with which, through many a year and season, I have watched his bright descent in the warm summer evenings, or beheld him struggling to cast a ‘farewell sweet’ through the thick clouds of winter. I love to see the trees first covered with leaves in the spring, the primroses peeping out from some sheltered

bank, and the innocent lambs running races on the soft green turf; because, at that birth-time of nature, I have always felt sweet hopes and happy wishes—which have not been fulfilled.

“I remember, when I was abroad, the trees, and grass, and wet leaves, rustling in the walks of the Tuileries, seemed to be as much English, to be as much the same trees and grass that I had always been used to—as the sun shining over my head was the same sun which I saw in England; the faces only were foreign to me.

“I remember once strolling along the margin of a stream, skirted with willows and plashy sedges, in one of those low sheltered valleys on Salisbury Plain, where the monks of former ages had planted chapels and built hermits' cells. There was a little parish church near, but tall elms and quivering alders hid it from my sight; when all of a sudden, I was startled by the sound of the full organ pealing on the ear, accompanied by rustic voices, and the willing choir of village maids and children.

“I remember finding Dr. Chalmers' *Sermons on Astronomy* in the orchard at Burford Bridge, near Boxhill, and passing a whole and very delightful morning in reading them, without quitting the shade of an apple-tree.

“How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at the approach of nightfall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom!

“I once took a party<sup>1</sup> to Oxford with no mean

<sup>1</sup> Lamb and his sister in 1810. He likened Lamb to “the most capricious poet Ovid among the Goths,” a saying borrowed from *As You Like It*, and said that in the quadrangle he (Lamb) “walked gowned.” There is a very funny account of the little hunchbacked tailor of Potterne, in Wiltshire, who, on their return journey through Oxford, made a pair of breeches for Lamb of Lincoln green instead of brown or snuff-coloured, as ordered, and of Lamb riding in triumph in a

*éclat*; showed them that seat of the muses at a distance—

‘With glistening spires and pinnacles adorn’d;’

descanted on the learned air that breathes from the grassy quadrangles and stone walls of halls and colleges, was at home in the Bodleian, and at Blenheim quite superseded the powdered Ciceroni that attended us, and that pointed in vain with his wand to commonplace beauties in matchless pictures.

“I remember being much amused with meeting, on a hot dusty day, between Blenheim and Oxford some strolling Italians with a troop of dancing dogs, and a monkey in *costume* mounted on the back of one of them. He rode *en cavalier*, and kept his countenance with great gravity and decorum, and turned round with a certain look of surprise and resentment that I, a foot passenger, should seem to question his right to go on horseback. This seemed to me a fine piece of practical satire in the manner of Swift.

“After a certain period we live only in the past. Give me back one single evening at Boxhill, after a stroll in the deep-empurpled woods, before Bonaparte was yet beaten, ‘with wine of Attic taste,’ when wit, beauty, friendship, presided at the board! But no! Neither the time nor friends that are fled can be recalled.

“I have made this capital mistake all my life, in imagining that those objects which lay open to all, and excited an interest merely from the *idea* of them, spoke a common language to all; and that

cross-country caravan through Newbury, and entering Oxford, thinking more of the jest than of his personal dignity. To Lamb, however, Oxford was more or less familiar; he had visited Gutch there in 1800: but to his sister it was new ground. Hazlitt was there in 1803.

nature was a kind of universal home, where all ages, sexes, classes, meet. Not so.

“The vital air, the sky, the woods, the streams—all these go for nothing, except with a favoured pen. . . . I can understand the Irish character better than the Scotch. I hate the formal crust of circumstance and the mechanism of society. I have been recommended indeed to settle down into some respectable profession for life:—

‘Ah! why so soon the blossom tear?  
I am “in no haste to be venerable.”’

“One of the most delightful parts of my life was one fine summer, when I used to walk out of an evening to catch the last light of the sun, gemming the green slopes or russet lawns, and gilding tower or tree, while the blue sky gradually turning to purple or gold, or skirted with dusky grey, hung its broad marble pavement over all, as we see it in the great master of Italian landscapes.”<sup>1</sup>

Of Hazlitt’s early romantic adventures we hear of at least three: Miss Railton of Liverpool, Miss Sarah Shepherd of Gateacre, and Miss Windham of Norman Court, near Salisbury. The last has been described by Hazlitt as “the most beautiful woman he ever knew,” and he once replied to the objection offered by another lady on general grounds without reference to Miss Windham, who was slightly marked with the smallpox, that he looked at the question “with the eye of a painter,” and his voice dropped to a whisper as he pronounced the words Miss Windham. Hers seems to have been the image which he speaks of having haunted him through all his later life. He describes her as “being all grace.” That Miss Windham’s father did not entertain any serious thought,

<sup>1</sup> Was this the summer of 1809 or 1810, when the Lambs were successively at Winterslow?

even if he was approached, on the subject, appears to be shown by the fact that the gentleman who married the object of his admiration once, perhaps feeling that my grandfather was uncomfortably lodged at Winterslow Hut, offered to place rooms at Norman Court at his disposal when he chose to be in the country. He declined the suggestion, but has apostrophised what was evidently during the rest of his life an emotional and distracting reminiscence, still farther intensified by later experiences:—

“Ye woods, that crown the clear lone brow of Norman Court, why do I revisit ye so oft, and feel a soothing consciousness of your presence, but that your high tops, waving in the wind, recall to me the hours and years that are for ever fled; that ye renew in ceaseless murmurs the story of long-cherished hopes and bitter disappointment; that in your solitudes and tangled wilds I can wander and lose myself, as I wander on and am lost in the solitude of my own heart; and that, as your rustling branches give the loud blast to the waste below, borne on the thoughts of other years, I can look down with patient anguish at the cheerless desolation which I feel within! Without that face, pale as the primrose, with hyacinthine locks, for ever shunning and for ever haunting me, mocking my waking thoughts as in a dream; without that smile, which my heart could never turn to scorn; without those eyes, dark with their own lustre, still bent on mine, and drawing the soul into their liquid mazes like a sea of love; without that name, trembling in fancy’s ear; without that form, gliding before me like Oread or Dryad in fabled groves, what should I do? how pass away the listless, leaden-footed hours? Then wave, wave on, ye woods of Tuderley, and lift your high tops in the air; my sighs and vows, uttered by your mystic voice,



breathe into me my former being, and enable me to bear the thing I am. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The three attachments above indicated were chronologically not even closely consecutive. The two former belonged to early Liverpool days, before Hazlitt knew the Stoddarts; the Windham affair was not only posterior to his marriage in 1808, but was the outcome of his adoption of Winterslow Hut after 1812 as an occasional residence. Dora Wordsworth has been named as a fourth.

I apprehend that to the years (1798-1804) when he was in a condition of uncertainty as to his career we have to ascribe a small incident—only one, perchance among many—and who is exempt from these experiences?—noticed in the most improbable of places, the *Reply to Malthus*, 1807, where it is introduced as a reminiscence, though possibly not a very remote one. "I never fell in love but once," he tells us, "and then it was with a girl who always wore her handkerchief pinned tight round her neck, with a fair face, gentle eyes, a soft smile, and cool auburn locks. It was not a raging heat, a fever in the veins; but it was like a vision, a dream-like thought of childhood, an everlasting hope, a distant joy, a heaven, a world that might be. The dream is still left, and sometimes comes confusedly over me, in solitude and silence, and mingled with the softness of the sky, and veils my eye from mortal grossness."

His brain was as clear as crystal, but not, as crystal, cold. His was a mind of intense and vast sensibilities, susceptible of the most violent nervous fluctuations; it opened itself willingly to pleasurable

<sup>1</sup> It is a theme for speculation whether, in his mention somewhere of characters traced "by fingers fairer than Aurora's," allusion is intended to Miss Windham of Norman Court or to the Aurora of his favourite *Gil Blas*.

impressions. It was of an Epicurean complexion. The instincts and impulses of the flesh had their share in governing it, and perhaps it was too large a share. Yet this immediate episode has almost the air of such another subdued flame as that of Lamb for the maiden of whom he says :—

“ She’s sweet fifteen, I’m one year more.”

There was the young girl, too, who once rowed him across the Severn. Cannot some legend be woven about her ?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I deem myself almost entitled to challenge the biographers of some of my grandfather’s contemporaries to take a solemn affidavit that these other gentlemen never had *their bonnes fortunes*. Were Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb, nay Keats, quite exempt from similar frailties ?

## XXI

### DEATH OF MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER — CHARACTER AND PARTICULARS OF HIM

MY grandfather was at Winterslow Hut when the news came to him of the death of the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt, at Crediton, in Devonshire. The latter had removed from Wem to Addlestone, in Surrey, in 1813, from Addlestone<sup>1</sup> to Bath (1817), where he met the Emmetts, and where he was within reach of his old Marshfield friends, and finally to Crediton, where he was to yield up his life. There he spent, in humble retirement and obscure monotony, the last few years of a long and honourable career. There had been scarcely anything in the whole weary time—not weary, perhaps, however, to him—to vary the sameness and dulness of a village existence, beyond a correspondence with congenial spirits, or steadfast members of former flocks, on topics of common interest and of matters of current public concern even outside the Church. A friend now and then stayed at the house; Mrs. Hazlitt visited them sometimes. But no Samuel Taylor Coleridge dined on mutton and turnips under that roof before or after 1798, and it merits consideration, that the impetus received by Hazlitt from that source originated in circumstances and surroundings strangely foreign to the local atmosphere.

<sup>1</sup> The small stone detached house facing the entrance to Addlestone Park (now no more) approached by a gate fixed in the wall, which conceals the basement from the street, has been pointed out as the former residence of my ancestor. It is a two-storied building with a garden in the rear.

He lost his father on the 16th July 1820; the venerable old man was in the eighty-fourth year of his age. It was not till Mrs. Hazlitt, my grandmother, arrived at Crediton on the night of the 27th, that William's address could be ascertained, so that he might be apprised of the circumstances. The widow was too weak and poorly to write, and his sister Peggy wrote for her.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Hazlitt, when he first settled at Crediton, seems to have occupied an old-fashioned house called Winswood at a rent of £24 a year; but he subsequently removed to one near the church, which was traditionally believed to have once formed part of the old episcopal palace, and a letter of his wife assignable to 1821 is dated "Palace."<sup>2</sup> There were in 1867 two or three people who recollected him in his infirm state; but he appears merely to have resided at Crediton during his last years. It is to be collected from a letter of Dr. Kippis to him that the income of Mr. Hazlitt was derived from an annual grant out of the Presbyterian Fund, occasionally supplemented by special allowances and doubtless by donations from members of the flock formerly under his charge. In the *Examiner* newspaper of August 1, 1820, he is signalised as "a man who through his whole life was a friend to truth and liberty."

The Rev. W. Hazlitt and his wife lie buried in the same grave in Crediton churchyard. On the headstone is the following inscription: "Beneath this stone lie the remains of the late Rev<sup>d</sup>. Will<sup>m</sup>. Hazlitt, Died July 16<sup>th</sup> 1820, in the 84<sup>th</sup> year of his age. Also Grace, Wife of the above, died June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1837, aged 90."

<sup>1</sup> See Correspondence, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> The site of the ancient palace of the see of Devonshire and Cornwall. It is now divided into two private residences. There are two fragments of the old building, one outside, the other in the interior.

Sufficient evidence has survived to furnish some slight key to his philanthropic character and catholic interest in public affairs and literary history; there is proof that he kept himself from his successive abodes at a distance from London in touch with men of the time; we gain tidings of his interest in such enterprises as Griffiths' *Monthly Review* and its management, of which he may have heard through Dr. Kippis or through Mr. Viny's friend, Benjamin Franklin, who employed Griffiths as a publisher of one of his works;<sup>1</sup> and it may not be inopportune to add that he was by no means deficient in a taste for those theatrical amusements and distractions with



Seal used by Rev. W. Hazlitt (1787-1820).

which his name in the next generation was so intimately bound up; for his son incidentally mentions the minister's liking for Mrs. Pritchard's style—Hannah Pritchard, a great favourite with the playgoers of the age immediately prior to Hazlitt, and of whom the minister himself gained his knowledge as a young man before his marriage, since Mrs. Pritchard died in 1768—the Pritchard of Churchill's *Rosciad*.

His visits to the printsellers in 1787 in company with his daughter, after their return to England from America, I have already noticed. He was in more senses than one the father of his son, who notes

<sup>1</sup> *An Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania*, 1759.



that he owed his first initiation into the beauties of *Tom Jones* to a copy at Wem. Yet his diversion from the Church almost seems to have insensibly bred a lukewarmth between his father and himself; there is no hint of a meeting between the two posterior to 1798; and the latest letter to the minister from him dated as far back as 1806.

Some tales have been handed down of that household at Crediton: of the old gentleman being once nearly dragged into the water by a swan; of his love for snuff and barley-sugar, and of his keeping both in the same leather-lined waistcoat-pocket; of his occasional playfulness and his wife's little jealousies; of her recovery of her sight, so that she could thread Peggy's needles, and of her second dentition; of Peggy's sexagenarian girlhood; and of their boarder, Miss Emmett.

It is Hazlitt who now speaks:—

“I did not see my father after he was dead; but I saw death shake him by the palsied hand, and stare him in the face. He made as good an end as Falstaff, though different, as became him. After repeating the name of his Redeemer often, he took my mother's hand, and looking up, put it in my sister's, and so expired. There was a something graceful and gracious in his nature, which showed itself in his last act. . . . I have never seen death but once, and that was in an infant.<sup>1</sup> It is years ago. The look was calm and placid, and the face was fair and firm. It was as if a waxen image had been laid out in the coffin and strewed with innocent flowers. It was not like death, but more like an image of life! No breath moved the lips, no pulse

<sup>1</sup> His son John, born 28th November 1815, who died on the following 19th June. His father cut off a lock of his hair and wrapped it in a piece of paper. He wrote upon it: “My dear little John's hair, cut off the day he died.”

stirred, no sight or sound would enter those eyes or ears more. While I looked at it I saw no pain was there; it seemed to smile at the short pang of life which was over: but I could not bear the coffin-lid to be closed—it seemed to stifle me.

“My father was one of those who mistook his talent after all. He used to be very much dissatisfied that I preferred his Letters to his Sermons. The last were forced and dry; the first came naturally from him. For ease, half-plays on words, and a supine, monkish, indolent pleasantry, I have never seen them equalled.

“For myself, I have never had a watch, nor any other mode of keeping time in my possession, nor ever wish to learn how time goes. It is a sign I have little to do, few avocations, few engagements. When I am in town, I can see the clock; and when I am in the country, I can listen to the silence. What I like best is to lie whole mornings on a sunny bank on Salisbury Plain without any object before me, neither knowing nor caring how time passes. . . . Perhaps some such thoughts as I have last set down float before me like motes before my half-shut eyes, or some vivid image of the past by forcible contrast rushes by me. . . . Somewhat of this idle humour I inherit from my father, though he had not the same freedom from *ennui*, for he was not a metaphysician; and there were stops and vacant intervals which he did not know how to fill up. He used in these cases, and as an obvious resource, carefully to wind up his watch at night, and with lack-lustre eye more than once in the course of the day look to see what o'clock it was. Yet he had nothing else in his character in common with the elder Mr. Shandy.

“One of my first attempts was a picture of my father, who was then in a green old age, with

strongly marked features, and scarred with the small-pox. I drew it with a broad light crossing the face, looking down, with spectacles on, reading. The book was *Shaftesbury's Characteristics*, in a fine old binding, with Gribelin's etchings. My father would as lieve it had been any other book; but for him to read was to be content,—was 'riches fineless.' The sketch promised well; and I set to work to finish it, determined to spare no time nor pains. . . . He had some pride in the artist, though he would rather I should have written a sermon than have painted like Rembrandt or like Raphael. Those winter days, with the gleams of sunshine coming through the chapel-windows, and cheered by the notes of the robin-redbreast in our garden [at Wem] . . . were among the happiest of my life. I used regularly to set my work in the chair, to look at it through the long evenings; and many a time did I return to take leave of it before I could go to bed at night. I remember sending it with a throbbing heart to the Exhibition, and seeing it hung up there by the side of the Honourable Mr. Skeffington (now Sir George). . . . I think, but I'm not sure, that I finished this portrait (or another afterwards) on the same day that the news of the battle of Austerlitz came.<sup>1</sup> I walked out in the afternoon; and as I returned, saw the sun set over a poor man's cottage with other thoughts and feelings than I shall ever have again.<sup>2</sup> The picture is left; the table, the chair, the window where I learned to construe Livy, the chapel where my father preached, remain where they were; but he himself is gone to rest, full of years, of faith, of

<sup>1</sup> In December 1805.

<sup>2</sup> It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1806. The varnish employed in this case and in general use by artists at that time, including Sir Joshua, from whom the Hazlitts may have adopted it, has cracked and irreparably spoiled the surface.

hope, and charity. A shrewd man said of my father, that he would not send a son of his to school to him on any account, for that by teaching him to speak the truth he would disqualify him from getting his living in the world.

“I am sure, my father had as little vanity for the art as most persons; yet when he had sat to me a few times . . . he grew evidently uneasy when it was a fine day, that is, when the sun shone into the room, so that we could not paint; and when it became cloudy, began to bustle about, and ask me if I was not getting ready. Poor old room! Does the sun still shine into thee, or does Hope fling its colours around thy walls, gaudier than the rainbow? No, never while thy oak-panels endure,<sup>1</sup> will they enclose such fine movements of the brain as passed through mine, when the first hues of nature gleamed from the canvas, and my heart silently breathed the names of Rembrandt and Correggio! Between my father’s love of sitting and mine of painting, we hit upon a tolerable likeness at last; but the picture is cracked and gone, and *megilp* (the bane of the English school) has destroyed as fine an old Nonconformist head as one could hope to see in these degenerate times.

“A<sup>2</sup> dissenting minister is a character not so easily to be dispensed with, and whose place cannot well be supplied. It is the fault of sectarianism that it tends to scepticism. . . . It is a pity that this character has worn itself out, that that pulse of thought and feeling has ceased almost to beat in the heart of a nation. . . . But we have known some such in happier days, who had been brought up and bred from youth to age in the one constant

<sup>1</sup> They have long since been painted over.

<sup>2</sup> *Yellow Dwarf*, January 10, 1818. The Rev. William Hazlitt sat for the portrait.

belief of God and of his Christ, and who thought all other things but dross compared with the glory hereafter to be revealed. Their youthful hopes and vanity had been mortified in them, even in their boyish days, by the neglect and supercilious regards of the world; and they turned to look into their own minds for something else to build their hopes and confidence upon. They were true priests. They set up an image in their own minds—it was truth: they worshipped an idol there—it was justice. They looked on man as their brother, and only bowed the knee to the Highest. Separate from the world, they walked humbly with their God, and lived in thought with those who had borne testimony of a good conscience with the spirits of just men in all ages. They saw Moses when he slew the Egyptian, and the prophets who overturned the brazen images, and those who were stoned and sawn asunder. They were with Daniel in the lion's den, and with the three children who passed through the fiery furnace, Meshech, Shadrach, and Abednego; they did not crucify Christ twice over, or deny him in their hearts, with St. Peter; the *Book of Martyrs* was open to them; they read the story of William Tell,<sup>1</sup> of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, and the old one-eyed Zisca; they had Neale's *History of the Puritans* by heart, and Calamy's *Account of the Two Thousand Ejected Ministers*, and gave it to their children to read, with the pictures of the polemical Baxter, the silver-tongued Bates, the mild-looking Calamy, and old honest Howe; they believed in Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*; they were deep-read in the works of the *Frates Poloni*, Pripscavius, Crellius, Cracovius, who sought out truth in texts of Scripture, and grew blind over

<sup>1</sup> Apparently a slip for William Tyndale, although Tyndale was a much later man.



Hebrew points; their aspiration after liberty was a sigh uttered from the towers, 'time-rent,' of the Holy Inquisition; and their zeal for religious toleration was kindled at the fires of Smithfield. Their sympathy was not with the oppressors, but the oppressed. They cherished in their thoughts—and wished to transmit to their posterity—those rights and privileges for asserting which their ancestors had bled on scaffolds, or had pined in dungeons or in foreign climes. Their creed, too, was 'Glory to God, peace on earth, good-will to man.' This creed, since profaned and rendered vile, they kept fast through good report and evil report. This belief they had, that looks at something out of itself, fixed as the stars, deep as the firmament; that makes of its own heart an altar to truth, a place of worship for what is right, at which it does reverence with praise and prayer like a holy thing, apart and content; and feels that the greatest being in the universe is always near it, and that all things work together for the good of his creatures under his guiding hand. This covenant they kept, as the stars keep their courses; this principle they stuck by, for want of knowing better, as it sticks by them to the last. It grew with their growth, it does not wither in their decay. It lives when the almond-tree flourishes, and is not bowed down with the tottering knees. It glimmers with the last feeble eyesight, smiles in the faded cheek like infancy, and lights a path before them to the grave! This is better than the life of a whirligig court poet.

"I can never forget or describe the feeling with which not only their appearance, but the names of the *Fratres Poloni*<sup>1</sup> inspired me. The gravity of the contents seemed in proportion to the weight

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of the volumes; the importance of the subjects increased with my ignorance of them. The trivialness of the remarks, if ever I looked into them, the repetitions, the monotony, only gave a greater solemnity to the whole, as the slowness and minuteness of the evidence adds to the impressiveness of a judicial proceeding. I knew that the authors had devoted their whole lives to the production of these works, carefully abstaining from the introduction of anything amusing or lively or interesting. In the folio volumes there was not one sally of wit, one striking reflection. Such was the notion I then had of this learned lumber; yet I would rather have this feeling again for one half-hour than be possessed of all the acuteness of Bayle or the wit of Voltaire!

“For myself, I should like to browse on folios, and have to deal chiefly with authors that I have scarcely strength to lift, that are as solid as they are heavy, and if dull, are full of matter. It is delightful to repose on the wisdom of the ancients; to have some great name at hand, besides one’s own initials always staring one in the face; to travel out of one’s self into the Chaldee, Hebrew, and Egyptian characters; to have the palm-trees waving mystically in the margin of the page, and the camels moving slowly on in the distance of three thousand years.”<sup>1</sup>

But he elsewhere makes the avowal that such works as the *Tatler* formed a valuable leaven and relief.

Although Hazlitt at an early age had undergone something like the martyrdom of a prodigious mental transfiguration, he never completely outgrew the lines of his paternal culture, and in one of his maturest and noblest effusions—in his sketch of the origin of the Elizabethan Drama—eloquently vindi-

<sup>1</sup> In the account of the visit of Coleridge to Wem in 1798, there is more about the good old minister.

cated the influence of the Bible on the revival of learning in England ;<sup>1</sup> and it seems to me, although he puts the notion into the mouth of Lamb, a farther token of his own reverential loyalty to the old Shropshire home and his noble father, where, at the conclusion of an eclectic account of one of the Wednesdays, he says that, if Shakespear could have entered the room, every one would have risen to meet him, but that if Jesus Christ had appeared, they would have all fallen down and tried to kiss the hem of his garment. The cast of thought with which he had been so familiar at Wem was renewed by the then fresh tidings of his father's descent to the grave, full alike of years and faith. Nor are we to forget that in several places among his latest writings he takes pains to allude with respect, if not with sympathy, to the doctrines of the Unitarians. He says :<sup>2</sup> "The Test and Corporation Acts were repealed the other day. How would my father have rejoiced, if this had happened in his time, and in concert with his old friends Dr. Price, Dr. Priestley, and others !"

To the last hour of his life my grandfather preserved his reverential affection for his parents ; but the artist-brother was, after a certain age, the tutelary genius whenever he stayed in London, and the directing and controlling agency ; and it is in the circle which John Hazlitt had drawn round him in Rathbone Place that we have to seek the origin of the secession from the Unitarian ministry.

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, v. 182-84.

<sup>2</sup> "Project for a New Theory of Civil and Criminal Legislation" (as recast in 1828), *Works*, xii. 405.



## XXII

### LAMB'S WEDNESDAYS—THE SOUTHAMPTON ARMS

LAMB'S Wednesdays are named in a letter from him to Manning of December 5, 1806, as a new institution. The day was subsequently changed to Thursdays, as appears from a letter to Hazlitt of 1826. My grandfather appears to have borne quite his share of the conversation and argument, judging from those passages which he has preserved. Harriet Hazlitt, daughter of the miniature-painter, told me that she had attended some of these Wednesdays—almost the only lady who did, save Miss Lamb. The Menenius quoted just at the end of the paper dealing with a Wednesday is the Menenius Agrippa in *Coriolanus*. Hazlitt says:—

“Coleridge was riding the high German horse, and demonstrating the *Categories of the Transcendental Philosophy* to the author of the *Road to Ruin*, who insisted on his knowledge of German and German metaphysics, having read the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the original. ‘My dear Mr. Holcroft,’ said Coleridge, in a tone of infinitely provoking conciliation, ‘you really put me in mind of a sweet pretty German girl, about fifteen, that I met with in the Hartz Forest in Germany—and who one day, as I was reading the *Limits of the Knowable and the Unknowable*, the profoundest of all his works, with great attention, came behind my chair, and leaning over, said, “What, you read Kant?

Why, I that am a German born, don't understand him!" This was too much to bear, and Holcroft, starting up, called out in no measured tone, 'Mr. Coleridge, you are the most eloquent man I ever met with, and the most troublesome with your eloquence.' Phillips held the cribbage-peg, that was to mark him game, suspended in his hand; and the whist table was silent for a moment. I saw Holcroft downstairs, and on coming to the landing-place in Mitre Court, he stopped me to observe that he thought Mr. Coleridge a very clever man, with a great command of language, but that he feared he did not always affix very precise ideas to the words he used. After he has gone, we had our laugh out, and went on with the argument on the nature of Reason, the Imagination, and the Will. . . . It would make a supplement to the *Biographia Literaria* in a volume and a half octavo."

Ayrton had taken exception to the admittance of Chaucer among those persons one would wish to have seen, and brought forward grounds which dissatisfied Hazlitt, who remarks:—

"I was vexed at this superficial gloss, pertinaciously reducing everything to its own trite level, and asked 'if he did not think it would be worth while to scan the eye that had first greeted the Muse in that dim twilight and early dawn of English literature; to see the head round which the visions of fancy must have played like gleams of inspiration or a sudden glory; to watch those lips that 'lisped in numbers, for the numbers came'—as by a miracle, or as if the dumb should speak? Nor was it alone that he had been the first to tune his native tongue (however imperfectly to modern ears); but he was himself a noble, manly character, standing before his age and striving to advance it; a pleasant humourist withal, who has not only handed down to us the

living manners of his time, but had, no doubt, store of curious and quaint devices, and would make as hearty a companion as Mine Host of the Tabard. His interview with Petrarch is fraught with interest. Yet I would rather have seen Chaucer in company with the author of the *Decameron*, and have heard them exchange their best stories together,—‘The Squire’s Tale’ against ‘The Story of the Falcon,’ ‘The Wife of Bath’s Prologue’ against the ‘Adventures of Friar Albert.’ How fine to see the high mysterious brow which learning then wore, relieved by the gay, familiar tone of men of the world, and by the courtesies of genius! Surely, the thoughts and feelings which passed through the minds of these great revivers of learning, these Cadmuses who sowed the teeth of letters, must have stamped an expression on their features, as different from the moderns as their books, and well worth the perusal.

“ ‘Dante,’ I continued, ‘is as interesting a person as his own Ugolino, one whose lineaments curiosity would as eagerly devour in order to penetrate his spirit, and the only one of the Italian poets I should care much to see. There is a fine portrait of Ariosto by no less a hand than Titian’s: light, Moorish, spirited, but not answering our idea. The same artist’s large colossal profile of Peter Aretine is the only likeness of the kind that has the effect of conversing with “the mighty dead,” and this is truly spectral, ghastly, necromantic.’

“ Lamb put it to me if I should like to see Spenser as well as Chaucer; and I answered without hesitation, ‘No; for that his beauties were ideal, visionary; not palpable or personal, and therefore connected with less curiosity about the man. His poetry was the essence of romance, a very halo round the bright orb of fancy; and the bringing in the individual might dissolve the charm. No tones of voice could come

up to the mellifluous cadence of his verse ; no form but of a winged angel could vie with the airy shapes he has described. He was (to our apprehensions) rather "a creature of the element, that lived in the rainbow and played in the plighted clouds," than an ordinary mortal. Or if he did appear, I should wish it to be as a mere vision, like one of his own pageants, and that he should pass by unquestioned, like a dream or sound—

"—*that* was Arion crown'd :  
So went he playing on the wat'ry plain !"

"Lamb inquired if there was any one that was hanged that I would choose to mention? And I answered, Eugene Aram. He wished to know whether there were any metaphysicians to whom one might be attempted to apply the wizard spell? I replied, there were only six in modern times deserving the name—Hobbes, Berkeley, Butler, Hartley, Hume, Leibnitz, and perhaps Jonathan Edwards, a Massachusetts man. As to the French, who talked fluently of having *created* this science, there was not a tittle in any of their writings that was not to be found literally in the authors I had mentioned. Horne Tooke, who might have a claim to come in under the head of Grammar, was still living. None of these names seemed to excite much interest, and I did not plead for the reappearance of those who might be thought best fitted by the abstracted nature of their studies for their present spiritual and disembodied state, and who, even while on this living stage, were nearly divested of common flesh and blood. As Ayrton, with an uneasy fidgety face, was about to put some question about Mr. Locke and Dugald Stewart, he was prevented by Martin Burney, who observed, 'If J[ekyll] was here, he would undoubtedly be for having up those profound and

redoubted scholiasts, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus.' I said this might be fair enough in him who had read or fancied he had read the original works; but I did not see how we could have any right to call up these authors to give an account of themselves in person, till we had looked into their writings.

“Of all persons near our own time, Garrick’s name was received with the greatest enthusiasm, who was proposed by Barron Field. He presently superseded both Hogarth and Handel, who had been talked of, but then it was on condition that he should act in tragedy and comedy, in the play and the farce, *Lear* and *Wildair* and *Abel Drugger*. What a *sight for sore eyes* that would be! Who would not part with a year’s income at least, almost with a year of his natural life, to be present at it? Besides, as he could not act alone, and recitations are unsatisfactory things, what a troop he must bring with him—the silver-tongued Barry and Quin, and Shuter and Weston, and Mrs. Clive and Mrs. Pritchard, of whom I have heard my father speak as so great a favourite when he was young! This would indeed be a revival of the dead, the restoring of art; and so much the more desirable, as such is the lurking scepticism mingled with our overstrained admiration of past excellence, that though we have the speeches of Burke, the portraits of Reynolds, the writings of Goldsmith, and the conversation of Johnson, to show what people could do at that period, and to confirm the universal testimony to the merits of Garrick; yet, as it was before our time, we have our misgivings, as if he was probably after all little better than a Bartlemy-fair actor, dressed out to play *Macbeth* in a scarlet coat and laced cocked-hat. For one, I should like to have seen and heard him with my own eyes and ears. Certainly, by all accounts, if



any one was ever moved by the true histrionic *æstus*, it was Garrick. When he followed the Ghost in *Hamlet*, he did not drop the sword, as most actors do, behind the scenes, but kept the point raised the whole way round, so fully was he possessed with the idea, or so anxious not to lose sight of his part for a moment. Once, at a splendid dinner-party at Lord Spencer's, they suddenly missed Garrick, and could not imagine what was become of him, till they were drawn to the window by the convulsive screams and peals of laughter of a young negro boy, who was rolling on the ground in an ecstasy of delight to see Garrick mimicking a turkey-cock in the courtyard, with his coat-tail stuck out behind, and in a seeming flutter of feathered rage and pride. Of our party only two persons present had seen the British Roscius; and they seemed as willing as the rest to renew their acquaintance with their old favourite."

In a letter from Miss Lamb to my grandmother, December 10, 1808, she observes: "Hazlitt was most brilliant, most ornamental, as a Wednesday-man, but he was a more useful one on common days, when he dropt in after a quarrel or a fit of the glooms."

Hazlitt occasionally made one at Talfourd's Wednesdays. It was when the author of *Ion* was residing at Castle Street, Holborn, a barrister in moderate practice, and as yet known only to a select circle of admirers. My grandfather also attended Charles Kemble's *conversazioni*. For several years he was a very regular visitor at the Southampton Arms, at the corner of Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane. He always came in the evening, occupied a particular place, reserved for him as scrupulously as his seat at Covent Garden, called for what he wanted, and settled the score whenever it happened to be convenient. His custom was worth something to

the establishment, for several of his literary and miscellaneous acquaintance, sure of finding him there, and of hearing good talk, made the Arms their trysting-spot, as others had gathered before round Dryden and round Johnson in their respective times, and as at Paris Chappelle and Piron had had their sets at the *Pomme de pin* and the *Caveau*. It was here that he would confer with Hone and Cruikshank on the next political squib to be launched by the two in partnership. Of Hone my grandfather must have seen a good deal, although I have no epistolary evidence of their intercourse.

Hone, like Cobbett, suffered severely for his opinions, and was tried before Lord Ellenborough for publishing a pamphlet decried as blasphemous. It was on this occasion that the defendant handed up to the bench one written in a similar style by Ellenborough's father. It was a deadly shock.

"William our waiter is dressed neatly in black, takes in the *Tickler* (which many of the gentlemen like to look into), wears, I am told, a diamond pin in his shirt-collar, has a music-master to teach him to play on the flageolet two hours before the maids are up, complains of confinement and a delicate constitution, and is a complete Master Stephen in his way. He is a sleek hand for his temper in managing an argument, and admires George Kirkpatrick. The members of this circle were fond of making bets and laying wagers, as whether, Dr. Johnson's Dictionary was originally published in quarto or folio." George Kirkpatrick once lost a bet he had entered into, that Congreve's play of *The Mourning Bride* was Shakespeare's. He paid in punch. "George's brother Roger was a rare fellow, of the driest humour and the nicest tact, of infinite sleights and evasions, of a picked phraseology, and the very soul of mimicry. I fancy I have some insight into physiognomy my-

self, but he could often expound to me, at a single glance, the characters of those of my acquaintance that I had been most at fault about. The account, as it was cast up and balanced between us, was not always very favourable. How finely, how truly, how gaily he took off the company at the Society! Poor and faint are my sketches compared to his!

“ I remember Roger Kirkpatrick once describing three different persons together to myself and Martin Burney, namely, the manager of a country theatre, a tragic and a comic performer, till we were ready to tumble on the floor with laughing at the oddity of their humours, and at Roger’s extraordinary powers of ventriloquism, bodily and mental: and Burney said (such was the vividness of the scene) that when he awoke the next morning, he wondered what three amusing characters he had been in company with the evening before. Oh! it was a rich treat to see him describe Mudford, him of the *Courier*, the Contemplative Man, who wrote an answer to *Cælebs*, coming into a room, folding up his great-coat, taking out a little pocket volume, laying it down to think, rubbing the calf of his leg with grave self-complacency, and starting out of his reverie when spoken to, with an inimitable rapid exclamation of ‘Eh!’

“ Before I had exchanged half-a-dozen sentences with Mouncey,<sup>1</sup> I found that he knew several of my old acquaintances (an immediate introduction of itself, for the discussing the characters and foibles of common friends is a great sweetening and cement of friendship), and had been intimate with most of the wits and men about town for the last twenty years. He knew Tobin, Wordsworth, Porson, Wilson, Paley, Erskine, and many others. . . . On my saying that I had never seen the Greek Professor but once, at the library of the London Insti-

<sup>1</sup> George Mouncey of Staple Inn. See *Hazlitt Memoirs*, 1897, i. 173.

tution, when he was dressed in an old rusty black coat, with cobwebs hanging to the skirt of it, and with a large patch of coarse brown paper covering the whole length of his nose . . . talking to one of the proprietors with an air of suavity, approaching to condescension, Mouncey could not help expressing some little uneasiness for the credit of classical literature. ‘I submit, sir, whether common-sense is not the principal thing?’

“How I should make my friend Mouncey stare if I were to mention the name of my still better friend, old honest Signor Friscobaldo, the father of Bellafront. Yet his name was perhaps invented, and the scenes in which he figures unrivalled, might for the first time have been read aloud to thrilling ears on this very spot! <sup>1</sup>

“‘Don’t you think,’ says Mouncey to me, ‘that Mr. — is a very sensible, well-informed man?’ ‘Why no,’ I say; ‘he seems to have no ideas of his own, and only to wait to see what others will say, to set himself against it.’”

Dr. Whittle,<sup>2</sup> a large, plain, fair-faced man, was once sitting “where Sarratt was playing a game at chess without seeing the board; and after remaining for some time absorbed in silent wonder, he turned suddenly to me, and said, ‘Do you know, Mr. Hazlitt, that I think there is something I can do?’ ‘Well, what is that?’ ‘Why, perhaps you would not guess, but I think I could dance; I’m sure I could; ay, I could dance like Vestris!’

“Sarratt, who was a man of various accomplishments (among others one of the Fancy), afterwards bared his arm, to convince us of his muscular strength, and Mrs. S., going out of the room with another lady, said, ‘Do you know, madam, the

<sup>1</sup> Referring to a place visited during the tour in Italy in 1824.

<sup>2</sup> He was a Moravian preacher.



Doctor [Whittle] is a great jumper!' Molière could not outdo this. Never shall I forget Whittle's pulling off his coat to eat beef-steaks on equal terms with Martin Burney.

"A country gentleman happened to drop in, and thinking to show off in London company, launched into a lofty panegyric on the *Bard* of Gray, as the sublimest composition in the English language. This assertion presently appeared to be an anachronism, though it was probably the opinion in vogue thirty years ago, when the gentleman was last in town. After a little floundering, one of the party volunteered to express a more contemporary sentiment, by asking, in a tone of mingled confidence and doubt—'But you don't think, sir, that Gray is to be mentioned as a poet in the same day as my Lord Byron?' The disputants were now at issue; all that resulted was, that Gray was set aside as a poet who would not go down among readers of the present day; and his patron treated the works of the noble bard as mere ephemeral effusions, and spoke of poets that would be admired thirty years hence, which was the farthest stretch of his critical imagination. His antagonist's did not even reach so far.

"We for some time took C—— for a lawyer, from a certain arguteness of voice and slenderness of neck, and from his having a quibble and a laugh at himself always ready. On inquiry, however, he was found to be a patent-medicine seller, and having leisure in his apprenticeship and a forwardness of parts, he had taken to study *Blackstone* and *The Statutes at Large*.

"Wells,<sup>1</sup> Mouncey, and myself, were all that remained one evening. We had sat together several hours without being tired of one another's company.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Jeremiah Wells, a solicitor, and author of *Joseph and his Brethren*, a dramatic poem, and *Stories after Nature*, 1822.



The conversation turned on the Beauties of Charles the Second's Court at Windsor, and from thence to Count Grammont, their gallant and gay historian. . . . Jacob Hall's prowess was not forgotten, nor the story of Miss Stewart's garters. I was getting on in my way with that delicate *endroit*, in which Miss Churchill is first introduced at Court, and is besieged (as a matter of course) by the Duke of York. This passage, I contended, was striking, affecting, and grand, the sublime of amorous biography. . . ."

There was a man named K——, who was reckoned to be like Dawe the painter in personal appearance, and this K. had often asked Hazlitt to introduce him to Dawe. . . . At last, Hazlitt took K. to Dawe's house. There was a glass over the chimney-piece in Dawe's painting-room, and on Hazlitt introducing K., he described each as giving a furtive glance at the glass and then at each other.

"*Hazlitt*.—'This is Mr. K——, Mr. Dawe.'

"*Dawe*.—'Very happy to see Mr. K—— (looking first at K. and then at himself in the glass, and giving a sort of inward smile of self-congratulation. . . .). I think they say we are like each other, Mr. K——. I can't say I exactly see any great similarity (looking in the glass again). There is a little something, to be sure, about the mouth—a sort of——'

"*K——*.—'Why, no; I don't see much resemblance myself. There may, perhaps, be a little something in the forehead—a kind of——'

"There was a scene at the Montagus between Mrs. Montagu and Dawe, illustrating the contrast between the flowing, graceful, queen-like style and manner of the one, and the little, peddling, pimping, snipped manner of the other."

## XXIII

### LECTURES AT GLASGOW — WITH KNOWLES IN THE HIGHLANDS—CALL ON JEFFREY—THE FIGHT.

IN 1822 Hazlitt gave two lectures at the Andersonian Institution, Glasgow. The first, which took place on Monday, May 6, was on Milton and Shakespeare. In the *Glasgow Herald* of May 3 is the following notice :—

#### ANDERSONIAN INSTITUTION.

Mr. Hazlitt Lectures on Monday evening, May the 6th,  
on Milton and Shakespeare.

Tickets, five shillings. To Commence at 8 o'clock.

This lecture was thus noticed in the same paper for Friday, May 10 :—

“Mr. Hazlitt’s lecture on Monday night last was numerously attended, and made a powerful impression upon an audience composed of some of the most distinguished characters and most respectable inhabitants of our city. His perception of the beauties and faults of our great dramatist was vivid and accurate, and the sublimities of Milton were developed with kindred enthusiasm.”

The second lecture was advertised for Monday the 13th, at the same hour, the tickets five shillings, as before. The subject was to be BURNS ; but the plan

was subsequently altered, and the *Herald* of May 13 announced that Mr. Hazlitt would treat of THOMSON AND BURNS.

The following notice of this second and farewell lecture appeared in the *Scotsman* of Saturday, May 18, 1822, as an extract from the *Glasgow Chronicle*:—

“Mr. Hazlitt delivered his second and last lecture on Monday evening to a numerous and respectful audience. Nothing could exceed the marked attention with which he was heard throughout. ‘He concluded,’ continues a correspondent, ‘amidst the plaudits of highly-raised and highly-gratified expectation.’”

While he was at Glasgow he attended St. John’s Church, for the sake of hearing Dr. Chalmers preach. “We never saw,” he says, “fuller attendances or more profound attention—it was like a sea of eyes, a swarm of heads, gaping for mysteries, and staring for elucidations.”

In a letter of the same year to Patmore he says:—

“I was at Roslin Castle yesterday. It lies low in a rude, but sheltered valley, hid from the vulgar gaze, and powerfully reminds one of the old song. The straggling fragments of the russet ruins, suspended smiling and graceful in the air as if they would linger out another century to please the curious beholder, the green larch-trees trembling between with the blue sky and white silver clouds, the wild mountain plants starting out here and there, the date of the year on an old low door-way, but still more, the beds of flowers in orderly decay, that seem to have no hand to tend them, but keep up a sort of traditional remembrance of civilization in former ages, present altogether a delightful and amiable subject for contemplation.”

In a postscript to a letter of March 30, 1822, to the same, from Edinburgh, Hazlitt writes:—

“I have seen the great little man,<sup>1</sup> and he is very gracious to me—*Et sa femme aussi!* I tell him I am dull and out of spirits, and he says he cannot perceive it. He is a person of an infinite vivacity. My *Sardanapalus*<sup>2</sup> is to be in. In my judgment Myrrha is most like S. W., only I am not like Sardanapalus.”

It was upon this occasion that Sheridan Knowles accompanied Hazlitt to the Highlands. “You remember,” he says to him, “the morning when I said, ‘I will go and repose my sorrows at the foot of Ben Lomond’—and when from Dumbarton Bridge its giant-shadow, clad in air and sunshine, appeared in view? We had a pleasant day’s walk. We passed Smollett’s monument on the road (somehow these poets touch one in reflection more than most military heroes)—and talked of old times. You repeated Logan’s beautiful verses to the cuckoo, which I wanted to compare with Wordsworth’s, but my courage failed me; you then told me some passages of an early attachment which was suddenly broken off; we considered together which was the most to be pitied, a disappointment in love where the attachment was mutual, or one where there has been no return; and we both agreed, I think, that the former was best to be endured, and that to have the consciousness of it a companion for life was the least evil of the two, as there was a secret sweetness that took off the bitterness and the sting of regret . . . One had been my fate, the other had been yours!

“You startled me every now and then from my reverie by the robust voice in which you asked the country people (by no means prodigal of their answers) ‘if there was any trout-fishing in those

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey.

<sup>2</sup> That is, in the *Edinburgh Review*. See Douady, 30-1, which I do not quite follow.

streams?' and our dinner at Luss set us up for the rest of our day's march.

"The sky now became overcast; but this, I think, added to the effect of the scene. The road to Tarbet is superb. It is on the very verge of the lake—hard, level, rocky, with low stone bridges constantly flung across it, and fringed with birch-trees, just then budding into spring, behind which, as through a slight veil, you saw the huge shadowy form of Ben Lomond. . . . The snow on the mountain would not let us ascend; and being weary of waiting, and of being visited by the guide every two hours to let us know that the weather would not do, we returned, you homewards, and I to London. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

On the 11th December, 1822, took place the prize-fight between Hickman and Neate, so uniquely commemorated by Hazlitt, and he was induced to go down and witness the scene. His account of it is historical. He thoroughly enjoyed the occasion, stepped out along the road, and snuffed up the country air. In his paper on the day's adventure in the *New Monthly Magazine*, he furnishes racy particulars of the introductory stages, and the technical details of the affair itself are no longer of any public interest.<sup>2</sup>

"It was my *first fight*, yet it more than answered my expectations. Ladies! it is to you I dedicate this description; nor let it seem out of character for the fair to notice the exploits of the brave. . . .

"I was going down Chancery Lane, thinking to

<sup>1</sup> The visit to Edinburgh had had a special motive, independent of literary matters. But it was bringing himself almost face to face with Blackwood, who would not have been much gratified by the reception at Glasgow and at the hands of Jeffrey. Comp. Correspondence under 1818.

<sup>2</sup> I wonder whether Hazlitt's eye had ever fallen on a panoramic engraving by J. R. Cruikshank attributed to 1819, and entitled: "Going to a Fight, Exhibiting the Sporting World in all its Variety of Style and Costume on the Road from Hyde Park Corner to Moulsey Hurst."



ask at Jack Randall's where the fight was to be, when looking through the glass door of the Hole in the Wall, I heard a gentleman asking the same question at Mrs. Randall, as the author of *Waverley* would express it. Now Mrs. Randall stood answering the gentleman's question with the authenticity of the lady of the Champion of the Light Weights. Thinks I, I'll wait till this person comes out, and learn from him how it is. For, to say a truth, I was not fond of going into this house of call for heroes and philosophers, ever since the owner of it (for Jack is no gentleman) threatened once upon a time to kick me out of doors for wanting a mutton-chop at his hospitable board, when the conqueror in thirteen battles was more full of *blue ruin* than of good manners. I was the more mortified at this repulse, inasmuch as I had heard Mr. James Simpkins, hosier in the Strand, one day when the character of the Hole in the Wall was brought in question, observe—'The house is a very good house, and the company quite genteel: I have been there myself!' Remembering this unkind treatment of mine host, to which mine hostess was also a party, and not wishing to put her in unquiet thoughts at a time jubilant like the present, I waited at the door; when who should issue forth but my friend Joe Parkes, and turning suddenly up Chancery Lane with the quick jerk and impatient stride which distinguishes a lover of the FANCY, I said, 'I'll be hanged if that fellow is not going to the fight, and is on his way to get me to go with him.' So it proved in effect, and we agreed to adjourn to my lodgings to discuss measures with that cordiality which makes old friends like new, and new friends like old, on great occasions. . . . Parkes and I, though we seldom meet, were an *alter idem* on this memorable occasion, and had not an idea that we did not candidly impart; and 'so

carelessly did we fleet the time,' that I wish no better, when there is another fight, than to have him for a companion on my journey down. . . .

"Joe Parkes and I could not settle about the method of going down. He said there was a caravan, he understood, to start from Tom Belcher's<sup>1</sup> at two, which would go there *right out* and back again the next day. Now I never travel all night, and I said I should get a cast to Newbury by one of the mails. Joe swore the thing was impossible, and I could only answer that I had made up my mind to it. In short, he seemed to me to waver, said he only came to see if I was going, had letters to write, a cause coming on the day after, and faintly said at parting (for I was bent at setting out that moment)—'Well, we meet at Philippi!' I made the best of my way to Piccadilly. The mail-coach stand was bare. 'They are all gone,' said I. 'This is always the way with me—in the instant I lose the future—if I had not stayed to pour out that last cup of tea, I should have been just in time;' and cursing my folly and ill-luck together, without inquiring at the coach-office whether the mails were gone or not, I walked on in despite, and to punish my own dilatoriness and want of determination. At any rate, I would not turn back: I might get to Hounslow, or perhaps farther, to be on my road the next morning. I passed Hyde Park Corner (my Rubicon), and trusted to fortune. Suddenly I heard the clattering of a Brentford stage, and the fight rushed full upon my fancy. I argued (not unwisely) that even a Brentford coachman was better company than my own thoughts (such as they were just then), and at his invitation mounted the box with him. I immediately stated my case to him—namely, my quarrel with myself for missing the Bath or Bristol

<sup>1</sup> Probably related to Jem Belcher the Game Chicken.

mail, and my determination to get on in consequence as well as I could, without any disparagement or insulting comparison between longer or shorter stages. It is a maxim with me that stage-coaches, and consequently stage-coachmen, are respectable in proportion to the distance they have to travel; so I said nothing on that subject to my Brentford friend. Any incipient tendency to an abstract proposition, or (as he might have construed it) to a personal reflection of this kind, was however nipped in the bud; for I had no sooner declared indignantly that I had missed the mails, than he flatly denied that they were gone along; and lo! at the instant three of them drove by in rapid, provoking, orderly succession, as if they would devour the ground before them. . . . If I had stopped to inquire at the White Horse Cellar, which would not have taken me a minute, I should now have been driving down the road in all the dignified unconcern and *ideal* perfection of mechanical conveyance. The Bath mail I had set my mind upon, and I had missed it, as I miss everything else, by my own absurdity, in putting the will for the deed, and aiming at ends without employing means. 'Sir,' said he of the Brentford, 'the Bath mail will be up presently, my brother-in-law drives it, and I will engage to stop him if there is a place empty.' I almost doubted my good genius; but, sure enough, up it drove like lightning, and stopped directly at the call of the Brentford Jehu. I would not have believed this possible, but the brother-in-law of a mail-coach driver is himself no mean man. I was transferred without loss of time from the top of one coach to that of the other; desired the guard to pay my fare to the Brentford coachman for me, as I had no change; was accommodated with a great-coat; put up my umbrella to keep off a

drizzling mist, and we began to cut through the air like an arrow. The milestones disappeared one after another; the rain kept off; Tom Thurtell the trainer sat before me on the coach-box, with whom I exchanged civilities as a gentleman going to the fight; the passion that had transported me an hour before was subdued to pensive regret and conjectural musing on the next day's battle; I was promised a place inside at Reading, and upon the whole I thought myself a lucky fellow. Such is the force of imagination! On the outside of any other coach on the 10th of December, with a Scotch mist drizzling through the cloudy midnight air, I should have been cold, comfortless, impatient, and no doubt wet through; but seated on the royal mail, I felt warm and comfortable, the air did me good, the ride did me good, I was pleased with the progress we had made, and confident that all would go well through the journey. When I got inside at Reading I found Thurtell and a stout valetudinarian, whose costume bespoke him one of the FANCY, and who had risen from a three months' sick bed to get into the mail to see the fight. They were intimate, and we fell into a lively discourse. . . .

“Just then, all going on well, I thought on my friend Parkes, whom I had left behind, and said innocently, ‘There was a blockhead of a fellow I left in town, who said there was no possibility of getting down by the mail, and talked of going by a caravan from Belcher’s at two in the morning, after he had written some letters.’ ‘Why,’ said he of the lappels, ‘I should not wonder if that was the very person we saw running about like mad from one coach-door to another, and asking if any one had seen a friend of his, a gentleman going to the fight, whom he had missed stupidly enough by staying to write a note.’ ‘Pray, sir,’ said my fellow-



traveller, 'had he a plaid cloak on?'—'Why, no,' said I, 'not at the time I left him, but he very well might afterwards, for he offered to lend me one.' The plaid cloak and the letter decided the thing. Joe, sure enough, was in the Bristol mail, which preceded us by about fifty yards. This was droll enough. We had now but a few miles to our destination, and the first thing I did on alighting at Newbury, both coaches stopping at the same time, was to call out, 'Pray, is there a gentleman in that mail of the name of Parkes?'—'No,' said Joe, borrowing something of the vein of Gilpin, 'for I have just got out. Well!' says he, 'this is lucky; but you don't know how vexed I was to miss you; for,' added he, lowering his voice, 'do you know when I left you I went to Belcher's to ask about the caravan, and Mrs. Belcher said very obligingly she couldn't tell about that, but there were two gentlemen who had taken places by the mail and were gone on in a landau, and she could frank us. It's a pity I didn't meet with you; we could then have gone down for nothing. But *mum's the word.*' It's the devil for any one to tell me a secret, for it's sure to come out in print. I do not care so much to gratify a friend, but the public ear is too great a temptation to me.

"Our present business was to get beds and a supper at an inn; but this was no easy task. The public-houses were full, and where you saw a light at a private house, and people poking their heads out of the casement to see what was going on, they instantly put them in and shut the window the moment you seemed advancing with a suspicious overture for accommodation. Our guard and coachman thundered away at the outer gate of the Crown for some time without effect—such was the greater noise within—and when the doors were unbarred,



and we got admittance, we found a party assembled in the kitchen round a good hospitable fire, some sleeping, others drinking, others talking on politics and on the fight. A tall English yeoman (something like Mathews in the face, and quite as great a wag)—

‘A lusty man to ben an abbot able’—

was making such a prodigious noise about rent and taxes, and the price of corn now and formerly, that he had prevented us from being heard at the gate. The first thing I heard him say was to a shuffling fellow who wanted to be off a bet for a shilling glass of brandy and water—‘Confound it, man, don’t be *insipid!*’ Thinks I, that is a good phrase. It was a good omen. He kept it up so all night, nor flinched with the approach of morning. He was a fine fellow, with sense, wit, and spirit, a hearty body and a joyous mind, free-spoken, frank, convivial—one of that true English breed that went with Harry the Fifth to Harfleur—‘standing like greyhounds in the slips,’ &c. We ordered tea and eggs (beds were soon found to be out of the question), and this fellow’s conversation was *sauce piquante*. It did one’s heart good to see him brandish his oaken towel and to hear him talk. He made mincemeat of a drunken, stupid, red-faced, quarrelsome, *frowsy* farmer, whose nose ‘he moralized into a thousand similes,’ making it out a firebrand like Bardolph’s. ‘I’ll tell you what, my friend,’ says he, ‘the landlady has only to keep you here to save fire and candle. If one was to touch your nose it would go off like a piece of charcoal.’ At this the other only grinned like an idiot, the sole variety in his purple face being his little peering grey eyes and yellow teeth; called for another glass, swore he would not stand it;

and after many attempts to provoke his humorous antagonist to single combat, which the other turned off (after working him up to a ludicrous pitch of choler) with great adroitness, he fell quietly asleep with a glass of liquor in his hand, which he could not lift to his head. His laughing persecutor made a speech over him, and turning to the opposite side of the room, where they were all sleeping in the midst of this 'loud and furious fun,' said, 'There's a scene, by God, for Hogarth to paint. I think he and Shakspeare were our two best men at copying life.' This confirmed me in my good opinion of him. Hogarth, Shakspeare, and Nature were just enough for him (indeed for any man) to know. I said, 'You read Cobbett, don't you? At least,' says I, 'you talk just as well as he writes.' He seemed to doubt this. But I said, 'We have an hour to spare: if you'll get pen, ink, and paper, and keep on talking, I'll write down what you say; and if it doesn't make a capital *Political Register*, I'll forfeit my head. You have kept me alive to-night, however. I don't know what I should have done without you.' He did not dislike this view of the thing, nor my asking if he was not about the size of Jem Belcher and told me soon afterwards, in the confidence of friendship, that 'the circumstance which had given him nearly the greatest concern in his life was Cribb's beating Jem after he had lost his eye by racket-playing.'

"The morning dawns; that dim but yet clear light appears, which weighs like solid bars of metal on the sleepless eyelids; the guests drop down from their chambers one by one—but it was too late to think of going to bed now (the clock was on the stroke of seven); we had nothing for it but to find a barber's (the pole that glittered in the morning sun lighted us to his shop), and then a nine miles' march

to Hungerford. The day was fine, the sky was blue, the mists were retiring from the marshy ground, the path was tolerably dry, the sitting-up all night had not done us much harm—at least the cause was good; we talked of this and that with amicable difference, roving and sipping of many subjects, but still invariably we returned to the fight. At length, a mile to the left of Hungerford, on a gentle eminence, we saw the ring, surrounded by covered carts, gigs, and carriages, of which hundreds had passed us on the road. Parkes gave a youthful shout, and we hastened down a narrow lane to the scene of action.

“When it was over I asked Cribb if he did not think it was a good one? He said, ‘*Pretty well!*’ The carrier-pigeons now mounted into the air, and one of them flew with the news of her husband’s victory to the bosom of Mrs. Neate. Alas, for Mrs. Hickman!

“*Mais au revoir*, as Sir Fopling Flutter says. I went down with Parkes; I returned with Patmore, whom I met on the ground. Parkes is a rattle-brain; Patmore is a sentimentalist. Now, under favour, I am a sentimentalist too—therefore I say nothing, but that the interest of the excursion did not flag as I came back. Patmore and I marched along the causeway leading from Hungerford to Newbury, now observing the effect of a brilliant sun on the tawny meads or moss-coloured cottages, now exulting in the fight, now digressing to some topic of general and elegant literature. My friend was dressed in character for the occasion, or like one of the Fancy; that is, with a double portion of great-coats, clogs, and overalls; and just as we had agreed with a couple of country lads to carry his superfluous wearing apparel to the next town we were overtaken by a return post-chaise, into which I got, Patmore preferring a seat on the bar. There were two strangers already in the chaise, and

on their observing they supposed I had been to the fight, I said I had, and concluded they had done the same. They appeared, however, a little shy and sore on the subject; and it was not till after several hints dropped, and questions put, that it turned out that they had missed it. One of these friends had undertaken to drive the other there in his gig; they had set out, to make sure work, the day before at three in the afternoon. The owner of the one-horse vehicle scorned to ask his way, and drove right on to Bagshot, instead of turning off at Hounslow; there they stopped all night, and set off next day across the country to Reading, from whence they took coach, and got down within a mile or two of Hungerford just half-an-hour after the fight was over. This might be safely set down as one of the miseries of human life. We parted with these two gentlemen who had been to see the fight, but had returned as they went, at Wolhampton, where we were promised beds (an irresistible temptation, for Patmore had passed the previous night at Hungerford as I had done at Newbury); and we turned into an old bow-windowed parlour with a carpet and a snug fire; and after devouring a quantity of tea, toast, and eggs, sat down to consider, during an hour of philosophic leisure, what we should have for supper. In the midst of an Epicurean deliberation between a roasted fowl and mutton chops with mashed potatoes, we were interrupted by an inroad of Goths and Vandals. . . . Patmore withdrew from the smoke and noise into another room, and left me to dispute the point with them for a couple of hours *sans intermission* by the dial. The next morning we rose refreshed; and on observing that Patmore had a pocket volume in his hand, in which he read in the intervals of our discourse, I inquired what it was, and learned

to my satisfaction that it was a volume of the *New Héloïse*. Ladies, after this, will you contend that a love for the Fancy is incompatible with the cultivation of sentiment? We jogged on as before, my friend setting me up in a genteel drab great-coat and green silk handkerchief (which I must say became me exceedingly); and after stretching our legs for a few miles, and seeing Jack Randall, Ned Turner, and Scroggins pass on the top of one of the Bath coaches, we engaged with the driver of the second to take us to London for the usual fee. I got inside, and found three other passengers. One of them was an old gentleman with an aquiline nose, powdered hair, and a pigtail, and who looked as if he had played many a rubber at the Bath rooms. I said to myself, he is very like Mr. Windham; I wish he would enter into conversation, that I might hear what fine observations would come from those finely-turned features. However, nothing passed, till, stopping to dine at Reading, some inquiry was made by the company about the fight, and I gave (as the reader may believe) an eloquent and animated description of it. When we got into the coach again the old gentleman, after a graceful exordium, said he had, when a boy, been to a fight between the famous Broughton and George Stevenson, who was called the *Fighting Coachman*, in the year 1770, with the late Mr. Windham. When we stopped in Piccadilly I wanted to ask the gentleman some questions about the late Mr. Windham, but had not courage. I got out, resigned my coat and green silk handkerchief to Patmore (loth to part with these ornaments of life), and walked home in high spirits. Parkes called upon me the next day to ask me if I did not think the fight was a complete thing? I said I thought it was.



## XXIV

### DULWICH GALLERY—PICTURE GALLERIES REVISITED

“IT WAS on the 5th November [1823] that I went to see Dulwich Gallery. The morning was mild, calm, pleasant: it was a day to ruminare on the subject I had in view.<sup>1</sup> It was the time of year—

‘When yellow leaves, or few or none, do hang  
Upon the branches.’

Their scattered gold was strangely contrasted with the dark-green spiral shoots of the cedar trees that skirt the road; the sun shone, faint and watery, as if smiling his last. . . . At the end of a beautiful little village, Dulwich College appeared in view, in modest state, yet mindful of the olden time, and the name of Alleyn and his compeers rushed full upon the memory.”

He is speaking of one of the scholars of Alleyn’s foundation:—

“He stirs not—he still pores upon his book; and as he reads, a slight hectic flush passes over his cheek, for he sees the letters that compose the word FAME glitter on the page, and his eyes swim, and he thinks that he will one day write a book, and have his name repeated by thousands of readers; and assume a certain signature, and write essays and criticisms in a London magazine, as a consummation of felicity scarcely to be believed!

“Come hither, thou poor little fellow, and let us

<sup>1</sup> He was equally accompanied by Patmore on this occasion.

change places with thee, if thou wilt ; here, take the pen and finish this article, and sign what name you please to it ; so that we may but change our dress for yours, and sit shivering in the sun, and con over our little task, and feed poor, and lie hard, and be contented and happy, and think what a fine thing it is to be an author, and dream of immortality, and sleep o' nights."

Thus he apostrophizes one of the pictures in the Stafford (now the Bridgewater) Gallery :—

"Thou, oh ! divine *Bath of Diana*, with deep azure dyes, with roseate hues, spread by the hand of Titian, art still there upon the wall, another, yet the same that thou wert five-and-twenty years ago. . . . And there that fine passage stands in *Antony and Cleopatra* as I read it long ago with exulting eyes in Paris, after puzzling over a tragedy of Racine's, and cried aloud, 'Our Shakespeare was also a poet !' These feelings were dear to me at the time, and they come back unimpaired, heightened, mellowed, whenever I choose to go back to them.

"I must go through my account of the pictures in the Grosvenor Gallery as they start up in my memory, not according to the order of their arrangement, for want of a proper set of memorandums. My friend, Mr. Gummow of Cleveland House, had a nice little neatly-bound duodecimo catalogue, of great use as a *vade-mecum* to occasional visitants or absent critics—but here I have no such advantage ; and to take notes before company is a thing that I abhor : it has a look of pilfering something from the pictures. . . .

"Stourhead, the seat of Sir Richard Colt Hoare, did not answer our expectations. But Stourton, the village where it stands, made up for our disappointment. After passing the park-gate, which is a beautiful and venerable relic, you descend into

Stourton by a sharp-winding declivity, almost like going underground, between high hedges of laurel trees, and with an expanse of woods and water spread beneath. . . . The inn is like a modernized guard-house; the village church stands on a lawn without any enclosure; a row of cottages, facing it, with their whitewashed walls and flaunting honeysuckles, are neatness itself. . . . There is one masterpiece of colouring by Paul Veronese, a naked child with a dog. . . . On praising this picture (which I always do when I like a thing) I was told it had been criticised by a great judge, Mr. Beckford of Fonthill, who had found fault with the execution as too coarse and muscular. I do not wonder, it is not like his own turnery-ware! . . .

“Burleigh! thy groves are leafless, thy walls are naked—

‘And dull cold winter does inhabit here.’

The yellow evening rays gleam through thy fretted Gothic windows; but I only feel the rustling of withered branches strike chill to my breast; it was not so twenty years ago. Thy grooves were leafless then as now; it was the middle of winter twice that I visited there before; but the lark mounted in the sky, and the sun smote my youthful blood with its slant ray, and the ploughman whistled as he drove his team afield. . . . All is still the same, like a petrification of the mind, the same things in the same places; but their effect is not the same upon me. I am twenty years the worse for *wear and tear*. What is become of the never-ending studious thoughts that brought their own reward, or promised good to mankind? of the tears that started welcome and unbidden? of the sighs that whispered future peace? of the smiles that shone, not in my

face indeed, but that cheered my heart, and made a sunshine there, when all was gloom around? That fairy vision—that invisible glory, by which I was once attended—ushered into life, has left my side, and ‘faded to the light of common day,’ and I now see what is, or has been, not what may be, hid in Time’s bright circle and golden chaplet.

“Perhaps this is the characteristic difference between youth and a later period of life—that we, by degrees, learn to take things more as we find them, call them more by their right names; that we feel the warmth of summer, but the winter’s cold as well; that we see beauties, but can spy defects in the fairest face, and no longer look at everything through the genial atmosphere of our own existence. . . .

“The second time<sup>1</sup> I passed along the road that skirts Burleigh Park, the morning was dank, and ‘ways were mire.’ I saw and felt it not; my mind was otherwise engaged. Ah! thought I, there is that fine old head by Rembrandt; there, within those cold grey walls, the painter of old age is enshrined, immortalized in some of his inimitable works! The name of Rembrandt lives in the fame of him who stamped it with renown, while the name of Burleigh is kept up by the present owner. An artist survives in the issue of his brain to all posterity, a lord is nothing without the issue of his body lawfully begotten, and is lost in a long line of illustrious ancestors. So much higher is genius than rank, such is the difference between fame and title. A great name in art lasts for centuries; it requires twenty generations of a noble house to keep alive the memory of the first founder for the same length of time. So I reasoned, and was not a little proud of my discovery.

“In this dreaming mood, dreaming of deathless

<sup>1</sup> In 1802, prior to the professional visit to Paris.

works and deathless names, I went on to Peterborough, passing, as it were, under an archway of Fame,

‘ — And still walking under,  
Found some new matter to look up and wonder.’

I had business there, I will not say what. I could at this time do nothing. I could not write a line, I could not draw a stroke. . . . In words, in looks, in deeds, I was no better than a changeling. . . .

“ Why then do I set so much value on my existence formerly? Oh God! that I could be but one day, one hour, nay, but for an instant (to feel it in all the plenitude of unconscious bliss, and take one long last lingering draught of that full brimming cup of thoughtless freedom) what then I was, that I might, as in a trance, a waking dream, hear the hoarse murmur of the bargemen, as the Minster tower appeared in the dim twilight, come up from the willowy stream, sounding low and underground like the voice of the bittern; that I might paint that field opposite the window where I lived, and feel that there was a green, dewy moisture in the tone, beyond my pencil’s reach, but thus gaining almost a new sense, and watching the bustle of new objects around me; that I might stroll down Peterborough bank (a winter’s day) and see the fresh marshes stretching out in endless level perspective (as if Paul Potter had painted them), with the cattle, the windmills, and the red-tiled cottages, gleaming in the sun to the very verge of the horizon, and watch the field-fares in innumerable flocks, gambolling in the air, and sporting in the sun, and racing before the clouds, making summersaults, and dazzling the eye by throwing themselves into a thousand figures and movements; THAT I MIGHT GO, AS THEN, A PILGRIMAGE TO THE TOWN WHERE MY MOTHER WAS BORN, AND



VISIT THE POOR FARM-HOUSE WHERE SHE WAS BROUGHT UP, AND LEAN UPON THE GATE, WHERE SHE TOLD ME SHE USED TO STAND WHEN A CHILD OF TEN YEARS OLD, AND LOOK AT THE SETTING SUN! I could do all this still, but with different feelings.

“In the Cathedral of Peterborough there is a monument to Mary Queen of Scots, at which I used to gaze when a boy, while the events of the periods, all that had happened since, passed in review before me.

“I had at this time, simple as I seemed, many resources. I could in some sort ‘play at bowls with the sun and moon,’ or, at any rate, there was no question in metaphysics that I could not bandy to and fro, as one might play at cup and ball, for twenty, thirty, forty miles of the great North Road, and at it again, the next day, as fresh as ever. I soon get tired of this now, and wonder how I managed formerly.”

Patmore, in his Recollections of this trip, says: “In going through the various apartments at Sir Richard Colt Hoare’s, I shall never forget the almost childish delight which Hazlitt exhibited at the sight of two or three of the chief favourites of his early days.

“On another day, while at Fonthill, we walked over to Salisbury (a distance of twelve miles) in a broiling sunshine; and I remember, on this occasion in particular, remarking the extraordinary physical as well as moral effect produced on Hazlitt by the sight and feel of the ‘country!’”

## XXV

### SECOND MARRIAGE—TOUR IN FRANCE AND ITALY

(1824-25)

IN the well-known tour through France and Italy in 1824-25, the notion of which dated back to 1823, and was laid before Colburn, Hazlitt was accompanied by his second wife. He had met in a stage-coach a lady, who proved to be the widow of Colonel Bridgewater, and he proposed marriage to her, and was accepted. They were married in 1824, and it was understood that they should go together on the tour which her husband had projected some time before through France and Italy by arrangement with the *Morning Chronicle*. I have not much information of a precise nature respecting the second Mrs. Hazlitt beyond a slight account of her by a gentleman, who knew her as a girl.

Mr. Leslie of the War Office wrote to me in 1854: "One of my earliest recollections, when I was just at the age when one feels the full force of female loveliness, was a day passed in Miss Isabella ——'s charming presence, at my uncle's in Scotland, when she was about nineteen, and on her way to some relation in the island of Granada. I believe she was of a very good family. . . . It is so long ago that I do not remember her maiden name; but she was connected somehow with an aunt of mine. . . ."

"We had a fine passage in the steamboat (Sept. 1,

1824). Not a cloud—scarce a breath of air ; a moon, and then starlight, till the dawn with rosy fingers ushered us into Dieppe.”

Partly perhaps in deference to the lady's wishes, they selected rather expensive quarters at the Hôtel des Étrangers, Rue Vivienne, when they reached the capital. But there was also the advantage of English cookery—an important consideration in view of Hazlitt's weak digestion.

“The first thing I did when I got to Paris was to go to the Louvre. It was indeed ‘first and last and midst’ in my thoughts. Well might it be so, for it had never been absent from them for twenty years. I had gazed myself almost blind in looking at the precious works of art it contained—should I not weep myself blind in looking at them again after a lapse of half a life, or on finding them gone. . . . There were one or two pictures (old favourites) that I wished to see again, and that I was told still remained. I longed to know whether they were there, and whether they would look the same. It was fortunate I arrived when I did ; for a week later the doors would have been shut against me, on occasion of the death of the king. . . . One or two English stragglers alone were in it. The coolness and stillness were contrasted with the bustle, the heat, and the smell of the common apartments. My thoughts rushed in, and filled the empty space. Instead of the old Republican doorkeepers, with their rough voices and affectation of equality, a servant in a court-livery stood at the gate.

“On presenting myself, I inquired if a Monsieur Livernois (who had formerly ushered me into this region of enchantment) were still there ; but he was gone or dead. My hesitation and foreign accent, with certain other appeals, procured me admittance. I passed on without further question. I cast a glance

forward, and found that the Poussins were there. At the sight of the first, which I distinctly recollected (a fine green landscape with stately ruins), the tears came into my eyes, and I passed an hour or two in that state of luxurious enjoyment which is the highest privilege of the mind of man. . . . One picture of his [Poussin's] in particular drew my attention, which I had not seen before. It is an addition to the Louvre, and makes up for many a flaw in it. It is the *Adam and Eve in Paradise*, and it is all that Mr. Martin's picture of that subject is not. . . . A landscape with a rainbow by Rubens (a rich and dazzling piece of colouring), that used to occupy a recess half way down the Louvre, was removed to the opposite side. The singular picture (the *Defeat of Goliath*, by Daniel Volterra) painted on both sides on slate, still retained its station in the middle of the room. It had hung there for twenty years unmolested. The Rembrandts keep their old places, and are as fine as ever. . . . The Vandykes are more light and airy than ever. . . . The Cardinal Bentivoglio (which I remember procuring especial permission to copy, and left untouched, because, after Titian's portraits, there was a want of interest in Vandyke's which I could not get over) is not there.<sup>1</sup> But in the Dutch division I found Weenix's game, the battle-piece of Wouvermans', and Ruysdael's sparkling woods and waterfalls without number. On these (I recollect as if it were yesterday) I used, after a hard day's work, and having tasked my faculties to the utmost, to cast a mingled look of surprise and pleasure, as the light gleamed upon them through the high casement, and to take leave of them with a *non equidem invideo, mirror magis*. . . .

"The portrait of a man in black, by Titian (No. 1210) . . . was there to meet me, after an

<sup>1</sup> It is at Florence.—*Note* by W. H.

interval of years, as if I had parted from it the instant before. Its keen, steadfast glance staggered me like a blow. . It was the same—how was I altered! I pressed towards it, as it were, to throw off a load of doubt from the mind, or as having burst through the obstacles of time and distance that had held me in torturing suspense. . . .

“A French gentleman (*un Rentier*), who lodges in the hotel opposite to me, passes his time in reading all the morning—dines, plays with his children after dinner, and takes a hand at backgammon with an old *gouvernante* in the evening. . . . This looks like domestic comfort and internal resources. How many disciples of Rousseau’s *Emilius* are there in France at the present day? I knew one twenty years ago. . . .

“The theatre is the throne of the French character, where it is mounted on its pedestal of pride, and seen to every advantage. I like to contemplate it there, for it reconciles me to them and to myself. It is a common and amicable ground on which we meet. . . .

“I saw three very clever comic actors at the *Théâtre des Variétés*, on the Boulevards, all quite different from each other, but quite French. One *Le Peintre*, who acted a master-printer; and he *was* a master-printer—so bare, so dingy, and so wan, that he might be supposed to have lived on printer’s ink and on a crust of dry bread, cut with an *oniony* knife. . . . Another was *Ôdry* (I believe), who, with his blue coat, gold-laced hat, and corpulent belly, resembled a jolly, swaggering, good-humoured parish officer, or the boatswain of an English man-of-war. . . . Monsieur Potier played an old lover, and, till he was dressed, looked like an old French cookshop-keeper. The old beau transpired through his finery afterwards. . . . I could not help taking notice, that during his



breakfast, and while he is sipping his coffee, he never once ceases talking to his valet. . . .

“The French Opera is a splendid, but a comparatively empty theatre. It is nearly as large (I should think) as the King’s Theatre in the Haymarket, and is in a semi-circular form. The pit (the evening I was there) was about half-full of men in their black, dingy, *sticky*-looking dresses; and there were a few plainly-dressed women in the boxes. . . . It was not so in Rousseau’s time, for these very *Loges* were filled with the most beautiful women of the court, who came to see his *Devin du Village*, and whom he heard murmuring around him in the softest accents, ‘*Tous ces sons-la vont au cœur!*’ . . .

“I was told I ought to see *Nina, or La Folle par Amour*, at the Salle Louvois or Italian theatre. If I went for that purpose, it would be rather with a wish than from any hope of seeing it better done. I went, however. . . . It was to see the *Gazza Ladra*. The house was full, the evening sultry, a hurry and bustle in the lobbies, an eagerness in the looks of the assembled crowd. The audience seemed to be in earnest, and to have imbibed an interest from the place. . . . Signora Mombelli played the humble, but interesting heroine charmingly, with truth, simplicity, and feeling. Her voice is neither rich nor sweet, but it is clear as a bell. Signor Pellegrini played the Intriguing Magistrate with a solemnity and farcical drollery that I would not swear is much inferior to Liston. But I swear that Brunet (whom I saw the other night, and had seen before without knowing it) is not equal to Liston. . . . A girl in the gallery (an Italian by her complexion and from her interest in the part) was crying bitterly at the story of the ‘Maid and the Magpie,’ while three Frenchmen, in the *Troisième Loge*, were laughing at her the whole of the time. I said to one of them,

‘It was not a thing to laugh at, but to admire.’ He turned away, as if the remark did not come within his notions of sentiment.

“My favourite walk in Paris is to the Garden of the Tuileries. Paris differs from London in this respect, that it has no suburbs. The moment you are beyond the barriers, you are in the country to all intents and purposes. . . . The superfluous population is pared off, like the pie-crust by the circumference of the dish; even on the crust side—not a hundred yards from the barrier of Neuilly—you see an old shepherd tending his flock, with his dog, and his crook, and sheepskin cloak, just as if it were a hundred miles off or a hundred years ago. It was so twenty years ago. I went again to see if it was the same yesterday. The old man was gone; but there was his flock by the roadside, and a dog and a boy, grinning with white healthy teeth, like one of Murillo’s beggar-boys. It was a bright frosty morn. . . .

“The road I speak of, frequented by English jockeys and French market-women, riding between panniers, leads down to the Bois de Boulogne on the left, a delicious retreat, covered with copsewood for fuel, and intersected with greensward paths and shady alleys, running for miles in opposite directions, and terminating in a point of inconceivable brightness. Some of the woods on the borders of Wiltshire and Hampshire present exactly the same appearance, with the same delightful sylvan paths through them. It was winter when I used to wander through the Bois de Boulogne formerly. I have already mentioned the Père-la-Chaise—the Catacombs I have not seen, nor have I the least wish. But I have been to the top of Montmartre, and intend to visit it again. . . .

“I would go a pilgrimage to see the *St. Peter*

*Martyr*, or the *Jacob's Dream*, by Rembrandt, or Raphael's cartoons, or some of Claude's landscapes; but I would not go far out of my way to see the Apollo, or the Venus, or the Laocoon. [He is comparing painting with sculpture.] . . .

"I had the good fortune to meet here with my old fellow-student Dr. Edwards, after a lapse of thirty years; he is older than I by a year or two, and makes it five-and-twenty.<sup>1</sup> He had not been idle since we parted. He sometimes looked in, after having paid La Place a visit; and I told him it was almost as if he had called on a star in his way. It is wonderful how friendship that has long lain unused accumulates like money at compound interest. We had to settle an old account, and to compare old times and new. . . . He was particularly mortified at the degraded state of our public press—at the systematic organization of a corps of government critics, to decry every Liberal sentiment, and proscribe every Liberal writer as an enemy to the person of the reigning sovereign, only because he did not avow the principles of the Stuarts. I had some difficulty in making him understand the full lengths of the malice, the lying, the hypocrisy, the sleek adulation, the meanness, equivocation, and skulking concealment of a Quarterly Reviewer, the reckless blackguardism of Mr. Blackwood, and the obtuse drivelling profligacy of the *John Bull*.

"He said, 'It is worse with you than with us; here an author is obliged to sacrifice twenty mornings and twenty pair of black silk stockings in paying his court to the editors of different journals, to insure a hearing from the public, but with you, it seems, he must give up his understanding and his character, to establish a claim to taste or learning.' . . .

"I told him that public opinion in England was

<sup>1</sup> It was in 1802. See ch. xi. *infra*.

at present governed by half-a-dozen miscreants, who undertook to bait, hoot, and worry every man out of his country, or into an obscure grave, with lies and nicknames, who was not prepared to take the political sacrament of the day. . . . To be a reformer, the friend of a reformer, or the friend's friend of a reformer, is as much as a man's peace, reputation, or even life is worth. Answer, if it is not so, pale shade of Keats! . . .

“Dr. Edwards was unwilling to credit this statement, but the proofs were too flagrant. He asked me what became of that band of patriots that swarmed in *our* younger days, that were so glowing hot, desperate, and noisy in the year 1794. I said I could not tell. . . .

“I remember meeting Lucien Buonaparte in the streets, walking arm in arm with Maria Cosway, with whom I had drunk tea the evening before. He was dressed in a light drab-coloured great-coat, and was then a spirited, dashing-looking young man. I believe I am the only person in England who ever read his *Charlemagne*. It is as clever a poem as can be written by a man who is not a poet. It came out in two volumes quarto, and several individuals were applied to by the publishers to translate it; among others, Sir Walter Scott, who gave for answer, ‘That as to Mister Buonaparte’s poem, he should have nothing to do with it.’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A review, which appeared in the *Champion* for 1814, is reprinted as Hazlitt’s in vol. xi. of the *Collected Writings* and accepted by M. Douady in his *Bibliographie*. I demur.

## XXVI

### TOUR IN FRANCE AND ITALY (*continued*)

MR. LESLIE, already mentioned, was destined to meet the object of his early admiration once more, when she stayed with her second husband at the Hotel des Étrangers, Paris, on the present occasion. "Having heard," he wrote to me about forty years ago, "that she was in Paris, and married to your grandfather, I found her out, when I was passing a few weeks [there], being very desirous of renewing my acquaintance with my former *flame of one day*, and to see Mr. H., many of whose works I had read with much delight. *She* told me she never saw him take a fancy, such a fancy, for any one as he did for me. I suppose this was because he found me a capital listener; and perhaps talking through my tube, with which I could hear very well in those days, gave a new sort of fillip to his thoughts. Once when I dined with them, he drank three or four basins of tea, and dissertated most charmingly from six o'clock till two in the morning, and was my cicerone in the Louvre one day from ten till four. His conversation on that day I thought better than any *book* I had ever read on the *Art Pictorial*. . . ." "He was more striking and eloquent even," my informant assures me, referring to the day in the Louvre, "than his printed pages. In the Louvre it was not a *sederunt*, but a peripatetic dissertation, and most admirable it was. . . ."



There are a few rather helpful glimpses of the new Mrs. Hazlitt in the following selection, which purely aims at the illustration of personal feeling and character. The original writer had a wider or more general scope. But, which is oddest, Hazlitt's first wife was in Paris at the same time, and met him, and in a letter to her son at school at Tavistock, Sept. 25, 1824, tells him that his father, when she left, desired his love to the child, but could not write to him, as he did not feel well enough. My grandmother describes the rooms, but it has the air of a verbal account at second-hand from her late husband.

“The conductor of the Lyons coach insisted on my going thither in the middle of the night (contrary to my agreement), and I was obliged to comply, or to sleep upon trusses of straw in a kind of out-house. We quarrelled incessantly, but I could not help laughing, for he sometimes looked like my old acquaintance Dr. Stoddart, and sometimes like my friend A—— H[enderson?], of Edinburgh. . . . We were quizzed by the postboys, the innkeepers, the peasants all along the road, as a shabby concern, and our *conducteur* bore it all, like another *Candide*.

“When we alighted at Moulins, our guide told us it was eleven; the clock in the kitchen pointed to three. As he laughed in my face, when I complained of his misleading me, I told him he was ‘*un impudent*,’ and this epithet sobered him the rest of the way.

“As we left Moulins, the crimson clouds of evening streaked the west, and I had time to think of Sterne's ‘*Maria*.’ The people at the inn, I suspect, had never heard of her. There was no trace of romance about the house. Certainly, mine was not a *Sentimental Journey*. . . . Is the story of *Maria* the worse, because I am travelling a dirty road in a rascally diligence?

“At the Hotel des Couriers at Lyons we were attended by a brown, greasy, dark-haired, good-humoured, awkward gipsy of a wench from the south of France, who seemed just caught; stared and laughed, and forgot everything she went for; could not help exclaiming every moment—‘*Que madame a le peau blanc!*’ from the contrast to her own dingy complexion and dirty skin.

“Here is the ‘Hôtel de Nôtre-Dame de Piété,’ which is shown to you as the inn where Rousseau stopped on his way to Paris when he went to overturn the French monarchy by the force of style. I thought of him as we came down the mountain of Tarare, in his gold-laced hat, and with his *jet-d'eau* playing. . . . At Lyons I saw this inscription over a door: *Ici on trouve le seul et unique dépôt de l'encre sans pareil et incorruptible*—which appeared to me to contain the whole secret of French poetry. I went into a shop to buy M. Martine’s *Death of Socrates*, which I saw in the window, but they would neither let me have that copy nor get me another. . . . While I was waiting for an answer a French servant in livery brought in four volumes of the *History of a Foundling*, an improved translation, in which it was said the *morceaux* written by M. de la Place were restored. I was pleased to see my old acquaintance Tom Jones, with his French coat on. Leigh Hunt tells me that M. Casimir de la Vigne is a great Bonapartist, and talks of the ‘tombs of the brave.’ He said I might form some idea of M. Martine’s attempts to be great and *unfrenchified* by the frontispiece to one of his poems, in which a young gentlemen in an heroic attitude is pointing to the sea in a storm, with his other hand round a pretty girl’s waist. I told Hunt this poet had lately married a lady of fortune. He said, ‘That’s the girl.’ He also said very well, I thought,

that 'the French seemed born to puzzle the Germans.' . . .

"At Pont Beau-Voisin, the frontier town of the King of Sardinia's dominions, we breakfasted with a Spaniard, who invited himself to our tea-party, and complimented Madame (in broken English) on the excellence of her performance. We agreed between ourselves that the Spaniards and English were very much superior to the French. I found he had a taste for the fine arts, and I spoke of Murillo and Velasquez as two excellent Spanish painters. 'Here was sympathy.' I also spoke of *Don Quixote*. 'Here was more sympathy.' What a thing it is to have produced a work that makes friends of all the world that have read it, and that all the world have read! . . .

"I had two trunks. One contained books. When it was unlocked it was as if the lid of Pandora's box flew open. There could not have been a more sudden start or expression of surprise had it been filled with cartridge-paper or gunpowder.

"Books were the corrosive sublimate that eat out despotism and priestcraft. . . . A box full of them was a contempt of the constituted authorities, and the names of mine were taken down with great care and secrecy. . . . Here was some questionable matter enough—but no notice was taken. My box was afterwards corded and *leaded* with equal gravity and politeness, and it was not till I arrived at Turin that I found it was a prisoner of state, and would be forwarded to me anywhere I chose to mention out of his Sardinian Majesty's dominions. . . .

"We noticed some of the features of the scenery, and a lofty hill opposite to us being scooped out into a bed of snow, with two ridges or promontories (something like an arm-chair) on each side, '*Voilà!*' said the younger and more volatile of our com-

panions, '*c'est un trône, et la nuage est la gloire!*'—a white cloud indeed encircled its misty top. I complimented him on the happiness of his allusion, and said that Madame was pleased with the exactness of the resemblance. . . .

“My arrival at Turin was the first and only moment of intoxication I have found in Italy. It is a city of palaces. I walked out, and traversing several clean, spacious streets, came to a promenade outside the town, from which I saw the chain of Alps we had left behind us, rising like a range of marble pillars in the evening sky. . . . I could distinguish the broad and rapid Po winding along at the other extremity of the walk, through vineyards and meadow grounds. The trees had on that deep sad foliage which takes a mellow tinge from being prolonged into the midst of winter, and which I had only seen in pictures. A monk was walking in a solitary grove at a little distance from the common path. The air was soft and balmy, and I felt transported to another climate—another earth—another sky. The winter was suddenly changed to spring. It was as if I had to begin my life anew. . . .

“At Parma the hurry occasioned by passports prevented me from seeing some fine Rembrandts, Spagnolettis, and Caraccis, which I was told are to be found in the palace of Prince Carignani and elsewhere. . . . But I saw a number of pictures, and among others the Correggios and the celebrated *St. Jerome*, which I had seen at Paris. I must have been out of tune, for my disappointment and consequent mortification were extreme. I had never thought Correggio a god, but I had attributed this to my own inexperience and want of taste, and I hoped by this time to have ripened into that full idolatry of him expressed by Mengs and others.

Instead of which, his pictures (they stood on the ground without frames and in a bad light) appeared to be comparatively mean, feeble, and affected. . . . I was ready to exclaim, 'Oh, painting! I thought thee a substance, and find thee a shadow!' There was, however, a *Crowning of the Virgin*, a fresco (by Correggio) from the church of St. Paul, which was full of majesty, sweetness, and grace; and in this, and the heads of boys and fauns in the *Chase of Diana*, there is a freedom and breadth of execution, owing to the mode in which they were painted, and which makes them seem pure emanations of the mind, without anything overdone, finical, or little.

"The Farnese Theatre is the noblest and most striking monument I have seen of the golden age of Italy. . . .

"Bologna is even superior to Parma. . . . Going along we met Professor Mezzofanti, who is said to understand thirty-eight languages, English among the rest. He was pointed out to us as a prodigious curiosity by our guide (Signor Gatti), who has this pleasantry at his tongue's end, that 'there is one Raphael to paint, one Mezzofanti to understand languages, and one Signor Gatti to explain everything they wish to know to strangers.' . . .

"I left the gallery at Bologna once more reconciled to my favourite art. Guido also gains upon me, because I continually see fine pictures of his. . . . There is a Description of the Chief Towns in Italy. . . . Some of these I have seen, and others not; and those that I have not seen seem to me the finest. We left Bologna on our way to Florence. . . . At the first village we came to among the hills we saw, talking to her companions by the roadside, the only very handsome Italian we have yet seen. It was not the true Italian face neither, dark and



oval, but more like the face of an English peasant, with heightened grace and animation. . . . Our voiture was ascending a hill; and as she walked by the side of it with elastic step, and a bloom like the suffusion of a rosy cloud, the sight of her was doubly welcome in this land of dingy complexions, squat features, scowling eyebrows, and round shoulders."

At Florence he met Leigh Hunt, who introduced him to Savage Landor. Hunt dined with him and his new wife. Hunt had been piqued by the manner in which my grandfather on one or two occasions, in those fits of spleen which sometimes came over him, retorted on him; and L. H. became anxious to prove to Mr. Hazlitt that he could do the same if he chose. He selected the present opportunity to do so, and before dinner was served, L. H. said to Mrs. Hazlitt, "I have something to show Hazlitt, but I will not let him see it till after dinner, as it might spoil his appetite." "Oh!" said Mrs. H., "it will do him good." Thereupon Hunt gave Hazlitt a paper, in which he had spoken his mind pretty freely on the sore subject, and Hazlitt sat down in a chair and read it through. When he had done, he observed, "By God, sir, there's a good deal of truth in it."

The second Mrs. Hazlitt coaxed him for a time into conforming to the gentilities, but it was not for long, I fear. She abandoned the attempt in despair. An indifference to conventionalities had set in ever since his one great disappointment in life, and his appearance was not improved by cropping his hair, as it began at this time to turn grey.

"From my friend Leigh Hunt's house at Moiano, you see at one view the village of Setinian, belonging to Michael Angelo's family, the house in which Machiavelli lived, and that where Boccaccio wrote . . . and not far from this the 'Valley of Ladies' (the scene of *The Decameron*). With a

view like this, one may think one's sight 'enriched,' in Burns's phrase. . . .

"I wonder when the change in the forms of image-worship took place in the old Roman states and what effect it had. I used formerly to wonder how or when the people in the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and who live in solitudes to which the town of Keswick is *the polite world*, and its lake 'the Leman Lake,' first passed from Popery to Protestantism, what difference it made in them at the time, or has done to the present day? . . .

"Customs come round. I was surprised to find at Florence, at the Hotel of the Four Nations, where we stopped the two first days, that we could have a pudding for dinner (a thing that is not to be had in all France). . . . It was exceedingly cold when we first came. . . . It is now milder (Feb. 23, 1825), and like April weather in England. There is a balmy lightness and vernal freshness in the air. Might I once more see the coming on of spring as erst, in the springtime of my life, it would be here! . . .

"Among the pictures at the Palace Pitti is Titian's *Hippolyto de' Medici* (which Mr. Opie pronounced the finest portrait in the world), with the spirit and breadth of history, and with the richness, finish and glossiness of an enamel picture. I remember the first time I ever saw it,<sup>1</sup> it stood on an easel which I had to pass, with the back to me; and as I turned and saw it with the boar-spear in its hand, and its keen glance bent upon me, it seemed 'a thing of life,' with supernatural force and grandeur.<sup>2</sup>

"From La Scala, a tremendous valley to the

<sup>1</sup> At the Louvre in 1802.

<sup>2</sup> It was at Florence, in May 1825, that he wrote the paper *On Reading New Books*.

left, we saw the distant hills of Perugia, covered with snow and blackened with clouds, and a heavy sleet was falling around us. We started on being told that the post-house stood on the other side of the fort (at a height of 2400 feet above the level of the sea), and that we were to pass the night there. It was like being lodged in a cloud; it seemed the rocking-cradle of storms and tempests. . . . It reminded me, by its preternatural strength and sullen aspect, of the castle of Giant Despair in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. . . . Never did I see anything so rugged and so stately, apparently so formidable in a former period, so forlorn in this. . . .

“Perugia is situated on a lofty hill, and is in appearance the most solid mass of building I ever beheld. . . . Travelling this road from Rome to Florence is like an eagle's flight—from hill-top to hill-top, from towered city to city, and your eye devours your way before you over hill or plain.”

## XXVII

### TOUR IN FRANCE AND ITALY (*continued*)

(1824-25)

THEY took apartments in Rome, 33 Via Gregoriana.

“The picture-galleries in Rome disappointed me quite. I was told there was a dozen at least equal to the Louvre; there is not one. I shall not dwell long upon them, for they gave me little pleasure. . . .

“This is not the Rome I expected to see. No one, from being in it, would know he was in the place that had been twice mistress of the world. I do not understand how Nicholas Poussin could tell, taking up a handful of earth, that it was ‘a part of the ETERNAL CITY.’ . . . No! this is not the wall that Remus leaped over: this is not the Capitol where Julius Cæsar fell: instead of standing on seven hills, it is situated in a low valley: the golden Tiber is a muddy stream: St. Peter’s is not equal to St. Paul’s: the Vatican falls short of the Louvre as it was in my time; but I thought that here were works immovable, immortal, inimitable on earth, and lifting the soul half-way to heaven. I find them not, or only what I had seen before in different ways. . . .

“From the window of the house where I lodge I have a view of the whole city at once; nay, I can see St. Peter’s as I lie in bed of a morning. . . . The pleasantest walks I know are round the Via Sistina and along the Via di Quattro-Montane.”

“I was lucky enough to see the Pope here on Easter Sunday. He seems a harmless, infirm, fretful old man. . . . I was also lucky enough to see St. Peter’s illuminated to the very top (a project of Michael Angelo’s) in the evening. It was finest at first, as the kindled lights blended with the fading twilight. . . . I can easily conceive some of the wild groups that I saw in the streets the following day to have been led by delight and wonder from their mountain-haunts, or even from the bandit’s cave, to worship at this new starry glory, rising from the earth.

“I did not hear the *Miserere* which is chanted by the priests and sung by a single voice (I understand like an angel’s) in a dim religious light in the Sistine Chapel, nor did I see the exhibition of the relics, at which, I was told, all the beauty of Rome was present. . . . I am no admirer of pontificals, but I am a slave to the picturesque. The priests talking together in St. Peter’s or the common people kneeling at the altars, make groups that shame all art. . . .

“The young women that come here from Gersano and Albano, and that are known by their scarlet bodices and white head-dresses and handsome good-humoured faces, are the finest specimens I have ever seen of human nature. They are like creatures that have breathed the air of heaven till the sun has ripened them into perfect beauty, health, and goodness. They are universally admired in Rome. The English women that you see, though pretty, are pieces of dough to them. I was quite delighted with the external deportment of the ecclesiastics in Rome. It was marked by a perfect propriety, decorum, and humanity, from the highest to the lowest.

“At Perugia, when looking at some panels in a church, painted by Pietro Perugino, we met with a young Irish priest, who claimed acquaintance with us



as country-folks, and recommended our staying six days, to see the ceremonies and finery attending the translation of the deceased head of his order from the church where he lay to his final resting-place. We were obliged by this proposal, but declined it. It was curious to hear English spoken by the inmate of a Benedictine monastery. Near here, we passed the celebrated Lake of Thrasymene, where Hannibal defeated the Roman consul Flaminius. It struck me as not unlike Windermere in character and scenery, but I have seen other lakes since, which have driven it out of my head. . . . We saw Cortona on our right, looking over its walls of ancient renown, conscious of its worth, not obtruding itself on superficial notice, and passed through Arezzo, the reputed birth-place of Petrarch.

“The road from Aquapendente is of a deep heavy soil, over which the horses with difficulty dragged the carriage. . . . We passed, I think, but one habitation between Aquapendente and San Lorenzo, and met but one human being, who was a gendarme! I asked our vetturino if this dreary aspect of the country was the effect of nature or of art. He pulled a handful of earth from the hedge-side, and showed a rich black loam, capable of every improvement. I asked in whose dominions we were, and received for answer, ‘In the Pope’s.’ . . . On a green bank far below the high ground near Terni, so as to be just discernible, a shepherd boy was sleeping under the shadow of a tree, surrounded by his flock, enjoying peace and freedom, scarce knowing their names. That’s something. . . .

“On our return from Rome on the second morning we reached the last of the Apennines that overlook Bologna, and saw stretched out beneath our feet a different scene, the vast plain of Lombardy, and almost the whole of the North of Italy, like a rich

sea of boundless verdure, with towns and villages spotting it like the sails of ships. . . . We presently descended into this plain (which formed a perfect contrast to the country we had lately passed), and it answered fully to the promise it had given us. Of all the places I have seen in Italy, Ferrara is the one by far I should most covet to live in. We walked out in the evening, and found it enchanting.

“I never saw palaces anywhere but at Venice. Those at Rome are dungeons compared to them. . . . The richest in interior decoration that I saw was the Grimani palace,<sup>1</sup> which answered to all the imaginary conditions of this sort of thing. Aladdin might have exchanged his for it, and given his lamp into the bargain. The floors are of marble, the tables of precious stones, the chairs and curtains of rich silk, the walls covered with looking-glasses, and it contains a cabinet of invaluable antique sculpture, and some of Titian’s finest portraits. . . . I saw no other mansion equal to this. The Pisani is the next to it for elegance and splendour; and from its situation on the Grand Canal, it admits a flood of bright day through glittering curtains of pea-green silk, into a noble saloon, enriched with an admirable family-picture by Paul Veronese, with heads equal to Titian in all but the character of thought.<sup>2</sup>

“Titian was ninety-nine when he died, and was at last carried off by the plague. My guide, who was enthusiastic on the subject of Venetian art, would not allow of any falling-off in these latest efforts of his mighty pencil, but represented him as prematurely cut off in the height of his career. He knew, he said,

<sup>1</sup> The Grimani family is, I believe, extinct. The daughter of a Signor Grimani (who was a teacher of languages in England for many years) married Thomas Hornby the solicitor, and was the mother of my old acquaintance, Sir Edmund Grimani Hornby.

<sup>2</sup> This is the picture which is now in the National Gallery; it was bought for England many years ago at a cost of £14,000.

an old man, who died a year ago, at one hundred and twenty. The Venetians may still live to be old, but they do not paint like Titian! . . .

“I teased my *valet-de-place* (Mr. Andrew Wyche, a Tyrolese, a very pleasant, companionable, and patriotic sort of person) the whole of the first morning at every fresh landing and embarkation by asking, ‘But are we going to see the *St. Peter Martyr*?<sup>1</sup> When we reached the church of St. John and St. Paul, the light did not serve, and we got reprimanded by the priest for turning our backs on the Host, in our anxiety to find a proper point of view. We returned to the church about five in the afternoon, when the light fell upon it through a high-arched Gothic window. . . . I found everything in its place, and as I expected; yet I am unwilling to say that I saw it through my former impressions. . . . Most probably, as a picture, it is the finest in the world; or if I cannot say it is the picture which I would the soonest have painted, it is at least the one which I would the soonest have. . . . I left this admirable performance with regret; yet I do not see why; for I have it present with me, ‘in my mind’s eye,’ and swear, in the wildest scenes of the Alps, that the *St. Peter Martyr* is finer. That and the man [with the Glove] in the Louvre are my standards of perfection: my taste may be wrong, nay, even ridiculous—yet such it is.

“Danielli’s Hotel, at which we were<sup>2</sup> . . . commands a superb view of the bay, and the scene (particularly by moonlight) is delicious. I heard no music at Venice, neither voice nor lute; saw no group of dancers or maskers; I saw the Rialto, which is no longer an Exchange. . . .

“*Horas non numero nisi serenas*, is the motto of

<sup>1</sup> It has since been destroyed by fire.

<sup>2</sup> My father always recollected the silk curtains to the windows.

a sun-dial near Venice.<sup>1</sup> There is a softness and a harmony in the words and in the thought unparalleled. . . . For myself, as I rode through the Brenta, while the sun shone hot upon its sluggish, shiny waves, my sensations were far from comfortable ; but the reading this inscription on the side of a glaring wall in an instant restored me to myself ; still, whenever I think of or repeat it, it has the power of wafting me into the region of pure and blissful abstraction. . . . It (the dial) stands *sub dio*, under the marble air, and there is some connection between the image of infinity and eternity. I should also like to have a sunflower growing near it, with bees fluttering round. Is this a verbal fallacy ? or in the close, retired, sheltered soul which I have imagined to myself, is not the sunflower a natural accompaniment of the sun-dial ?

“ On returning from Verona we witnessed the most brilliant sight we had seen in Italy ; the sun setting in a flood of gold behind the Alps that overlook the Lago di Garda. The Adige foamed at our feet below ; the bank opposite was of pure emerald ; the hills which rose directly behind it in the most fantastic forms were of perfect purple, and the arches of the bridge to the left seemed plunged in ebon darkness by the flames of light that darted round them.

“ I think I never saw so many well-grown, well-made, good-looking women as at Milan. I did not, however, see one face strikingly beautiful, or with a very fine expression. . . . We saw the celebrated theatre of the Gran Scala, which is of an immense size and of extreme beauty, but it was not full, nor was the performance striking. The manager is the proprietor of the Cobourg Theatre (Mr. Glossop), and his wife

<sup>1</sup> The writer founded on this incident or idea his own Essay on the subject.

(formerly our Miss Fearon) the favourite singer of the Milanese circles.

“I inquired after the great pantomime actress, Palarini, but found she had retired from the stage on a fortune. The name of Vigano was not known to my informant. I did not see the great picture of the *Last Supper*, by Leonardo, nor the little Luini, two miles out of Milan, which my friend Mr. Beyle charged me particularly to see.

“We proceeded to Domo d’Ossola on our way to the Simplon, and the next day began the ascent. I have already attempted to describe the passage of Mont Cenis; this is said to be finer, and I believe it; but it impressed me less, I believe, owing to circumstances.

“We passed under one or two sounding arches, and over some lofty bridges. At length we reached the village of the Simplon, and stopped there at a most excellent inn, where we had a supper that might vie, for taste and elegance, with that with which Chaffinch entertained Peveril of the Peak and his companion at the little inn in the wilds of Derbyshire.

“The next day we proceeded onwards, and passed the commencement of the tremendous glacier of the Flech Horr. . . . This mountain is only a few hundred feet lower than Mont Blanc, yet its name is hardly known. So a difference of a hair’s-breadth in talent often makes all the difference between total obscurity and endless renown.”



## XXVIII

### RETURN TO ENGLAND

“WE left the inn at Brigg after having stopped there above a week, and proceeded on our way to Vevey, which had always been an interesting point in the horizon, and a resting-place to the imagination. . . . Vevey is the scene of the *New Héloïse*. In spite of Mr. Burke’s philippic against this performance, the contempt of the ‘Lake School,’ and Mr. Moore’s *Rhymes of the Road*, I had still some over-mastering recollections on that subject, which I proposed to indulge at my leisure on the spot, which was supposed to give them birth, and which I accordingly did.

“I did not, on re-perusal, find my once favourite work quite so vapid, quite so void of eloquence or sentiment as some critics . . . would insinuate. [The writer here quotes a passage, commencing—*Mais vois la rapidité de cet astre*, &c.] What a difference between the sound of this passage and of Mr. Moore’s verse or prose! Nay, there is more imagination in the single epithet *astre*, applied as it is here to this brilliant and fleeting scene of things, than in all our fashionable poet’s writings! At least, I thought so, reading St. Preux’s letter in the wood near Clarens, and stealing occasional glances at the lake and rocks of Meillerie.

“We reached Sion that evening. It was here that Rousseau, in one of his early peregrinations, was recommended by his landlord to an iron-

foundry in the neighbourhood (the smoke of which, I believe, we saw at a little distance), where he would be likely to procure employment, mistaking the 'pauper lad' for a journeyman blacksmith. . . . Haunted by some indistinct recollection of this adventure, I asked at the inn 'if Jean Jacques Rousseau had ever resided in the town?' The waiter himself could not tell, but soon after brought back for answer, 'that Monsieur Rousseau had never lived there, but that he had passed through about fourteen years before on his way to Italy, when he had only time to stop to take tea'! We reached Vevey the next day in a drizzling shower of rain, which prevented our seeing much of the country. . . . The day after my arrival I found a lodging at a farm-house a mile out of Vevey, 'so lapped in luxury,' so retired, so reasonable, and in every respect convenient, that we remained here for the rest of the summer, and felt no small regret at leaving it.

"I wonder Rousseau, who was a good judge and an admirable describer of romantic situations, should have fixed upon Vevey as the scene of the *Neve Héloïse*. You have passed the rocky and precipitous defiles at the entrance into the valley, and have not yet come into the open and more agreeable parts of it.

"The immediate vicinity of Vevey is entirely occupied with vineyards slanting to the south, and enclosed between stone walls without any kind of variety or relief. The walls are uneven and bad, and you in general see little (for the walls on each side of you) but the glassy surface of the lake, the rocky barrier of the Savoy Alps opposite, . . . the green hills of an inferior class over Clarens, and the winding valley leading northward toward Berne and Fribourg.

"Here stands Gelamont (the name of the *campagna* which we took) on a bank sloping down to the brook

that passes by Vevey, and so entirely embosomed in trees and 'upland swells' that it might be called, in poetical phrase, 'the peasant's nest.'

"Days, weeks, months, and even years might have passed on [at Gelamont] much in the same manner, with 'but the season's difference.' We breakfasted at the same hour, and the tea-kettle was always boiling (an excellent thing in housewifery)—a *lounge* in the orchard for an hour or two, and twice a week we could see the steamboat creeping like a spider over the surface of the lake; a volume of the Scotch novels (to be had in every library on the Continent in English, French, German, or Italian, as the reader pleases), or M. Galignani's *Paris and London Observer*, amused us till dinner time; then tea, and a walk till the moon unveiled itself, . . . or the brook, swollen with a transient shower, was heard more distinctly in the darkness, mingling with the soft, rustling breeze; and the next morning the song of peasants broke upon refreshing sleep, as the sun glanced among the clustering vine-leaves, or the shadowy hills, as the mists retired from their summits, looked in at our windows.

"The uniformity of this mode of life was only broken during the fifteen weeks that we remained in Switzerland by the civilities of Monsieur Le Vade, a doctor of medicine and octogenarian, who had been personally acquainted with Rousseau in his younger days; by some attempts by our neighbours to *lay us under obligations* by parting with rare curiosities to Monsieur l'Anglais for half their value; and by an excursion to Chamouni."

It was here that Captain Medwin, Byron's friend, came to see Hazlitt, and took notes of his conversations.<sup>1</sup> He had been introduced to him at Florence

<sup>1</sup> *Fraser's Magazine* for March 1839. An abstract of what passed between the two is in *Memoirs of W. H.*, 1867, i. 183.

by Leigh Hunt. In reply to Medwin's inquiry, how he liked the society at Florence, Hazlitt said:—

*H.* "I only knew Leigh Hunt, the author of the *Imaginary Conversations*, and Lord Dillon. The latter, but for some twist in his brain, would have been a clever man. He has the *cacoethes parlandi*, like Coleridge, though he does not pump out his words. . . . I went to dine with him—the only time I ever dined at a lord's table.<sup>1</sup> He had all the talk to himself; he never waits for an answer. . . ."

*M.* "Do you really think Shakspeare was an unlearned man?"

*H.* "Sir, he was, if not the most learned, the best read man of his age; by which I mean that he made the best use of his reading. His 'Brutus' and 'Antony,' and 'Coriolanus' are real conceptions of those Romans. His Romeo and Juliet have all the beautiful conceits of the time; he has steeped them all in the enthusiastic tenderness of Petrarch. . . ."

"I have seen no country where I have been more tempted than in Switzerland to stop and enjoy myself, where I thought the inhabitants had more reason to be satisfied, and where, if you could not find happiness, it seemed in vain to seek farther for it. . . . Perhaps, one of these days, I may try the experiment, and turn my back on sea-coal fires and old English friends!

"Geneva is, I think, a very neat and picturesque town, not equal to some others we had seen, but very well for a Calvinistic capital. . . . I was struck with the fine forms of many of the women here. Though I was pleased with my fare, I was not altogether delighted with the manners and appearance of the inhabitants. . . . I here saw Rousseau's

<sup>1</sup> The meeting may have suggested the paper in the *New Monthly Magazine* "On the Conversation of Lords" (April 1826).

house, and also read the *Edinburgh Review* for May. . . . The next day we passed along in the diligence through scenery of exquisite beauty and perfect cultivation. . . . We saw Lausanne by moonlight. . . . We arrived that night at Vevey after a week's absence and an exceedingly delightful tour. . . . We left Vevey on the 20th of September.

“As we ascended a steep hill on this side of Moudon, and looked back, first at the green dewy valley under our feet, with the dusky town and the blue smoke rising from it, then at the road we had traversed the preceding evening, winding among thick groves of trees, and last at the Savoy Alps on the other side of the Lake of Geneva (with which we had been familiar for four months, and which seemed to have no mind to quit us), I perceived a bright speck close to the top of one of these Alps. I was delighted, and said it was Mont Blanc. Our driver was of a different opinion, was positive it was only a cloud, and I accordingly supposed I had mistaken a sudden fancy for a reality. I began in secret to take myself to task, and to lecture myself for my proneness to build theories on the foundation of my conjectures and wishes. On turning round occasionally, however, I observed that this cloud remained in the same place. We disputed the point for half-an-hour, and it was not till the afternoon, when we had reached the other side of the Lake of Neufchatel that, this same cloud, rising like a canopy over the point where it had hovered . . . he acknowledged it to be Mont Blanc.

“We dined at Verdun (a pretty town), at the head of the lake, and passed on to Neufchatel, along its enchanting and almost unrivalled borders, having the long unaspiring range of the Jura on our left (from the top of which, St. Preux, in the *New Héloïse*, on his return from his wanderings round



the world, first greeted that country where 'torrents of delight had poured into his heart'; and indeed we could distinguish the Dent de Jamant right over Clarens almost the whole way); and on our right was the rippling lake, its low cultivated banks on the other side, then a brown rocky ridge of mountains, and the calm golden peaks of the snowy passes of the Simplon, the Great St. Bernard, and (as I was fain to believe) of Monte Rosa, rising into the evening sky at intervals beyond.

"Meanwhile we rode on. This kind of retreat, where there is nothing to surprise, nothing to disgust, nothing to draw the attention out of itself, uniting the advantages of society and solitude, of simplicity and elegance, and where the mind can indulge in a sort of habitual and self-centred satisfaction, is the only one which I should never feel a wish to quit. The *golden mean* is, indeed, an exact description of the mode of life I should like to lead, of the style I should like to write; but alas! I am afraid I shall never succeed in either object of my ambition.

"We had the Lake of Biene and the Isle of St. Pierre in prospect before us, which are so admirably described by Rousseau in his *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, and to which he gives the preference over the Lake of Geneva.

"We stopped at the Three Kings at Basle, and were shown into a long, narrow room, which did not promise well at first; but the waiter threw up the window at the further end, and we all at once saw the full breadth of the Rhine, rolling rapidly. . . . It was clear moonlight, and the effect was fine and unexpected. The broad mass of water rushed by with clamorous sound and stately impetuosity, as if it were carrying a message from the mountains to the ocean.

“We crossed the Rhine at Strasburg, and proceeded through Rastadt and Mannheim to Mayence. We stopped the first night at the Golden Cross at Rastadt, which is the very best inn I was at during the whole time I was abroad. Among other things, we had *chiffrons* for supper, which I found on inquiry were wood-partridges, which are much more highly esteemed than the field ones. . . . I regretted afterwards that we did not take the right-hand road by Freybourg and the Black Forest—the woods, hills, and mouldering castles of which, as far as I could judge from a distance, are the most romantic and beautiful possible. . . .

“All the way from Utrecht to Amsterdam, to the Hague, to Rotterdam, you might fancy yourself on Clapham Common. You do not see a set of clean teeth from one end of Holland to the other. I was assured at Amsterdam that Rembrandt was the greatest painter in the world, and at Antwerp that Rubens was. I was shown the plain and village of Ryswick, close to the Hague. It struck me I had seen something very like it before. It is the background of Paul Potter’s *Bull*.

“Delft is a very model of comfort and polished neatness. We met with a gentleman belonging to this place in the *trackschuyt*, who, with other civilities, showed us his house (a perfect picture in its kind), and invited us in to rest and refresh ourselves, while the other boat was getting ready. These things are an extension of one’s idea of humanity. I would not wish to lower any one’s idea of England, but let him enlarge his notions of existence and enjoyment beyond it.

“There was a steamboat at Rotterdam which set sail for London the next day; but we preferred passing through Ghent, Lille, and Antwerp. . . . We saw the Rubenses in the great church at the

last. . . . The person who showed us the *Taking Down from the Cross* said 'it was the finest picture in the world.' I said 'One of the finest,' an answer with which he appeared by no means satisfied.

"We returned by way of St. Omer and Calais. I wished to see Calais once more, for it was here that I landed in France more than twenty years ago. We arrived in England on the 16th of October, 1825. I confess London looked to me on my return like a long, straggling, dirty country town. . . . I am not sorry, however, that I have got back. There is an old saying, *Home is home, be it never so homely.* . . .

"The pictures that most delighted me in Italy were those I had before seen in the Louvre 'with eyes of youth.' I could revive this feeling of enthusiasm, but not transfer it. . . .

"Since my return I have put myself on a regimen of brown bread, beef, and tea, and have thus defeated the systematic conspiracy carried on against weak digestions. To those accustomed to, and who can indulge in foreign luxuries, this list will seem far from satisfactory."

A perusal of the Notes of the French and Italian Tour in 1824-25, satisfies one that it greatly tended to vary and enlarge the experience of Hazlitt, and yielded him, on the whole, deep and sincere enjoyment. At the period of his former visit to France in 1802 he was a very young man, and found his hands tolerably full; while his resources were extremely limited. But that earlier acquaintance with the treasures of the Louvre lent a peculiar zest to the second visit, under easier circumstances, with maturer judgment.

In a letter addressed by Leigh Hunt to Hazlitt at 10 Down Street, Piccadilly, dated from Highgate,

June 20, without note of year,<sup>1</sup> Hunt says: "I know but one thing that would take me to town sooner than the pleasure of passing an evening with your masculine discourse on one side the table and 'the calm of pleasant womankind' which you have on the other. Pray forgive my saying this, and let Mrs. Hazlitt forgive me, but I am more at ease with you in your own house than anywhere else, and have felt so comfortable there both in Florence and Down St., that I trust to please you by saying what I do, and think you should be pleased because it is true. . . ."

And in his *Journal*, Haydon, under date of November 10, 1825, notes that he called on the couple, who were at breakfast, and that Hazlitt looked ill, but that his jaunt had done him good, and his new wife, "a very superior woman," a greater.

The commonly accepted, but clearly erroneous account is that Hazlitt and his son returned home, unaccompanied by the new wife, who had remained behind, and in reply to an inquiry when her husband might come to fetch her, announced that she had proceeded to Switzerland with her sister, and that they were to meet no more. The account of an eye-witness of some of the scenes between my father and his stepmother helps to explain the climax,<sup>2</sup> which, at all events, was soon reached, and the outcome was perhaps assisted by the anomalous touch with the first wife, which can scarcely have been unknown to the second one.

<sup>1</sup> Original, apparently unpublished, sold at Sotheby's, June 5, 1902, No. 549.

<sup>2</sup> An advertisement for Colonel Bridgewater's next-of-kin appeared in the papers in 1879. The second Mrs. Hazlitt, however, had died in September 1869.

## XXIX

### NORTHCOTE'S CONVERSATIONS

So far back as 1802, Mr. Hazlitt had become acquainted, through his brother John, with Mr. Northcote the artist, and is found in that year calling on him,<sup>1</sup> and discussing or raising questions of art. Northcote had seen a great deal, heard a great deal, read a great deal; he was a shrewd observer, and a person of average conversational powers; and Mr. Hazlitt and he found many common topics. We shall find that the talk turned in chief measure on art, literary gossip, and fond recollections *temporis acti*. During his later years he lived in the past, when the Tory organs knew not him, nor he them, in the shadow of a disappointment, of the full and true particulars of which we are not in possession. I seem to distinguish throughout the period of manhood two incongruous and irreconcilable veins of feeling and thought—the yearning for a once hoped-for attachment in even an ambitious sphere, and a scarcely sincere preference for the nymphs or shepherdesses of the country side.

“The person whose doors I enter with most pleasure, and quit with the most regret, never did me the smallest favour. I once did him an uncalled-for service, and we nearly quarrelled about it. If I were in the utmost distress, I should just as soon think of asking his assistance as of stopping a person

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Oct. 16, 1802, *infra*.



on the highway. Practical benevolence is not his *forte*. He leaves the profession of that to others. His habits, his theory are against it as idle and vulgar. His hand is closed; but what of that? His eye is ever open, and reflects the universe: his silver accents, beautiful, venerable as his silver hairs, but not scanted, flow as a river. I never ate or drank in his house; nor do I know or care how the flies or spiders fare in it, or whether a mouse can get a living. But I know that I can get there what I can get nowhere else—a welcome, as if one was expected to drop in just at that moment, a total absence of all respect of persons, and of airs of self-consequence, endless topics of discourse, refined thoughts, made more striking by ease and simplicity of manner—the husk, the shell of humanity is left at the door, and the spirit, mellowed by time, resides within!

“I asked leave to write down one or two of these conversations; he said I might, if I thought it worth while; ‘but,’ he said, ‘I do assure you that you overrate them. You have not lived enough in society to be a judge. What is new to you you think will seem so to others. To be sure, there is one thing, I have had the advantage of having lived in good society myself. I not only passed a great deal of my younger days in the company of Reynolds, Johnson, and that circle, but I was brought up among the Mudges,<sup>1</sup> of whom Sir Joshua (who was certainly used to the most brilliant society of the metropolis) thought so highly that he had them at his house for weeks, and even sometimes gave up his own bedroom to receive them. Yet they were not thought superior to several other persons at Plymouth, who were distinguished, some for their satirical wit, others for their delightful fancy, others

<sup>1</sup> See Boswell's *Johnson* under 1781.

for their information or sound sense, and with all of whom my father was familiar, when I was a boy.’<sup>1</sup>

“I told him that when Godwin wrote his *Life of Chaucer*, he was said to have turned Papist from his having made use of something I had said to him about confession.

“Northcote asked if I had sent my son to school?<sup>2</sup> I said I thought of the Charter House, if I could compass it. I liked those old-established places, where learning grew for hundreds of years, better than any new-fangled experiments or modern seminaries. He inquired if I had ever thought of putting him to school on the Continent; to which I answered, No, for I wished him to have an idea of home before I took him abroad; by beginning in the contrary method, I thought, I deprived him both of the habitual attachment to the one and of the romantic pleasure in the other.

“Northcote spoke in raptures of the power in Cobbett’s writings, and asked me if I had ever seen him. I said I had for a short time; that he called *rogue* and *scoundrel* at every second word in the coolest way imaginable, and went on just the same in a room as on paper.”

Yet elsewhere Hazlitt draws a more agreeable, and more complete portrait.

“The only time I ever saw Cobbett, he seemed to me a very pleasant man, easy of access, affable, clear-headed, simple and mild in his manner, deliberate and unruffled in his speech, though some of his expressions were not very qualified. His figure is tall and portly. He has a good, sensible face, rather full, with little grey eyes, a hard square forehead, a ruddy complexion, with hair grey or

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Zachariah Mudge, Vicar of St. Andrew’s, Plymouth, and Prebendary of Exeter, was Sir Joshua’s early and lifelong friend.

<sup>2</sup> That is, to an advanced one. He had been at three, at different times, if not four, of a preparatory character.

powdered; and had on a scarlet broad cloth waist-coat, with the flaps of the pocket hanging down, as was the custom for gentlemen-farmers in the last century, or as we see it in the pictures of members of parliament in the reign of George I. I certainly did not think less favourably of him for seeing him."

Referring to Emily Coventry, who sat to Sir Joshua for his *Thais*, Northcote observed that she was a chimney-sweeper's daughter, or something of that kind; but she was a vast beauty. Northcote once saw the old woman concerned in the business of obtaining her, and declared that "her look went through you."

H. "But I suppose you looked at her again. Coleridge used to remark that description was the vice of poetry, and allegory of painting."

N. "Nothing can be better said. Since you told me that remark of his about *Paul and Virginia*, he has risen vastly in my estimation."

H. "Was I not right in stating it to be an error to suppose that character is one thing, and to be judged of from a single circumstance? The simplicity of language constantly runs us into false abstractions. . . . We call a man by one name, and forget the heap of contradictions of which he is composed. An acquaintance was wondering not long ago, how a man of sense that he mentioned could be guilty of such absurdities in practice. I answered that a man's understanding often had no more influence over his will than if they belonged to two different persons, nor frequently so much, since we sometimes consented to be governed by advice, though we could not control our passions, if left to ourselves."

N. "That is very true. But I do not see why you should express so much eagerness about it, as if your life depended on it."

H. "Nor I neither; I was not aware that I did so."

N. "You lay too much stress on these speculative opinions and abstruse distinctions. You fancy it is the love of truth; it is quite as much the pride of understanding. . . . I do not wish to speak against a classical education; it refines and softens, I grant; and I see the want of it in Cobbett. . . . But surely it often gives a false estimate of men and things. Every one brought up in colleges, and drugged with Latin and Greek for a number of years, firmly believes *that there have been about five people in the world, and that they are dead.*"

"I had once, I said, given great offence to a knot of persons by contending that *Jacob's Dream* was finer than anything in Shakspeare; and that *Hamlet* would bear no comparison with at least one character in the New Testament. A young poet had said on this occasion that he did not like the Bible, because there was nothing about flowers in it; and I asked him if he had forgot that passage, 'Behold the lilies of the field,' &c.

"I mentioned the pleasure I had formerly taken in a little print of Gadshill from a sketch of his own, which I used at one time to pass a certain shop-window on purpose to look at. He said 'it was impossible to tell beforehand what would hit the public. You might as well pretend to say what ticket would turn up a prize in the lottery.'

"I remarked that I believed corporations of art or letters might meet with a certain attention, but it was the stragglers and candidates that were knocked about with very little ceremony. . . . Those of my own way of thinking were 'bitter bad judges' on this point. A Tory scribe, who treated mankind as rabble and *canaille*, was regarded by them in return as a fine gentleman: a reformer like myself, who stood up for liberty and equality, was taken at his word by the very journeyman that set up his paragraphs, and could not get a

civil answer from the meanest shop-boy in the employ of those on his own side of the question. Northcote laughed, and said I irritated myself too much about such things. He said it was one of Sir Joshua's maxims that the art of life consisted in not being upset by trifles.

"I mentioned having once had a very smart debate with Godwin about a young lady, of whom I had been speaking as very much like her aunt, a celebrated authoress, and as what the latter, I conceived, might have been at her time of life. Godwin said, when Miss — did anything like *Evelina* or *Cecilia*, he should then believe she was as clever as Madame d'Arblay. I asked him whether he did not think Miss Burney was as clever before she wrote those novels as she was after; or whether in general an author wrote a successful work for being clever, or was clever because he wrote a successful work?"

"I said, 'I am glad to hear you speak so of Guido. I was beginning, before I went abroad, to have a "sneaking contempt" for him as insipid and monotonous, from seeing the same everlasting repetitions of Cleopatras and Madonnas; but I returned a convert to his merits. I saw many indifferent pictures attributed to great masters; but wherever I saw a Guido, I found eloquence and beauty that answered to the "silver" sound of his name.'

"On my excusing myself for some blunder in history by saying 'I really had not time to read,' he said 'No, but you have time to write.' And once a celebrated critic taking me to task as to the subject of my pursuits, and receiving regularly the same answer to his queries, that I knew nothing of chemistry, nothing of astronomy, of botany, of law, of politics, &c., at last exclaimed, somewhat impatiently, 'What the devil is it then you *do* know?' I laughed, and was not very much disconcerted at the reproof, as it was just.



“ I said authors alone were privileged to suppose that all excellence was confined to words. Till I was twenty, I thought there was nothing in the world but books. When I began to paint I found there were two things both difficult to do and worth doing; and I concluded from that there might be fifty. At least I was willing to allow every one his own choice. I recollect Southey saying ‘ he should like to *hamstring* those fellows at the Opera.’ I suppose because the great would rather see them dance than read *Kehama*.

“ Mr. Northcote enlarges with enthusiasm on the old painters, and tells good things of the new. The only thing he ever vexed me in was his liking the *Catalogue Raisonné*. I had almost as soon hear him talk of Titian’s pictures (which he does with tears in his eyes, and looking just like them) as see the originals; and I had rather hear him talk of Sir Joshua’s than see them. He is the last of that school who knew Goldsmith and Johnson. How finely he describes Pope! . . . I never ate or drank with Mr. Northcote, but I have lived on his conversation with undiminished relish ever since I can remember; and when I leave it I come out into the street with feelings lighter and more ethereal than I have at any other time.”

Hazlitt said that he recollected, when he was formerly trying to paint, nothing gave him the horrors so much as passing the old battered portraits at the doors of brokers’ shops, with the morning sun flaring full upon them. He was generally inclined to prolong his walk and put off painting for that day; but the sight of a fine picture had a contrary effect, and he went back and set to work with redoubled ardour.

One day, when he went into Northcote’s, the latter said to him, “ Sir, there’s been such a *beautiful* murder.” The old painter was very fond of reading,

and hearing, and talking of all the atrocities of this kind that occurred in his day. He regarded them, like De Quincey, from an artistic point of view.

Speaking of Lord Byron's opinions, especially his notions about Shakspeare, Hazlitt once observed, "I do not care much about his opinions." Northcote remarked that they were evidently capricious, and taken up in the spirit of contradiction. *Hazlitt*: "Not only so (as far as I can judge), but without any better founded ones in his own mind. They appear to me conclusions without premises or any previous process of thought or inquiry. I like old opinions with new reasons, not new opinions without any; not mere *ipse dixits*. He was too arrogant to assign a reason to others or to need one for himself. It was quite enough that he subscribed to any assertion to make it clear to the world, as well as binding on his valet."

Hazlitt asked if he remembered the name of Stringer<sup>1</sup> at the Academy, when he first came up to town. Northcote said he did, and that he drew very well, and once put the figure for him in a better position to catch the foreshortening. Northcote then inquired if Hazlitt knew anything about him; and Hazlitt said he had once vainly tried to copy a head of a youth by him, admirably drawn and coloured, and in which he had attempted to give the effect of double vision by a second outline accompanying the contour of the face and features. Though the design might not be in good taste, it was executed in a way that made it next to impossible to imitate.

He was grateful to Northcote for admiring *No Song, No Supper*, which was the first play he had ever seen. Northcote remarked that it was very delightful, but that the players had cut a good deal out.

<sup>1</sup> Daniel Stringer of Knutsford. My grandfather knew him in 1803.

### XXX

#### NORTHCOTE'S CONVERSATIONS (*continued*)

HAZLITT certainly feared that the want of popularity which Wordsworth suffered in his lifetime would militate against his future fame. "Few persons," he said, "made much noise after their deaths who did not do so while they were living. Posterity could not be supposed to rake into the records of past times for the illustrious Obscure, and only ratified or annulled the lists of great names handed down to them by the voice of common fame. Few people recovered from the neglect or obloquy of their contemporaries. The public would hardly be at the pains to try the same cause twice over, or did not like to reverse its own sentence, at least when on the unfavourable side."

Northcote was of opinion that my grandfather abandoned too hastily the profession of a painter. He said to him, at an early stage of their acquaintance, "I wanted to ask you about a speech you made the other day; you said you thought you could have made something of portrait, but that you never could have painted history. What did you mean by that?" Whereupon Hazlitt observed: "Oh, all I meant was that sometimes when I see a Titian or Rembrandt, I feel as if I could have done something of the same kind with proper pains, but I have never the same feeling with respect to Raphael. My admiration there is utterly unmingled with emulation or regret. In fact, I see what is before me, but

I have no invention." But Northcote thought differently, and considered that his companion might have succeeded if he had tried.

"Who is there," Hazlitt asked, "that admires the author of *Waverley* more than I do? Who is there that despises Sir Walter Scott more? . . . The only thing that renders this *mésalliance* between first-rate intellect and want of principle endurable is, that such an extreme instance of it teaches us that great moral lesson of moderating our expectations of human perfection and enlarging our indulgence for human infirmity. Northcote said to me: '*Mister* Hazlitt, you are more angry at Sir Walter Scott's success than at his servility.'

"I met with a young lady who kept a circulating library and milliner's shop in a watering-place in the country who, when I inquired for the 'Scotch Novels,' spoke indifferently about them, said they were so dry she could hardly get through them, and recommended me to read *Agnes*. I never thought of it before, but I would venture to lay a wager that there are many other young ladies in the same situation, and who think *Old Mortality* dry.

"Those who see completely into the world begin to play tricks with it, and overreach themselves by being too knowing. . . . Fielding knew something of the world, yet he did not make a fortune. Sir Walter Scott has twice made a fortune by descriptions of nature and character, and has twice lost it by the fondness for speculative gains. . . . A bookseller to succeed in his business should have no knowledge of books except as marketable commodities. . . . In like manner a picture-dealer should know nothing of pictures but the catalogue price, the cant of the day. Should a general then know nothing of war, a physician of medicine? No; because this is an art, and not a trick.

“ If put to the vote of all the milliners’ girls in London, *Old Mortality*, or even the *Heart of Mid-Lothian*, would not carry the day (or at least not very triumphantly) over a common Minerva Press novel; and I will even hazard another opinion, that no woman liked Burke. Mr. Pratt, on the contrary, said that he had to ‘boast of many learned and beautiful suffrages.’

“ I was pleased the other day, on going into a shop to ask if they had any of the Scotch Novels, to be told that they had just sent out the last, *Sir Andrew Wyllie* [Galt’s].”

He said he feared that *Sir Andrew Wyllie* would sicken people of him; and he mentioned to Northcote that some one had been proposing to form a Society for *not* reading the “ Scotch Novels.”

Northcote was offended by certain remarks about the Mudges of Plymouth printed in the *Conversations*, and was afraid that Scott would resent the strictures on him.

Referring to Scott, Hazlitt observed:—

“ Enough was said in his praise; and I do not believe he is captious. I fancy he *takes the rough with the smooth*. I did not well know what to do. You seemed to express a wish that the conversations should proceed, and yet you are startled at particular phrases; or I would have brought you what I had done to show you. I thought it best to take my chance of the general impression.”

Godwin was also angry about these personalities. But Hazlitt retorted that he was quite safe from having such freedom used with *him*. He should never think of repeating any of Godwin’s conversations.<sup>1</sup>

He once said to him, in answer to a question, that he liked Sir Walter Scott “on this side of idolatry and Toryism.” Scott reminded him of

<sup>1</sup> See *Memoirs of Hazlitt*, 1867, ii. 211–12.



Cobbett, with his florid face and scarlet gown, like the other's red face and scarlet waistcoat.

"I inquired if he had read *Woodstock*? He answered, 'No, he had not been able to get it.' I said I had been obliged to pay five shillings for the loan of it at a regular bookseller's shop (I could not procure it at the circulating libraries); and that, from the understood feeling about Sir Walter, no objection was made to this proposal, which would in ordinary cases have been construed into an affront. I had well nigh repented my bargain, but there were one or two scenes that repaid me (though none equal to his best), and in general it was very indifferent.

"We begin to measure Shakespeare's height from the superstructure of passion and fancy he has raised out of his subject and story, on which, too, rests the triumphal arch of his fame. If we were to take away the subject and story, the portrait and history from the 'Scotch Novels,' no great deal would be left worth talking about. No one admires or delights in the 'Scotch Novels' more than I do; but at the same time, when I hear it asserted that his mind is of the same class with Shakespeare's, or that he imitates nature in the same way, I confess I cannot assent to it. No two things appear to me more different. Sir Walter is an imitator of nature, and nothing more; but I think Shakespeare is infinitely more than this.

"Have I not seen a household where love was not?" says the author of the *Betrothed*; "where, although there was worth and good-will, and enough of the means of life, all was embittered by regrets, which were not only vain, but criminal? I would take the *Ghost's* words for a thousand pounds, or in preference to that of any man living, though I was told in the streets of Edinburgh that Dr. Jamieson, the author of the *Dictionary*, was quite as great a man.

“Northcote showed me a poem with engravings of Dartmoor, which were too fine by half. I said I supposed Dartmoor would look more gay and smiling after having been thus illustrated, like a dull author who had been praised by a reviewer. I had once been nearly benighted there, and was delighted to get to the inn at Ashburton.”

When Hazlitt was at Calais in 1825, he was offended at a waiter who had misbehaved; and while the fellow was out of the room he tried to “call up a look” against the time he returned. But he found this sort of “previous rehearsal” of no use. When the waiter came back he assumed an expression involuntarily or spontaneously, which made it unnecessary to say anything; and he mentioned afterwards to Northcote that it seemed to him that this was just the difference between good acting and bad, between face-making and genuine passion. For, “to give the last,” he remarked, “an actor must possess the highest truth of imagination, and must undergo an entire revolution of feeling.”

“He asked me if I had seen anything of Haydon? I said yes, and that he had vexed me; for I had shown him some fine heads from the cartoons done about a hundred years ago (which appeared to me to prove that since that period those noble remains have fallen into a state of considerable decay), and when I went out of the room for a moment, I found the prints thrown carelessly on the table, and that he had got a volume of Tasso, which he was spouting, as I supposed, to let me know that I knew nothing of art, and that he knew a great deal about poetry.

“I said I never heard him speak with enthusiasm of any painter or work of merit, nor show any love of art, except as a puffing-machine for him to get up into to blow a trumpet in his own praise. Instead of falling down and worshipping such names as

Raphael and Michael Angelo, he is only considering how he may, by storm or stratagem, place himself beside them, on the loftiest seats of Parnassus, as ignorant country squires affect to sit with judges on the bench. He told me he had had a letter from Wilkie, dated Rome, with three marks of admiration, and that he had dated his answer 'Babylon the Great,' with four marks of admiration. Stuff! Why must he always 'out-Herod Herod'?

"Northcote said that he had just been at Opie's, and that Mrs. Opie had told him how it was that her husband had been compelled to lend Haydon fifty pounds. She said, 'Oh, sir, my husband *could not help* lending it to him—he *would* have it.'"

"He was sure to be unusually entertaining after a morning in Argyll Street," says Patmore, and I know that he would go round to Broad Street on these occasions, and retail to the Reynells all that he had heard—all that Northcote had said to him, and what he said to Northcote back. After a visit to the Montagus it was the same thing.

## XXXI

### “LIFE OF NAPOLEON”—RETROSPECTIONS

HE seems to have had his *Life of Napoleon* in view as early as the summer of 1825, when he was at Vevey. In a conversation with Captain Medwin, who called on him twice while he stayed there, he observed, “I will write a Life of Napoleon, though it is yet too early: some have a film before their eyes, some want magnifying-glasses—none see him as he is, in his true proportions.”

It happened, when the MS. of the second volume was almost ready for the printer, some burglars, who had got at the back of the premises in Half Moon Street, Piccadilly, through Shepherd’s Market, tried to break in, and put Hazlitt into a great state of terror. He posted off the next morning to the *Atlas* office with his MS., and begged that it might be taken care of till the printer wanted it; and he had not even then, when the danger or alarm was all over and his treasure was secure, quite overcome his excitement. I owe this anecdote to a gentleman who was an eye-witness of his arrival, MS. in hand, at the newspaper-office.

To another friend, whom he met with the adventure fresh in his mind, he said, “You know, sir, I had no watch, and they wouldn’t have believed I had no watch and no money; and, by God, sir, they’d have cut my throat.”

The first and second volumes were finished before the end of 1827, when he was overtaken by an illness,

which brought him to London for advice, and then, during some time, confined him to his bed at Winter-slow.<sup>1</sup> He had been working “double tides.”

“I see (as I awake from a short, uneasy doze) a golden light shine through my white window curtains on the opposite wall. Is it the dawn of a new day, or the departing light of evening? I do not well know, for the opium ‘they have drugged my posset with’ has made strange havoc with my brain, and I am uncertain whether time has stood still, or advanced, or gone backward.”

He gradually rallied :

“Returning back to life with half-strung nerves and shattered strength, we seem as when we first entered it with uncertain purposes and faltering aims. . . . Everything is seen through a medium of reflection and contrast. We hear the sound of merry voices in the street ; and this carries us back to the recollections of some country-town or village group—

‘We see the children sporting on the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters roaring evermore.’

A cricket chirps on the hearth, and we are reminded of Christmas gambols long ago. The very cries in the street seem to be of a former date, and the dry toast eats very much as it did twenty years ago. A rose smells doubly sweet after being stifled with tinctures and essences, and we enjoy the idea of a journey and an inn the more for having been bed-ridden. But a book is the secret and sure charm to bring all these implied associations to a focus. I should prefer an old one, Mr. Lamb’s favourite, the *Journey to*

<sup>1</sup> During the last ten years of his life his time, when he was in England, was to a considerable extent passed here. His quarters in town were not usually suited to systematic and continuous literary labour.



*Lisbon*; or the *Decameron*, if I could get it; but if a new one, let it be *Paul Clifford*.

“Food, warmth, sleep, and a book: these are all I at present ask—the *Ultima Thule* of my wandering desires. Do you not then wish for

‘A friend in your retreat,  
Whom you may whisper, solitude is sweet?’

Expected, well enough:—gone, still better. Such attractions are strengthened by distance. Nor a mistress? ‘Beautiful mask! I know thee!’ When I can judge of the heart from the face, of the thoughts from the lips, I may again trust myself. Instead of these, give me the robin red-breast, pecking the crumbs at the door, or warbling on the leafless spray, the same glancing form that has followed me wherever I have been and ‘done its spiriting gently’: or the rich notes of the thrush that startle the ear of winter, and seem to have drunk up the full draught of joy from the very sense of contrast. To these I adhere, and am faithful, for they are true to me; and, dear in themselves, are dearer for the sake of what is departed, leading me back (by the hand) to that dreaming world, in the innocence of which they sat and made sweet music, waking the promise of future years, and answered by the eager throbbings of my own breast.

“But now ‘the credulous hope of mutual minds is o’er,’ and I turn back from the world that has deceived me, to nature that lent it a false beauty, and that keeps up the illusion of the past. As I quaff my libations of tea in the morning, I love to watch the clouds sailing from the west, and fancy that ‘the spring comes slowly up this way.’ In this hope, while ‘fields are dank and ways are mire,’ I follow the same direction to a neighbouring wood,<sup>1</sup> where, having gained the dry, level greensward, I

<sup>1</sup> He must allude to Clarendon Wood, near Winterslow.

can see my way for a mile before, closed in on each side by copse-wood, and ending in a point of light more or less brilliant, as the day is bright or cloudy. What a walk is this to me ! I have no need of book or companion ; the days, the hours, the thoughts of my youth are at my side, and blend with the air that fans my cheek.

“ Here I can saunter for hours, bending my eye forward, stopping and turning to look back, thinking to strike off into some less trodden path, yet hesitating to quit the one I am in, afraid to snap the brittle threads of memory. I remark the shining trunks and slender branches of the birch-trees, waving in the idle breeze ; or a pheasant springs up on whirring wing : or I recall the spot where I once found a wood-pigeon at the foot of a tree, weltering in its gore, and think how many seasons have flown since ‘it left its little life in air.’ Dates, names, faces, come back—to what purpose ? or why think of them now ? or rather, why not think of them oftener ? We walk through life as through a narrow path, with a thin curtain drawn round it ; behind are ranged rich portraits, airy harps are strung—yet we will not stretch forth our hands and lift aside the veil, to catch glimpses of the one, or sweep the chords of the other.

“ As in a theatre, when the old-fashioned green curtain drew up, groups of figures, fantastic dresses, laughing faces, rich banquets, stately columns, gleaming vistas appeared beyond ; so we have only at any time to ‘peep through the blanket of the past,’ to possess ourselves at once of all that has regaled our senses, that is stored up in our memory, that has struck our fancy, that has pierced our hearts : yet to all this we are indifferent, insensible, and seem intent only on the present vexation, the future disappointment. If there is a Titian hanging up in the room

with me, I scarcely regard it ; how then should I be expected to strain the mental eye so far, or to throw down, by the magic spells of the will, the stone walls that enclose it in the Louvre ?

“ There is one head there of which I have often thought, when looking at it, that nothing should ever disturb me again, and I would become the character it represents—such perfect calm and self-possession reigns in it ! Why do I not hang an image of this in some dusky corner of my brain, and turn an eye upon it ever and anon, as I have need of some such talisman to calm my troubled thoughts ? The attempt is fruitless, if not natural ; or, like that of the French, to hang garlands on the grave, and to conjure back the dead by miniature-pictures of them while living ! It is only some actual coincidence, or local association, that tends, without violence, to ‘ open all the cells where memory slept.’ I can easily, by stooping over the long-sprent grass and clay-cold clod, recall the tufts and primroses, or purple hyacinths, that formerly grew on the same spot, and cover the bushes with leaves and singing-birds as they were eighteen summers ago :<sup>1</sup> or, prolonging my walk, and hearing the sighing gale rustle through a tall, straight wood at the end of it, can fancy that I distinguish the cry of hounds, and the fatal group issuing from it as in the tale of *Theodore and Honoria*. A moaning gust of wind aids the belief ; I look once more to see whether the trees before me answer to the idea of the horror-stricken grove, and an air-built city towers over their grey tops—

‘ Of all the cities in Romanian lands,  
The chief and most renown’d, Ravenna, stands.’<sup>2</sup>

“ I return home resolved to read the entire poem

<sup>1</sup> In 1810, when the Lambs were at Winterslow.

<sup>2</sup> Leigh Hunt’s *Story of Rimini*.

through, and, after dinner drawing my chair to the fire, and holding a small print close to my eyes, launch into the full tide of Dryden's couplets (a stream of sound), comparing his didactic and descriptive pomp with the simple pathos and picturesque truth of Boccaccio's story, and tasting with a pleasure, which none but an habitual reader can feel, some quaint examples of pronunciation in this accomplished versifier—

' Which, when Honoria viewed,  
The fresh *impulse* her former fright renewed.'  
—*Theodore and Honoria.*

' And made th' *insult* which in his grief appears,  
The means to mourn thee with my pious tears.'  
—*Sigismonda and Guiscardo.*

These trifling instances of the wavering and unsettled state of the language give double effect to the firm and stately march of the verse, and make me dwell with a sort of tender interest on the difficulties and doubts of an earlier period of literature. They pronounced words then in a manner which we should laugh at now; and they wrote verse in a manner which we can do anything but laugh at. The pride of a new acquisition seems to give fresh confidence to it; to impel the rolling syllables through the moulds provided for them, and to overflow the envious bounds of rhyme into time-honoured triplets.

“What sometimes surprises me in looking back to the past is, with the exception already stated, to find myself so little changed in the time. The same images and trains of thought stick by me: I have the same tastes, likings, sentiments, and wishes that I had then.

“One great ground of confidence and support has, indeed, been struck from under my feet; but I have made it up to myself by proportionable perti-

nacity of opinion. The success of the great cause, to which I had vowed myself, was to me more than all the world. I had a strength in its strength, a resource which I knew not of, till it failed me for the second time :

‘ Fall’n was Glenartney’s stately tree !  
Oh, ne’er to see Lord Ronald more !’

“ It was not till I saw the axe laid to the root, that I found the full extent of what I had to lose and suffer. But my conviction of the right was only established by the triumph of the wrong ; and my earliest hopes will be my last regrets. One source of this unbendingness (which some may call obstinacy) is that, though living much alone, I have never worshipped the echo. I see plainly enough that black is not white, that the grass is green, that kings are not their subjects, and, in such self-evident cases, do not think it necessary to collate my opinions with the received prejudices. In subtler questions, and matters that admit of doubt, as I do not impose my opinion on others without a reason, so I will not give up mine to them without a better reason ; and a person calling me names, or giving himself airs of authority, does not convince me of his having taken more pains to find out the truth than I have, but the contrary.

“ Mr. Gifford once said, ‘ that while I was sitting over my gin and tobacco-pipes I fancied myself a Leibnitz.’<sup>1</sup> He did not so much as know that I had ever read a metaphysical book : was I, therefore, out of complaisance or deference to him, to forget whether I had or not ? Leigh Hunt is puzzled to reconcile the shyness of my pretensions with the inveteracy

<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt did not smoke, nor did he partake, to my knowledge, of gin. Compare the account of Gifford in the *Letter* to him from Hazlitt, 1819, and in the *Spirit of the Age*, 1825 (Hazlitt’s *Works*, i. 363-411 ; iv. 398-410). Mr. Murray has not yet collected Gifford’s works.



and sturdiness of my principles. I should have thought they were nearly the same thing. Both from disposition and habit, I can *assume* nothing in word, look, or manner. I cannot steal a march upon public opinion in any way. My standing upright, speaking loud, entering a room gracefully, proves nothing; therefore I neglect these ordinary means of recommending myself to the good graces and admiration of strangers, and, as it appears, even of philosophers and friends.

“Why? Because I have other resources, or, at least, am absorbed in other studies and pursuits. Suppose this absorption to be extreme, and even morbid—that I have brooded over an idea till it has become a kind of substance in my brain; that I have reasons for a thing which I have found out with much labour and pains, and to which I can scarcely do justice without the utmost violence of exertion (and that only to a few persons): is this a reason for my playing off my out-of-the-way notions in all companies, wearing a prim and self-complacent air, as if I were ‘the admired of all observers’? or is it not rather an argument (together with a want of animal spirits) why I should retire into myself, and perhaps acquire a nervous and uneasy look, from a consciousness of the disproportion between the interest and conviction I feel on certain subjects, and my ability to communicate what weighs upon my own mind to others? If my ideas, which I do not avouch, but suppose, lie below the surface, why am I to be always attempting to dazzle superficial people with them, or smiling, delighted at my own want of success?

“In matters of taste and feeling, one proof that my conclusions have not been quite shallow or hasty, is the circumstance of their having been lasting. I have the same favourite books, pictures, passages,

that I ever had ; I may therefore presume that they will last me my life—nay, I may indulge a hope that my thoughts will survive. This continuity of impression is the only thing on which I pride myself. Even Lamb, whose relish of certain things is as keen and earnest as possible, takes a surfeit of admiration, and I should be afraid to ask about his select authors or particular friends after a lapse of ten years.

“As to myself, any one knows where to have me. What I have once made up my mind to, I abide by to the end of the chapter. One cause of my independence of opinion is, I believe, the liberty I give to others, or the very diffidence and distrust of making converts. I should be an excellent man on a jury. I might say little, but should starve ‘the other eleven obstinate fellows’ out. I remember Mr. Godwin writing to Mr. Wordsworth, that ‘his tragedy of *Antonio* could not fail of success.’ It was damned past all redemption. I said to Mr. Wordsworth that I thought this a natural consequence ; for how could any one have a dramatic turn of mind who judged of others entirely from himself ? Mr. Godwin might be convinced of the excellence of his work ; but how could he know that others would be convinced of it, unless by supposing that they were as wise as himself, and as infallible critics of dramatic poetry—so many Aristotles sitting in judgment on Euripides !

“This shows why pride is connected with shyness and reserve : for the really proud have not so high an opinion of the generality as to suppose that they can understand them, or that there is any common measure between them. So Dryden exclaims of his opponents with bitter disdain—

‘Nor can I think what thoughts they can conceive.’

I have not sought to make partizans, still less did

I dream of making enemies, and have therefore kept my opinions myself, whether they were currently adopted or not.

“To get others to come into our way of thinking we must go over to theirs; and it is necessary to follow in order to lead. At the time I lived here<sup>1</sup> formerly, I had no suspicion that I should ever become a voluminous writer; yet I had the same confidence in my feelings before I had ventured to air them in public as I have now. Neither the outcry *for* or *against* moves me a jot: I do not say that the one is not more agreeable than the other.”

<sup>1</sup> At Winterslow.

## XXXII

### RETROSPECTIONS (*continued*)

“NOT far from the spot where I write I first read Chaucer’s *Flower and Leaf*, and was charmed with that young beauty, shrouded in her bower, and listening with ever fresh delight to the repeated song of the nightingale close by her. The impression of the scene, the vernal landscape, the cool of the morning, the gushing notes of the songstress—

‘And ayen methought she sang close by mine ear’—

is as vivid as if it had been of yesterday, and nothing can persuade me that it is not a fine poem. I do not find this impression conveyed in Dryden’s version, and therefore nothing can persuade me that that is as fine. I used to walk out at this time with Mr. and Miss Lamb of an evening, to look at the Claude Lorraine skies over our heads, melting from azure into purple and gold; and to gather mushrooms, that sprung up at our feet, to throw into our hashed mutton at supper.

“I was at that time an enthusiastic admirer of Claude, and could dwell for ever on one or two of the finest prints from him hung around my little room—the fleecy flocks, the bending trees, the winding streams, the groves, the nodding temples, the air-wove hills, and distant sunny vales—and tried to translate them into their lovely living hues. People then told me that Wilson was much superior to Claude: I did not believe them. Their pictures

have since been seen together at the British Institution, and all the world have come into my opinion. I have not, on that account, given it up. I will not compare our hashed mutton with Amelia's;<sup>1</sup> but it put us in mind of it, and led to a discussion, sharply seasoned and well sustained, till midnight, the result of which appeared some years after in the *Edinburgh Review*.<sup>2</sup> Have I a better opinion of these criticisms on that account, or should I therefore maintain them with greater vehemence and tenaciousness? Oh, no; but both rather with less, now that they are before the public, and it is for them to make their election.

“It is in looking back to such scenes that I draw my best consolation for the future. Later impressions come and go, and serve to fill up the intervals; but these are my standing resource, my true classics. If I had few real pleasures or advantages, my ideas, from their sinewy texture, have been to me in the nature of realities; and if I should not be able to add to the stock, I can live by husbanding the interest. As to my speculations, there is little to admire in them but my admiration of others; and whether they have an echo in time to come or not, I have learned to set a grateful value on the past, and am content to wind up the account of what is personal only to myself and the immediate circle of objects in which I have moved, with an act of easy oblivion,—

‘And curtain-close such scene from every future view.’

“I have since turned my thoughts to gathering up some of the fragments of my early recollections,

<sup>1</sup> In Fielding's novel. He refers to one of the visits which Mr. and Miss Lamb paid to Winterslow in 1809-10. There is a similar reminiscence elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> See Correspondence (1815), *infra*.



and putting them into a form to which I might occasionally revert. The future was barred to my progress, and I turned for consolation and encouragement to the past. It is thus that while we find our personal and substantial identity vanishing from us, we strive to gain a reflected and vicarious one in our thoughts: we do not like to perish wholly, and wish to bequeath our names, at least, to posterity. As long as we can make our cherished thoughts and nearest interests live in the minds of others, we do not appear to have retired altogether from the stage.

“Taking one thing with another, I have no great cause to complain. If I had been a merchant, a bookseller, or the proprietor of a newspaper, instead of what I am, I might have had more money, or possessed a town and country house, instead of lodging in a first or second floor, as it may happen. But what then? I see how the man of fortune and business passes his time. He is up and in the City by eight, swallows his breakfast in haste, attends a meeting of creditors, must read Lloyd’s list, consult the price of consols, study the markets, look into his accounts, pay his workmen, and superintend his clerks.

“He has hardly a minute of the day to himself, and perhaps in the four-and-twenty hours does not do a single thing that he would do, if he could help it. Surely this sacrifice of time and inclination requires some compensation; which it meets with.

“But how am I entitled to make my fortune (which cannot be done without all this anxiety and drudgery), who do hardly anything at all, and never anything but what I like to do? I rise when I please, breakfast *at length*, write what comes into my head, and after taking a mutton chop and a dish of strong tea, go to the play, and thus my time passes. . . . It was but the other day that I

had to get up a little earlier than usual, to go into the City about some money transactions, which appeared to me a prodigious hardship. If so, it was plain that I must lead a tolerably easy life; nor should I object to passing mine over again.

“I am (or used some time ago to be) a sleep-walker, and know how the thing is. In this sort of disturbed, unsound sleep, the eyes are not closed, and are attracted by the light. I used to get up and go towards the window, and make violent efforts to throw it open. The air in some measure revived me, or I might have tried to fling myself out. I saw objects indistinctly—the houses, for instance, facing me on the opposite side of the street—but still it was some time before I could recognize them, or recollect where I was: that is, I was still asleep, and the dimness of my senses (as far as it prevailed) was occasioned by the greater numbness of my memory. . . . I have observed that whenever I have been waked suddenly, and not left to myself to recover from the state of mental torpor, I have been always dreaming of something, *i.e.*, thinking according to the tenour of the question. . . . I never dream of the face of any one I am particularly attached to. I have thought almost to agony of the same person for years, nearly without ceasing, so as to have her face always before me, and to be haunted by a perfect consciousness of disappointed passion; and yet I never in all that time dreamt of this person more than once or twice, and then not vividly. O thou who, the first time I ever beheld thee, didst draw my soul into the circle of thy heavenly looks, and wave enchantment round me, do not think thy conquest less complete, because it was instantaneous; for in that gentle form (as if another Imogen had entered) I saw all that I had ever loved of female grace, modesty, and sweetness!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He probably refers to Miss Windham.

“I should have made a very bad Endymion in this sense; for all the time the heavenly goddess was shining over my head, I should never have had a thought about her. If I had waked and found her gone, I might have been in a considerable *taking*.

“Coleridge used to laugh at me for my want of the faculty of dreaming; and once, on my saying that I did not like the preternatural stories in the *Arabian Nights* (for the comic parts I love dearly), he said, ‘That must be because you never dream. There is a class of poetry built on this foundation, which is surely no inconsiderable part of our nature, since we are asleep, and building up imaginations of this sort half our time.’ I had nothing to say against it: it was one of his conjectural subtleties, in which he excels all the persons I ever knew; but I had some satisfaction in finding afterwards that I had Bishop Atterbury expressly on my side in this question, who has recorded his detestation of *Sinbad the Sailor* in an interesting letter to Pope. Perhaps he, too, did not dream.

“Yet I dream sometimes: I dream of the Louvre—*intus et in cute*. I dreamt I was there a few weeks ago, and that the old scene returned—that I looked for my favourite pictures, and found them gone or erased. The dream of my youth came upon me; a glory and a vision unutterable, that comes no more but in darkness and in sleep; my heart rose up, and I fell on my knees, and lifted up my voice and wept; and I awoke.

“I also dreamt a little while ago, that I was reading the *New Héloïse* to an old friend, and came to the concluding passage in Julia’s farewell letter, which had much the same effect upon me. The words are, ‘*Trop heureuse d’acheter au prix de ma vie le droit de t’aimer toujours sans crime, et de te le dire encore une fois, avant que je meurs.*’

“I used to sob over this passage twenty years ago; and in this dream about it lately I seemed to live these twenty years over again in one short moment. I do not dream ordinarily; and there are people who never could see anything in the *Neve Héloïse*. Are we not quits?

“For myself I do not complain of the greater thickness of the atmosphere as I approach the narrow house. I felt it more formerly, when the idea alone seemed to suppress a thousand rising hopes, and weighed upon the pulses of the blood. I remember once, in particular, having this feeling in reading Schiller’s *Don Carlos*,<sup>1</sup> where there is a description of death, in a degree that almost stifled me. At present I rather feel a thinness and want of support; I stretch out my hand to some object, and find none; I am too much in a world of abstraction; the naked map of life is spread out before me, and in the emptiness and desolation I see Death coming to meet me.

“In my youth, I could not behold him for the crowd of objects and feelings, and Hope stood always between us, saying, ‘Never mind that old fellow!’ If I had lived indeed, I should not care to die. But I do not like a contract of pleasure broken off unfulfilled, a marriage with joy unconsummated, a promise of happiness rescinded.

“My public and private hopes have been left a ruin, or remain only to mock me. I would wish them to be re-edified. I should like to see some prospect of good to mankind, such as my life began with. I should like to leave some sterling work behind me. I should like to have some friendly hand to consign me to the grave. On these conditions I am ready, if not willing, to depart. I shall then write on my tomb—GRATEFUL AND

<sup>1</sup> Probably in Stoddart’s version.

CONTENTED. But I have thought and suffered too much to be willing to have thought and suffered in vain. In looking back, it sometimes appears to me as if I had in a manner slept out my life in a dream of shadow on the side of the hill of knowledge, where I have fed on books, on thoughts, on pictures . . . waked out of this dim, twilight existence, and startled with the parting scene, I have felt a wish to descend to the world of realities, and join in the chase. But, I fear, too late, and that I had better return to my bookish chimæras and indolence once more. *Zanetto, lascia le donne, e studia la matematica.* I will think of it."







William Max Litt's hair.  
cut off the day after his death  
Born 10<sup>th</sup> April 1770  
Died 10<sup>th</sup> September 1830  
Aged 52 years five months  
and eight days

### XXXIII

#### DEATH OF HAZLITT—EARLY FORTUNES OF HIS ONLY CHILD

HAZLITT died at No. 6 Frith Street, Soho, on Saturday, September 18, 1830.<sup>1</sup> His physical strength was thoroughly prostrate, and Procter, who had paid him a visit not long before, was shocked by the sad spectacle of his old acquaintance, once so alert and so strenuous, not only bedridden, but scarcely able to raise his hand above the coverlid, or to utter articulate sounds. But he appears, almost to the last, to have preserved his consciousness and even recollection.

He had during some time suffered from sleeplessness, and his medical advisers, of whom there were three, found it desirable to administer an opiate. At least two locks of his hair, dark brown slightly tintured with grey, were cut off—it is believed by Horne, and one passed into the possession of Mr. Buxton Forman. The other was either begged or received by his first wife—the Sarah Stoddart of 1808—who wrapped it in a piece of paper, and wrote upon it the annexed memorandum: “William Hazlitt’s hair, cut off the day after his death. Born 10th April 1778. Died 18th September 1830. Aged 52 years five months and eight days.”

Curiously enough, in his *Essay On Sitting for One’s Picture*, my grandfather had remarked: “I

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Hazlitt Memoirs*, 1897, i. 197-8. Soho was a wholly different place eighty years since from the existing locality.

think, therefore, that the looking forward to this mode of keeping alive the memory of what we were by lifeless lines and discoloured features is not among the most approved consolations of human life or favourite dalliances of the imagination. Yet I own I should like some part of me, as the hair or even nails, to be preserved entire, or I should have no objection to lie like Whitfield in a state of petrification."

In a letter to Northcote of September 20 my father says: "You have perhaps heard of my poor father's death; he died, I am happy to tell you, most tranquilly. He will be interred on Thursday or Friday. I will come if possible to-morrow. Then shall be able to finish the Appendix to the *Titian*."

In a second letter written by my uncle to his sister in Havre, where some of my mother's family had settled, on the following Tuesday, there is a reference to the loss which his son, his acquaintance, and literature had sustained. "Of the events which have occurred here since your departure," Mr. W. H. Reynell writes, "none will astonish you more, or at least affect you more, than the death of poor Hazlitt; though the uncertain state in which he has been for the last two months ought to have prepared his friends for the worst. It appears, however, from all accounts, that his son has entertained a very different opinion, or at least caused a very different opinion to be entertained. His father died on Saturday, and on Friday William told me that he was much better; and even on the following day (the day he died) gave out that he was in no danger, but that he had *something in his mind*, which would kill him if he did not dispel it. I hear that Mr. Lawrence and another medical man were present, besides Dr. Darling, who had been attending him throughout, and who, they think, had not treated

him judiciously. Mr. Hone called in Broad Street on Saturday afternoon to inform me of the melancholy event. My father will be very much shocked to hear of the departure of his old friend so suddenly."

On his deathbed he intimated a desire to see "Mrs. Hazlitt," and they thought that he meant his first wife, but he referred to his mother down in Devonshire. *On revient toujours à ses premières amours.* The letters of 1790, and his pilgrimage to Peterborough to behold her early home, come back to us. He also mentioned to Lamb with evident satisfaction that his son was engaged to Catherine Reynell. The future of my father had been a source of anxiety to him, and his first wife enlisted the good offices of Lamb in seeking to prevail on him to suggest that he should become a pupil of Braham the singer, Lamb's "Jew, gentleman, and angel." This was early in June 1830. But Hazlitt would not entertain the idea. Martin Burney was consulted, but declined to interfere.

Still he was able to think and write a little. He composed a paper on *Personal Politics*, in view of the then recent deposition of Charles X. and the overthrow of the Bourbon dynasty in France. It was something, he thought, to have been spared to witness *that*. The possibility of their recall occurred to him.

"Even then," he wrote, "I should not despair. The Revolution of the Three Days was like a resurrection from the dead, and showed plainly that liberty too has a spirit of life in it; and that the hatred of oppression is 'the unquenchable flame, the worm that dies not.'"

He was contributing to the *Atlas* down to April 25, 1830, and in the *New Monthly Magazine* down to a few weeks of his death. In the columns of the



latter appeared the *Free Admission* and *The Sick Chamber*. But *Personal Politics* and a paper on *The Emancipation of the Jews*, the latter printed as a pamphlet for Mr. Isaac Goldsmid, who defrayed all the expenses, were the latest fruits of that luxuriant pen.

The evident and fortunate appreciation of Hazlitt, evinced by Jeffrey since 1814, without having till 1822 had the opportunity of meeting him, was signalized in a striking manner in 1818, when the editor of the *Edinburgh Review* befriended him in the threatened litigation with Blackwood, and in 1822 in his proposal to introduce him to Sir Walter Scott. Hazlitt endeavoured to requite in his own way that valuable service by his splendid panegyric in the *Spirit of the Age*. But when Jeffrey had vacated the editorial chair, and reimbursement was out of the question, with characteristic and touching generosity he responded to the appeal of his old acquaintance on his deathbed for £50. Jeffrey's kindness on this occasion won, as Talfourd tells us, Lamb's admiration, nor did it affect the argument that the money arrived too late to be of any use to the applicant himself. But there is no room to question, that adequate, if not ample, means were forthcoming from more than one source for all immediate purposes. Apart from Jeffrey there were Lamb and other staunch friends, and there were articles ready for publication in editors' hands. Besides, his mother had long enjoyed an annuity by arrangement with her brother Sir John Stoddart, and had begun to lay aside a portion, insomuch that I understood in the course of years a sum of £1500 to have accumulated for my eventual benefit; but I never cease to be glad that it was applied for my parents'.

There is a feeling of satisfaction in my own mind and one of undying gratitude, when I am sure that

I need entertain no doubt that my father, deprived under such circumstances of support, without any training, found substantial sympathy, till he was able to stand alone, from such friends as Moxhay (who had a fine house at Stamford Hill, where he kept his famous organ), the Reynells, and the Lambs, who were acquainted with Moxhay,<sup>1</sup> and associated themselves with him in relieving Hone in May of the year (1830).

A remarkable and eloquent tribute to Hazlitt is embodied in the funeral discourse delivered, October 10, 1830, at Crediton by the Rev. J. Johns.<sup>2</sup> As it is the least known of all the posthumous homage, which has fallen under my eyes, I shall transcribe one or two salient passages:—

“A distinguished individual, a stranger but not an alien, will henceforth exist only as a distinguished name. One who had always been an object of attachment to the few,—and who by a strange involution of hostilities has been battling with the Many—while he was contending for Mankind,—has been laid at length in the peaceful resting-place ‘where they shall not learn war any more.’ Brief and sincere may the requiem be, which a stranger breathes over a stranger’s grave. He is gone to his rest, and let it not be broken! In an age, when the general diffusion of knowledge has made it no easy matter for one man to rise greatly above the educated thousands around him, he has been one of those who have achieved the difficult undertaking, and whose thoughts have sparkled upon the topmost waves of the world. He felt it a proud distinction—perhaps he felt it *too* proudly

<sup>1</sup> Lamb's *Letters*, by W. C. Hazlitt, 1886, ii. 356.

<sup>2</sup> *The Season of Autumn, as connected with Human Feelings and Changes.* A Sermon, occasioned by the Death of William Hazlitt. Delivered at Crediton, on Sunday, October 10, 1830. By J. Johns. London, 1830. 8vo., pp. 26.

—to be the owner of a luminous and vigorous mind. . . . But the name of Hazlitt is associated with far nobler recollections. Whatever might be his speculative, whatever his practical errors, he was the fearless, the eloquent, and disinterested advocate of the rights and liberties of Man in every cause and in every clime. His opinions were such as to make him one of a party, whom the brilliant and influential Administration, under which he commenced his career, honoured with no small portion of political and personal hatred. . . . He was neither persecuted, fined, nor incarcerated. But these were the lightest and briefest of the evils which *they* experienced, though to the common eye they might appear the heaviest and the worst. The most active persecution, which the Government could excite against them, was far less lastingly prejudicial and painful, than the cloud of silent obloquy, in which it found means to involve their opinions and their leaders. . . . *Now*, my brethren, the case is widely altered. The hearts of nations have been touched—their minds have been enlightened—their voices have been lifted and heard. But there *was* a time, when he, who dared to advocate those principles, was overwhelmed with a foaming deluge of obloquy and opprobrium. . . .”

The too early close of the career, which it has been the aim of the foregoing pages to outline, is without great difficulty or hesitation traceable up from adolescence to premature old age, if we follow even with a fair degree of attention the course and tenor of Hazlitt's life, and take into account the operation of its incidence on such an intellect and such a temperament. Already, while he yet remained at school, the conflict, which was to have a duration of years, and to grow in intensity and

force, between the studies, with which he aspired to identify himself, and those to which his parents proposed to restrict him, was exercising a most baleful effect on his health and constitution. As a young man he laboured under the twofold disadvantage of possessing very scanty resources and political opinions unacceptable to the Government, with the added drawback of keen, self-protective sensitiveness, a somewhat Celtic irritability, and unswerving tenacity of purpose; and his later days, with some bright, and not a few proud and happy, exceptions, were checkered and shortened by social indiscretions only in part personal to himself—in a larger measure characteristic of the age, but specially prejudicial to one who, descended on both sides from persons of strong physical *stamina*, in his youth had undergone so laborious and exacting an ordeal, and as a politician endured nearly to the end a torturing persecution as cowardly as it was cruel, from the unscrupulous and despicable satellites of the Ministry.

I have thought that it was through Walter Coulson that Hazlitt first heard of the house in York Street, Westminster, which he took in 1812, soon after the birth of my father. It was a spot hallowed by the earlier footsteps of Milton.<sup>1</sup> The new tenant had probably had rather scanty means of furnishing his London home, but it had been made to serve its purpose for several years. The dining-room mantelpiece had been turned to account as a memorandum-book—a sort of tables—for embryonic germs of future essays or articles in the form of pencil hieroglyphs.

Both the Coulsons were regular visitors at my grandfather's in York Street and at John Black's

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently a broker's shop, and long since demolished. An account of it may be found in the *Memoirs of Hazlitt*, 1867.

at Millbank. Walter and Martin Burney were my father's sponsors. But I do not think that he ever derived any benefit from either beyond half-a-crown, which Burney gave him when he was a boy, for singing out of the *British Warbler* a song called *Paddy Cary*. Coulson the surgeon married one of the daughters of Bartrum, the pawnbroker of Elian celebrity. He at first lived in Charterhouse Square and later in Frederick Place, Old Jewry. Brougham, when Chancellor, befriended Walter Coulson by employing him as a parliamentary draughtsman.

When Haydon was once at York Street, and Bentham occupied adjoining premises, he says:—"Both Hazlitt and I looked with a longing eye from the windows of the room at the white-haired philosopher in his leafy shelter, his head the finest and most venerable ever placed on human shoulders."

He would often be seen trotting up and down his garden, his stick Dapple in hand, and generally with one of his admirers or pupils at his side, who had some difficulty in keeping pace with him. This was what he described as "maximizing relaxation and minimizing time." He would say "that he had a great deal to do, and not long to do it in." *Ars longa, vita brevis*. The practice amounted to a sort of Aristotelian Peripatetics.

My father's education had been a good deal neglected. I have heard him say that he attended a school at Isleworth where Creech, the translator of Lucretius, was once the, or a, master, and at a very early period we know that his brother and Mary Lamb gave him occasional instruction. I trace him to two private schools at Tavistock and in London. But he was mainly self-taught. His earliest associations were with the house in York



Street, and the whole of his youth may be said to have been passed under that roof. He was not more than eleven when the relations between his father and mother became strained, and he subsequently divided his time between his various relatives or friends in so casual a manner that it remains to his infinite honour that he lived to win for himself, after many vicissitudes, a handsome professional competence.

His father used to give the child money if he left home in the morning on business, to spend while he was away. The great hall at York Street was his playground; and on these occasions a rather promiscuous circle of acquaintances from the neighbourhood used to be invited in to assist in the outlay of the silver which papa had given with a strict injunction to spend, like the Prince de Condé, who flung indignantly away his young heir's unspent pocket-money that he might grow up with generous notions. It was an almost daily practice on his part to make one of the crowd which yet, as morning succeeds morning, accompanies the Guards to St. James's Palace yard.

My father told me, that when he was quite a little fellow, he went to the house at Millbank, where Walter Coulson and John Black were domiciled together, to spend the day, and going down to the river with a bucket to fetch water for the garden, he fell in, and was rescued by Black's dog.

His father seems to have placed him in 1822 at Mr. Dawson's school in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, and he used to call and see him there, or write to him. He was then eleven years old. In her Diary, 28th June 1822, his mother acquaints us that his father had sent him a sovereign, and had asked Patmore to convey him to Mr. John Hunt's for the holidays. The little fellow was scarcely ever

out of his father's thoughts. Patmore kept him informed.

He says to him: "I would have you make yourself master of French, because you may find it of use in the commerce of life; and I would have you learn Latin, partly because I learnt it myself, and I would not have you without any of the advantages or sources of knowledge that I possessed—it would be a bar of separation between us—and secondly, because there is an atmosphere round this sort of classical ground to which that of actual life is gross and vulgar.

"If you ever marry, I wish you to marry the woman you like. Do not be guided by the recommendation of friends. Nothing will atone for or overcome an original distaste. It will only increase from intimacy; and if you are to live separate, it is better not to come together. There is no use in dragging a chain through life, unless it binds one to the object we love. Choose a mistress from among your equals. You will be able to understand her character better, and she will be more likely to understand yours. Those in an inferior station to yourself will doubt your good intentions, and misapprehend your plainest expressions. All that you swear is to them a riddle or downright nonsense. You cannot by possibility translate your thoughts into their dialect. They will be ignorant of the meaning of half you say, and laugh at the rest. As mistresses, they will have no sympathy with you; and as wives, you can have none with them.

"Women care nothing about poets, or philosophers, or politicians. They go by a man's looks and manner. Richardson calls them 'an eye-judging sex'; and I am sure he knew more about them than I can pretend to do. If you run away with a pedantic notion that they care a pin's point about

your head or your heart, you will repent it too late.

“As my health is so indifferent, and I may not be with you long, I wish to leave you some advice (the best I can) for your conduct in life, both that it may be of use to you, and as something to remember me by. I may at least be able to caution you against my own errors, if nothing else.

“Yet if I were to name one pursuit rather than another, I should wish you to be a good painter, if such a thing could be hoped. I have failed in this myself, and should wish you to be able to do what I have not—to paint like Claude, or Rembrandt, or Guido, or Vandyke, if it were possible. Artists, I think, who have succeeded in their chief object, live to be old, and are agreeable old men. Their minds keep alive to the last. Cosway’s spirits never flagged till after ninety; and Nollekens, though nearly blind, passed all his mornings in giving directions about some group or bust in his workshop. You have seen Mr. Northcote, that delightful specimen of the last age. With what avidity he takes up his pencil, or lays it down again to talk of numberless things! His eye has not lost its lustre, nor ‘paled its ineffectual fire.’ His body is a shadow; he himself is a pure spirit. There is a kind of immortality about this sort of ideal and visionary existence that dallies with Fate and baffles the grim monster Death. If I thought you could make as clever an artist, and arrive at such an agreeable old age as Mr. Northcote, I should declare at once for your devoting yourself to this enchanting profession; and in that reliance should feel less regret at some of my own disappointments, and little anxiety on your account.”

A birthday present, when he completed his eleventh year, was the Boston reprint in 1818 of

the *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*. On the fly-leaf occurs, beautifully written; "William Hazlitt, His book, given him by his father. Sept<sup>r</sup>. 26, 1820;" and in a *Forget-Me-Not* of 1823 there is on the spare leaf reserved for the purpose: "William Hazlitt, jun., from his affectionate Father. Feb<sup>y</sup>. 21, 1823."



WILLIAM HAZLITT THE YOUNGER  
(1811-93).

*From a photograph by Dr. Diamond.*



1890  
1891  
1892

## XXXIV

JOHN HAZLITT, MINIATURIST, &c.

(1767-1837)

IT is regrettable that of JOHN HAZLITT, of whose manly and affectionate character such a charming estimate may be formed from the American Narrative of his sister, and to whom his brother owed so much at the outset of his career, we are able to regain so little. Very few clues to the circumstances which attended his establishment in the Metropolis after the return from America have come under my notice; his representatives are destitute of any memorials of him, nor have I met with a single scrap of his handwriting. As a mere boy he must have acquired an elementary proficiency in the art of painting, and we ascertain that he executed a good deal of work of all kinds during the stay in the States, and that on the settlement of the family at Wem in 1787, he, being then hardly of age, was left behind in London under the charge of his father's tried and loyal friend, Mr. David Lewis, in order to pursue his studies and earn his subsistence. It must have been at this stage of his life that he came in contact with Sir Joshua Reynolds, that is to say, immediately posterior to his return to England.

That he accomplished these objects, married (some time prior to 1793) Miss Mary Pearce of Portsea, of whom there are several miniatures by her husband, and settled in London, is clear enough; but the details are scanty. His progress and success in his calling as a miniaturist must have been extraordinary.

The Pearces or Pierces were said by my father to be connected with Charles Edward Mudie the Librarian, a gentleman of pleasant, unassuming manners, as I understood.

In 1788, only a twelvemonth after his arrival in the Metropolis, he exhibited at the Royal Academy four miniatures after pictures by Sir Joshua in one frame; and he not merely continued to hang his productions down to 1819, but had sufficient interest and reputation to procure the admission of their father's likeness by his younger brother in 1806, and to draw round him many of the eminent literary men and artists of the time. He was a member of the circle which included Godwin, Thelwall, Coleridge, Lamb, Holcroft, Stoddart, and his younger brother. The last quotes his saying, that "no young man thinks he shall ever die," and made it the groundwork of an essay; and Coleridge was struck by his definition of a picture with the palette beside it as "Association, with the glow of production." He was a strongly-built man, like his father, below the middle height. He never wrote any work, but he had literary tastes and good judgment, and at one time he moved in an excellent and wide circle. In politics he was, like his brother, a Liberal of the old school, and also, like him, remained one. Among his professional performances in my hands are the above-named exhibit of 1788, the miniatures of his father and mother, brother, sister, and himself, and many others, particularly a portrait of Charles Kemble, painted in 1807, and a copy on ivory of Sir Joshua's *Robinetta*, of which (then in the possession of the Honourable William Tollemache) there is a well-known print by T. Jones. A miniature of Mrs. Godfrey was formerly in the possession of Lady Berry.

Leaving England as a lad of sixteen, he had remained in America with his parents four years,

and during the last twelvemonth or so followed his profession. Among his transatlantic performances were a pastel two-thirds life size of the Rev. Ebenezer Gay; a second of his sister Margaret, which he permitted her to give to a girl friend; and a study of two wild turkeys.<sup>1</sup> He must have been, to a large extent, self-taught, like his brother; yet when he was a comparatively young man he had secured a connection which enabled him to maintain a household, to receive company, and to remove to more fashionable quarters in Great Russell Street.

This was in 1804, and he notified his change of address in the annexed circular:—

*MR. HAZLITT, Miniature Painter, begs leave respectfully to inform his friends and the public, that he is removed to No. 109, Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, where he flatters himself with a continuance of their favors.*

*He hopes that his miniatures will justify the high encomiums passed upon them by the late Sir Joshua Reynolds, by whom he was warmly recommended to many of his friends before his death.*

*Specimens of his pictures may be seen at his house in Great Russell Street.*

*His price for the usual sizes is seven guineas.*

*Great Russell Street,  
Feb. 20th, 1804.*

This document goes no farther than to state that John Hazlitt's work had met with the approbation of Sir Joshua, which, seeing that several of the specimens were from his own originals, might have been complimentary; but we are expressly informed that the deceased painter recommended his young contemporary to his friends. I have not seen any evidence of the elder Hazlitt having copied Sir Joshua's works in the original size.

<sup>1</sup> In his sister's Diary, 1783-87, are notices of other works during that period.

We gather from the Lamb correspondence certain traits and vestiges of the establishment in Great Russell Street. Lamb, writing to Hazlitt on February 19, 1806, refers to the show-cupboard there, and expresses his high estimation of John's ability. He particularly specifies the miniature of Margaret Hazlitt as having been done prior to this date, and as being of special excellence.

He executed, concurrently with his practice as a miniature-painter, a considerable number of portraits, including several of his brother, one of his sister Margaret, one of Joseph Lancaster (now in the National Portrait Gallery), and one of Thomas Clio Rickman, the bookseller, a kinsman of Lamb's early friend and correspondent; and in the decline of life I believe that, owing to failing sight, he confined himself entirely to this class of work. The likeness in oils of his sister is almost worthy of Romney. In the vestry of St. Stephen's Green Unitarian Church, Dublin, is preserved his portrait of the Rev. Samuel Thomas, an endeared friend of his father. From a letter of the Rev. William Hazlitt written in 1814 we learn that the artist was then at Manchester, possibly on tour through the old familiar country, where both his brother and himself had in former days found so many patrons.

In 1809 his name appears among those who, upon the establishment of the British Institution, applied for permission to copy the old masters, and seven of his pictures were placed on view there. In a letter to Sarah Hazlitt of November 7, this year, Miss Lamb says: "I carried the baby-caps to Mrs. [John] Hazlitt; she was much pleased and vastly thankful. Mr. [John] Hazlitt got fifty-four guineas at Rochester, and has now several pictures in hand."

Some of his miniatures and portraits have been engraved. Among the former I may mention those



of Dr. Kippis, his father's early and steadfast friend, and the well-known editor of the *Biographia Britannica*, executed in the winter of 1787-88, and mentioned with satisfaction in a letter from the doctor to the artist's father, and of Arthur Young, the agriculturist and traveller. Of the portrait of Clio Rickman the print by James Holmes is dated 1800. But an exhaustive catalogue of his works would be a task no longer susceptible of satisfactory treatment.

Lamb, in his letter of February, 1806, to Hazlitt, deprecates the seduction of his brother by *ignes fatui* in the shape of Madonnas. He was then engaged in painting a Virgin and Child from his wife and infant son; and he once undertook a recumbent Aphrodite on an unprecedentedly large canvas from the same models. It furnished a proof of his capacity, at any rate, for producing works small enough to wear as a brooch, or large enough to occupy one side of a room. His portrait of his grandmother, Mrs. Loftus, executed in 1798, when she had attained her ninety-sixth year, was only too realistic, and both in pose and dress lacks the vital quality of selection.

A man of such undoubted genius, working so many years as a miniaturist in a then tolerably fashionable neighbourhood, ought in the very nature of things to have left fuller memorials of his professional life behind him than the entries in the catalogues of the Royal Academy, and such traditional items as have been handed down to his descendants. His political views, which were almost Jacobinical, were as antagonistic to his success as an artist as those of his brother were to his favourable reception by certain sections of the literary world; and the two resembled each other, and the father from whom they derived them, in a radical incapacity for disguising what they felt. It is, moreover, an

open secret that the miniaturist carried the use of stimulants farther than was likely to be conducive to his advantage. It was a prevailing infirmity in those days among the disciples of the Muses.

The name of John Hazlitt does not occur in the lists of the Royal Academy after 1819, and he was clearly at this time in financial straits, for in a letter of July 28, 1820, to my grandfather, his sister states that the miniaturist's wife and children were living with their kinsfolk the Pearces at Portsmouth, and that John Hazlitt himself was talking of going to Glasgow, where there may have been college friends of his father, or his uncle James, still living, in search of professional employment. The situation at that juncture was acute.

The latest actual trace of him in London or in England is in a letter from my grandmother Hazlitt to her son, 26th July, 1824, where she states that he was then lodging in Down Street, Piccadilly, where his brother stayed from that date to 1827, and that he had received a commission from some bookseller, which would involve his absence from England for a time. What it was, the writer did not know, or whether he had left London.

It is uncertain whether his brother, who had experienced uniform kindness at his hands, and who, on setting up house in York Street in 1812, had had an offer of help toward the new establishment, ever actually assisted him in his day of trouble; but he more than once expressed a desire in such a direction. It was evidently a thought constantly in my grandfather's mind, and the allusion to the subject in 1822, when the Scottish business was absorbing his attention, proves the strength and sincerity of the sentiment. He had been of course made aware of the state of affairs in 1820, and it is possible that the miniaturist, when he is said to be living in Down Street, was pro-

visionally his brother's guest there. So late as 1827 he repeated in the paper *On the Feeling of Immortality in Youth* the saying of the artist that "no young man ever thinks he shall die," which he had introduced into that *On the Fear of Death in Table-Talk*, 1821, without naming the source. The sentiment haunted his memory.

My father recollected the cottage which stood above and overlooked the road, about half a mile out of Exeter, where his uncle first went to live on his withdrawal from London. It was a neighbourhood, to which he might have been naturally drawn by the proximity to Crediton or Alphington, where his mother and sister were living about the same time. It was at Exeter that his eldest daughter Harriet, after the death of her first husband, Captain Stewart, met with Mr. Upham, a bookseller, whom she married; and the Uphams may have helped her father. I like to think that they did.

In May, 1832, John Hazlitt removed to Stockport. His inducement to do so was the acquaintance which he enjoyed or formed with the Carlingfords, connections of Harling the artist and a leading family at that time in the town, of whom he might have gained a personal knowledge during his earlier provincial tours. He executed between 1832 and 1837 a considerable number of likenesses and other works, and acquired a reputation for conversational ability, though, like his brother, he was said to be irritable. One of his latest efforts may have been a small crayon of himself, side-face, shewing aged features and grey hair, now with the Hazlitt Collection in the Maidstone Museum. He died at Stockport, May 16, 1837, aged 70.

His London career had extended over about thirty-six years (1788-1824), and we hear of seven addresses: 288 High Holborn; 65 Margaret Street,

Cavendish Square; 139 Long Acre; 6 Suffolk Street, Middlesex Hospital; 12 Rathbone Place; 109 Great Russell Street; and 10 Down Street, Piccadilly.

By his wife he had three children, Mary, Harriet, and William, of whom Mary and William died unmarried. We observe that Harriet, as well as Margaret, was a favourite traditional name in the family. Harriet Hazlitt married twice: Captain Stewart, by whom she had a son James; and Mr. John Upham, by whom there was issue. My father remembers that John Hazlitt's son William, who subsequently emigrated to Barbadoes,<sup>1</sup> and died at Port Louis, Mauritius, in 1885, fitted up on the paternal premises near Exeter a carpenter's shop, where he used to work by way of amusement as a boy. His early lot was a hard one.

WORKS EXHIBITED AT THE ROYAL  
ACADEMY BY JOHN HAZLITT

*Extracted from Royal Academy Catalogues for me by Mr. Redgrave  
(with some additions and corrections)*

288 *High Holborn* :

1788—Frame with four miniatures.

Portrait of a Lady.

Dr. Kippis.

[? Rev. Samuel Thomas of the Unitarian Church,  
St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.]

65 *Margaret Street, Cavendish Square* :

1789—Portrait of a Lady.

139 *Long Acre* :

1790—Portrait of a Young Lady.

Portrait of a Lady.

Portrait of a Lady.

Portrait of a Gentleman.

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<sup>1</sup> See a letter from Grace Hazlitt of July 21, 1824, in the Correspondence, *infra*.

Portrait of an Officer.

Portrait of a Lady.

1791—Portrait of a Gentleman (No. 23, probably in oil).

Portrait of a Lady (No. 26, probably in oil).

Portrait of himself (No. 128, probably in oil).

Portrait of a Lady.

Portrait of a Lady.

Portrait of a Lady.

1792—A frame with ten portraits.

1793—Portrait of a Lady.

1794—Portrait of a Gentleman.

Portrait of a Young Gentleman.

Portrait of a Gentleman.

Portrait of a Lady.

Portrait of a Gentleman.

6 *Suffolk Street, Middlesex Hospital :*

1795—Portrait of a Gentleman.

Portrait of a Young Gentleman.

1796—Portrait of an Artist.

Portrait of a Lady.

1797—Portrait of a Gentleman.

Portrait of a Lady,

Portrait of a Lady.

Portrait of a Lady.

A frame with five miniatures.

1798—A frame containing portraits of Mr. S. Robinson, Mrs. Meadows, Mrs. S. Robinson, Mr. Hardcastle, Mr. Hull, Mr. J. Robinson, Miss Kitchener-Heggars, Mr. N. Robinson.

NOTE.—The Robinson miniatures of 1798 and 1802 were identified by me in the possession of my friend, the Rev. J. C. Foster of Forest Hill, who claims them as his ancestors.

12 *Rathbone Place :*

1799—A frame containing portraits of Mr. Markland, Mr. Satterwaite, Mr. J. Curtis, Mrs. Lloyd, Mr. James.

Portrait of Mrs. Nicholson.

Portrait of Mr. Edridge.

Portrait of Thomas Clio Rickman. Engraved in 1800.



- 1800—A frame with the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Trimbey, Captain Hicks, and others.
- 1801—Portrait of himself.
- 1802—Portrait of Mrs. Hazlitt.  
Portrait of Mrs. Carsburgh.  
Portraits of Mrs. Favell, Mr. S. Robinson, and Mr. N. Robinson.  
Portrait of Mr. Coleridge.  
[*N.B.*—The artist's name is given this year *T. Hazlitt*, but with the above address.]
- 1803—Portrait of himself.  
Portrait of Mr. George.  
Portrait of Mrs. Linwood.
- 1804—Portrait of Miss Jackson.  
Portrait of Mr. W. Smythies.  
An Old Woman.  
Portrait of Miss Hazlitt.  
Portrait of Miss Innes.  
Portrait of his Father.
- 1805—Portrait of a Gentleman.
- 109 *Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury* :  
1806—Portrait of a Clergyman (but *W. Hazlitt* in catalogue).
- 109 *Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury* :  
1807—Portrait of Mr. T. Stackhouse.  
Portrait of Mr. Rickman.  
See Lamb's *Letters*, i. 271.  
Portrait of a Young Lady.  
Portrait of Mr. C. Kemble.  
Portrait of a Young Lady as Maria.  
Portrait of a Young Lady.
- 109 *Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury* :  
1808—Portrait of Mr. Robinson.  
1809—Portrait of Mr. Adams.  
Frame containing the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Humble, Mr. and Mrs. Esdaile.  
Portrait of Dr. Jenner.
- 1810—Portrait of a Young Gentleman.  
Portrait of Miss Hazlitt.  
A frame with portraits of Mr. Francis, Mr. King, Miss Lamb, and a Young Gentleman.

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- Portrait of Mr. Daniel. [? George Daniel of Islington.]  
1811—Portrait of a Young Lady (No. 500, probably in oil).  
1812—Portrait of Rev. Dr. Lindsey (No. 52, probably in oil).  
Portrait of a Gentleman (No. 92, probably in oil).  
Portrait of Mr. King (No. 276, probably in oil).  
Portrait of the Rev. J. Evans.  
1813—Portrait of a Gentleman.  
1814—Nil.  
1815—Portrait of Dr. Bardsley (No. 27, probably in oil).  
Portrait of E. Chesshyre, Esq. (No. 302, probably in oil).  
Portrait of Rev. T. Morgan (No. 373, probably in oil).  
1816—Nil.  
1817—Portrait of Right Hon. the Lord Mayor (No. 380, probably in oil).  
1818—Portrait of Rev. Mr. Coates (No. 374, probably in oil).  
1819—Portrait of a Gentleman (No. 429, probably in oil).  
1820-1828—Nil.
- 

In 1801 Mrs. Hazlitt lost her mother, Mrs. Loftus, of Wisbeach, who lived to be ninety-nine, and had her portrait painted at ninety-six by John Hazlitt. Mrs. Loftus lived latterly at Peterborough, where she sat for her picture, and where she died.

My grandmother Hazlitt, of whom many particulars are furnished in the present volume and elsewhere, was during many years troubled by rheumatism, which somewhat affected the use of her fingers in sewing, knitting, and writing, and became a diligent reader of books (often loans from friends). The circulating library system was yet an imperfect development. I remember her staying with us at Alfred Place, Old Brompton, about 1840.

She had then nearly lost the use of her hands. She died in 1842-43 at Mrs. Penny's, No. 4 Palace Street, Pimlico, whither she had been probably attracted in the first instance by the neighbourhood of the Reynells, and was buried in the churchyard of St. John's, Abingdon Street, Millbank.

Peggy Hazlitt died at Liverpool, in 1844, at the house of the Rev. J. Johns, and lies buried there.

Certain particulars of Margaret or Peggy Hazlitt, the only sister of the painter and of the critic and artist, all three, as I have shown, more or less gifted with the same taste and power, were furnished in the *Memoirs* of 1867; and a few corrections of that account appeared in a small volume entitled *Lamb and Hazlitt*, 1900. I have since obtained yet farther information<sup>1</sup> so far as Miss Hazlitt's connection with the Emmetts is concerned. Hence it appears that the Hazlitts met Miss Catharine Emmett at Bath, while the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt held the ministry there, that this lady was the daughter of Temple Emmett, eldest brother of Robert Emmett, that she executed her will in 1815, leaving Peggy Hazlitt for her life the interest of £500, and that she died at Lower Swanswick, near Bath, in 1824-25, unmarried. The source of the sympathy and tie between the two families, subsequently to the formation of an acquaintance, is tolerably obvious. There was the common Irish blood and the common republican leaning. Henry Irving projected a drama on the story of Robert Emmett, and employed some one to work it up, but the Fenian excitement was then high, and the Lord Chamberlain requested that it might not be brought on the stage.

The career of my great-aunt had been, it is to

<sup>1</sup> From Miss Guiney, who communicated to me matter recently inserted in a pamphlet printed at Dublin in 1902.

be feared, sadly undiversified with the exception of the four years spent in America during her girlhood and occasional visits to London, when she appears to have stayed with her brother. In 1790 she was almost certainly there, and there is evidence that she took the opportunity of revisiting Maidstone, as she in her *Narrative* apprises us that she did long after the departure of the family in 1780.

The Rev. D. D. Jeremy wrote to me in 1897: "When thirty-seven years ago I settled in Dublin, I became intimately acquainted with an old lady aged ninety-six, and her daughter aged seventy-six, from whom I heard a great deal that was interesting about the Hazlitts.<sup>1</sup> The old lady was a daughter of Mr. Swanwick, a prominent member of your great-grandfather's congregation at Wem. If I remember aright, the ladies used to speak of Miss Margaret Hazlitt as being highly gifted, like her brother, and very artistic."

A sentiment of deep and hearty regard, blended with admiration, was shared by others, and long survived the period of youth and the American experience. For in a letter from Catharine Emmett to her cousin Elizabeth, dated February 27, 1817, while our family was living near Bath, the writer says: "Most grateful do I feel for having met with a friend such as my dear Miss Hazlitt, who can feel and allow for all my weaknesses. We are now, together with her good Father and Mother, residing on Combe Down, near the town of Bath. . . . My dear Miss Hazlitt could tell you how often our conversation is of New York. As to company, we see none. Our enjoyments are totally of the domestic kind."

<sup>1</sup> See Correspondence under August 6, 1790. The lady was probably Mrs. Hincks, who had been Susan Swanwick.

## XXXV

### THE STODDARTS AND MONCRIEFFS

JOHN STODDART and his sister Sarah were the children of Lieutenant John Stoddart, R.N., a retired and disappointed Navy man, then resident in St Ann's Street, Salisbury, who had inherited or acquired a small property at a neighbouring village called Winterslow, including Middleton Cottage, of which a drawing by Hazlitt was made on cardboard in 1808. Lieutenant Stoddart lived at Salisbury upon his half-pay and the proceeds of his independence, and with him his wife and daughter,<sup>1</sup> of whom the latter, in 1808, became the wife of William Hazlitt.

Stoddart received his early education at the school in Salisbury Close, where the under-master was the Rev. E. Coleridge, an elder brother of the poet and philosopher, and this circumstance may be fairly taken to have been the channel through which Stoddart was introduced to the Lambs and the Hazlitts. He and John Hazlitt were extreme Liberals in politics; and Charles Richardson the lexicographer used to say that he could remember Stoddart when he went all lengths in Radicalism, and wore the Phrygian cap. John Hazlitt never swerved from his faith, but Stoddart did. In his younger days he was a member of the *Lunar Society*,

<sup>1</sup> The sole relic of him in our possession is his mahogany sea-chest. But there was evidently a sort of library, and his daughter owned a book-label bearing the inscription: "S. Stoddart, St. Ann's Street, Sarum."



otherwise *Lunatics*, to which social club his intimate friend Sir Benjamin Brodie, James Watt, Joseph Priestley, and others belonged. The meetings were held at the full moon. In 1798 he had formed the acquaintance of Holcroft, to whom he sent a copy of his translation of Schiller's *Don Carlos* in that year, and on August 5 he was invited to dine with Holcroft, and met Pinkerton and Godwin. His host says in his *Diary*: "Stoddart, as usual, acute, but pertinacious and verbose."

Stoddart, who had a son of the same name, a colonial judge and knight, married Isabella, daughter of the Rev. Sir Henry Wellwood Moncrieff, Bart., of whom there is an edifying mention in Cockburn's *Memorials*. I have a perfect recollection of her. She published several tales, chiefly illustrative of Scottish life and character, under the name of M. Blackford. He had a genealogical tree, in which it was proved that the Moncrieffs were one of three families exclusively entitled to trace their descent from Charlemagne.<sup>1</sup>

In 1803 Stoddart, who had entered at Lincoln's Inn, and subsequently at Doctors' Commons, was appointed, by the influence of Sir William Scott, King's Advocate at Malta, and upon his departure to that island his sister accompanied him on a visit. In 1826 he was made Chief Justice and Judge of the Vice-Admiralty Court of Malta, and was knighted. He resigned in 1839, and survived till 1856.

By experience perhaps rather than natural temperament a cautious man, he was not exempt in earlier life from perpetrating a few tactical mistakes. One of them was the establishment of the *New Times*, of which Hazlitt said that, if any one

<sup>1</sup> An heraldic specialist wrote to me from Plymouth to state that the Reynells, my mother's family, had the great Frankish emperor for their forefather. So I am doubly imperial.

wanted to keep a secret, the best plan was to put it in the columns of his relative's paper, which proved a failure, although it continued in print during some years. The *New Times* professed to be unconnected with the paper called *The Times*, which Stoddart had edited from 1812 to 1816, and was published every morning at six o'clock, price sevenpence. The first number, called No. 5415, appears to have been issued January 1, 1818. It preserved the original name till October 4, 1828, when the title was changed to *The Morning Journal*. The latter seems to have ceased on May 13, 1830; but Stoddart must have severed his connection with the enterprise many years prior.

Besides the *Don Carlos*, Stoddart in 1797 translated from the French of Joseph Despaze an Account of the Committee of Public Safety, consisting of Barras and four others (*Les Cinq*). His work on *Scotish Scenery*, 1801, with aquatint engravings, was inscribed to the Duchess of Gordon, and he testifies the obligations under which his family lay to her Grace. It seems that he paid her a visit on the occasion of his tour through the Highlands. He amused his old age with philological researches and publications, of which his limited acquaintance with languages weakened the value. He was a thoroughly upright man, and like his sister, methodical. And it was from this source that came, I feel sure, all the virtues of that class which may belong to us.

He was the *Dr. Slop* of one of Hone's political squibs—a name borrowed from *Tristram Shandy*—and the Dominie Stoddart of the *Fudge Family in Paris*. I presume that he is the "Scotch doctor" mentioned by Lamb in a letter to Manning of August 31, 1801.

Well-executed plaster busts of Sir John and

Lady Stoddart, most probably modelled at Malta about 1825, are in the Maidstone Museum as part of my recent donation of Hazlitt heirlooms in memory of my grandfather, a Maidstone man.

From a document dated January 10, 1803, we might infer that at that date Lieutenant Stoddart was dead, as three heads of him, *done from description*, are enumerated among paintings executed by Hazlitt prior to that date.<sup>1</sup> His wife survived him. He was interred in St. Martin's Churchyard.

At any rate within a very brief interval Miss Stoddart had lost her father, and in a letter to Manning of February 26, 1808, Lamb takes occasion to say, "A treaty of marriage is on foot between William Hazlitt and Miss Stoddart. Something about settlements only retards it. She has somewhere about £80 a year, to be £120 when her mother dies. . . ." We hear no more of Mrs. Stoddart; but the expected event did not take place till the following May.

It had been intended that my grandfather and Miss Stoddart should be married at Winterslow, and a good deal of discussion arose in the correspondence between the bride and Miss Lamb as to details; but Miss Stoddart's brother overruled the plan, and was probably instrumental in procuring a special license from Doctors' Commons, dated four days prior to the performance of the ceremony. All the particulars have been long made public. The breakfast was at Stoddart's, the honeymoon at Winterslow.

The licence for the marriage, however, has only just been recovered, and although it is a stereotyped formula, yet, the circumstances considered, I may be forgiven for inserting it.

<sup>1</sup> *Lamb and Hazlitt*, 1900, p. 73.

**Charles** by Divine Providence, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England and Metropolitan, by the Authority of Parliament lawfully empowered for the purposes herein written: To our wellbeloved in Christ, William Hazlitt of the Parish of Saint Andrews, Holborn, in the County of Middlesex, a Bachelor, and Sarah Stoddart of the Parish of Winterslow, in the County of Wilts, a Spinster.

GRACE AND HEALTH. **Whereas** ye are it is alledged resolved to proceed to the solemnization of true and lawful Matrimony, and that you greatly desire that the same may be solemnized in the Face of the Church; We being willing that these your Desires may the more speedily obtain a due Effect, and to the End thereof, that this Marriage may be publicly and lawfully solemnized in the Parish Church of Saint Andrews, Holborn, London, by the Rector, Vicar, or Curate thereof, without the Publication or Proclamation of the Banns of Matrimony.

[Then follow 13 lines of Conditions of a Special License.]

**Given** under the Seal of our **Office of Faculties** at Doctors' Commons, this Twenty-Sixth Day of April, in the Year of our Lord, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eight, and in the Fourth Year of our Translation.

CHAS. MOORE, Reg<sup>r</sup>.

(Endorsed on the back thus)—M<sup>d</sup>. May 1st, 1808.

C. PRYCE.

Assuming the traditional view of the Scottish genesis of the Hazlitts to be correct, the new Stoddart alliance bore a promise, after two centuries, of preserving and strengthening certain elements in the character of the family already benefited by the Loftus union of 1766, and to be farther so by the Reynell one of 1833.

The family connection with the Stoddarts, begun in 1808, certainly tended to infuse into the Hazlitt blood a taste for formality and method; for my grandmother, with all her inattention and repugnance to domestic matters, was by no means destitute of

a love of order, and her brother John was a precisian. The Celtic element may have been thought by some to predominate hitherto too exclusively, to the disadvantage and sacrifice of what are understood as the conventional gentilities. My great-grandfather was an Irishman, and my grandfather after him; nor am I quite positive that the Irish blood is extinct in us to this day. My father inherited from his uncle certain old-fashioned ways, which he unsuccessfully endeavoured to instil into me; he possessed the idea that persons of rank expected to have letters, addressed to them by those in an inferior position, left at their doors by hand, and not sent through the post. I have frequently acted as the messenger on these occasions, and, until I became a free agent, had only in Oriental fashion to hear and obey.

Stoddart and his sister were equally remarkable for their florid complexions, and my father in his younger days favoured his uncle and mother in this respect. Hazlitt on one occasion, being vexed with his son, then a youth of about eighteen, called him an apple-face. He preserved this characteristic long enough for me to carry it down with me as a vivid recollection. Gladstone was forestalled in one respect by Stoddart, who prolonged his life, as he thought, by taking at table thirty bites to a mouthful. Agreeable companions!

One of Stoddart's sons, the Rev. W. Wellwood Stoddart, of St. John's College, Oxford, where a portrait in oils of him is preserved, was a particular friend of Thackeray. There is a copy of *Esmond*, with the inscription: "Rev<sup>d</sup>. W. W. Stoddart, with the Author's affectionate regards, October 28, 1852, W. M. T." But Thackeray had given Stoddart his *Irish Sketch-Book*, 1843.

The circle which gathered round William Wellwood Stoddart, whom I personally remember, was,



with the exception of Thackeray, composed of men of academic repute, transient luminaries, who were held by their contemporaries not greatly inferior to the author of *Vanity Fair*. Stoddart and Thackeray became acquainted in very early days—they already knew each other in 1829. Through my father I knew Hine and Seth Watson, two intimates of the Stoddarts, the latter associated in my mind solely with his humorous rendering of *το παρ* into *the footbath*.

There is a note from Thackeray to John Frederic Boyes of 1829, from 7 Charterhouse Square, when the former was a youth of seventeen, referring to a brace of wine and supper parties at Oxford, accompanied by a pen-and-ink drawing by Thackeray of one of those meetings. To those jovial gatherings Stoddart owed his comparatively early death, and perhaps they did not confer much benefit on any one concerned. Boyes married Stoddart's widow.

Sumner, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was related to the Stoddarts, while still a curate obtained an appointment as tutor to a young nobleman, and was his bear-leader to Paris. There the pupil became enamoured of a young lady, and engaged himself to her, to the utter discomfort of his mother. Sumner was charged to break off the match at any cost, and told that, if he succeeded, his promotion in the Church would be secured. Great difficulty was experienced in achieving the desired object for the family; but at last Sumner prevailed, and married the girl himself to make sure that his negotiation should not miscarry. This episode is said to have laid the foundation of the fortunes of his brother of Winchester and himself.

## XXXVI

### THE REYNELLS

THE Reynells of Devonshire, who intermarried with the Carews, were a notable family in that county, and owners of large estates down to the end of the seventeenth century. They claim Walter Reynolds, the Walter de Reynel of Hume, as a progenitor. According to Lysons (*M. B. Cornwall*, 187), citing Polwhele, Walter Reynell was Castellan of Launceston Castle under Richard I.

The name has been variously spelled. A John Reynwell was sheriff and alderman of London in 13 Henry IV. and 7 Henry V.<sup>1</sup> But I see that one John Reynell, a Frenchman, is described<sup>2</sup> as naturalised in 11 Henry VI., and as in that king's service.

A sermon by John Preston at the funeral of Josiah Reynell, Esquire, 1615, is dedicated to Sir Thomas, Sir George, and Sir Carew Reynell, Knights, and to Mr. Richard Reynell.

In 1625, Sir Richard Reynell sumptuously entertained Charles I., when two of his sons were knighted; and one of the family, Carew Reynell, whose portrait was engraved by Faithorne, published a poem of some interest on the Restoration in 1660, as well as a very sensible volume called *The True English Interest* in 1674. His contemporary and probable relative, Edward Reynell, Rector of East Ogwell, also distinguished himself as the biographer of his kinswoman, Lady Lucy Reynell, and by other works.

<sup>1</sup> Riley's *Memorials*, 1868, pp. 586-7, 667.

<sup>2</sup> *The Case of Robert Calvin, &c.*, 1705.

Jane, sole daughter of the above-named Sir Richard, married Sir William Waller, the parliamentary general. They were both interred at Bath, where there is a fine altar-tomb with their children kneeling round them. The Rector of Wolborough, a Reynell, was the first in England, it has been said, to proclaim William of Orange. It is mentioned in *England's Gazetteer*, 1751, that at East Ogwell, a mile from Newton Friars, was the seat of Richard Reynell, Esq.<sup>1</sup> The Reynells intermarried at an early date with Hunt of Exeter.

Mr. Henry Reynell, born in 1746, had been apprenticed to the King's printer in the Savoy, and subsequently acquired the business of Mr. Towers in Piccadilly, whose premises he considerably enlarged. He was one of the sons of Dr. Richard Reynell, of Air Street, medical officer to the parish of St. James, in which appointment he was succeeded by his son Carew.

Dr. Reynell's house in Air Street was, I understood from his grandson, on the right-hand side as one formerly went from Piccadilly—one of those with bow-windows. Here he occasionally entertained at dinner his relatives, the Bishop of Londonderry; the Bishop's son, Precentor of Down and Connor, and other eminent connections. The doctor published three professional tracts between 1735 and 1743, the last-named a communication to the *Philosophical Transactions*.

Mrs. Henry Reynell was Rebecca, daughter of the Precentor. Both her husband and herself were of the Reynells of Ogwell and Newton Abbot. A portion of the family property had gone through heiresses to the Courtenays of Powderham Castle, a portion to the Davys of Creedy Park, a portion to the Packs, and finally some to the Taylors and

<sup>1</sup> See farther in my *Roll of Honour*, 1908, v. *Reynell*.

Whitbreads, of which latter stock, including Lady Elizabeth Whitbread, there are portraits by Hoppner and Reynolds.

In the old drawing-room over the office, and looking on Piccadilly, were long preserved an interesting series of family portraits, including Sir George Reynell, Marshal of the King's Bench *temp.* James I., of whom there is a very curious glimpse in the *Economy of the Fleet*, with an account of the mutiny there in 1620; the Right Honourable Sir Richard Reynell, Chief Justice of Ireland *temp.* William III.; the Bishop of Londonderry, and the Precentor of Down and Connor. Most, or all of these, are still in the possession of representatives of the family. But the likenesses from the hands of the two masters above mentioned belonged to the Whitbreads, till they were quite recently sold by auction.

The Earl of Abingdon, to whom the printer was distantly related, called on him here, inspected the little picture-gallery, and borrowed the family pedigree, which he did not return.

Mr. H. Reynell was the first member of his ancient house who had been engaged in trade, and both his wife and himself were quite members of the old school in dress and deportment. Mrs. Reynell considered it a degradation to have to go into her kitchen, and not to ride in her coach. She died of whooping-cough in 1807, her husband in 1811. My uncle Reynell recalled the small episode of tripping over his own cloak—a rather longer one than usual probably—when he attended his grandmother's funeral as a child of ten. The old lady's great affection for him may have fixed the matter in his memory. There are in the hands of the family attractive pastels of both, and they have the thorough old-world, feudal look. Mr. Reynell is represented in his tie-wig, which used to be regularly dressed for him by his old



servant Molly. The house was demolished in 1817 to make room for the *New Street*, as it was originally called—the modern Regent Street—and the business was removed to Broad Street, with which the important and intimate associations between the Reynells and ourselves are identified.

Mr. Henry Reynell used to buy his fruit and vegetables in Carnaby Garden, as he called it—Carnaby Market, Broad Street—behind the present Regent Street. His death has been described to me as probably accelerated by the villainous drainage of the locality and the insanitary atmosphere of the business premises. One of the delectable features of the place in those days was the practice of “bishoping the balls”—that is, of steeping the balls, which were employed to ink the rollers, in *urine* to keep them moist. The process was a sort of baptism, and the term perhaps owed itself to the resentment of the printers at the old animosity of the episcopal order against the typographical art, of which they foresaw the fatal influence.

Cardanus Rider's Almanacs were still in vogue in Mr. Reynell's time. I have seen one of 1786 which belonged to him, on one of the interleaves of which he has written, “Reynell, 21 Piccadilly.”

The old office, where the shop of Messrs. Swan and Edgar now stands or immediately thereabout, had been originally of very humble pretensions, and acquired only by degrees the area and importance which it eventually possessed by taking in the adjoining tenements. But the site had been partly occupied since 1735 or so by the Black Bear Inn, which was flanked on the eastern side by a narrow court leading into a labyrinth of mean streets in the rear. The printing premises, prior to 1817, extended back into Castle Street. On the other side of Piccadilly was a second hostelry, the *White*



*Bear*, where in a Guide-Book of 1839 the *Balloon* coach from Maidstone is described as stopping. Mr. Henry Reynell not only enlarged the building, but added a storey; and in his time (1780–1811) it was an old-fashioned house two or three steps above the footway, which was still more or less at its original level, with a bow-window on either side of the door, something like Fribourg's old snuff-shop at the top of the Haymarket, only that the bars to the basement windows, instead of being perpendicular, were oblique. The exact situation of the buildings on this spot has been slightly changed, but his grandson thought that Mr. Henry Reynell's printing-office stood almost precisely where the stationer's shop now is.

Here during a long series of years were printed Weatherby's *Racing Calendar*, and the Bellman's verses for St. James's, Westminster, of which latter there are extant some early examples. It was here also that Jeremiah Whitaker Newman, at first a Foxite, and afterward a Tory, printed his *Lounger's Commonplace Book* (1805–7), a favourite book of my mother's, conditionally on the preservation of the strictest *incognito*. Nor was his name known even to Mr. Reynell at the time. He passed among the staff as "The Lounger." I understand that Mr. Reynell met Newman casually in a stage-coach, and there discovered his vocation, whereupon he called in Piccadilly, and employed my relative to print the books for him.

As a place of business this was during, perhaps, more than half a century one of the leading firms at the West End. The waggons used to bring orders from all parts, and take the work, when completed, to its destination. My uncle Reynell vividly recollected them standing opposite his grandfather's premises with six or eight horses furnished

with bells, and the driver in his smock-frock, with a whip long enough to enable him to reach the leaders. It was a picturesque sight. Hazlitt, in the *Letter Bell*, says: "The finest sight in the metropolis is that of the mail-coaches setting off from Piccadilly; the horses paw the ground, and are impatient to be gone, as if conscious of the precious burden they convey."

A depôt for military accoutrements lay a few doors off. It had been established by Mr. Hawkes, whose name is still preserved. It was there that Mr. H. Reynell's eldest son took lodgings for his young wife and himself in 1797.

John Hunt was apprenticed to Mr. Henry Reynell, and in his *Autobiography* his brother Leigh speaks of the printer's iron voice calling up the tube. It was this early association between the two families which led to important results in the succeeding century.

George Frederick Cooke, who preceded Edmund Kean, and played many of Kean's parts at a certain distance, worked originally as a journeyman in the office; he left it to go on the stage, and he made his name in Dublin. It is still well recollected that, after his acquisition of celebrity, Cooke took the earliest occasion when he came to London of paying his respects to his old employer.<sup>1</sup>

Next to Mr. Reynell's westward (No. 22 Piccadilly) lay a house on the first-floor of which was preserved William Bullock's London Museum and Pantherion, partly formed out of the Leverian at Liverpool. Of this there is a Catalogue, doubtless by the proprietor, printed in an octavo volume, 1814.

Bullock had shot some of the specimens himself. He told my grandfather Reynell that he once brought home from Norway a pony so diminutive that he

<sup>1</sup> See Correspondence, *infra*.

conveyed it to his place from the ship in a hackney coach. He afterward removed to the Egyptian Hall; and at a later date, when a very old man, he had a small catalogue printed of a collection of pictures he had for sale. He was then residing at Bristol.

He seems to have been the first to introduce the practice of presenting the fauna in their natural aspects as far as possible—the monkeys on trees, &c. His collection was very select, but limited. The first object which met the eye was a deer with a boa coiled round its body. The room was fitted with cases for birds, smaller animals, and other items, and in the centre were grouped the larger specimens.

The house of Swan & Edgar was founded by Mr. Swan, one of the staff at Flint's establishment, Grafton House, Newport Market, the favourite shop a century ago. People came from long distances to make their purchases there. It is an apt illustration of the more frugal notions of many well-to-do folks in former days, that some ladies at Chiswick in good circumstances were in the habit of walking from Chiswick to Flint's and back again, and only partook of a bun and a glass of water by way of refreshment. Of course, there were no cheap conveyances, and they did not happen to keep a carriage.

Mr. Carew Henry Reynell, my maternal grandfather, married Miss Ann Constance Hammond<sup>1</sup> of Hounslow, Mr. John Hunt, Leigh Hunt's elder brother, becoming the husband of her sister. The Hammonds were at one period tolerably prosperous corn-factors at Woodbridge in Suffolk, and were connected in blood with the Riddleys of Bury St. Edmunds, who had a tan-yard, and were in good circumstances. It is a sort of coincidence that

<sup>1</sup> See Correspondence under 1797.

the Hazlitts of Antrim (before their removal to the south of Ireland) were flax-factors, and in the south set up a tan-yard.

My grandfather Reynell was absolutely destitute of sentiment toward the existing relics and memorials of his family. He had in his possession by accident the portraits which I have just specified; but when his cousin, the Rev. Henry Reynell, of Hornechurch, offered to enlarge the collection by presenting him with those which he held, Mr. Reynell took no action in the matter, and the paintings were probably thrown into the market. Even if they still exist, they may be unrecognisable; yet, like those formerly in Piccadilly, they portrayed personages belonging to an eminent Devonshire race, and were possibly from the hand of Sir Godfrey Kneller or some other distinguished artist. Apropos of Kneller, a desk, which I have seen at the Reynells' office, was said to have belonged to him.

His son, who, as a printer, was in constant relationship with the publishers of the works of Byron, Shelley, Keats, Leigh Hunt, and in some instances with the writers themselves, frequently lamented his neglect to preserve the manuscripts which passed through his hands, and which were generally destroyed. So little did that generation foresee the value which we, with all the development of American enthusiasm, would set on such relics.

The Reynell family was acquainted through the Hunts with Benjamin West, R.A., who, as well as Copley, has been already mentioned in the American Diary of 1783-87, and who eventually resided in Newman Street, Oxford Street, in the house subsequently occupied by Kirby the chemist. Kirby's shop had been West's book-room. It and the rooms upstairs as well were still adorned in 1890 with

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CATHERINE REYNELL

*After the picture by West.*

the handsome mantelpieces belonging to the house in the artist's time. But West lodged, when he first came over from America, at the *White Bear*. My uncle Reynell recollected being taken as a boy to call on West with Mr. Robert Hunt; and in the picture of the *Centurion and his Family*, the centurion was painted from Mr. John Hunt, and the young girl in the foreground from my mother, then about eight years old. This was about 1812. His juvenile sitter wears a rather nervous and wistful expression.

Charles Kemble used to say that my mother, whom he knew in her youth, would have made a capital Lady Teazle. She was remarkable in her youth for beauty and graceful dignity, and she preserved much of these to the last. She was the best of wives and of mothers. I possess, and greatly value for her sake, the accompanying pencil drawing of her by William Mulready, taken when she was about five-and-twenty.

Her moral influence over my father, who was left very young at Hazlitt's death in 1830, and her excellent domestic training, accomplished, I am sure, wonders for her husband and for all of us. It is to her frugality and intelligence that I feel myself indebted beyond the power of repayment, for while her practical observance of home lessons did so much to save her husband from ruin, her precept and example have been through life a precious treasure to myself. A worthless adventurer named Fancourt, a major in the Army, a member of Parliament and of the Garrick Club, and a friend of Tom Duncombe, was only one of many who called at our house and endeavoured to swindle my father, and might have done so, had my mother not stood in the way.

My grandfather had left his only son without provision of any kind. The scanty resources on

which his own young home at Wem had been perforce maintained, and the sparing expenditure, to which he was accustomed, even when he had quitted the paternal roof, and until he met Mr. Thomas Wedgwood and his connection with the press proved remunerative, gave place in a not unusual manner to habits of prodigality and improvidence. Perhaps the recompense, which came to his son in 1854, was barely adequate to the load of anxiety which he suffered in the interval, and certainly in one respect the boon arrived too late; for, had it been conceded ten years sooner, it might have saved my mother from a premature grave. She was our good genius through all our troubled times, and was only spared, as it were, to look for a short season on the land of Canaan. I feel confident, from what my mother once told me, that her husband did his best in those early days of trial and straits, before I understood how narrow and how precarious were our means, to sustain her courage and his own. There was one occasion, when he was unusually silent and thoughtful, and when, at length, he owned to her that he had lost his engagement on the press and their only source of livelihood. I am relating over again the experience of many and many—of some whose careers have been full of such incidents to heartbreaking.

I remember that, when I was a boy, my mother mentioned to me how she had complained to my grandmother Reynell that my weight, when she carried me, made her arms ache, and how my grandmother replied, "Never mind, my dear, so long as he never makes your heart do so." Writing fifty years after her death, her memory is a weight on mine, and a sweet if a sad one.

I was baptized rather later than usual at Stowmarket in Suffolk by Mr. Bedingfield, a connection



CATHERINE REYNELL

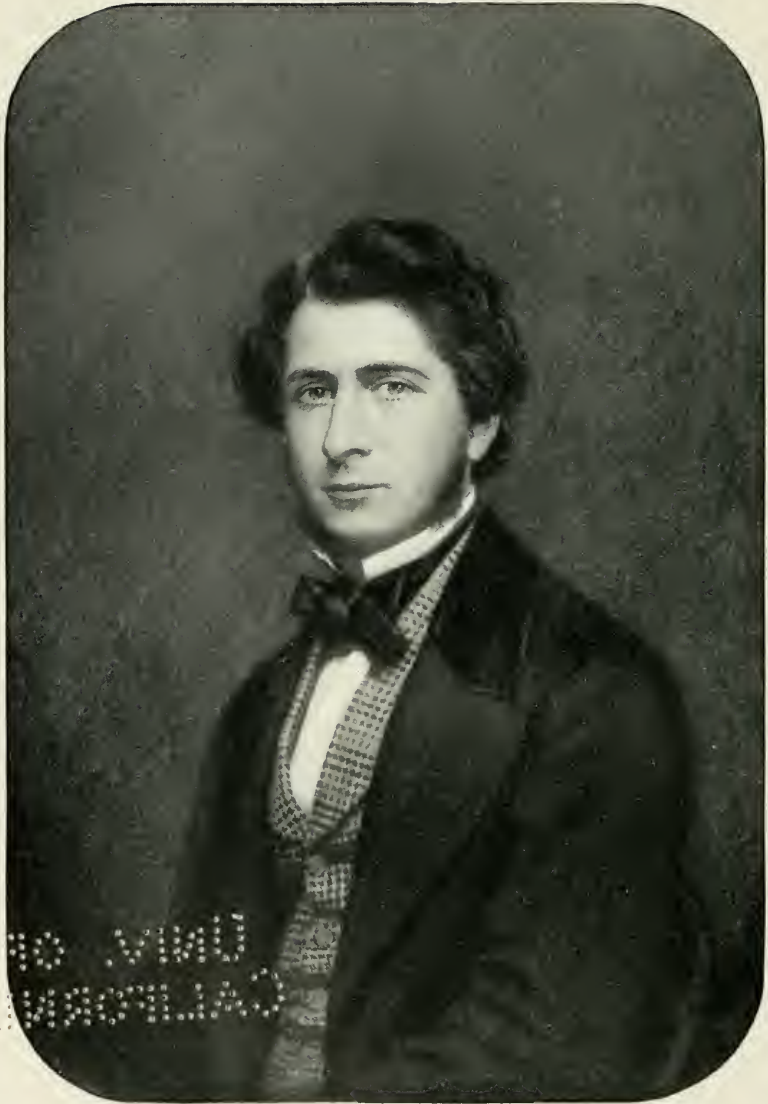
(1804-60).

*After a pencil sketch by William Mulready (about 1828).*





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WILLIAM CAREW HAZLITT

*From a painted photograph (1859).*

of the Bryans, and a descendant of an ancient Suffolk family. I am traditionally reported to have toddled into church, and at the font, to the general amazement, to have loudly ejaculated "Bun!" My sponsors were Goldsworthy Gurney and Edward Bryan, and Mrs. Cocksedge, who had been a Bryan.

One of my earliest experiments in criticism was a vocal notation of the difference between the barks of a large and little dog, kept by M'Comie the book-binder in Percy Street. I have a childish recollection of my grandmother's apple-puddings, out of the upper side of which she used to cut a round piece the size of a crown, and drop in a lump of butter.

My mother was a superlative manager of her husband's too-long-straitened resources, and she acquired the accomplishment of riding on horseback. I recollect that she often rode in Hyde Park with our old friend Dr. Edward Bryan, and I regret the loss of the gold-mounted whip which she used. She died at my father's house in Brompton, June 12, 1860, as I stood at her bedside. It was midnight. I stooped down and kissed her. I hear my father's sobs after half a century, when I told him that all was over.

It was to Broad Street, to which the business had been transferred from Piccadilly, and while Mr. Reynell was printing for Whiting the *Select British Poets* in 1824, that Charles Lamb came to bring the corrected proofs, for although the title-page bears the name of Hazlitt, the latter was abroad just then, and, in fact, did nothing to the work but indicate what was to be printed, and write the preliminary notices. Lamb is recollected as a little spare man in black clothes and knee-breeches, much as he appears in Brook Pulham's etching. This work was originally undertaken by Whiting, and the earlier sheets set up at his office; but he handed

over the business to Mr. Reynell's father, with the type. My uncle composed a good deal of the volume with his own hands, as he was then a young man learning the practical side of the business. The original edition of 1824 is larger in size than that of 1825, and contains about a third more.

Robert Chambers, writing to Hazlitt's son in 1842, in respect to the *Cyclopaedia of English Literature*, and the utility to him of the *Select British Poets*, delivers this significant and complimentary testimony: "I beg to mention to you, wishing much that it were possible to mention it to your father, that to him I was indebted for my first acquaintance with the beauties of the Elizabethan period, and perhaps to him originally is to be traced the design which now occupies me. Humbly offering to you the gratitude due to him," &c.

Mr. Hazlitt called at Broad Street shortly before the first launch of the new *Tutler*, and heard from Mr. Reynell what was taking place. He drew Mr. Reynell into a window, and said, "What do you think, sir, of the ESOTERIC—or the EXOTERIC?"

There is a letter from the younger Hazlitt to his future wife, which dates itself about this point of time, when his father was fast failing, yet apparently rallying a little now and then, in which the writer observes: "My father is much better, and ate a chicken for dinner, but he was disappointed, as he had ordered a fowl, chickens being injurious to him." This otherwise unimportant communication is characteristically addressed to "Miss C. Reynell, Eden." From the time of Hazlitt's death, if not before, till his marriage in 1833, he made the Reynells' house in Broad Street almost a second home.

From Broad Street the Reynells' printing establishment migrated to Little Pulteney Street. The

*Examiner* was retained at the office, and in my own occasional visits there I have met several distinguished men who were successively on the staff. Albany Fonblanque was before my time, but I knew Laman Blanchard, John Forster, Dudley Costello, and Henry Morley. Fonblanque used to be known at the office as *Death on the Pale Horse*—an expression borrowed from an engraving in an early French book by Pierre Michault, called *La Danse des Aveugles*, on account of his cadaverous complexion and his white steed.

A furious philippic against the Papacy by a certain Dr. Beggi had been printed at Mr. Reynell's, and when the author had sent out a few copies for presents, he was so alarmed at the consequences of the indignation and vengeance of the Holy See, that he shaved off his beard to disguise his identity with the portrait prefixed to the book, in case the Pope should send over emissaries to track and assassinate him. But he was left unmolested, and his book too, for it became waste-paper. There was one review of it, in which it was observed that there were five dedications, that the title-page was a volume, and that before it was a portrait of the author with a beard like a doormat. My uncle Reynell had a good deal of trouble in revising the book, even such as it was, for Beggi had introduced all sorts of colloquialisms, such as "I believe you, my boy," into what was intended for serious—very serious composition.

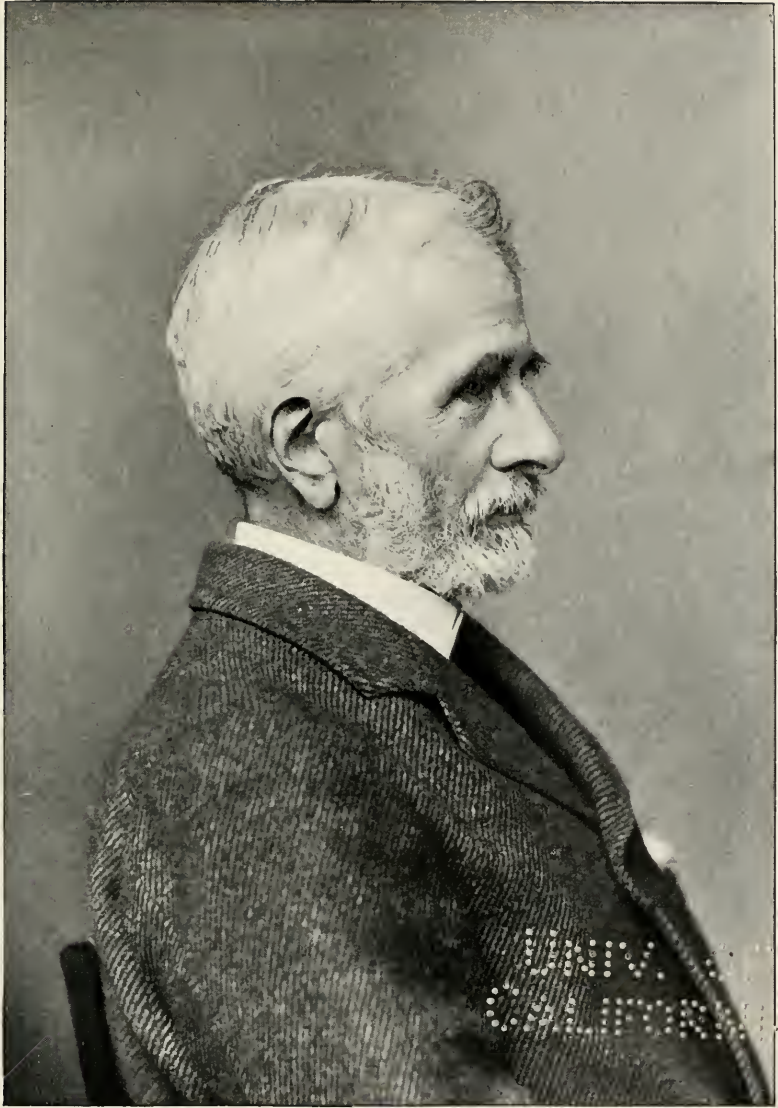
Beggi was a vegetarian, but took gravy with his rice. He was very fond of the Italian confectionery, and always had plenty of it to offer and give away. He possessed an old Chelsea tea-service, which he used, when company came; but he brought it in and removed it himself, and washed it up afterward with his own hands.



My uncle, who was on the jury in a case before Lord Denman, where Sir James Scarlett was counsel, heard it observed that, instead of being on the Bench, he was only conducting an action before it. He eventually obtained, however, a seat in the Exchequer, and was created Lord Abinger. I think that I understand how it was distasteful to my great-grandfather to contract obligations to a man of this low political stamp, when he made friendly overtures in 1805 to the writer of the *Essay on the Principles of Human Action*.

My uncle, as a young man, met Keats at Leigh Hunt's lodgings in the New Road. He produced the impression upon him of being dressed in a sort of naval costume. This must have been about 1817. Some forty-five years later I met Joseph Severn at Hunt's cottage in Hammersmith, and received an invitation from him to go over and see him at his temporary residence in Eccleston Square. I did so. Mr. Reynell said to me: "I went after the Revolution of July, 1830, to congratulate your grandfather on the triumph of Liberalism; but I found him in no very sanguine humour about the ultimate result. 'Ah!' said he, 'I am afraid, Charles, things will go back again.'"

One generation has been said to stand on the shoulders of another. The father often lives to see the son, whom he may have rocked in the cradle, a man of middle years and the head of a grown-up family. But it is rarely the case that a man of ninety-four can look on one whom he held in his arms as a child in swaddling clothes, and who lived to stand side by side with him an octogenarian; yet such was the relationship between my maternal uncle and my late father. The latter was born in 1811. The former recollected how, in 1809, the Jubilee year of George III., he mounted up to the



WILLIAM CAREW HAZLITT

*From a photograph (1897).*



top of the house in Piccadilly, which was higher than some of those which surrounded it, to see the bonfires and illuminations in Hyde Park. He had seen the gigantic Irish porter at Carlton House look over the outer entrance-door to discover who was claiming admittance before he took the trouble to open it.

The ornamental enclosure in St. James's Park was in his remembrance a mere field with some fine elms and broken sheets of water. It used to have deer till Farmer George placed beeves in it instead. There was a half-witted fellow appointed to tend them, whom the boys called Lal, and impishly tormented.

In Kensington Gardens, too, there were deer at one time, and they were similarly replaced—in that case by some merino sheep, which had been sent over to the King, in 1791, I suppose, as in that year he made a present of a ram of this breed to Arthur Young of Bradfield.

My uncle of course recollected the destruction of the Houses of Parliament in 1834, and indeed witnessed the same, and picked up at Millbank, as he told me, some of the charred paper belonging to documents which perished in the flames.

The greater part of the grounds of Buckingham Palace was a theft by his Gracious Majesty George III. from the Green Park, and farther *conveyances* have since been made without any respect for public opinion or the interests and views of the ratepayer in order to form a forecourt and something more. It is possible that hereafter the entire enclosed area, palace inclusive, may be restored to those, to whom they belong.

In George III.'s time the whole area occupied by Grosvenor Place and Belgrave Square might have been purchased for £20,000. George III. wished

Parliament to vote the money in order to secure him greater privacy; but the royal views were not appreciated. The King would of course have appropriated the ground, and honourably—nay, graciously treated it as his private domain.

Leigh Hunt, before his marriage, lived with my grandfather and grandmother Reynell at Pimlico, when they had ceased to reside at the office, and when my uncle Charles, as a schoolboy at Dr. Duncan's Ciceronian Academy in that neighbourhood, was required to write a thesis on the Horse, Leigh Hunt helped him by giving him as a start: "The horse is a noble animal, and eats hay and straw with equal facility."

The Reynells during their residence in Black Lion Lane, Bayswater,<sup>1</sup> which at that time was open as far as Harrow, and had quite rural surroundings, formed the acquaintance of the Mulreadys, who lived in Orme Square, a block of buildings erected about the commencement of the century by a partner in the firm of Longman and Co. My uncle Carew Reynell was constantly at the house when he was a boy. The friendship between the families began by Mulready seeing my uncle, who was a good boxer, fighting with another boy, bigger than himself, in the street; he was very handsome, and the artist founded on the circumstance his picture of *The Wolf and the Lamb*, which John Doyle subsequently caricatured in illustrating the quarrel between Lord Brougham and Lord Melbourne, the family name of the latter being Lambe.

Mulready himself was a singular character. He spent the greater part of his time with Sir John Swinburne, who would hardly bear him out of his sight. A portion of the year he would be with

<sup>1</sup> See *Hazlitt Memoirs*, 1897, ii. 90.



Sir John in the country, and a portion with him at his residence in London. Mulready was separated from his wife, but kept a home for his children. He gave his son Peter proper clothes to wear, but the others went anyhow. He said that he did this to keep them from gadding about, and if one of them obtained leave to go out, he had to borrow Peter's clothes, and Peter stayed at home till he returned.

Another neighbour was S. W. Reynolds, who engraved the graphic works of his namesake, as well as the vignette on the title-page of *Liber Amoris*. Samuel Cousins, R.A., was a pupil of S. W. Reynolds, and executed eighty-nine of the engravings from Sir Joshua's pictures, published in three folio volumes. In these days there were only two or three cottages in Westbourne Grove, which really deserved its name.

Catherine Haylett  
1874

## XXXVII

### “LIBER AMORIS”

AT a point of time, when his literary success and reputation, while they rendered him acceptable to a select circle of friends and not less so to the then few Liberal organs of the press, were exposing him, almost from day to day, to outrageous abuse and misrepresentation on the part of the miserably vulgar and unmanly tools of the Government, Hazlitt became in the autumn of 1820 an unconscious *dramatis persona* in an adventure almost solely remarkable from the intellectual effect and from the view of its nature which he imbibed. The relations between himself and his wife had long been strained and anomalous; there was no connubial sympathy; they were, in fact, living apart. Under all these unfortunate conditions Hazlitt was thrown to a hazardous extent on casual resources and external objects of contact; and the intense susceptibility of his temperament, which might have found a different vent in a congenial home, exposed him to any temptation which presented itself. Since his first engagement on the press, and while he continued to make reporting notes in Parliament, he had been drawn into company far from conducive to his physical welfare, and the set, which surrounded his brother, partook of the intemperate propensities of the time.

It seems an inedited circumstance and link in the biography that it was almost certainly just posterior

to the abandonment of York Street in 1819, that my grandfather, induced by the close neighbourhood of one or two friends, sought quarters in King Street, Somers Town, a locality which may for the moment have recommended itself as secluded and out of the beaten track. It happened, however, that the house was kept by a woman, who had near relations, named Walker, at No. 9 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, where Walker carried on the business of a tailor, and let lodgings. He had made clothes for John Payne Collier. No. 34 in the Buildings, so far back as 1806, had been familiar to my grandfather, when he originally engaged lodgings on his own account; it was subsequently associated with Lamb and Coleridge; and the whole locality, with the Southampton Arms at the corner, was more or less well-trodden, consecrated ground.

A not unnatural development was the discovery by Hazlitt, after some months' experience, that Somers Town was not central, and his transfer of himself to quarters at No. 9, where in due course he met Walker's daughter Sarah (August, 1820). The rest is matter of history.

The amours of celebrated personages of all ages and countries have remained among the *arcana*, into which we do not choose to penetrate, unless the sentimental or heroic element assists in leavening the grossness of the picture, or in imparting something which lifts the case above commonplace. The interest in the present *historiette* is not the piquancy of the relationship, but the atmosphere, with which an ardent and fertile imagination enveloped an every-day incident, and the force, which held him spellbound in the face of constant evidence of the absurdity of the illusion. We have, then, a metaphysical study, as it were, due to peculiar environments—to the proffered hand of love—the

love of one who valued him for his own sake, who was interested in his *Essays*, nay, desired to possess them, and who cared for Bonaparte, because he did. We are not for a moment to believe, that Miss Walker felt or thought one tithe of what Hazlitt tells us that she did. She was little more than a lay figure. All that she is made to appear to the world of spiritual, cultivated, æsthetic, sublime, was an emanation from the brain of her admirer, a will-o'-the-wisp, which pursued him, and which he pursued. The *Conversations* are much on the footing of those in a play, where the dramatist is the sole interlocutor—has all the talk in his own hands.

It was the not very surprising, and total, inability of the object of worship in this case to sustain the double character imposed on her of a Madonna and an Aspasia, which prevented Hazlitt from gaining converts to his gospel, and eventually led to his silent relinquishment of a false and untenable position. The severance of his connection with his first wife, which had at the outset seemed to him the stepping-stone to an honourable alliance with Miss Walker and the dawn of a new life, must be regarded as having brought the whole business to a conclusion.

The circumstances have to be fully and dispassionately considered, if we desire to do justice to Hazlitt. There was the great distance of his parents from London, the want, at a critical period of life, of a regular home, the necessity for resorting to lodging-houses of not too expensive a character, and the deficiency in confidence and address, which rendered him shy in ordinary female society, and involved him in the double mischief of taking as his wife an excellent woman for whom he did not really care, and of coquetting with others, who

made a pretence of caring for him. For in the particular instance of Miss Walker it was not so much that Hazlitt loved her, as that he imagined that she loved him. His regard was a corollary to hers. Lamb, in one of his letters, shortly after the commencement of their acquaintance, refers to his friend's embarrassment in the presence of two young girls, whom he met at the Lambs', and the tradition is that my grandfather's proposal of marriage in 1808 or the end of 1807 was shyly made, while Miss Stoddart was putting on the tea-kettle. The society of Miss Walker was free from the constraint and etiquette even of Miss Stoddart, who was not a formalist, yet at the same time a lady of unblemished character. In the greater license at Southampton Buildings lay the danger and the detriment. The entrance proved easier than the egress. Nor was it a case of the spider and the fly, for the evidence is against the girl having exhibited anything approaching reciprocity or an aim at plunder. There is not the most distant allusion to payments of money; we hear of nothing but presents of his own books, of a statuette of Bonaparte, of trifling gifts. He charged her with leaving his letters to her unanswered; her communications to him are purely formal and of Arctic frigidity, forwarding letters, messages, and so forth, or declining orders for the theatre.

Domestic jars, the spectral sense of a marred and wasted career, political persecution, the constitutional injury occasioned by neglect of his health, when he had quitted home, and the slenderness of his parents' resources, are more than sufficient to account for the morbid frame of mind, which made the *Liber Amoris* a possibility even as a passing distemper. But it is a universal experience, that



an exquisite appreciation of the beauty of Nature, highly developed intellectual acumen, and a warm and even sensuous temperament, are almost invariably found in union. It is to this type of mind that the world owes the better part of its literary, artistic, and other masters, even on the battle-field and on the sea. As long as the blood acquires in certain individuals a richer and less controllable current, and human nature remains unchanged, there will be an endless succession of such phenomena, and what would the rest of us be without them? Thousands of names could be set down, conclusively demonstrating the fact stated; names of men and women from the remotest times, who displayed qualities only contradictory in unobservant eyes, to uncritical understandings, the majority of course inclusive.<sup>1</sup>

That great writers and great wits should display foibles and infirmities, and proceed to the extremity of taking the world into their confidence on matters of private concern, is, no doubt, very regrettable; but their eminence has to answer for the interest or curiosity felt in their affairs; and the public would hardly enter so keenly into the question, if the individual implicated were not by his antecedents and rank in life or letters able to impart a zest to the circumstances and perhaps even a set-off to his personal pretensions. On the contrary, those who may take the trouble to study with care and without bias all the facts, will probably arrive at the conclusion, that Hazlitt was and is to be pitied, not so much for the passing phrenzy portrayed in the

<sup>1</sup> In the seventh Lecture on the English Poets, 1818, Hazlitt dealt out to Wordsworth brimming measure of reproof for his smug pharisaical strictures on Burns in a letter to some hidebound Scottish pedagogue, and states the whole case for men of genius. Wordsworth, who was not that in so high a sense as the inspired Ayrshire ploughman, cannot have relished the stinging castigation, which he so well deserved.

*Liber Amoris*, as for the disastrous fruit of a faulty education and a misdirected career. If Hazlitt was the greatest sinner, he was the greatest sufferer. How many during the ages—in our own—have as grievously offended, and suffered less, because they were more genteelly constituted, and were not Hazlitts. Such transcendental and unhealthy raptures may be unintelligible save to those few, who have been caught and detained in the toils of a first potent impression of some object, and who in its absence fail or refuse to realise riper and wiser experiences. They replace the real by an ideal, and are shocked, when the two come into contact. So Hazlitt for a season wavered between what he tried to persuade himself was true and what he too well knew to be so.

In forming a judgment of this episode, it is to be remembered, that it was an episode only, and such an one as has occurred in the lives of millions of others, lacking in the passionate and wilful nature, which invested it with publicity and importance, and in the distinguished literary rank, which tended to throw it into bolder relief. If the person concerned had been an obscure man, the matter would not have gone beyond a newspaper paragraph. If he had exercised ordinary prudence, not a soul would have been a whit the wiser. Others acted similarly, but did not hand their contemporaries and posterity a ready-written indictment against themselves, erring on the side of personal incrimination, partly as a voucher for sincerity and partly for the sake of dramatic effect. Had Hazlitt, again, been a common libertine, had his normal literary work been of a licentious cast or even of indifferent quality, this poor little book would have attracted no permanent notice, nor deserved any. It was because it stood out so distinctly, so defiantly, in contrast to the rest,

in opposition to anything hitherto produced in this country, that it awakened censure at the time, and that it appeals to us to-day, if at all, as an intellectual problem or puzzle. The aberrations of great men are interesting and pardonable only, because they were great. It was because Hazlitt was what he was, that some take the trouble, after almost a century, to recall the affair. Nor in the absence of the *litera scripta* should a biographer have done otherwise than let it pass into oblivion.

Why did not Patmore dissuade from publication? Possibly he did; but he had not £100 to put into the author's hands to indemnify him, and, once more, Hazlitt may have immediately discerned in the contents nothing beyond the rhapsody which he had poured into everybody's ears for a year or more. He shrank from literary drudgery, and here was a ready-made article, such as it became in the jumble, which he or Patmore made of it, for sale. If he did not do so, some one in the secret might then or thereafter turn the subject-matter of more or less apocryphal conversations into cash.

In 1898 a second MS. very illegibly written by Hazlitt himself in the form of a Diary, but incomplete, accidentally came to light, and served to establish that some of Hazlitt's personal friends, notably Patmore and Procter, frequented the residence of the Walkers, and to present Patmore in the light of Maupassant's *Morin*. Miss Walker speaks of Procter from personal knowledge, and alludes to his literary work. Was it not a case of Hazlitt & Co.? There were other moths hovering round the candle, if not scorched by it; and, on the other hand, Roscoe of Liverpool, who married the sister, and gave Hazlitt to understand that he did not regret the step, resided in the house

four years as a lodger. The heroine (if one may use the term) of the *Liber Amoris* made an equally good marriage, although neither was so successful in one sense as Annabella or Nancy Parsons, the tailor's daughter, who passed from having been the Duke of Grafton's mistress to becoming Viscountess Maynard.

Absorbed and immersed as he was by this affair from 1820 to 1822, and powerfully as his correspondence and talk were coloured by it during that time, the spell died away when he became a free agent, and when he had committed the melodrama to the press, like a spent shell, and we observe in his later writings no trace of its influence. He outlived it seven years in the happiest sense; and, in a greater degree than most of his critics, left the world richer in thought, in appreciation of the beautiful and the true, and of literary workmanship. How marvelously he rallied, the *Picture Galleries Revisited* (1823), the *Notes of a Journey through France and Italy*, the *Plain Speaker*, the *Life of Napoleon*, and numerous delightful contributions to periodical literature and dramatic criticism, prove more eloquently than any words. Or indeed the late monumental edition of the Works, supported by the written and traditional testimonies of his true friends and admirers, constitute a well-nigh unanswerable brief for the defendant.

The two circumstances of enduring vividness in his recollection, when this ephemeral spell had lost its charm and its sway, were the Windham dream, which haunted him nearly to the last, and that “hurt to his mind,” to which he adverted on his deathbed, and which I should be disposed to identify with the unfortunate incident of the arrest in 1823.

A remark made at a later date on the character and temperament of Hazlitt impresses me as an

apposite piece of extenuating evidence. The writer, recalling an incident of the last days, when he stood at Hazlitt's bedside in 1830, observes: "Under that straightforward, hard-hitting, direct-telling manner of his, both in writing and speaking, Hazlitt had a depth of gentleness—even tenderness—of feeling on certain subjects; manly friendship, womanly sympathy, touched him to the core; and any token of either would bring a sudden expression into his eyes very beautiful as well as very heart-stirring to look upon. We have seen this expression more than once, and can recall its appealing charm, its wonderful irradiation of the strong features and squarely cut, rugged under-portion of the face."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cowden Clarke's *Recollections of Writers*, 1878, p. 63.



## XXXVIII

### HAZLITT CORRESPONDENCE

(1772-1865)

#### I.—LETTERS TO AND FROM THE EARLIER HAZLITTS (1772-1830)

THE earliest extant vestige of what must have been a correspondence of considerable extent and long duration with many more or less distinguished men of the day is in the form of an enclosure by Dr. Priestley in a letter of March 2, 1772, to the Rev. T. Lindsey, where Priestley transcribes the following passage from a letter addressed to him by Mr. Hazlitt from Maidstone:—

“ You may assure him [Archdeacon —] from me if you will, that my intelligence came neither directly nor indirectly from you. I had it first from a gentleman in the West, and afterwards from many others—so many, indeed, that I supposed it to be universally known.”

These few obscure lines may be said to bear very slender immediate significance; but they present the position of my ancestor in a distincter light at this point of time, and indicate his acquaintance with Priestley as well established, no less than his touch with a wide circle of appreciative and staunch friends. He was at this time a man of five-and-thirty.

Two communications to the Rev. W. Hazlitt in Ireland just precede the departure of the family for America, where they remained till 1787.

*From the Rev. Richard Price.*

NEWINGTON GREEN,  
June 28th, 1782.

DEAR SIR,—I am very sorry for the account in your letters to me and Mr. Palmer of the distress you are in. In conformity to your desire I requested the favour of L<sup>d</sup>. Shelburne to convey a letter from me to Col<sup>l</sup>. Fitzpatrick. In this letter I stated to him some of the particulars of your case, and at the same time assured him of my favourable opinion of you, and the irreproachableness of your character. He was so polite as immediately to answer my letter, and to inform me that all possible attention had been paid to your complaints ag<sup>st</sup>. the officers; that he saw nothing in your conduct with respect to them that was blameable, and that an order had been given to censure them. I learn from Mr. Palmer that your difficulties since you writ to me have increased, and that you are determined to quit Ireland in August. I heartily wish you may be extricated out of your troubles and find a provision for yourself and family. You mention going over to America, but I cannot advise you to this. I am afraid you would only find your difficulties increased by this.<sup>1</sup>

Deliver my complim<sup>ts</sup> to Mrs. Hazlitt.—I remain,  
Dear S<sup>r</sup>, Sincerely yours, RICHD. PRICE.

To the Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr. HAZLITT.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Priestley was of a different opinion.

*From the Same and Others.*

I have known Mr. Hazlitt, the bearer of this, many years. I was concerned with the late Dr. Chandler and Dr. Prior in examining him before his entrance on the ministry, and in giving him a testimonial of approbation. His moral character is unblemish'd, and he has always been a zealous friend to civil and religious liberty, and the cause of America. His last settlement has been with a congregation of Protestant Dissenters near Cork, in Ireland, where he exerted himself successfully in favour of some American prisoners.

Believing him to be a man of integrity and ability, I wish him success in his endeavours to obtain a settlement for himself and his family in one of the United American States.

RICH<sup>D</sup>. PRICE.

NEWINGTON GREEN, NEAR LONDON,  
*March 3rd, 1783.*

We whose names are underwritten, from a personal Intimacy with Mr. Hazlitt, sincerely join in the above Recommendation.

AND. KIPPIS.  
 JOHN PALMER.  
 A. REES.

It was immediately after the arrival of Mr. Hazlitt at Hallowell that he wrote the following letter to the Rev. Dr. Howard at Boston. He most probably wrote many others:—

DEAR SIR,—The morning after we parted, I arrived at the mouth of Kennebec; but, the wind being then contrary, and the fresh in the river so violent, occasioned by the late uncommon heavy

rains, as to prevent the flowing of the tide, we could not enter the river until late in the evening. The whole day was altogether disagreeable. The ship was incessantly tossed about like a piece of cork in a tumultuous eddy. Almost all the passengers were extremely sick. We could have no dinner dressed, and we were in hourly expectation of being driven out to sea, and of being forced upon an unequal contention with the rocks and boisterous waves. But our situation was more dangerous the preceding night. The vessel was old, unmanageable, and rotten as a pear. She leaked, I believe, above a foot of water every hour. The wind was very high. The captain and mate were drunk in their beds: the other raw and ignorant sailors were in the same state. Providentially, as the vessel could not be made to move but in a direct line with the wind, the wind was as fair as it could blow, kept us exactly in our course, and preserved us from otherwise probable destruction. We had a very tedious passage up the river to Bomley Hook. I did not arrive here before Sunday morning, and then only time enough to preach once to the people at Hollywell. I can as yet form no judgment of the place. The climate and the face of the country are much like Nova Scotia; I think more agreeable. The people seem greatly pleased at my coming, particularly as I have come under the direction of Mr. Vaughan. But, though the place is more out of the world than accords with my inclination, I will endeavour to accommodate myself to it, if, after a few weeks' trial, I find myself acceptable to the people. When I shall have the power of more particularly informing you of my situation here, you may expect to hear from me. I wish for your good advice to my son. I do not petition for your other services, because I

know it is unnecessary. Be pleased to carry the enclosed to Mrs. Hazlitt as soon as you can. With my respectful compliments to Miss Mayhew, Dr. Lathrop, and all inquiring friends,—I am, dear Sir, Your very affectionate, &c., W. HAZLITT.

HOLLYWELL [HALLOWELL], KENNEBEC RIVER,  
Nov. 4th, 1785.

It seems to have been from Wem that the earliest specimen of my grandfather's correspondence was directed to his father, who was temporarily at the Lewis's house in London. The writer could not have been more than eight:—

12 of Nov. [1787-8?]

MY DEAR PAPA,—I shall never forget that we came to america. If we had not came to america, we should not have been away from one and other, though now it can not be helped. I think for my part that it would have been a great deal better if the white people had not found it out. Let the [others] have it to themselves, for it was made for them. I have got a little of my grammar; sometimes I get three pages and sometimes but one. I do not sifer any at all. Mamma Peggy and Jacky are all very well, and I am to.—I still remain

Your most  
affectionate Son

William, Hazlitt

The Rev. Mr. HAZLITT, London.  
To the care of Mr. DAVID LEWES.



In a letter from the Rev. J. Lathrop, dated Boston, August 4th, 1788, to the Rev. W. Hazlitt, the writer says:—

“Your very affectionate letter, in answer to mine by Mrs. Hazlitt, after a long passage, reached me, and gave the first information of her safe arrival with the children. Some time after I heard of your happy settlement at Wem. . . . The pain which we feel at parting with amiable friends would be exceedingly great were it not for the hope which we entertain of seeing them again. . . . *Your* Betsy, in particular, frequently expresses the tender feelings of her heart, in sincere wishes that she could see her beloved friend, Peggy Hazlitt.”

A series of letters written between 1788 and 1793 to his brother and father, while he was quite young, possess a peculiar interest, no less than his father's replies. He was during part of this time at a private school at Wem:—

WEM, *Saturday morning,*  
*March —, 1788.*

DEAR BROTHER,—I received your letter this morning. We were all glad to hear that you were well, and that you have so much business to do. We cannot be happy without being employed. I want you to tell me whether you go to the Academy or not, and what pictures you intend for the exhibition. Tell the exhibitioners to finish the exhibition soon, that you may come and see us. You must send your picture to us directly. You want to know what I do. I am a busybody, and do many silly things: I drew eyes and noses till about a fortnight ago. I have drawn a little boy since, a man's face, and a little boy's front face, taken from a bust.

Next Monday I shall begin to read Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Eutropius. I shall like to know all the Latin and Greek I can. I want to learn how to measure the stars. I shall not, I suppose, paint the worse for knowing everything else. I begun to cypher a fortnight after Christmas, and shall go into the rule of three next week. I can teach a boy of sixteen already who was cyphering eight months before me; is he not a great dunce? I shall go through the whole cyphering book this summer, and then I am to learn Euclid. We go to school at nine every morning. Three boys begin with reading the Bible. Then I and two others show our exercises. We then read the *Speaker*.<sup>1</sup> Then we all set about our lessons, and those who are first ready say first. At eleven we write and cypher. In the afternoon we stand for places at spelling, and I am almost always first. We also read, and do a great deal of business besides. I can say no more about the boys here: some are so sulky they wont play; others are quarrelsome because they cannot learn, and are only fit for fighting like stupid dogs and cats. I can jump four yards at a running jump, and two at a standing jump. I intend to try you at this when you come down. We are not all well, for poor Peggy has a great cold. You spelled Mr. Vaughan's name wrong, for you spelled it Vaughn. Write soon again. I wish I could see all those paintings that you see, and that Peggy had a good prize. I don't want your old clothes. I shall go to dancing this month. This is all I can say.—I am your affectionate brother,

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

Two years afterward William Hazlitt paid a visit to Liverpool, where he was received at the house of the Tracys, and he seems to have done his schooling

<sup>1</sup> Enfield's *Speaker*.

under their roof with the daughters during the visit :—

*Saturday, March —, 1790.*

DEAR FATHER,—I now sit down to spend a little time in an employment, the productions of which I know will give you pleasure, though I know that every minute that I am employed in doing anything which will be advantageous to me, will give you pleasure. Happy, indeed unspeakably happy, are those people who, when at the point of death, are able to say, with a satisfaction which none but themselves can have any idea of—“I have done with this world, I shall now have no more of its temptations to struggle with, and praise be to God I have overcome them; now no more sorrow, now no more grief, but happiness for evermore!” But how unspeakably miserable is that man who, when his pleasures are going to end, when his lamp begins to grow dim, is compelled to say,—“Oh that I had done my duty to God and man! oh that I had been wise, and spent that time which was kindly given me by Providence, for a purpose quite contrary to that which I employed it to, as I should have done; but it is now gone; I cannot recal time, nor can I undo all my wicked actions. I cannot seek that mercy which I have so often despised. I have no hope remaining. I must do as well as I can—but who can endure everlasting fire?” Thus does the wicked man breathe his last, and without being able to rely upon his good, with his last breath, in the anguish of his soul, says, “Have mercy upon me a sinner, O God!”—After I had sealed up my last letter to you, George asked me if I were glad the Test Act was not repealed? I told him, No. Then he asked me why? and I told him because I thought that all the people who are the inhabitants of a country, of whatsoever sect or denomination, should

have the same rights with others.—But, says he, then they would try to get their religion established, or something to that purpose.—Well, what if it should be so?—He said that the Church religion was an old one.—Well, said I, Popery is older than that.—But then, said he, the Church religion is better than Popery.—And the Presbyterian is better than that, said I. I told him I thought so for certain reasons, not because I went to chapel. But at last, when I had overpowered him with my arguments, he said he wished he understood it as well as I did, for I was too high learned for him. I then went to the concert. But as I am now going with George<sup>1</sup> to a Mrs. Cupham, I must defer the rest of my letter till another time. I have gotten to the 36th verse, 15th chapter.

*Monday morning.*—I was very much pleased at the concert; but I think Meredith's singing was worth all the rest. When we came out of the concert, which was about nine o'clock, we went to Mrs. Chilton's, at whose house we slept. It rained the next morning, but I was not much wet coming home. George was very much wet, and the colour of his coat was almost spoiled. On Wednesday Mr. Clegg did not come, as he was confined to his bed. On Wednesday evening Mr. Dolounghpryee [De Lemprière] came, to whom I was very attentive. I was sorry Mr. Clegg did not come on Saturday, but I hope he will come on Wednesday next. Saturday afternoon I and George, with Miss Avis, went to a Mrs. Bartton's, who appeared to be an unhospitable English prim "lady," if such she may be called. She asked us, as if she were afraid we should accept it, if we would stay to tea. And at the other English person's, for I am sure she belongs to no

<sup>1</sup> George Dickin, some members of whose family were at one time my neighbours in Kensington.

other country than to England, I got such a surfeit of their ceremonial unsociality, that I could not help wishing myself in America. I had rather people would tell one to go out of the house than ask one to stay, and, at the same time, be trembling all over, for fear one should take a slice of meat, or a dish of tea, with them. Such as these require an Horace or a Shakspeare to describe them. I have not yet learned the gamut perfectly, but I would have done it if I could. I spent a very agreeable day yesterday, as I read 160 pages of Priestley, and heard two good sermons; the best of which, in my opinion, was Mr. Lewin's, and the other Mr. Smith's. They both belong to Benn's Gardens Chapel. Mr. Nicholls called last night, who informed me that he sent the note by his boy, who left it with the servant, and that when he went again, Mr. Yates had not received it; so that I have not yet received the books, which I am very sorry for. I forgot to tell you, Winfield and all the other part of the family are very well, and that Mrs. Tracey said, I said my French task very well last Saturday. I am now almost at the end of my letter, and shall therefore answer all questions in your letter, which I received this morning, which I have not already answered. And in the first place. I have not seen Mr. Kingston since. I am glad that you liked my letter to Joc, which I was afraid he had not received, as you said nothing about it. Does he intend to answer me? Miss Shepherd<sup>1</sup> will go on Monday, I believe, and I shall go with her. I have not seen Mr. Yates since I wrote last. I do not converse in French; but I and Miss Tracey have a book, something like a vocabulary, where we get the

<sup>1</sup> Probably Sally Shepherd, daughter of the Rev. Mr. Shepherd of Gateacre.



meanings of words. Miss Tracey never does accounts, but I take an hour or two every other day. I will follow your Greek precept. Give my best love to mamma, and tell her I shall write to her next time, and hope she will write to me in answer to it. Give my respects to Mr. and Miss Cottons, and to every other inquirer, not forgetting Kynaston. I wish people made larger paper. I shall put this into the post-office to-night, Monday evening.—I am your affectionate son,  
WILLIAM HAZLITT.

The subjoined letter was addressed in his thirteenth year to his mother, while he was staying with the Tracys at Liverpool, in company with their neighbour's son, George Dickin :—

*Friday, 9th of July 1790.*

DEAR MOTHER,—It is with pleasure I now sit down to write to you, and it is with pleasure that I do anything, which I know, will please you. I hope you have by this time received my letter, which I put in the Post Office on Tuesday evening. I intended to have written to you in my last, but, as you see, I had not room for it, and therefore I shall fill up this sheet as your correspondent. On Tuesday night, after I had been at Mrs. Hudson's to tea, I took my Papa's letter to the Post Office. As it was half an hour past eight when I left Mrs. Hudson's and I had a mile and half to go in half an hour I went there rather quickly, and got home a good while before the rest. As soon as I came home Mrs. Tracey told me that a Gentleman, who appeared to be about 2 or 3 and 20 years old, had been here enquiring after me; he said that he saw my brother on Sunday last, and that I must enquire for him at the Mail Coach Office, without telling where it was, or what his name was, so that it was almost impos-

sible for anybody to find out who it was. I accordingly went, about ten o'clock in the morning, to the Mail Coach Office to enquire for him; I told the man how it was, who said that it was almost impossible to find out who it was, but however he said that if I would stop about an hour he would make enquiry. I amused myself about an hour with looking at the pictures in the shops, and then I went again, but I came home without knowing who it was, any more than I did when I went. On Wednesday I and George Dickin went to Mr. Fisher's to dine. He is a very rich man, but—The man who is a well-wisher to slavery, is always a slave himself. The King, who wishes to enslave all mankind, is a slave to ambition; The man who wishes to enslave all mankind for his King, is himself a slave to his King. He like others of his brethren, I suppose, wished that Mr. Beaufoy was out, or with the Devil, he did not care which. You see that he wished to have him out, merely because *'he would do to others as he would be done to.'* The man who is a well-wisher to liberty, wishes to have men good, and himself to be one of them, and knows that men are not good unless they are so willingly, and does not attempt to force them to it, but tries to put them in such a situation as will induce them to be good. Slavery is not a state for men to improve in, therefore he does not wish them to be in that condition. In a state of liberty men improve. He therefore wishes them to be in such a state.—I have just received my Papa's letter, and the other things which I am much obliged to him for. I am concerned to hear you have so little money, but I hope that your portion is not in this world, you have trouble for a few days, but have joy for many. The RICH take their fill in a few years, are cut short in the midst of their career, and fall into ruin; Never to rise again. But the good

shall have joy for evermore.—Be sure to tell me if I may sell my old Buckles.

*Tuesday, 13th of July.*

I yesterday received my Papa's kind letter. I am sorry you did not receive my letter in due season as I put it in on Tuesday according to my directions. I was very glad to hear of Mr. Tayleur's present. I yesterday began a letter to my sister, and finished one to my brother.

Tell my Papa, to tell John Kynaston that I understand the 2nd problem, and that the other is very right. Do not forget to remember me to him. I have translated 11 Fables and written 11 verbs. Remember me to Mrs. and Miss Cottons, and to every inquirer. Tell Kynaston I am very sorry Mrs. Tracey has not gotten him a place. The person who called on me last Tuesday was Isaac Kingston. He called here on Friday after I had written the first part of this letter, he stayed about an hour, and drank tea here the day following. He said he attempted to get Papa to Cork, but found it was useless to attempt it. He was asked by a lady to vote against Hind, but he said he would vote against no one. He said that those who were against him staid away from the Election, and that he carried the Election without opposition.

He said that he was sorry that Papa had not a better place, and wished that he would set up a school, that is a boarding school; and that there was no man in the world to whom he would sooner send his children. He has 3 Boys, the eldest of which is 5 years old, within a few months.

I shall go to Mr. Clegg's to drink tea on Thursday, and shall go to the play on Friday. I shall write to Joseph Swanwick this week. I dined at Mrs. Corbett's on Saturday, and at Mrs. Chilton's on Sunday, which was not very agreeable. I have told

you all the news I know almost, and have not much more paper.—They were pressing on Saturday evening. The world is not quite perfect yet ; nor will it ever be so whilst such practices are reckoned lawful. Mrs. Tracey says I had better let my arm alone, until I come home ; but I wish I could tell how to procure grains and then I would foment it in them. Adieu—Give my love to Papa. Mr. Kingston will call as he returns if he can.—I am your affectionate Son,

W. HAZLITT.

*P.S.*—I like my Balls very well, and have also received the money.

[Endorsed] Mr. HAZLITT, Wem, Shropshire.

*Monday, 18th of July [1790].*

DEAR PAPA,—I this morning received your affectionate letter, and, at the same time, one from my brother and sister, who were very well when they wrote. On Wednesday I received a lexicon, which I was very glad of. I have, since that time, gotten to the 12th verse of the 14th chapter, which is 39 verses from the place I was in before. Mr. Clegg came last Wednesday, and employed the time he staid in showing the Miss Traceys how to find the Latitude and Longitude of any place, which I can now do upon the globes with ease. Whilst he was here I was as attentive as I could be. He came again on Saturday, and I came in a few minutes after he came. I drank tea at his house the Thursday before, when he asked me to prepare the map of Asia, which Miss Traceys were at that time getting. I answered that I had already gotten it. I said it to him on saturday, with Miss Traceys, without missing a single word. He, when he had finished with us, bid me have the map of Africa ready by the next

time he should come, which I have done. He also asked me to read a dialogue with him, which I did. I should think he intends to teach me Geography while I stay. On Thursday he took me and George, with his two brothers, to the glass-house, and then we went to the New Fort. On Friday I went to the play with Mr. Corbett, at whose house I dined and drank tea. The play was *Love in many masks*, and the Farce, *No Song, no Supper*. It was very entertaining, and was performed by some of the best players in London, as for instance, Kemble, Suett, Dignum, the famous singer, Mrs. Williams, Miss Hagley, Miss Romanzini, and others. Suett, who acted in the character of Ned Blunt, was enough to make any one laugh, though he stood still; and Kemble acted admirably as an officer. Mr. Dignum sang beautifully, and Miss Hagley acted the country-girl with much exactness. Mr. Corbett says he will take us to another play before we go. SO MUCH FOR LAST WEEK. I have been writing an hour now. Yesterday I went to Meeting by myself in the morning, where we had a very good discourse on the 10th of the 2nd Chapter of Thess. 2nd—"With all deceivableness of unrighteousness." From this he drew several CONCLUSIONS of the false pretences which are made by sin to her followers, to happiness; how people are drawn away, by imperceptible degrees, from one Degree of Sin to another, and so on to greater. I sent a note to Mr. Yates this morning, requesting him to send me a Dictionary and *Horace*. Was it right to express myself in this manner?—"Mr. Hazlitt sends his compliments to Mr. Yates, and would be much obliged to him if he would send him a dictionary and an *Horace*."

*P.S.* papa desired me to remember him to you.

On Sunday, after I had come from Meeting, I



went, but not willingly, to Mrs. Sydebotham's to dinner. In the afternoon we went to church, for the first time I ever was in one, and I do not care if I should never go into one again. The Clergyman, after he had gabbled over half a dozen prayers, began his sermon, the text of which was as follows: Zachariah, 3rd chapter, 2nd verse, latter part—"Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" If a person had come in five minutes after he began, he would have thought that he had taken his text out of Joshua. In short, his sermon had neither head nor tail. I was sorry that so much time should be thrown away upon nonsense. I often wished I was hearing Mr. Yates; but I shall see I do not go to church again in an hurry. I have been very busy to-day; I got up at seven and wrote a note for Mr. Yates; and called on Mr. Nicholls with it, who was at breakfast. I then went to the post-office, and there I staid a good while waiting for my letter, but as they told me the letters were gone to Richmond,<sup>1</sup> I came home to my breakfast. After breakfast I went with George, to buy some paper, down to Mr. Bird; when I came home I sat down to my French, but as Mrs. Tracey wanted some ribband, I went to Mr. Bird's for some; but, as you may suppose, I was not a long time going there. I had almost forgotten to tell you that I wrote to Joseph Swanwick last week. I have everything ready for Mr. Doloungpryec [De Lemprière], who comes this evening. I have also made myself perfect in the Map of Africa. As I have now given you all the news I can, I shall lay by for the present and to-morrow for my observations and reflections. Tell Kynaston I have done the first Sum, and understand it quite well. I cannot play any tune on the harpsichord but "God save the King."—Farewell for the present.

<sup>1</sup> Near Liverpool.

I shall have satis pecuniæ, dum tu habeas opportunitatem mittendi aliquam partem mihi.

*Tuesday Morning.*

I have this morning gotten my French for tomorrow, and thirteen verses of the "Testament;" I have also written out the contractions, and can tell any of them. I said my lessons very well last night; I had only one word wrong in my fable, and not any one in my two verbs. I am to go to the concert to-night. I have written two verbs, and translated my French task. How ineffectual are all pleasures, except those which arise from a knowledge of having done, as far as one knew, that which was right, to make their possessors happy. The people who possess them, at night, lie down upon their beds, and after having spent a wearisome night, rise up in the morning to pursue the same "pleasures," or, more properly, vain shadows of pleasure, which, like Jacks with lanthorns, as they are called, under a fair outside at last bring those people who are so foolish as to confide in them into destruction, which they cannot then escape. *How different from them is a man who wisely "in a time of peace, lays up arms, and such like necessaries in case of a war."* Mrs. Tracey desires me to give her respects.

[Endorsed] Rev. Mr. HAZLITT, Wem, Shropshire.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,<sup>1</sup>—We received letters from your brother and sister on Sunday last, by which we learned that they were well, that your brother had two new pictures engaged, and that your sister is to

<sup>1</sup> There is an imperfect duplicate of this letter, also bearing the date June 24 as that of the receipt of a letter by the writer from a Boston correspondent, and, as it must seem, erroneously ascribed to March 1790. The Boston letter is said to have reached Wem five weeks after its despatch on June 24, that is, just about the time when my great-grandfather wrote the present one to his son on the 31st July.

leave London next Thursday evening in company with Miss Thornthwaite. They both were very affectionate in their enquiries after you. They had heard nothing of Isaac Kingston since they had your letter concerning him. Your brother said that your letter to him was very long, very clever, and very entertaining. On Wednesday evening we had your letter, which was finished on the preceding Monday. The piety displayed in the first part of it was a great refreshment to me. Continue to cherish those thoughts which then occupied your mind, continue to be virtuous, and you will finally be that happy being whom you describe, and to this purpose you have nothing more to do than to pursue that conduct, which will always yield you the highest pleasures even in this present life. But he who once gives way to any known vice, in the very instant hazards his total depravity and total ruin. You must, therefore, fixedly resolve never, through any possible motives, to do any thing which you believe to be wrong. This will be only resolving never to be miserable, and this I rejoicingly expect will be the unwavering resolution of my William. Your conversation upon the Test Act did you honour. If we only think justly we shall always easily foil all the advocates of tyranny. The inhospitable ladies whom you mention<sup>1</sup> were, perhaps, treated by you with too great severity. We know not how people may be circumstanced at a particular moment, whose disposition is generally friendly. They may then happen to pass under a cloud, which unfits them for social intercourse. We must see them more than once or twice to be able to form a tolerable judgment of their characters. There are but few, like Mrs. Tracy, who can always appear what they really are. I do not say, however, that

<sup>1</sup> In the letter of Saturday, March —, 1790.

the English ladies whom you mentioned are not exactly as you described them. I only wish to caution you against forming too hasty a judgment of characters, who can seldom be known at a single interview. I wish you, if you can, to become master of the gamut whilst you are there. I am glad that you have made so great a progress in French, and that you are so very anxious to hear Mr. Clegg's lectures. It is a pity that you cannot have another month at the French, &c. But, as matters are, I hope you will be soon able to master that language. I am glad that you employed the last Sunday so well, and that the employment afforded you so much satisfaction. Nothing else can truly satisfy us but the acquisition of knowledge and virtue. May these blessings be yours more and more every day. On Thursday morning we had a letter from Mr. Booth,<sup>1</sup> written at Boston 24 June, just five weeks before we received it. He was forty-six days on his passage from England, with agreeable company. They had sometimes very heavy weather, and so extremely cold that the sails were frozen to the yards. The last winter was very extraordinary and very unhealthy in America. Consequently, many persons died in Boston and in other parts of the country. He says, concerning you, "I read Billy's letter to Fanny, and she was delighted with it. She sends her love to him, but Fanny has lost the recollection of her little playfellow. The letter does Billy much credit. He has uncommon powers of mind, and if nothing happens to prevent his receiving a liberal education, he must make a great man." This compliment, I know, will not make you proud or conceited, but more diligent. He, also, desires his and Mrs. Booth's affectionate regards to Billy. You see how careful I am to transmit to you all the

<sup>1</sup> In the other copy it is *Boatt*.

news in my power. I must now give you some information and directions concerning your return home. Mrs. Dickin is to send Sandlin with horses for George, at the time Miss Shepherd proposes to return. Mr. Swanwick<sup>1</sup> has made me an offer of his white horse to go for you. Therefore, if you be not afraid to ride him, and if you do not dislike this mode of travelling, the horses will be ready for you at Eastham on the day and hour you expect to be there. You will come forward the same day to a tenant of Miss Walford's, five miles on this side of Chester, and on the next day you will dine at Mrs. Wicherley's, at Whitechurch, and afterwards come home. But if the weather be blowing, or if it be not very fine, when Miss Shepherd comes upon the water, you are not to accompany her, but to wait until it be just what you could wish. You will mention the day and the hour that are fixed upon for you to set out in your next, or propose to me any other preferable mode of returning, that I may prepare accordingly. And you will take care to leave none of your books or other things behind you in your hurry, and also to bring my shirt, stock, stockings, and handkerchief. I hope to hear from you again on Wednesday evening next, and I propose to write to you the day following, to mention any further particulars that may occur with respect to your coming. I leave it entirely to yourself to thank Mrs. Tracy in the manner you think you ought for her friendship. You will stop at Mr. Nichols's as you come through Chester, and you may ask him to assist you in purchasing the best hat you can at the price of 8s., if you find yourself *rich* and choose to do so. Before you leave Liverpool, you will not neglect to call upon all persons who have shewn you

<sup>1</sup> The Swanwicks were members of Mr. Hazlitt's congregation at Wem.



any particular civilities. You will thank Mr. Nichols for the trouble you have given him, and especially your masters for their attention to you, and Mr. Yates for his books, which you will be careful to return in the good order in which you received them. You will give my respects to Mr. Yates. I wish that he amongst his friends could procure for your brother engagements for about a score of pictures at Liverpool this summer, that we might have the pleasure of seeing him here. Your mother gives her love, and she unites with me in affectionate regards to Mrs. and all the Miss Tracys.—I am, my dear William, your truly affectionate father,

W. HAZLITT.

WEM, 31 July 1790.

[Endorsed] Master HAZLITT,  
Mrs. TRACEY'S, Richmond, Liverpool.

Kynaston attends the school at present. How long he will continue to do so, I cannot pretend to say. Jos. Swanwick talked of writing to you by last Thursday's post.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—We had letters yesterday from your brother and sister, by which we learned that they were both well, that Isaac Kingston was returned to London, that Mrs. Large is also there, and that Peggy is to set off this evening on her return home, in the Baloon<sup>1</sup> Coach, in company with Miss Thornthwaite. Your brother will go to Canterbury as soon as Peggy leaves town, where he expects some employment to help him to lay in provision for the winter. I wish he may succeed no worse

<sup>1</sup> The Balloon coach plied between Maidstone and London, and stopped at the White Bear, Piccadilly. Peggy Hazlitt seems to have been staying with her brother John in Long Acre, and was apparently projecting a visit to Maidstone, before she returned home.

than he did last year in Kent. Yesterday evening we had your letter, which gave us much satisfaction, though you disappointed us in not being more particular in answer to my inquiries concerning the time the water will serve and the hour you propose to set off from Liverpool on Monday next. But I perceive that your paper was almost filled before you received my letter, and that you left yourself scarce any room to make me any reply to my questions. Sandland is to take your great coat and spatter-dashes to protect you from the weather. The horses will be ready for you at Eastham at 11 o'clock on Monday morning. You will take care to leave none of your things nor mine behind you, that Mrs. Tracy may not have the trouble of sending them afterwards. Take leave of Mr. Yates on Sunday afternoon in the vestry, and, as I before directed you, call upon all your friends who have taken any notice of you. When you are at Whitechurch, call at Mr. Jenkins's, if you can spare time, and bring with you the last part of Dr. Priestley's *Familiar Letters*, which he borrowed from me when he was last here. I am, at present, hurried, and therefore you must expect but a very short letter. I cannot, however, neglect acquainting you that young Mrs. Hincks, the late Susan Swanwick, is at Chester, and will be here this evening. She came over quite unexpectedly, with her aunt, her mother-in-law, and two boarders, who are coming to the school. Your sister will be quite glad to see her friend, though not quite so much so as to see you. The only other intelligence I can recollect is that old Mr. Walmsley of Cromer died this morning, and that Kynaston, I believe, will stay here until Christmas. Enquire which is the best of the cheap French dictionaries. Enquire at the bookseller's there for Watts's *Geography and Astronomy*, and if it be there and you can purchase

it for about half-a-crown, bring it with you. Do not forget to thank Mr. Nichols for his civilities. But what must you say to Mrs. Tracy? I leave that entirely to yourself. But present her with your mamma's respect and mine, and our sincere thanks for all favours, and tell her that we wish to see her again, and that we also hope for this pleasure with all the young ladies, and all of them quite happy. My sermons will soon be printed. I shall embrace the very first opportunity of sending Mrs. Tracy her copy. I have lately come to a resolution of taking half-a-dozen of boys to educate, if such should offer, under ten years of age, at 25 guineas a year each. You may mention this where you are, as there are multitudes in the West Indies who want a good education. Mrs. and the Miss Cottons are to be here this evening. Your mamma unites in love to you with, my dear William, your ever affectionate father,

W. HAZLITT.

WEM, August 6, 1790.

Dear William, you must excuse my writing to you now. [*In his mother's hand.*]

*To the Editor of the "Shrewsbury Chronicle."*<sup>1</sup>

[1791.]

MR. WOOD,—'Tis really surprising that men—men, too, that aspire to the character of Christians—should seem to take such pleasure in endeavouring to load with infamy one of the best, one of the wisest, and one of the greatest of men.

<sup>1</sup> Written in his thirteenth year. It was his first entrance into the field as a political champion and a newspaper correspondent. More than possibly his father prompted him here and there. Hazlitt and his sister, at any rate, subsequently modified their appreciation of Priestley in certain respects.

One of your late correspondents, under the signature of ΟΥΔΕΙΣ, seems desirous of having Dr. Priestley in chains, and indeed would not perhaps (from the gentleman's seemingly charitable disposition) be greatly averse to seeing him in the flames also. This is the Christian! This the mild spirit its great Master taught. Ah! Christianity, how art thou debased! How am I grieved to see that universal benevolence, that love to all mankind, that love even to our enemies, and that compassion for the failings of our fellow-men that thou art contracted to promote, contracted and shrunk up within the narrow limits that prejudice and bigotry mark out. But to return;—supposing the gentleman's end to be intentionally good, supposing him indeed to desire all this, in order to extirpate the Doctor's supposedly impious and erroneous doctrines, and promote the cause of truth; yet the means he would use are certainly wrong. For may I be allowed to remind him of this (which prejudice has hitherto apparently prevented him from seeing), that violence and force can never promote the cause of truth, but reason and argument or love, and whenever these fail, all other means are vain and ineffectual. And as the Doctor himself has said, in his letter to the inhabitants of Birmingham, "that if they destroyed him, ten others would arise, as able or abler than himself, and stand forth immediately to defend his principles; and that were these destroyed, an hundred would appear; for the God of truth will not suffer his cause to lie defenceless."

This letter of the Doctor's also, though it throughout breathes the pure and genuine spirit of Christianity, is, by another of your correspondents, charged with sedition and heresy; but, indeed, if such sentiments as those which it contains be sedition and heresy, sedition and heresy would be an

honour; for all their sedition is that fortitude that becomes the dignity of man and the character of Christian; and their heresy, Christianity. The whole letter, indeed, far from being seditious, is peaceable and charitable; and far from being heretical, that is, in the usual acceptance of the word, furnishing proofs of that resignation so worthy of himself. And to be sensible of this, 'tis only necessary, that any one laying aside prejudice read the letter itself with candour. What, or who, then, is free from the calumniating pen of malice, malice concealed, perhaps, under the specious disguise of religion and a love of truth?

Religious persecution is the bane of all religion; and the friends of persecution are the worst enemies religion has; and of all persecutions, that of calumny is the most intolerable. Any other kind of persecution can affect our outward circumstances only, our properties, our lives; but this may affect our characters for ever. And this great man has not only had his goods spoiled, his habitation burned, and his life endangered, but is also calumniated, aspersed with the most malicious reflections, and charged with everything bad, for which a misrepresentation of the truth and prejudice can give the least pretence. And why all this? 'To the shame of some one, let it be replied, merely on account of particular speculative opinions, and not anything scandalous, shameful, or criminal in his moral character. "Where I see," says the great and admirable Robinson, "a spirit of intolerance, I think I see the great Devil." And 'tis certainly the worst of devils. And here I shall conclude, staying only to remind your anti-Priestlian correspondents, that when they presume to attack the character of Dr. Priestley, they do not so much resemble the wren pecking at the eagle, as the owl, attempting by the flap of her wings, to hurl Mount



Etna into the ocean; and that while Dr. Priestley's name "shall flourish in immortal youth," and his memory be respected and revered by posterity, prejudice no longer blinding the understandings of men, theirs will be forgotten in obscurity, or only remembered as the friends of bigotry and persecution, the most odious of all characters.<sup>1</sup> ΕΛΙΑΣΟΝ.<sup>2</sup>

We now leave behind us the school-days and the Liverpool visits, and must follow Hazlitt to his next destination, with his father's profession still in view. The immediately following letters partially bear upon the question of his *Theory of Civil and Criminal Legislation*, of which the final text was not committed to paper until 1828.

Hazlitt evidently owed his introduction to the Unitarian College at Hackney to the successive connection with that neighbourhood and institution of his father's friends, Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley. The latter spent a good deal of time in London in 1791-92, and the students of the College sent him an address of sympathy and appreciation after the catastrophe at Birmingham, to which he replied.

[HACKNEY COLLEGE, 1793.]

DEAR FATHER, — I rec<sup>d</sup>. your kind letter on Monday evening at five o'clock, the usual time. I was very much pleased you liked the plan of my essay. You need not fear for the execution of it, as I am sensible that, after I have made it as perfect as I can, it will have many imperfections, yet I know that I can finish in a manner equal to the introduction. I have made some progress, since I wrote last. The essay on laws will make a part of

<sup>1</sup> See Lamb's earlier letters to Coleridge.

<sup>2</sup> His father had written in the *Monthly Repository* under more than one assumed signature on strictly professional topics.

it. I will here give you an account of my studies, &c. On Monday I am preparing Damien's lectures from seven until half-past eight, except the quarter of an hour in which I say Corrie's grammar lecture, and from nine till ten. From ten till twelve we are with him. His lectures are Simpson's elements of gram. and Bonnycastle's algebra. By the bye, the Ass's bridge is the tenth proposition of the geometry. From twelve to two I am preparing Belsham lectures in shorthand, and the Hebrew grammar, which I am saying till then. The shorthand is to write out eight verses [of the] Bible. From half-past three till five I walk. From five to six, I have my g. grammar for the morning. At liberty from six to seven. From seven to eight, preparing Belsham's evening lectures in L[eviticus?] and Heb. With them from eight to nine. And from half after nine till eleven I am reading Dr. Price's lecture for the next day. On Tuesday I am from seven till h. p. eight preparing Corrie's classical lecture, only the time that I am saying my grammar. And again from nine to h. p. ten, from which time to h. p. eleven I attend Dr. Priestley's lecture in history. From then till a little after twelve is C.'s classical lecture, which is Sophocles one week and Quintilian the next. In the greek we have two of the old students, in the latin five. J[oseph] S[wanwick] is now in my classes, at first he was not. But on his requesting it, he is now with me. You will take care not to mention this. From twelve till one, I am at Corrie's lecture in g. antiquities. With him till half-past one. From which till three I study my essay. Walking as before. From five till six, preparing my evening lecture in geography with Corrie, and my g. for the next day. And from seven to nine, except about half-an-hour at geography with Corrie, I again studying my essay. From half-past nine till eleven, reading David Hartley. I go

on in the same course rest of the week, except the difference that not having Dr. P.'s lecture makes, and that I now study after supper on Saturday night. On Sundays, too, I am always idle. I like Hebrew very well, the mathematics very much. They are very much suited to my genius. The Reid whom I mentioned is about eighteen, a Bristol lad, and a pupil of Mr. Eslin. I was in town to day. I was glad to hear of the increase of my yearly allowance, and of what Corrie told Rowmann. They are very well. I am sorry to hear that my mother is poorly. My love to her and Peggy.—I am your affectionate son,

W. HAZLITT.

I forgot to give you an account of my expenses, and as I am tired, shall defer till next time. I have spent only 8s. since Thursday fortnight, though I have had everything I wanted. Adieu.

The next was written from his brother's:—

[139 LONG ACRE] *Sunday Evening.*

DEAR FATHER,—I rec<sup>d</sup>. your letter safely on Monday.

On the preceding Saturday, I finished the introduction to my essay on the political state of man, and shewed [it] to Corrie. He seemed very well pleased with it, and desired me to proceed with my essay as quickly as I could. After a few definitions, I give the following sketch of my plan.

“In treating on the political state of man, I shall first endeavour to represent his natural political relations, and to deduce from these his natural political duties, and his natural political rights; and secondly, to represent his artificial political relations, and to deduce from these his artificial political duties, and his artificial rights.” This I think an excellent plan. I wish I could recite it to my own satisfaction. I

hope, however, to do it tolerably by Christmas. I have already got the greatest part of the ideas necessary, though in a crude and undigested state; so that my principal business will [be] to correct and arrange them. But this will be a terrible labour, and I shall rejoice most heartily when I have finished it. Corrie seemed much pleased with some of my translations this week. I passed the Ass's Bridge very safely, and very solitarily, on Friday. I like Dominic (that is the name which Dr. Rees gave him) and his lectures very much. A young fellow, whose name is Reid, is by much the cleverest of the students.

Since I wrote last, I have had seven more lectures in the week; and at a little after ten on Tuesday with Dr. Priestley on history, and one every morning at nine in the greek grammar with Corrie.

I have been in town to-day, as I generally go once a fortnight. J. Swanwick was with me. John and Mary<sup>1</sup> are very well. They are to come and drink tea with me on Saturday. Since I came here I have spent above eight guineas. You need not, however, be alarmed at this, as in future I shall not spend, or, at least, shall not spend more than five shillings a week. About a shilling a week for washing; about two for fire; another shilling for tea and sugar; and now another for candles, letters, &c. Books, furniture, and other necessaries have run away with a good deal, but these expenses are extraordinary.

J. S. has had nine guineas from Mr. Lawrence, and being entirely stripped, he called at Lawrence's when we were in town to-day. When he had told him his errand, the little gentleman seemed very much surprized, and said that he must write to his father about it. But, sir, says Jo, I have [not] a

<sup>1</sup> His brother and sister-in-law.

farthing, and I'd be glad if you'd let me have a guinea. Well, well, if you want it, you may. But, as he did not offer to get it and as we were rather in haste, I whispered to Jo, that I would lend him some money, till he could procure his; and so away we came, a good deal diverted with the citizen's prudence.

The weather here is charming. We had some of the clearest days last week I ever saw.

My love to my mother and Peggy.—I am your affectionate son,  
W. HAZLITT.

I have not read this letter; so you will correct any slips.

[HACKNEY COLLEGE, 1793.]

DEAR FATHER,—I was sorry to hear from your two last letters that you wish me to discontinue my essay, as I am very desirous of finishing it, and as I think it almost necessary to do so. For I have already completed the two first prop. and the third I have planned and shall be able to finish in a very short time; the fourth prop., which will be the last, will consist only of a few lines. The first section you know I have done for some time; and the first, second, and fourth propositions are exactly similar to the first, second, and fourth of the second section, so that I have little else to do than to alter a few words. The third will consist principally of observations on government, laws, &c., most of which will be the same with what I have written before in my essay on laws. My chief reason for wishing to continue my observations is, that, by having a particular system of politics I shall be better able to judge of the truth or falsehood of any prevarication which I hear, or read, and of the justice, or the contrary, of any political transactions.



Moreover, by comparing my own system with those of others, and with particular facts, I shall have it in my power to correct and improve it continually. But I can have neither of these advantages unless I have some standard by which to judge of, and of which to judge by, any ideas, or proceedings, which I may meet with. Besides, so far is my studying this subject from making me gloomy or low-spirited, that I am never so perfectly easy as when I am, or have been, studying it. With respect to theories, I really think them rather disserviceable than otherwise. I should not be able to make a good oration from my essay. It is too abstruse and exact for that purpose. I shall endeavour to write one on providence, which will, I think, be a very good subject. I shall certainly make it my study to acquire as much politeness as I can. However, this is not the best place possible for acquiring it. I do not at all say that the fellows who are here do not know how to behave extremely well; but the behaviour which suits a set of young fellows, or boys, does not suit any other society. This disadvantage, however, is of very little consequence, as little else is necessary to politeness than care and a desire of pleasing.

I have nothing new to add. My lectures go on as usual. We began the lectures on logic on Friday last. These, I fancy, will be easy and entertaining, though the students who have gone through them say they are not. We have two lectures a week on logic, which are on Wednesday and Friday. I was in town this day week. My brother and sister were very well. But I suppose you have heard from him since that time. He has been here to-day. I wrote to J. Wickstead Friday week. Present my respects to Mr. Jenkins; also to Mr. Rowe. Compliments to all inquirers. I hope my mother and P.

are quite well before this time. I long to see you. I wish they could come too.—I am, dear father, your aff. son,  
 W. HAZLITT.

I forgot to tell you that Corrie has not returned me the first part of my essay.

The next two letters seem also to have been written from 139 Long Acre. He was still permitted to come up to town once a fortnight.

LONDON, *Oct. 6th*, 1793.

DEAR FATHER,—I rec<sup>d</sup> your very kind letter yesterday evening. With respect to my past behaviour, I have often said, and I now assure you, that it did not proceed from any real disaffection, but merely from the nervous disorders to which, you well know, I was so much subject. This was really the case; however improbable it may appear. Nothing particular occurred from the time I wrote last till the Saturday following. On the Wednesday before, C. had given me a thesis. As it was not a subject suited to my genius, and from other causes, I had not written anything on it; so that I was pleased to hear his bell on Saturday morning, which was the time for showing our themes. When I came to him, he asked me whether I had prepared my theme. I told him I had not. You should have a very good reason, indeed, sir, says he, for neglecting it. Why really, sir, says I, I could not write it. Did you never write anything, then? says he. Yes, sir, I said, I have written some things. Very well, then, go along and write your theme immediately, said he. I accordingly went away, but did not make much progress in my theme an hour after, when his bell rang for another lecture. My eyes were much swollen, and I assumed as sullen a countenance as I

could, intimating that he had not treated me well. After the lecture, as I was going away, he called me back, and asked me very mildly if I had never written anything. I answered, I had written several things. On which he desired me to let him see one of my compositions, if I had no objection. I immediately took him my essay on laws, and gave it to him. When he had read it, he asked me a few questions on the subject, which I answered very satisfactorily, I believe. Well, sir, says he, I wish you'd write some more such things as this. Why, sir, said I, I intended to write several things, which I have planned, but that I could not write any of them in a week, or two or three weeks. What did you intend to write? says he. Among other things I told him that I intended to enlarge and improve the essay he had been reading. Aye, says he, I wish you would. Well! I will do it then, sir, said I. Do so, said he; take your own time now; I shall not ask you for it; only write it as soon as you can, for I shall often be thinking of it, and very desirous of it. This he repeated once or twice. On this I wished him a good morning, and came away, very well pleased with the reception I had met.

My course is as follows: on Monday at eleven I attend Dr. Rees on mathematics and algebra. This lecture lasts till twelve. At two I have a lecture, with several others, in shorthand, and one in Hebrew with Jo. Swanwick. These two detain us till dinner-time, and we have another lecture in shorthand, and another in Hebrew at eight at night. On Tuesday we have a lecture with Corrie at eleven, in the classics, one week Greek, another Latin, which continues till twelve; and another lecture with Corrie, on Greek antiquities, from one to two. On Wednesday we have the same business as on Monday, on Thursday as on Tuesday, and so on.

The Greek class which I have been in this week consists of two old students, J. Mason, and myself. I think that I translate more correctly and much better than any of them. The other day Mason was laughing at me, while I was translating a passage, on account of my way of speaking. Says Corrie to him, "Mr. Mason, you should be sure you can translate yours as well as Mr. Hazlitt does his, before you laugh at your neighbours."

I believe I am liked very well by the students in general. I am pretty well intimate with one of them, whose name is Tonson. J. Swanwick has been hitherto in a different class. But on applying to Corrie, he has been put into the same class with me. Farewell.—I am your aff. son, W. HAZLITT.

[LONDON] *Sunday, Oct. 23rd* [1793].

MY DEAR FATHER.—I write, not so much because I have anything particular to communicate, as because I know that you, and my mother, and Peggy will be glad to hear from me. I know well the pleasure with which you will recognise the characters of my hand, characters calling back to the mind with strong impression the idea of the person by whom they were traced, & in vivid & thick succession, all the ready associations clinging to that idea, & impatience with which you will receive any news which I can give you of myself. I know these things: & I feel them. Amidst<sup>1</sup> that repeated disappointment, & that long dejection, which have served to overcast & to throw into deep obscurity some of the best years of my life, years which the idle & illusive dreams of boyish expectation had presented glittering, & gay, & prosperous, decked out in all the fairness and all the brightness of colouring, & crowded

<sup>1</sup> Attention has been drawn to this remarkable passage in the text.



with fantastic forms of numerous hues of ever-varying pleasure,—amidst much dissatisfaction and much sorrow, the reflection that there are one or two persons in the world who are [not] quite indifferent towards me, nor altogether unanxious for my welfare, is that which is, perhaps, the most “soothing to my wounded spirit.”

*Monday.*

We have just received your letter. With respect to that part of it which concerns my brother's business, I have information to give you of one new 7 guinea picture. As to my essay, it goes on, or rather it moves backwards & forwards; however, it does not stand still. I have been chiefly employed hitherto in rendering my knowledge of my subject as clear & intimate as I could, & in the arrangement of my plan. I have done little else. I have proceeded some way in a delineation of the system, which founds the propriety of virtue on it's coincidence with the pursuit of private interest, & of the imperfections inseparable from it's scheme. I have written in all about half a dozen pages of shorthand, & have composed one or two good passages, together with a number of scraps & fragments, some to make their appearance at the head of my essay, some to be affixed to the tail, some to be inserted in the middle, & some not at all. I know not whether I can augur certainly of ultimate success. I write more easily than I did. I hope for good. I have ventured to look at high things. I have toiled long and painfully to attain to some stand of eminence. It were hard to be thrown back from the mid-way of the steep to the lowest humiliation. I must conclude. You will not fail to give my love, & all our loves, to my mother & Peggy. Give my love to J. S. Remember me to Wicksteed & to Kynaston, when you see him.



Compliments according to form. I am sorry Molly has been so ill. Farewell.—I am your affectionate son,  
 W. HAZLITT.

The notions and theories which the writer of these juvenile news-letters thus propounded to his father in and about 1790 may be traced in substance or principle no doubt in his riper work; he seems to have been in the habit of writing and re-writing his boyish conceptions, and the project for a New System of Civil and Criminal Legislation, commenced in these years, doubtless underwent repeated castigation before it appeared, after the author's death, in the columns of the *Atlas* for 1832, where the publication was announced in the following terms. The Reform Bill of 1832 was then impending:—

#### NOTICE

“The importance of the great question that now almost exclusively occupies the public mind, and to which we have, in our present number, sacrificed our ordinary departments of Literature and Criticism, justifies us in bespeaking the attention of our readers to a series of papers on constitutional government, the first of which we propose to publish on the 1st January, 1832. The intrinsic value of those papers is enhanced by the circumstance of their authorship, as they are from the pen of WILLIAM HAZLITT, and are now for the first time to be submitted to the public. In those articles, the distinguished author enters at large upon the philosophy of government, and defines political, personal, and moral rights, with a truth and eloquence of which we know hardly another example in our language. These posthumous productions may be said to contain

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF WILLIAM HAZLITT.

At the present moment these papers will be of more than ordinary interest. They appear at the era of the approaching triumph and confirmation of the principles for which HAZLITT suffered prosecution during his life, and died in neglect. We need hardly recommend them to all literary and political inquirers."

The letter which succeeds is merely inserted, because it is somewhat characteristic of the time, and is the only memorial of the kind in my hands emanating from my mother's family at so early a date. Miss Hammond married shortly afterward Mr. Carew Henry Reynell, second son of the writer and my maternal grandfather. The Hammonds were still seated at Woodbridge, Suffolk, or the vicinity, in 1833-34, when my parents paid a visit to the Bedingfields of Stowmarket, where I was christened. Miss A. C. Hammond's aunt was then alive, aged ninety-two, and was a patient of Dr. Bedingfield, whom my mother once accompanied in one of his professional visits, partly perhaps for the sake of the drive. Farther particulars may be found in the *Four Generations*, 1897:—

*To Miss Ann Constance Hammond  
From Mrs. Rebecca Reynell.<sup>1</sup>*

"I return my dear Nannette a thousand thanks for her kind thought in sending me the agreeable news of Caroline's safe arrival at Hounslow, for I must say I was much alarmed when George told me he had put her in the Reading Coach, and would have had Carew have wrote to you directly to have begged the favor of a line, but he informed me you would not have an opportunity of sending a Letter

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Mr. Henry Reynell the printer (1746-1811). See Account of the Reynells (*suprà*).

before he saw you, when, lo! in the mean time my dear Nannette (as if knowing my thoughts) sent a Letter w<sup>ch</sup> set my heart at ease and w<sup>ch</sup> I shall ever love her for. My best respects attend your good Father and Sister, and tell them as they were so desirous of my coming to spend two or three days I mean to do myself that Pleasure next Week, but my dear friends must assure me at the same time that they will make no stranger of me, but treat me as one of their own Family; on no other terms, my dear Girl, will I come, as Ceremony destroys all Friendship. We have spent a few very agreeable days with my dear Burchett; we thought of you many times, and wished the time to come again when we might see you & be comfortable together. She left her love and kisses; that part of her commission I mean to send by Carew, as supposing it most agreeable to you. I now, my dear, congratulate you on the re-establishment of y<sup>r</sup> dear Carew's Health, w<sup>ch</sup> I pray God may continue so, and I must at the same time observe to my young friend that he is likewise very good and attentive to his dear Father and me; we spent a most comfortable evening last night, & he & I had a deal of talk on future affairs. Mr. Reynell begs to unite in Love and good wishes: from, my dear Nancy, y<sup>r</sup> ever affectionate Mother,

R. REYNELL.

(LONDON, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1797.)

Love to Caroline: do not keep her long, as school is the best place for little girls. Love to Charles.

[Endorsed] Miss A. C. HAMMOND.

There are no Hazlitt letters in my possession or within my knowledge between 1793 and 1798, when a new vital epoch was opening, nor between 1798 and 1802.

He appears to have been either at Liverpool or in London with his brother—at all events, away from home—when he sent his father on the eve of setting out for Wem the subjoined:—

[1798.]

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have just time to let you know, that I shall set out on my way home this evening. Mr. Coleridge is gone to Taunton to preach for Dr. Toulmin. He is to meet me at Bridgewater, and we shall proceed from thence to Bristol to-morrow morning. You may expect to see me on Saturday, or perhaps not till the next day. I received your letter on Friday. Farewell.

W. H.

*Letters from the Louvre, 1802-3.*

PARIS, A L'HÔTEL COQ HERON,  
RUE COQ HERON, PRES LA PALAIS ROYAL,  
16th October, 1802.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I arrived here yesterday. . . . Calais is a miserable place in itself, but the remains of the fortifications about it are very beautiful. There are several ranges of ramparts, and ditches one within another, “wall within wall, mural protection intricate.” The hand of time is very evident upon both; the ditches are filled with reeds and long grass, and the walls are very much decayed, and grown very dark coloured. (I am so perplexed with French that I can hardly recollect a word of English.) The country till within a few miles of Paris was barren and miserable. There were great numbers of beggars at all the towns we passed through. The vineyards near this have a most delightful appearance; they look richer than any kind of agricultural production that we have in England, particularly the red vines, with

which many of the vineyards are covered. Paris is very dirty and disagreeable, except along the river side. Here it is much more splendid than any part of London. The Louvre is one of the buildings which overlook it. I went there this morning as soon as I had got my *card of security* from the police-office. I had some difficulty in getting admission to the Italian pictures, as the fellows who kept the doors make a trade of it, and I was condemned to the purgatory of the modern French gallery for some time. At last some one gave me a hint of what was expected, and I passed through. The pictures are admirable, particularly the historical pieces by Rubens. They are superior to anything I saw, except one picture by Raphael. The portraits are not so good as I expected. Titian's best portraits I did not see, as they were put by to be copied. The landscapes are for the most part exquisite. I intend to copy two out of the five I am to do for Railton. I promised Northcote to copy Titian's portrait of Hippolito de Medici for him. He had a print of it lying on the floor one morning when I called on him, and was saying that it was one of the finest pictures in the whole world; on which I told him that it was now at the Louvre, and that if he would give me leave, I would copy it for him as well as I could. He said I should delight him if I would, and was evidently excessively pleased. Holcroft is in London. He gave me a letter to Mr. Merrimee, the same painter to whom Freebairn's letter was. I called on him this afternoon, and he is to go with me in the morning to obtain permission for me to copy any pictures which I like, and to assist me in procuring paints, canvas, &c. . . . I hope my mother is quite easy, as I hope to do very well. My love to her and Peggy.—I am your affectionate,

W. HAZLITT.



PARIS, AT THE HÔTEL COQ HERON, RUE COQ HERON,  
*Thursday, October 20th, 1802.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have begun to copy one of Titian's portraits. . . . I made a very complete sketch of the head in about three hours, and have been working upon it longer this morning; I hope to finish it this week. To-morrow and Saturday I can do nothing to it; there are only four days in the week in which one is allowed to, or at least able to, do anything. Friday is allotted to sweeping the rooms, and Saturday and Sunday are usually visiting days. There are great numbers of people in the rooms (most of them *English*) every day, and I was afraid at first that this would confuse and hinder me; but I found on beginning to copy that I was too occupied in my work to attend much to, or to care at all about what was passing around me; or if this had any effect upon me indirectly, it was to make me more attentive to what I was about. In order that I and my copy might not fall into contempt, I intend to occupy the vacant days of the week in making duplicates of the copies which I do here, and in doing a picture of myself, in the same view as that of Hippolito de Medici, by Titian, which I intend to begin upon to-morrow. This, it is true, will occasion an increase in the expense, but I shall do them better here, at least the duplicates, than I could at home, and it will be necessary for me to have them as models to keep by me. The pictures I wish to copy are the following:—1st, Portrait of a young man in black, and very dark complexion, by Titian. This is the one I am doing. 2nd. Another portrait by Titian. 3rd. The portrait by Titian of Hippolito de Medici. 4th. Portrait of a lady, by Vandyke. 5th. Portrait of the Cardinal Bentivoglio, by Vandyke also. 6th. Leo X., by

Raphael. If I cannot get them removed into the room, either through the influence of Mr. Merrimee or by bribing the keepers, I shall substitute either Titian's *Mistress*, or a head of a Sybil by Guercino, a very good painter, or two landscapes in the room. The finest picture in the collection is the *Transfiguration*, by Raphael. This is without any exception the finest picture I ever saw; I mean the human part of it, because the figure of Christ, and the angels, or whatever they are, that are flying to meet him in the air, are to the last degree contemptible. The picture of the *Taking Down from the Cross*, by Rubens, which I have heard John describe, is here. It is a very fine one. One of the pictures is Reynolds' picture of the Marquis of Granby. Mr. Merrimee came to look at the [young man in] black and the old woman, which he liked very much, though they are contrary to the French style; on the other hand, without vanity be it spoken, they are very much in the style of the Flemish and Italian painters. I like them better, instead of worse, from comparing them with the pictures that are here. The modern French pictures are many of them excellent in many particulars, though not in the most material. I find myself very comfortable here.

With my love to my mother, John, and Peggie, I  
am your affectionate son, W. HAZLITT.

I saw Bonaparte.

*Sunday, November 14th, 1802.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—A fortnight ago to-morrow I began a copy of a picture I had not seen before—the subject of which is described in the catalogue in this manner—“852, by Ludovic Lana, born at Modena, in 1597; died in 1646. *The Death of*

*Clorinda*.—Clorinda, having been mortally wounded in battle by Tancred, is seen lying at the foot of a tree, her bosom bare, discovering the place where she was wounded. On the point of expiring she desires to receive the baptismal sacrament; and while Tancred administers it to her with the water he has brought in his helmet from a neighbouring spring, she holds out her hand to him, in token of her forgiveness, and breathes her last." It is to my mind the sweetest picture in the place. My canvas is not so large as the other, but includes both the figures, which are of the size of life. I have worked upon it forty hours, that is seven mornings, and am going over the whole of it again this week, by the end of which I intend to have it finished. I propose to complete the copy of Titian, which I began the week following, in five weeks from the time I got here. The three heads, which I shall then have to do, I shall, I think, be able to do in the same time, allowing three weeks for another portrait by Titian, and a head of Christ crowned with thorns, by Guido, and two more for Titian's *Mistress*, in which the neck and arms are seen. I shall then, if I have time, do a copy of the Cardinal Bentivoglio, which is at present exhibited in the great room, and probably some others. But the first five I have mentioned I have certainly fixed upon. I generally go to the Museum about half-past nine or ten o'clock, and continue there until half-past three or four. Charles Fox was there two or three mornings. He talked a great deal, and was full of admiration. I have not yet seen Bonaparte near. He is not in Paris.—With love to all, I am your affectionate son,

W. HAZLITT.

Friday, November 29th, 1802.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I received your letter on Sunday. I wrote to you that day fortnight; I am, therefore, sorry that you did not receive my letter sooner. I there gave you an account of what pictures I had been doing, and of what I intended to do. The copy of *The Death of Clorinda* is as good as finished, though I shall have to go over the most of it again when it is quite dry. The copy of Titian is also brought forward as much as it could be till it is dry; for, as the room is not kept very warm, the pictures do not dry fast enough to be done out and out. I have been working upon the portrait of Titian's *Mistress*, as it is called, these two last days. I intend to complete this the beginning of next week, if possible; the rest of that week and the two following I shall devote to going over and completing the other two. If I succeed in this, which I am pretty confident of doing, I shall have done eight of my pictures in eight weeks, from the time I came here. But as one of them contains two whole figures, it may be reckoned equal to two; so that I shall have gone on at the rate of a portrait in a fortnight. I shall, therefore, have a month left to do the other two heads, which will make up the whole number. I intend to give an hour a day to copying a *Holy Family*, by Raphael, one of the most beautiful things in the world. Of this, and *The Death of Clorinda*, I shall probably be able to get prints taken in London, as this is frequently done; as my copies certainly contain all that is wanted for a print, which has nothing to do with colouring. I intend to write to Robinson about it. I was introduced this morning to Mr. Cosway, who is here, doing sketches of the pictures in the Louvre by a Mr. Pellegrini, whose pictures John knows very well, and whom I have seen with Mr.

Merrimee. If Railton chooses, I will do a copy of a most divine landscape by Rubens for him; but it will take at least a fortnight to do it, most probably three weeks. I have heard from Loftus.<sup>1</sup> This is all I can recollect at present, except my love, &c.—  
Your affectionate son, W. HAZLITT.

I would have written a longer letter if I had had time.

December 10th, 1802.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I yesterday morning completed my copy of the picture called *The Death of Clorinda*; I have been, in all, fifteen mornings about it. It is a very good copy; when I say this, I mean that it has very nearly all the effect of the picture, and will certainly make as great a figure in Railton's parlour as the original does in the Louvre. It has been praised by some of the French painters. They have begun of late to compliment me on my style of getting on; though, at first, they were disposed to be very impertinent. This is the way of the world; you are always sure of getting encouragement when you do not want it. After I had done my picture yesterday, I took a small canvas, which I had in the place, and began a sketch of a head in one of the large historical pictures, being very doubtful if I could; not at all expecting to finish it, but merely to pass away the time: however, in a couple of hours, I made a very fair copy, which I intend to let remain as it is. It is a side face, a good deal like yours, which was one reason of my doing it so rapidly. I got on in such a rapid style, that an Englishman, who had a party with him, came up, and told me, in French, that I was doing very well. Upon my answering him in English he seemed surprised, and

<sup>1</sup> His cousin on the mother's side, son of the "hair-brained uncle." He was an occasional visitor at the Lambs'.



said, "Upon my word, sir, you get on with great spirit and boldness: you do us great credit, I am sure." He afterwards returned; and after asking how long I had been about it, said he was the more satisfied with his judgment, as he did not know I was a countryman. Another wanted to know if I taught painting in oil. I told him that I stood more in need of instruction myself; that that sort of rapid sketching was what I did better than anything else; and that, after the first hour or two, I generally made my pictures worse and worse, the more pains I took with them. However, seriously, I was much pleased with this kind of notice, as however confident I may be of the real merit of my work, it is not always so clear that it is done in a way to please most other people. This same sketch is certainly a very singular thing, as I do not believe there are ten people in the world who could do it in the same way. However, I have said enough on the subject. I shall go on with this business, as I find it succeed. I intend to copy a composition of Rubens in this manner, which I can do at intervals, without interfering with my regular work. The copy of Titian's *Mistress*, and the other, which I began from him, I purpose finishing in the six following days, and another copy of Titian in the six after that; which will be four out of the five which I am doing for Railton. I shall want another fortnight for the copy of Guido; and it will take another fortnight, if I do that for Northcote. This will make fourteen weeks. I have been here seven already. I will now enumerate the pictures I have done, or am doing: 1. *The Death of Clorinda*, completed. 2. Portrait of a Man in black, by Titian, nearly finished. 3. Titian's *Mistress*; this will take four days more to finish it. 4. Portrait of another Man in black, by the same, not yet begun. 5. *Christ*

*Crowned with Thorns*, by Guido, not begun. 6. Hippolito de Medici. As I have six hours to work every morning, from ten till four, I intend to give an hour to making rough copies for myself. In this way I shall make a sketch of the head I mentioned; and I propose doing a *Holy Family*, from Raphael (a very small picture), and a larger copy, from Rubens, in the same way. My love to all.—Yours affectionately,  
W. HAZLITT.

PARIS, January 7th, 1803.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I finished, as far as I intend, the copy of Hippolito de Medici for Northcote, the day after I wrote to him; and the day following I began a copy of a part of the *Transfiguration* by Raphael, which had not been exhibited in the common or large room till the week before. I have nearly done the head of the boy, who is supposed to see Christ in his Ascension from the Mount, and who is the principal figure in the piece. I shall paint it in another morning. It is the best copy I have done, though I have been only fifteen hours about it. There will be two other figures included in the canvas; this is 4 feet 8 in. high, and 10 feet 8 in. in breadth. You will easily get a distinct idea of the size of the picture by measuring it on the parlour floor. Northcote's copy, and that of *The Death of Clorinda*, are the same size. The *Transfiguration* itself is about three times as high, and three times as wide. It is by no means the largest, though it is the finest figure-picture in the place. I am about a second copy of the de Medici for Railton. I shall have done it in two or three days more. I have also finished, since I wrote last, the first copy which I began, from Titian.—I am your affectionate son,  
W. HAZLITT.

I introduce here two letters which have reference to Hazlitt's literary work and friends in London in 1806. The first is addressed to Mr. Joseph Johnson, publisher of the *Abridgment of Tucker or Search*, from Great Russell Street, to which John Hazlitt had removed in 1804 from Rathbone Place. He still, we perceive, clung to the old familiar neighbourhood, My grandfather seems to refer back with vivid relish to this period, when he speaks in the *Letter Bell* of setting out in the evening from Wem on his way to Shrewsbury to take the coach for London. In the same paper he mentions the dinner bell summoning him to the fraternal board, "where youth and hope—

'Made good digestion wait on appetite,  
And health on both.'

DEAR SIR,—I have sent you the abridgment I have made of the two first volumes. The proportion in quantity is, as near as I can guess, about 210 pages to 790, that is, considerably less than a third. I imagine the 3 last volumes, though much larger, will not take more than the 2 first, and that the 3<sup>d</sup> and 4th will be about 400 pages, or perhaps more. If you should think this too much in quantity, the sooner you let me know the better. I find that going on in the way I have done, I can insert almost everything that is worth remembering in the book. I give the amusing passages almost entire. In fact I have done little more than leave out repetitions, and other things that might as well never have been in the book. But whether I have done it properly, or no, you will be able to determine better than I. If the first manuscript should be awkward to print from being written both ways, I

could easily have it transcribed.—I am with great respect, your ob. servant,  
W. HAZLITT.

*August 30th (1806).*  
109 GREAT RUSSELL ST.<sup>1</sup>

The second letter was written from his own lodgings, No. 34 Southampton Buildings, a locality which he selected at this early date partly for the sake of its convenient position, and partly from having been so far back as 1800 the residence of the Lambs; it was not long since pointed out by the tenant as one of Hazlitt's residences. He gives a remarkably full and gossiping account (for him) of his doings. He alludes to his painting, and we note how he was in touch with his brother's circle, and even with others, such as Hume, of the Pipe Office, whom he knew through Lamb, and at whose house in Bayswater the children of Shelley appear to have been domiciled during the poet's absence abroad.<sup>2</sup>

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have just seen Tom Loftus, who told me to my surprize that he left you last Friday. He called last night; but I was out. I was rather surprized, because, though I knew of his going into Wales, I did not think of his going your way. He seems much pleased with his reception and with his journey altogether. He has brought home some Welch mutton with him, which I am going to eat a part of to-night. He stopped a whole day at Oxford, which he thinks a finer place than Wem or even Shrewsbury. I have just finished the cheeks which I had dressed last Friday for my dinner after I had taken a walk round Hampstead

<sup>1</sup> Johnson died at his house at Walham Green, 20th December, 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Shelley from Pisa, February 17, 1820, to Hume, expressive of his gratitude for the kindness shown to the children.

and Highgate. I never made a better dinner in my life. T. Loftus came to help me off with them on Saturday, and we attacked them again at night, after going to the Opera, where I went for the first time and probably for the last. The fowls I took to Lamb's the night I received them, and the pickled pork. They were very good. But I found only one tongue in the basket, whereas you seem to speak of two.

The book I took to John's yesterday. The preface to Search is finished and printed to my great comfort. It is very long, and for what I know very tiresome. I am going on with my criticisms, and have very nearly done Burke. I do not think I have done it so well as Chatham's. I showed the one I did of him to Anth. Robinson,<sup>1</sup> who I understand since was quite delighted with it, and thinks it a very fine piece of composition. I have only Fox's to do of any consequence. Pitt's I shall take out of my pamphlet,<sup>2</sup> which will be no trouble. I am to settle with Budd<sup>3</sup> to-morrow, but I doubt my profits will be small. These four viz. Burke, Chatham, Fox, Pitt, with Sir R. Walpole's, will be the chief articles of the work, and if I am not mistaken confounded good ones. I am only afraid they will be too good, that is, that they will contain more good things, than are exactly proper for the occasion. Have you seen it in any of the papers? It was in the *M. Chronicle*. It is a pretty good one. I might if I was lazy take it, and save myself the trouble of writing one myself. I supped at Godwin's on New Year's day and at Holcroft's on Sunday.

I am going to dinner at Hume's to-morrow, where I also was on Christmas day, and had a pleasant time

<sup>1</sup> The brother of H. Crabb Robinson, already referred to.

<sup>2</sup> *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs*, 1806.

<sup>3</sup> The publisher.



enough. It was much such a day as it was two years ago, when I was painting your picture. *Tempus preterlabitur*. I am afraid I shall never do such another. But all in good time: I have done what I wanted in writing and I hope I may in painting.

My mother I suppose was much pleased to see T. Loftus. He said that he intended returning the same day, having no time to spare, but that you pressed him so much to stop. Did not you think him a good deal like me? He intends calling on John to say that he has seen you.

I can think of nothing more but my best love to my mother and Peggy, and that I am your affectionate son,  
W. HAZLITT.

*Tuesday.*

[Endorsed] Revd. Mr. HAZLITT,  
Wem, Salop. Single.

Hazlitt had been commissioned by his father to inquire, when his two volumes of *Sermons* which Johnson had undertaken, and which appeared in 1808, would be ready. The publisher had promised to consider the question of sitting to the painter for his portrait.

[1807 or 1808.]

DEAR SIR,—I have had a letter from my father, in which he is anxious to know what progress is made in the proof sheets. Would you have the goodness to let me have one soon?—If you would fix on some day to sit for the picture I spoke of, you would also confer a favour on your much obliged, humble servant,  
W. HAZLITT.

*Tuesday morning.*

34 SOUTHAMPTON BUILDINGS,  
HOLBORN.

A letter from Joseph Hume of Bayswater to Hazlitt forms the concluding item in a rather long and tiresome *rigmarole* which I was led to insert in the *Lamb and Hazlitt* volume, 1900.

[January 1808.]

DEAR SIR,—I don't know what a parcel of your Friends, or rather foes, are about, but I the other day received in the form of a Petition some stuff and farrago about your death: and I have had sent me this morning by a very mysterious conveyance a Letter not signed (I enclose it), but which I would swear is Mr. Lamb's writing. I don't like that Lamb; Look to him; I hate snakes in the grass. I say let a man, if he has a grudge against a friend, out with it; and not be scribbling and scrawling backwards & forwards every day or two, and secretly abusing one. For God's sake come down here, and convince those silly fellows, to say the least of it, that talk about your death, that you are alive.—Yours until death,

JOSEPH HUME.<sup>1</sup>

*P.S.*—"A living dog is better than a dead Lion."  
—*Solomon.*

To W. HAZLITT, Esq.

The following is the only prenuptial letter of Hazlitt to his future wife known to exist:—

*To Miss Stoddart.*

*Tuesday night [January 1808].*

MY DEAR LOVE,—Above a week has passed, and I have received no letter—not one of those letters

<sup>1</sup> Hume is the gentleman, whose wife is mentioned in a letter from Lamb to Hazlitt of Nov. 10, 1805. The Humes were evidently at that time on friendly, sociable terms with both. It was at Hume's that my

“in which I live, or have no life at all.” What is become of you? Are you married, hearing that I was dead (for so it has been reported)? Or are you gone into a nunnery? Or are you fallen in love with some of the amorous heroes of Boccaccio? Which of them is it? Is it with Chynon, who was transformed from a clown into a lover, and learned to spell by the force of beauty? Or with Lorenzo, the lover of Isabella, whom her three brethren hated (as your brother does me), who was a merchant’s clerk? Or with Federigo Alberigi, an honest gentleman, who ran through his fortune, and won his mistress by cooking a fair falcon for her dinner, though it was the only means he had left of getting a dinner for himself? This last is the man; and I am the more persuaded of it, because I think I won your good liking myself by giving you an entertainment—of sausages, when I had no money to buy them with. Nay now, never deny it! Did not I ask your consent that very night after, and did you not give it? Well, I should be confoundedly jealous of those fine gallants, if I did not know that a living dog is better than a dead lion: though, now I think of it, Boccaccio does not in general make much of his lovers: it is his women who are so delicious. I almost wish I had lived in those times, and had been a little *more amiable*. Now, if a woman had written the book, it would not have had this effect upon me: the men would have been heroes and angels, and the women nothing at all. Isn’t there some truth in that? Talking of departed loves, I met my old flame<sup>1</sup> the other day in the street. I did dream of her *one* night since, and only

grandfather first met John Scott, which introduced him to the *London Magazine*. But the acquaintance was of value to Hazlitt. They were kind, homely people. They equally knew the John Hazlitts. See C. Lamb’s *Letters*, 1886, i. 361; ii. 343, and *suprà*.

<sup>1</sup> The Miss Shepherd of one of the early Liverpool letters.

one: every other night I have had the same dream I have had for these two months past. Now, if you are at all reasonable, this will satisfy you.

*Thursday morning.*—The book is come. When I saw it I thought that you had sent it back in a *huff*, tired out by my sauciness, and *coldness*, and delays, and were going to keep an account of dimities and sayes, or to salt pork and chronicle small beer as the dutiful wife of some fresh-looking, rural swain; so that you cannot think how surprised and pleased I was to find them all done. I liked your note as well or better than the extracts; it is just such a note as such a nice rogue as you ought to write after the *provocation* you had received. I would not give a pin for a girl “whose cheeks never tingle,” nor for myself if I could not make them tingle sometimes. Now, though I am always writing to you about “lips and noses,” and such sort of stuff, yet as I sit by my fireside (which I do generally eight or ten hours a day), I oftener think of you in a serious, sober light. For indeed, I never love you so well as when I think of sitting down with you to dinner on a boiled scrag-end of mutton, and hot potatoes. You please my fancy more than when I think of you in—no, you would never forgive me if I were to finish the sentence. Now I think of it, what do you mean to be dressed in when we are married? But it does not much matter! I wish you would let your hair grow; though perhaps nothing will be better than “the same air and look with which at first my heart was took.” But now to business. I mean soon to call upon your brother *in form*, namely, as soon as I get quite well, which I hope to do in about another *fortnight*; and then I hope you will come up by the coach as fast as the horses can carry you, for I long mightily to be in your ladyship’s presence—to vindicate my character. I think you had better

sell the small house, I mean that at 4. 10, and I will borrow £100. So that we shall set off merrily in spite of all the prudence of Edinburgh.

Good-bye, little dear!

W. H.

Miss STODDART,  
Winterslow, Salisbury, Wilts.

From a MS. memorandum on the autograph the subjoined letter seems to have been the joint composition of Lamb and Hazlitt. The so-called cartoon was a pencil drawing by the latter of Midleton Cottage, Miss Stoddart's residence at Winterslow.

*To the Rev. William Hazlitt.*

TEMPLE, 18 Febr., 1808.

SIR,—I am truly concerned that any mistake of mine should have caused you uneasiness, but I hope we have got a clue to William's absence, which may clear up all apprehensions. The people where he lodges in town have received direction from him to forward one or two of his shirts to a place called Winterslow, in the county of Hants [Wilts] (not far from Salisbury), where the lady lives whose Cottage, pictured upon a card, if you opened my letter you have doubtless seen, and though we have had no explanation of the mystery since, we shrewdly suspect that at the time of writing that Letter which has given you all this trouble, a certain son of yours (who is both Painter & Author) was at her elbow, and did assist in framing that very Cartoon, which was sent to amuse and mislead us in town as to the real place of his destination. And some words at the back of the said Cartoon, which we had not marked so narrowly before, by the similarity of the hand-



writing to William's, do very much confirm the suspicion. If our theory be right, they have had the pleasure of their jest, and I am afraid you have paid for it in anxiety. But I hope your uneasiness will now be removed, and you will pardon a suspense occasioned by LOVE, who does so many worse mischiefs every day.

The Letter to the people where William lodges says, moreover, that he shall be in town in a fortnight.

My sister joins in respects to you and Mrs. Hazlitt, and in our kindest remembrances & wishes for the restoration of Peggy's health.—I am, Sir, your humble Servt.,

CH. LAMB.

Rev. W. HAZLITT, Wem, Shropshire.  
Single.

*From the Rev. William Hazlitt to the Editor of the  
"Monthly Repository."*

WEM, SHROPSHIRE [July 1808].

SIR,—I am not so much surprised as probably some of your readers at the mortifying account which has been published in your work of the brutality of Sterne to his mother. For, above forty years ago, as I was travelling in a coach from Bath to London, my companion, a Dr. Marriot, who was his near neighbour, gave me such a character of the man as filled me with unfavourable impressions of him ever since. Being then a young man, and, like most other young men, being too forward to show my opinion of men and books, I began to express my high admiration of the writings of Sterne, and to pass unqualified eulogiums upon him, as a man possessed of the finest feelings and philanthropy.

As soon as I had ended my frothy declamation, the Doctor very placidly told me that I did not know the man as well as he did; that he was his very near neighbour; and that of all the men he ever knew, he was the most devoid of the feelings of humanity, or of everything that we call sympathy.

As one proof of this, the Doctor told me that his daughter had some acquaintance with Miss Sterne, and therefore that she frequently passed an afternoon at his house; that Miss Sterne was subject to violent epileptic fits; that she had been lately seized with one of these, which was accompanied with such alarming symptoms, as made him and his daughter apprehend that she was dying; that they therefore sent to Mr. Sterne to apprise him of the circumstance, and to come to them immediately.

After waiting for some time in anxious expectation, the gentleman made his appearance, and seeing his daughter agonized upon the floor, and seemingly ready to expire, he coolly observed that she would be well again presently, and that he could not stop a moment, being engaged to play the first fiddle at York that night. Thus he took his leave, and hastily hurried out of the house.

We cannot therefore conclude with any certainty what a man feels from the pathos of his writings, unless we have an intimate acquaintance with the man himself; unless we can prove from his actions that his high-wrought descriptions are the index of his mind. It is even possible, as the philosopher Moyes asserted, that a man of no feeling may succeed best in giving us a finished picture of distress.

How is this to be accounted for, unless it be, that because they have no interest in what they deliver, they are not hurried on by any real passion—they take time to dress it to the popular taste,

by ornamenting it with all the nick-nackery which it will bear?

The man, however, who feels and suffers in a high degree, must express himself strongly on a subject which affects him, though he does not go out of his way to introduce any artful embellishment.

I intended to have attempted an explanation of this, but rather wish to have this done by some of your ingenious correspondents. I shall only observe, that notwithstanding all the admiration which Sterne's *Maria* has produced, he could not, to save his life, have written anything equal to David's lamentation over Absalom. He would, like Dr. Swift, if in his situation, have been proud and witty, even when deploring the death of his lovely Stella.

W. HAZLITT.

Hazlitt was much indebted to Godwin, when he found himself about the end of the eighteenth century under the necessity of obtaining a footing among the literary brotherhood in London. The parents of Godwin and of the mother of Hazlitt were fellow-townfolk at Wisbeach. The meeting in London in later years was the renewal of an old Cambridgeshire tie.

It was through Godwin that Hazlitt knew Holcroft and Fawcett, the last-named a man whom I regard as having during their intimate, but rather short-lived, intercourse imparted to my grandfather's mind and course of study, next to Coleridge, whose acquaintance he may have owed to Stoddart, and so indirectly that of the Lambs, a more powerful stimulus than any other individual whom he ever met.

Although Godwin and Hazlitt must have met before the close of the eighteenth century both independently and as common guests at certain houses, there is very slight actual evidence of letters

having passed between them. The two which follow, are derived from a second-hand source, as I have been unable to trace the originals; they appear to belong to the period, when Hazlitt was engaged in preparing the *Memoirs of Holcroft*, and interesting himself in the question of English philology in opposition to Lindley Murray:—

WINTERSLOW, *no date* [about 1808-9].

I received yours of the 2<sup>d</sup> yesterday. As to the attack upon Murray, I have hit at him several times, and whenever there is a mention of a blunder, "his name is not far off." Perhaps it would look like jealousy to make a formal set at him. Besides, I am already noted by the reviewers for want of liberality, and an undisciplined moral sense. . . . I was, if you will allow me to say so, rather hurt to find you lay so much stress upon the matter as you do in your last sentence; for assuredly the works of William Godwin do not stand in need of those of E. Baldwin for vouchers and supporters. The latter (be they as good as they will) are but the dust in the balance as compared with the former. Coleridge talks out of the Revelations of somebody's "new name from heaven"; for my own part, if I were you, I should not wish for any but my old one.—I am, dear Sir, very faithfully and affectionately yours,

W. HAZLITT.

I send this in a parcel, because it will arrive a day sooner than by the post. Will you send me down a copy of the Grammar, when you write again, by the same conveyance? As for the postage of the proof-sheets, it will not be more, nor so much, as the extra expense of correcting in the printing, occasioned by blurred paper in the author. It may therefore be set off.

WINTERSLOW [? 1808-9].

DEAR SIR,<sup>1</sup>—I am forced to trouble you with the following questions, which I shall be much obliged to you to answer as well as you can.

At what time H[olcroft] lived with Granville Sharpe?<sup>2</sup> whether before or after he turned actor? and whether the scene described in *Alwyn* as the occasion when Holkirk (*i.e.* himself in the subsequent part) went on the stage, really took place between Sharpe and Holcroft? I mean the one where Seddon discovers his appearance at a sporting club in the character of Macbeth.

What was the maiden name of Mrs. Sparks?

[No signature.]

A letter of three folio pages, written by Hazlitt, from Salisbury, to his wife staying with the Lambs, is one of the most remarkable, pleasantest, and wholesomest that remain to us. I attribute it to April 1809. The Lambs did not go into Wiltshire till the autumn.

*W. Hazlitt to his Wife.*

[SALISBURY, April 1809.]  
*Sunday evening.*

MY DEAR SARAH,—I begin on a large sheet of paper though I have nothing new to fill a half one. Both parcels of prints came safe, & I need hardly say that I was glad to see them & that I thank you exceedingly for getting them for me. I am much obliged to you for your trouble in this as well as about the pictures. Your last letter but one I did not receive in time to have come up to see them

<sup>1</sup> Kegan Paul's *Memoirs of Godwin*, 1870, ii. 175.

<sup>2</sup> See *Life of Holcroft* (Hazlitt's *Works*, ii. 56).



before Friday (the day then fixed for the sale), & though I got your letter on Friday time enough to have been with you yesterday morning, I did not feel disposed to set out. The day was wet & uncomfortable, & the catalogue did not tempt me so much as I expected. There were a parcel of Metzus & Terburgs & boors smoking, & ladies at harpsichords, which seemed to take up as much room as the *St. Cecilia*, the *Pan & St. George*, the *Danië* & the *Ariadne in Navos*. Did Lamb go to the sale, & what is the report of the pictures? But I have got my complete set of Cartoons, "here I sit with my doxies surrounded," & so never mind. I just took out my little copy of Rembrandt to look at, & was so pleased with it, I had almost a mind to send it up, & try whether it might not fetch two or three guineas. But I am not at present much in the humour to incur any certain expence for an uncertain profit. With respect to my painting, I go on something like Satan, through moist & dry, something glazing & sometimes scumbling, as it happens, now on the wrong side of the canvas & now on the right, but still persuading myself that I have at last found out the true secret of Titian's golden hue & the oleaginous touches of Claude Lorraine. I have got in a pretty good background, & a *conception* of the ladder which I learned from the upping stone on the down, only making the stone into gold, & a few other improvements. I have no doubt there was such another on the field of Luz, & that an upping stone is the genuine Jacob's Ladder. But where are the angels to come from? That's another question, which I am not yet able to solve. My dear Sarah, I am too tired & too dull to be witty, & therefore I will not attempt it. I did not see the superscription of the wrapping paper till this morning, for which I thank you as much as for the prints. You are a

good girl, & I must be a good boy. I have not been very good lately. I do not wish you to overstay your month, but rather to set off on the Friday. You will, I hope, tell me in your next about M<sup>rs</sup>. Holcroft<sup>1</sup> & the books. If the sale had been the 23<sup>rd</sup>, I intended to have come up, & brought them with me. Our new neighbour arrived the day after you went. I have heard nothing of her but that her name is Armstead, nor seen anything of her till yesterday & the day before, on one of which days she passed by our house in a blue pelisse, & on the other in a scarlet one. She is a strapper, I assure you. Little Robert & his wife still continue in the house. They returned the coals, but I sent them back, thinking they would be badly off perhaps. But yesterday they walked out together, he as smart as a buck, & she skipping & light as a doe. It is supper time, my dear, & I have been painting all day, & all day yesterday, & all the day before, & am very, very tired, & so I hope you will let me leave off here, & bid you good night. I inclose a £1 note to Lamb. If you want another, say so. But I hope your partnership concern with M<sup>r</sup>. Phillips will have answered the same purpose.—I am ever yours affectionately,

W. HAZLITT.

Before you come away, get Lamb to fix the precise time of their coming down here.

[Endorsed] Mr. LAMB, India House, London.

The special family and even personal interest of the two next have pleaded for their admission.

<sup>1</sup> Holcroft had died 23rd March, 1809. Perhaps the books referred to were the MSS. *Memoirs*, which Hazlitt eventually published—at least, three volumes of them (1816). They were ready in 1810. The MS. of the 4th volume was offered by the Holcrofts to my father, *who declined it*.

*To Mrs. Hazlitt.*

2nd Oct., 1811. TEMPLE.

MY DEAR SARAH, — I have been a long time anxiously expecting the happy news that I have just received. I address you because, as the letter has been lying some days at the India House, I hope you are able to sit up and read my congratulations on the little live boy you have been so many years wishing for. As we old women say, “May he live to be a great comfort to you.” I never knew an event of the kind that gave me so much pleasure as the little, long-looked-for, come-at-last’s arrival; and I rejoice to hear his honour has begun to suck. The word was not distinctly written, and I was a long time making out the wholesome fact. I hope to hear from you soon, for I am anxious to know if your nursing labours are attended with any difficulties. I wish you a happy *getting up*, and a merry christening.

Charles sends his love, perhaps though he will write a scrap to Hazlitt at the end. He is now looking over me; he is always in my way, for he has had a month’s holiday at home; but I am happy to say they end on Monday, when mine begin, for I am going to pass a week at Richmond with Mrs. Burney. She had been dying; but she went to the Isle of Wight and recovered once more. When there, I intend to read novels and play at piquet all day long.

—Yours truly, M. LAMB.

*To William Hazlitt.*

DEAR HAZLITT, — I cannot help accompanying my sister’s congratulations to Sarah with some of my own to you on this happy occasion of a man child being born.

Delighted fancy already sees him some future

rich alderman or opulent merchant, painting perhaps a little in his leisure hours for amusement, like the late H. Bunbury, Esq.

Pray, are the Winterslow estates entailed? I am afraid lest the young dog, when he grows up, should cut down the woods, and leave no groves for widows to take their lonesome solace in. The Wem estate of course can only devolve on him, in case of your brother leaving no male issue.

Well, my blessing and heaven's be upon him, and make him like his father, with something a better temper and a smoother head of hair; and then all the men and women must love him.

Martin and the card-boys join in congratulations. Love to Sarah. Sorry we are not within caudle-shot.

C. LAMB.<sup>1</sup>

If the widow be assistant on this notable occasion, give our due respects and kind remembrances to her.

[Endorsed] Mrs. HAZLITT,  
Winterslow, near Sarum, Wilts.

A letter to Mr. Thomas Ireland, of Wem, contains some interesting allusions. The writer had removed in 1813 to Addlestone in Surrey, but, as usual, his former flock did not forget or desert him.

*From the Rev. William Hazlitt.*

DEAR SIR,—Three weeks of my brittle life passed away last Saturday, since I received your friendly epistle. May God assist me so to spend the remainder of it, that death will be to me a passage to a new and eternally happy life. I should have written to you sooner, if I had supposed that you

<sup>1</sup> The *C* of Lamb's signature measures one inch and a quarter in length; it slopes very much, or its extreme altitude would be somewhere about two inches. The height of the *b* is one inch.

wished me to do so. I now thank you for your favour, and for your kindness in forwarding to me a letter from one of my old friends in America. I thank you also for the potatoes, though I never received them, as you did not direct them, according to my desire, to my son William's, as, John being at Manchester, his servant, probably thinking them for the use of the family, I presume made use of them. This being the case, do you think no more of them. We were all pleased to hear from you that all our former friends were well. We continue here in much the same style, in which we were, when I wrote to you last. Your having been at London lately, and not calling upon us here, was a disappointment to us. When you arrive there again, I hope that you will find or make time to gratify us. I should not be sorry, if the inquisitor Ferdinand was once more in his old prison in France, and that any other person was King of Spain, who had any justice or humanity. Having nothing of consequence to communicate, I only add that we all unite in friendly respects to all your family and to all those, whose remembrances you transmitted to me, besides Mr. J. Cooke of Nonelly and Mrs. Keay. I remain, my dear friend,

*most affectionately yours*  
*E. Hazlitt*

ADDELESTONE, 9th August 1814.

My grandfather, having contributed a paper on Standard Novels and Romances to the *Edinburgh Review* for February 1815, and having expressed his genuine views and estimate of Miss Burney's



*Wanderer* and other productions, and of her literary character, in very temperate and indulgent terms, received an intimation from her brother that their friendly relations had ceased. I could lay my finger on more than one passage in Hazlitt's writings where his reference to the Burneys is not only friendly but flattering—even years after this date. The communication was as foolish as it is illiterate.

May 17th, 1815.

SIR,—It would be strange, if not wrong, after years of intimate acquaintance, that cause of offence should happen between us, and be so taken, and be passed over in silence, and that acquaintance still continue. Your attack on my Sister's early publications dissatisfied me, and the more in coming from a quarter I had been in the habit of believing friendly. If I had seen it before publication, I should have remonstrated against some of your remarks, because I think them unjust. Your publication of such a paper shewed a total absence of regard towards me, and I must consider it as the termination of our acquaintance.

JAS. BURNEY.

JOHN HAZLET, Esq. [*sic*]

[Endorsed] WILLM.<sup>1</sup> HAZLIT [*sic*], Esq.

Captain Burney, a half-educated naval officer, Southey's *Capitaneus*, Lamb's Admiral, and one of the Wednesday men, and brother of Johnson's "Little Burney," lived in James Street, Buckingham Gate, and the Lamb set sometimes met there. His son, Martin Burney, who had some engagement on the press, lived at one time in Fetter Lane. He used to have occasional evenings, too, and my father well recollected the cold boiled beef and porter for

<sup>1</sup> *John* was originally written, but on further information *Willm.* substituted; this was strange after "years of intimate acquaintance"!

supper. Of the latter Colonel Phillips was a singularly copious partaker. Martin's housekeeper was a Mrs. M'Ginnis, a tall, raw-boned Irishwoman, of whom my father spoke as a fair cook, and that she had a way of saying "os becount of" instead of *because*.

A letter to Ollier leaves the writer under such a pressure of work, that he pleads inability to accept an invitation to a musical party. He was at this date a regular contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*,<sup>1</sup> and to two or three newspapers. There is no date, but the postmark bears October 4, 1815.

DEAR SIR,—I feel myself exceedingly obliged by your kind attention with respect to your musical treat. I am afraid from unavoidable circumstances I shall not be able to avail myself of it. I have to get something done by the end of next week, which obliges me to practise a great deal more self-denial than I like. If I do not pay my respects to Corelli, it is because I am held fast by half-a-dozen of his countrymen. If I can, however, I will escape from them.—I am, dear Sir, your obliged very humble servant,  
W. HAZLITT.

19 YORK STREET, WESTMINSTER,  
*Saturday morning.*

Hazlitt had commenced his series of contributions to the *Edinburgh Review* in September, 1814, two years only after his settlement in York Street, and this valuable channel he almost certainly owed to the good offices of Lady Mackintosh, not improbably through the Stoddarts, in introducing him to Jeffrey. But he does not appear to have approached Francis Jeffrey in a strictly personal sense till 1818, when he

<sup>1</sup> See Douady, *Liste Chronologique*, 1906, pp. 9-12.

wrote to consult the Editor of the *Review* on the probable reception of a course of Lectures at Edinburgh. Jeffrey's reply discloses the fact that he had already addressed him respecting a paper on Thomas Reid's book without receiving any answer. The tone and spirit of this communication reflect the highest credit on the writer. Between December 1817, and September 1819, Hazlitt was also contributing to Tait's *Edinburgh Magazine*. The paper on Reid was apparently never used.

This letter may be read with that to Macvey Napier, of August 26, *post.*<sup>1</sup>

EDINBURGH, 3rd May 1818.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am sorry you ascribe so much importance to the omission of your little paper on Dr. Reid's book. I did certainly intend to have inserted it, but the monstrous length of some other articles, and your unavoidable absence from home when the No. was finally filled up, prevented me. I think I shall give it a place in the next, though there is not much interest in the subject.

I feel that I am extremely to blame for not answering a former letter of yours on a subject more personal to yourself, and assuredly I do not feel it the less for your delicacy in saying nothing about it in your last, but I can safely say that it is not owing to indifference or unwillingness to give you all the information I had, but to a feeling of great uncertainty as to the justness of any information I had, and the hazard of great error in any advice I might found on it. This made me hesitate, and resolve to reflect and inquire before I made any answer, and

<sup>1</sup> This and the other letter are derived from the volumes published in 1873, entitled *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents*. Those of Hazlitt to him are not given, and have not perhaps been preserved.

then came in the usual vice of procrastination and the usual excuse of other more urgent avocations, till at last it was half forgotten, and half driven willingly from my conscience when it recurred.

Perhaps you care nothing about the subject any longer, or have received information to decide you from quarters of higher authority, but I still think myself bound to answer your questions as they were put, and therefore I say that in general I think Edinburgh the very worst place in the world for such experiments as you seem to meditate, both from the extreme dissipation of the fashionable part of its population, and from a sort of conceit and fastidiousness in all the middling classes, which, originating at least as much in a coldness of nature as in any extraordinary degree of intelligence, makes them very ready to find fault and decry.

Most Lectures have accordingly failed entirely in this place, and the only exhibitions of the sort which have taken have been such as pretended to reveal some wonderful secret, like Feinagle, or to give a great deal of information in a short and popular way, like some teachers of Astronomy and Chemistry, though their success has always been very moderate.

Estimating the merit of your Lectures as highly as I am sincerely inclined to do, I could by no means insure you against a total failure; but I think it much more likely that you might find about forty or fifty auditors—not of the first rank or condition—and be abused as a Jacobin and a raving blockhead by a great many more, if you seemed in any danger of—(*MS. torn here*). We are quite provincial enough for that, I assure you, notwithstanding the allowance of liberality and sense that is found among us. If this prospect tempts you, pray come. I shall willingly do all I can for you, but I fear it will not be very much.

In the meantime I am concerned to find your health is not so good as it should be, and that you could take more care of it if your finances were in better order. We cannot let a man of genius suffer in this way, and I hope you are in no serious danger. I take the liberty of enclosing £100, a great part of which I shall owe you in a few weeks, and the rest you shall pay me back in reviews whenever you can do so without putting yourself to any uneasiness. If you really want another £100 tell me so plainly, and it shall be heartily at your service.—Believe me always, with the greatest regard, your obliged and faithful servant,

F. JEFFREY.

Napier had invited Hazlitt to contribute the article on the Drama to a new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*:—

*To Macvey Napier.*<sup>1</sup>

WINTERSLOW HUT, NEAR SALISBURY,  
August 26, 1818.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am sorry to be obliged, from want of health and a number of other engagements, which I am little able to perform, to decline the flattering offer you make me. I have got to write, between this and the end of October, an octavo volume or a set of lectures on the Comic Drama of this country for the Surrey Institution, which I am anxious not to slur over, and it will be as much as I can do to get it ready in time. I am also afraid that I should not be able to do the article in question, or yourself, justice, for I am not only without books, but without knowledge of what books are necessary

<sup>1</sup> My lamented friend, the late Arnold Glover, who supplied this letter, pertinently observes: "It is difficult to know what 'nonsense' Hazlitt was writing for Constable."



to be consulted on the subject. To get up an article in a *Review* on any subject of general literature is quite as much as I can do without exposing myself. The object of an *Encyclopædia* is, I take it, to condense and combine all the facts relating to a subject, and all the theories of any consequence already known or advanced. Now, where the business of such a work ends, is just where I begin, that is, I might perhaps throw in an idle speculation or two of my own, not contained in former accounts of the subject, and which would have very little pretensions to rank as scientific. I know something about *Congreve*, but nothing at all of *Aristophanes*, and yet I conceive that the writer of an article on the *Drama* ought to be as well acquainted with the one as the other. If you should see Mr. Constable, will you tell him I am writing *nonsense* for him as fast as I can?—Your very humble servant,

W. HAZLITT.

A second letter from Jeffrey deals with the notorious Blackwood case, and enables us to infer, that Jeffrey had been solicited by Hazlitt to act as his counsel in the contemplated proceedings, and had assented to doing so. The threatened action, however, was met by a compromise amounting to the defenders' defeat. Probably the result owed a good deal to the attitude of Jeffrey, and it must have afforded immense relief to Hazlitt. The double footing which the latter had gained in Edinburgh as a writer in the *Review* and in *Tait's Magazine* was, no doubt, severely annoying to the Tories, who did not fail to give vent to their feelings in language worthy of Auld Reekie. On the day immediately following this of the 20th from Jeffrey, Keats, writing to Dilke, observes: "I suppose you will have heard that Hazlitt has on foot a prosecution against

Blackwood. I dined with him a few days since at Hessey's—there was not a word said about it, though I understand he is excessively vexed."

EDINBURGH, 20th September 1818.

DEAR SIR,—I have just received your letter, and shall willingly hold myself retained as your counsel. It is quite impossible, however, that I should either employ or recommend a solicitor for you. It is against all professional etiquette, and would besides imply a responsibility and a personal concern in the suit, which it would be absurd for me to assume. I know you to be a man of genius, and I have no reason to doubt that you are a man of integrity and honour, and most certainly my good opinion of you is in no degree affected by the scurrilities of Mr. Blackwood's publication, but you are aware that I have no personal acquaintance with you, and that beyond what I have now stated, I have no power to testify to your character.

I have scarcely read the libel to which you allude. From what you say I can scarcely doubt that it is actionable, and by our law the truth of the imputations would not absolutely justify their publication. At the same time, the question of truth or falsehood will be allowed to be gone into, as affecting the amount of damage, and the jury may give one farthing.

It is proper that you should be aware that by bringing such an action you put your character in issue, at least as to all matters alluded to in the libel, and therefore it will be of the utmost consequence to prove the statements to be false. Unquestionably it is *quite false* that you have been expelled from the *E.R.*, though, as it is against our principle to proclaim or acknowledge any name among our contri-

butors, I cannot give you a formal warrant for saying so.

If I can find room for Reid I shall insert him, and if you have anything brilliant or striking to say on any other subject, I shall be very thankful for it. I am told you are profound on the Fine Arts; if you could get up a dashing article on that topic, I should be glad of it.

I shall always be glad to hear from you, and to do you any service in my power.—Ever very truly yours,  
F. JEFFREY.

Patmore had paid Hazlitt the civility of sending him his article on the Lectures on the English Poets, 1818, for *Blackwood* in MS. before he let it pass from his hands. It was returned to the writer with the following note of thanks:—

DEAR SIR,—I am very well satisfied with the article, and obliged to you for it. I am afraid the censure is truer than the praise. It will be of great service, if they insert it entire, which, however, I hope.—Your obliged,  
W. HAZLITT.

*To the Editor of the "London Magazine."*<sup>1</sup>

[Historical Illustrations of Shakespeare.]

MR. EDITOR,—I dare say you will agree with me in thinking, that whatever throws light on the

<sup>1</sup> January 1819. Another letter on the same subject appeared in September 1819: "Mr. Editor,—The following passage in North's translation of Plutarch will be found to have been closely copied in the scene between Brutus and his wife in *Julius Cæsar*" [a long quotation from Plutarch follows, and Hazlitt continues]: "Again, the following curious account, extracted from Magellan's *Voyage to the South Seas*, may throw light on the origin of the *Tempest*, and the character of Caliban. The mention of the god Setebos seems decisive of the identity of the source from which he borrowed." The letter concludes with an extract from Magellan's *Voyage*.

dramatic productions of Shakespeare, deserves to be made public. I have already, in the volume called *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, shewn, by a reference to the passages in North's translation of Plutarch, his obligations to the historian in his *Coriolanus*, and the noble way in which he availed himself of the lights of antiquity in composing that piece. I shall, with your permission, pursue the subject in the present and some future articles. The parallel is even more striking between the celebrated trial-scene in Henry VIII., and the following narrative of that event, as it actually took place, which is to be found in Cavendish's *Life of Cardinal Wolsey* [a long quotation from that work follows, and Hazlitt concludes]: In another article I shall give some remarks on this subject, and the passages in Holinshed on which *Macbeth* is, in a great measure, founded.—I am, Sir, your humble servant,

W. HAZLITT.

LONDON, Nov. 13, 1818.

Two letters from John and Leigh Hunt are of a rather tangled yarn :—

DEAR SIR,—I have just received a letter from Henry, in which he states that Messrs. Rees and Eaton have sent to him, threatening immediate legal proceedings against me, unless the £50 bill be taken up. I have replied to him, desiring him to send them a note, telling them I have written to you on the business; and as they will certainly be paid, I trust they will not think of putting us to any legal expenses. I hope you will be able to satisfy them in some way, as any legal assault on me here, on the ground of debt, would be very unpleasant for various reasons, which you can very well imagine.

I take it for granted that you are at Winterslow

Hut, as Henry says you have left town, so I direct thither.

You would gratify me much by coming over here. We have a bed at your service, a beautiful country to exercise in, and we would do our best to make you comfortable, not forgetting a total banishment of *veal* and *pork* from our table. Our beef and mutton are as good as that in London. You can have my little parlour to write in, which is a snug place for the purpose, being hung round with prints after Raphael, Titian, Correggio, and Claude, and looking over a piece of grass into a fine orchard, through a latticed window. What more is needful for a tasteful Jacobin? that is, if he be not immoderate in his desires. Come and try how you like it.<sup>1</sup>

There are plenty of conveyances from Salisbury to Taunton. My cottage is at Up-Chaddon, nearly three miles north of Taunton, a pleasant walk, on the road to Hestercombe. Any one will direct you to the hamlet, when you reach Taunton. I rather expect Mr. Coulson here in a few days, on his way from Cornwall, but I have heard nothing of him for some time back.—Ever yours truly, JOHN HUNT.

*Wednesday, Sept. 15, 1819.*

YORK BUILDINGS, NEW ROAD.  
22nd Sept., 1819.

DEAR SIR,—*Nunc scio quid sit majestas.* I do not allude to Mrs. Tomlinson,<sup>2</sup> though she certainly ought to be called Caroline, but to large handwriting,<sup>3</sup> of which I know you are fond. It enables me

<sup>1</sup> I collect from a passage in one of the essays of W. H. that he accepted Mr. Hunt's invitation, and crossed over to Taunton. It has been said that he contributed some papers, as a result of this visit, to the *Taunton Courier*.

<sup>2</sup> The landlady at York Street.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Hazlitt usually wrote a very large, copper-plate hand, and to this Mr. Hunt jocosely alludes.



to write a long letter of three sentences. However, your Brobdingnagians are as pleasant as those at Covent Garden; and so with considerable effort I beget a similar progeny to send my answer by. Your letter dated Saturday I did not receive till yesterday; and to-day I saw Mr. Procter. He tells me that he had written me a letter enclosing the bill, and intrusted it to a friend, who kept it in his pocket for three or four days; upon which he enclosed it in another to you, directed to Southampton Buildings. Shall I call there for it? or what else shall I do? all that I can do I will: and your belief of this gives me great refreshment on these rascally occasions, though no more than I desire. I am glad to hear that you have broken the neck of the Elizabethan poets, and wished you could have knocked Lord Burleigh on the head, by the way, in good earnest. As to Winterslow, it is hopeless to me just now, who have a wife just ready to be brought to bed, and literary births of my own without end. But I thank you most heartily for asking me.—Most sincerely,

LEIGH HUNT.

To WILLIAM HAZLITT, Esq.,  
Winterslow Hut, near Salisbury.

Thomas Hardy, to whom a note from Hazlitt follows, was also acquainted with Lamb; he was a Radical, and underwent a trial for high treason in 1794 with Holcroft, Horne Tooke, and others. An account of him occurs in the Holcroft *Memoirs*, and in *Lamb and Hazlitt*, 1900, p. 105. He died in 1832, and was buried in Bunhill Fields.

WINTERSLOW, SALISBURY.  
[Early in 1820.]

DEAR SIR,—I was obliged to leave London without discharging my promise. The reason of

which was that I was myself disappointed in not receiving £20 which was due to me, £10 for a picture, & £10 for revising a manuscript. I am at present actually without money in the house. If you can defer it till October, when I shall be in London to deliver some Lectures, by which I shall pick up some money, I shall esteem it a favour, and shall be glad to pay you the interest from the time I was in London last. Hoping this delay will be no particular inconvenience, & that you will think it unavoidable on my part, I remain, yours respectfully,

W. HAZLITT.

*Sunday evening.*

[Endorsed] Mr. HARDY, Boot-Maker,  
Fleet Street, London.

A rather long letter from Margaret (or Peggy) Hazlitt to her brother announces the death of their father, and supplies other particulars. Hazlitt had not yet removed to Southampton Buildings, and his relatives had perhaps no address more recent than York Street; they may not have heard of Somers Town.

DEAR WILLIAM,—Sarah came here with the two boys<sup>1</sup> last night, as they could get no conveyance from Exeter to Crediton, and are gone there to-day. Harriet<sup>2</sup> is gone there with them, and will be back with Sarah in the evening: let Mrs. Armstead know they are come safe and well. If we had known where to direct to you, we should not have sent Mary<sup>3</sup> to tell you of our father's death, but would have written to you directly; but neither your mother nor I were well enough to write at the time, and we thought Sarah might be on the road, and

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Armstead's children. Mrs. A. was one of the residents at Winterslow.

<sup>2</sup> John Hazlitt's eldest daughter.

<sup>3</sup> John Hazlitt's second daughter.

have been expecting her every night since. Your father's death was unexpected at last; for though we had been at one time doubtful of his living through the week, Mr. Nosworthy thought him much better on Saturday morning. He died on Sunday the 16th, about seven in the morning. To him his death was a release from a state of suffering: he made no complaint, nor did he give one groan, but went on talking of glory, honour, and immortality, and talking with me to the last. His senses returned the last few hours, and when he could not speak, he took my hand and put it into mother's. He kept his bed but one day, and his appetite was very good; but he had water on his chest, and that we did not know for a long time, and we thought he might have lived many months longer. My mother is very weak and ill; it will be a long time before she recovers the distress and fatigue she has gone through. I am afraid I have not written very clearly, as my head is so confused for want of sleep. The habit of watching for so long a time prevents my sleeping now. I hope I shall get better soon, and be able to eat more than I do at present. Harriet had a letter from her father this week; he still talks of going to Glasgow, but is not yet gone; her mother and the children are at Portsmouth; what she intends or can do I can't think. Harriet had three letters from Barbadoes<sup>1</sup> last week. Mr. Stewart<sup>2</sup> talks of being here in about six weeks.

My mother wishes to know if you intend to write anything in the *Repository*, giving some account of your father? If you don't, somebody else will, and you can do it best. Mr. Hinton<sup>3</sup> was asking

<sup>1</sup> Where her brother William, John Hazlitt's only son, had settled.

<sup>2</sup> Who afterwards married Harriet Hazlitt.

<sup>3</sup> The Rev. G. P. Hinton, and not Hazlitt, prepared the memoir, and sent it to the *Repository*. See vol. xv. pp. 677-79.

about it, and wished to know if he could do anything for us in any way. The people here have been very kind in doing and ordering everything for us that we could not see about ourselves. Sarah intended to write some in this letter, but she will not be back time enough. We wish her to stay a week or two with us now she is here. We have got a bed to spare for you now whenever you like to come. I hope you will write to us soon: my mother wishes to hear from you, and know how you are. We all unite in love to you.

*I have no more to say  
but fare well & may God bless  
you  
I am your affec-  
sister P Hazlitt*

CREDITON, July 28th [1820].

[Endorsed] W. HAZLITT, Esq.,  
At the Hut, Winterslow, near Salisbury.

In a letter from Hazlitt to John Scott constructively of January 1821,<sup>1</sup> there is a reference to the growing friction between *Blackwood* and the *London Magazine*, and we see that Hazlitt was not for making any concessions.

DEAR SIR,—I return the proof which I prefer to the philippic against Bentham. Do you keep the Past and Future? You see Lamb argues the

<sup>1</sup> See Douady, *Liste*, 1906, p. 27.

same view of the subject, That "young master" will anticipate all my discoveries, if I don't mind. The last No. was a very good one. The *Living Authors* was spirited and fine. Don't hold out your hand to the Blackwoods yet, after having knocked those blackguards down. My address after you receive this will be Winterslow Hut, near Salisbury. Send me the article on Past and Future, if you can spare it. Ask Baldwins if they would like the articles on Modern Philosophy, eight in number, at five guineas apiece.

W. H.

A correspondence arose in 1821 between Leigh Hunt and Hazlitt by reason of the latter having offered certain remarks on Shelley in his essay on Paradox and Commonplace. Hazlitt had met Shelley at Leigh Hunt's early in 1817, and was unfavourably impressed by him. He repeatedly saw him at Godwin's. Hunt had formed an estimate of Shelley as a writer widely different from that which Hazlitt entertained, and saw no reason to modify.

HAMPSTEAD, April 20 [1821].

I think, Mr. Hazlitt, you might have found a better time, and place too, for assaulting me and my friends in this bitter manner. A criticism on *Table-Talk* was to appear in next Sunday's *Examiner*, but I have thought it best, upon the whole, not to let it appear, for I must have added a quarrelsome note to it; and the sight of acquaintances and brother-reformers cutting and carbonadoing one another in public is, I conceive, no advancement to the cause of Liberal opinion, however you may think they injure it in other respects. In God's name, why could you not tell Mr. Shelley in a pleasant



manner of what you dislike in him? If it is not mere spleen, you make a gross mistake in thinking that he is not open to advice, or so wilfully in love with himself and his opinions. His spirit is worthy of his great talents. Besides, do you think that nobody has thought or suffered, or come to conclusions through thought or suffering, but yourself? You are fond of talking against vanity: but do you think that people will see no vanity in that very fondness—in your being so intolerant with everybody's ideas of improvement but your own, and in resenting so fiercely the possession of a trifling quality or so which you do not happen to number among your own? I have been flattered by your praises: I have been (I do not care what you make of the acknowledgment) instructed, and I thought bettered, by your objections; but it is one thing to be dealt candidly with or rallied, and another to have the whole alleged nature of one's self and a dear friend torn out and thrown in one's face, as if we had not a common humanity with yourself. Is it possible that a misconception of anything private can transport you into these—what shall I call them?—extravagances of stomach? or that a few paltry fellows in Murray's or Blackwood's interest can worry you into such outrageous efforts to prove you have no vanities in common with those whom you are acquainted with? At all events, I am sure that this sulky, dog-in-the-manger philosophy, which will have neither one thing nor t'other, neither alteration nor want of it, marriage nor no marriage, egotism nor no egotism, hope nor despair, can do no sort of good to anybody. But I have faith enough in your disinterestedness and suffering to tell you so privately instead of publicly; and you might have paid as decent a compliment to a man half killed with his thoughts for others if you had done as much for me,

instead of making my faults stand for my whole character, and inventing those idle things about . . . and hints to emperors. If you wished to quarrel with me you should have done so at once, instead of inviting me to your house, coming to mine, and in the meanwhile getting ready the proof-sheets of such a book as this—preparing and receiving specimens of the dagger which was to strike at a sick head and heart, and others whom it loved. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of even in your philosophy; and if you had a little more imagination, the very “cruelty” of your stomach would carry you beyond itself, and inform you so. If you did not wish to quarrel with or to cut me, how do you think that friends can eternally live upon their good behaviour in this way, and be cordial and comfortable, or whatever else you *choose* they should be—for it is difficult to find out—on pain of being drawn and quartered in your paragraphs? I wish you well.

LEIGH HUNT.

*P.S.*—Since writing this letter, which I brought to town with me to send you, I have heard that you have expressed regret at the attack upon myself. If so, I can only say that I am additionally sorry at being obliged to send it; but I should have written to you, had you attacked my friends only in that manner. I am told also, that you are angry with me for not always being punctual with you in engagements of visiting. I think I have always apologized and explained when I have not been so; but if not, surely a trifle of this kind, arising out of anything but a sense of my being necessary to others, ought not to make you tear one to pieces in this way for the sport of our mutual enemies; and I must say, that since I got any notion of your being annoyed by such things, I have come to see you sometimes when

I have been ready to drop in the streets with illness and anguish.

WILLIAM HAZLITT, Esq.,  
Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane.

Not only the adverse political party assailed Hazlitt; but even such men as Hunt himself were lukewarm and jealous; and we find Byron, so emphatically Liberal in his views, stigmatizing Hazlitt as ungentlemanly, although no one could well have been less so than his lordship in the most essential respects. The sources of friction were different. Byron was an aristocrat. Scott was a Tory, a North Briton, and a phenomenally successful author. Hunt was a champion of Shelley, in whom Hazlitt saw very slight merit, and shone in those social functions, in which Hazlitt had had no opportunity of gaining proficiency; but in this case the question at issue was not exclusively literary or personal, for Hunt charged his friend with damaging by his indiscreet remarks the political cause, which they in common espoused and supported.

Here is the answer to Hunt:—

*Saturday night [April 21, 1821].*

MY DEAR HUNT,—I have no quarrel with you, nor can I have. You are one of those people that I like, do what they will; there are others that I do not like, do what they may. I have always spoken well of you to friend or foe—viz. I have said you were one of the pleasantest and cleverest persons I ever knew; but that you teased any one you had to deal with out of their lives. I am fond of a theory, as you know: but I will give up even that to a friend, if he shews that he has any regard to my personal feelings. You provoke me to think

hard things of you, and then you wonder that I hitch them into an Essay, as if that made any difference. I pique myself on doing what I can for others; but I cannot say that I have found any suitable returns for this, and hence perhaps my outrageousness of stomach! For instance, I praised you in the *Edinburgh Review*, and when in a case of life and death I tried to lecture, you refused to go near the place, and gave this as a reason, saying it would seem a collusion, if you said anything in my favour after what I had said of you. 2. I got Reynolds to write in the *Edinburgh Review*, at a time when I had a great reluctance to ask any favour of Jeffrey, and from that time I never set eyes on him for a year and a half after. 3. I wrote a book in defence of Godwin some years ago, one half of which he has since stolen without acknowledgment, without even mentioning my name, and yet he comes to me to review the very work, and I write to Jeffrey to ask his consent, thinking myself, which you do not, the most magnanimous person in the world in the defence of a cause. 4. I have taken all opportunities of praising Lamb, and I never got a good word from him in return, big or little, till the other day. He seemed struck all of a heap, if I ever hinted at the possibility of his giving me a lift at any time. 5. It was but the other day that two friends did all they could to intercept an article about me from appearing in the said *E. R.*, saying "it would be too late," "that the Editor had been sounded at a distance, and was averse," with twenty other excuses, and at last I was obliged to send it myself, *graciously* and by main force, as it were, when it appeared just in time to save me from drowning. Coulson had been backwards and forwards between my house and Bentham's for between three or four years, and when the latter philosophically put an execution in my house, the

plea was he had never heard of my name ;<sup>1</sup> and when I theorized on this the other day as bad policy, and *felo de se* on the part of the Radicals, your nephew<sup>2</sup> and that set said : “ Oh, it was an understood thing—the execution, you know ! ” My God, it is enough to drive one mad. I have not a soul to stand by me, and yet I am to give up my only resource and revenge, a theory—I won’t do it, that’s flat. Montagu<sup>3</sup> is, I fancy, cut at my putting him among people with one idea, and yet, when the Blackwoods (together with your) shirking out of that business put me nearly underground, he took every opportunity to discourage me, and one evening, when I talked of going there, I was given to understand that there was “ a party expected.” Yet after this I am not to look at him a little *in abstracto*. This is what has soured me, and made me sick of friendship and acquaintanceship. When did I speak ill of your brother John ? He never played me any tricks. I was in a cursed ill humour with you for two or three things when I wrote the article you find fault with (I grant not without reason). If I complained to you, you would only have laughed ; you would have played me the very same tricks the very next time ; you would not have cared one farthing about annoying me ; and yet you complain that I draw a logical conclusion from all this, and publish it to the world without your name. As to Shelley, I do not hold myself responsible to him. You say I want *imagination*. If you mean invention or fancy, I say so too ; but if you mean a disposition to sympathise with the claims or merits

<sup>1</sup> Could Bentham have been ignorant ? I have heard that he would make his visitors do obeisance to the tablet in honour of Milton, let by my grandfather into the garden wall of the house—the earliest example of a practice now become common in London.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Henry Leigh Hunt, of the firm of Hunt and Clarke.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Basil Montagu.



of others, I deny it. I have been too much disposed to waive my own pretensions in deference to those of others. I am tired with playing at rackets all day, and you will be tired with this epistle. It has little to do with you; for I see no use in raising up a parcel of small, old grievances. But I think the general ground of defence is good.

W. H.

I have given Hogg's papers to Baldwin, and wish you would write a character of me for the next number. I want to know why everybody has such a dislike to me.

The friendly and conciliatory tone of Hazlitt's lengthy communication seems to have softened Hunt's resentment; for he at once replied in these terms:—

*Monday, April [ ], 1821.*

DEAR HAZLITT.—If you do not want to quarrel with me, I certainly do not want to quarrel with you. I have always said, to my own mind and to those few to whom I am in the habit of speaking on such things, that Hazlitt might play me more tricks than any man; and I conceive you have played me some. If I have teased you, as you say, I have never revenged myself by trampling upon you in public; and I do not understand you when you say that there is no difference between having an ill opinion of one in private and trying to make everybody else partake it. But I am not aware how I can have teased you to the extent you seem to intimate. How can anybody say that I talked about the collusion you speak of? It is impossible. I both spoke of your lectures in the *Examiner*, and came to hear them; not indeed so often as I could

wish, but Mrs. Hunt knows how I used to fret myself every evening at not being able to go. It was illness, and nothing else, upon my soul, that detained me; and in this it is that I accuse you of want of imagination. You have imagination enough to sympathise with all the world *in the lump*; but out of the pale of your own experience, in illness and other matters of consciousness, you seem to me incapable of making the same allowance for others which you demand for yourself. I attribute your cuttings-up of me to anything but what should make me resent them, and yet you will put the worst construction on anything I do or omit—I mean the unhandsomest construction towards yourself. I think I have consulted our personal feelings, *always* where I might have revenged myself publicly, and sometimes where I have publicly praised you. I imagined, for instance, I had selected a good moment for doing the latter, when I called upon you in the *Examiner* to hear the hisses bestowed upon the Duke of Wellington. But these per contra accounts are unpleasant. I am willing to be told where my attentions to a friend are deficient; nor could you mistake me more when you say I should have “laughed” at you for complaining. On the contrary, let but the word friendship be mentioned, and nobody is disposed to be graver than myself—to a pitch of emotion. But here I will let you into one of the secrets you ask for. I have often said, I have a sort of irrepressible love for Hazlitt, on account of his sympathy for mankind, his unmercenary disinterestedness, and his suffering; and I should have a still greater and more personal affection for him if he would let one; but I declare to God I never seem to know whether he is pleased or displeased, cordial or uncordial—indeed, his manners are never cordial—and he has a way with him, when first in-

roduced to you, and ever afterwards, as if he said, "I have no faith in anything, especially your advances: don't you flatter yourself you have any road to my credulity: we have nothing in common between us." Then you escape into a corner, and your conversation is apt to be as sarcastic and incredulous about all the world as your manner. Now, egregious fop as you have made me out in your book, with my jealousy of anything bigger than a leaf, and other marvels—who is to be fop enough to suppose that any efforts of his can make you more comfortable? Or how can you so repel one, and then expect, not that we should make no efforts (for those we owe you on other accounts), but that it could possibly enter into our heads you took our omissions so much to heart? The tears came into the eyes of this heartless coxcomb when he read the passage in your letter where you speak of not having a soul to stand by you. I was very ill, I confess, at the time, and you may lay it to that account. I was also very ill on Thursday night, when I took up your book to rest my wits in, after battling all day with the most dreadful nervousness. This, and your attack on Mr. Shelley, which I must repeat was most outrageous, unnecessary, and even, for its professed purposes, impolitic, must account for my letter. But I will endeavour to break the force of that blow in another manner, if I can. As to the other points in your letter, if you wish me to say anything about them—everybody knows what I think of Godwin's behaviour, and of your magnanimity to boot, in such matters. But in sparing and assisting Godwin, you need not have helped him to drive irons into Shelley's soul. Reynolds is a machine I don't see the meaning of. As to Lamb, I must conclude that he abstained from speaking of you, either because you cut so at Coleridge, or from

thinking that his good word would really be of no service to you. Of the "execution" you may remember what I have said; but I was assured again on Saturday that Bentham knew nothing of *it*. How can you say I "shirked" out of Blackwood's business, when I took all the pains I could to make that raff and coward, Z,<sup>1</sup> come forward? But I will leave these and other matters to talk over when I see you, when I will open myself more to you than I have done, seeing that it may not be indifferent to you for me to do so. At any rate, as I mean this in kindness, oblige me in one matter, and one only, and take some early opportunity of doing justice to the talents and *generous qualities* of Shelley, whatever you may think of his mistakes in using them. The attack on me is a trifle compared with it, nor should I allude to it again but to say, and to say most honestly, that you might make five more if you would only relieve the more respectable part of my chagrin and impatience in that matter. You must imagine what I feel at bottom with regard to yourself, when I tell you that there is but one other person from whom I could have at all borne this attack on Shelley; but in one respect that only makes it the less bearable.—Yours sincerely,

L. H.<sup>2</sup>

The writer of the next letter had apparently come up to London from Glasgow. Hazlitt saw him at Drury Lane in 1817 and often afterward. He took Shakespearean and other parts. See the references in Index to Collected Edition of Hazlitt. Such

<sup>1</sup> Lockhart.

<sup>2</sup> In letters to Shelley of May 10 and August 28, 1821, Hunt pursues the subject. In the *Edinburgh Review* for July 1824, Hazlitt had a paper on Shelley's Posthumous Poems, written in a spirit of dissent from that school and class of poetry. But see *Memoirs of W. Hazlitt*, 1867, i. 314-15.

correspondence may be treated as unimportant; but they tend to shew the writer or the recipient in a more than one-sided light:—

DEAR SIR,—I trust time has not entirely erased my name from the tablet of your memory, and that you will pardon a moment's intrusion.

Mr. Greenhow, the gentleman who will present this, is a warm admirer of your talents; and finding occasion to brave the world of waters which lie between this vast continent and the emporium of learning and genius, wished an opportunity of seeing you. I have therefore taken the liberty of introducing him, in the hope of double gratification. He is a gentleman of good mind, extensive reading, and well acquainted with the history and all particulars relative to this country. He is, too, a profound lover of the drama; he will be happy to inform you of its state in this country—which with other matter may while (*sic*) away an hour—and perchance amuse you. Your society and converse will on his part be highly valued. I learn that poor “Ogilvie” has passed that “bourne whence no traveller returns”—his troubled spirit now finds rest. In the confidence that you do not think me presuming, and that your literary labour may ever be crowned by a golden harvest, I remain, yours with great respect,

R. C. MAYWOOD.

NEW YORK, *April 29th*, 1821.

W. HAZLITT, Esq., London.

*P.S.*—I feel assured that any part of so great a being as George Cooke will be esteemed a curiosity, and richly valued. The bearer of this will offer a morsel of the liver of this wondrous man.—R.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Account of the Reynells*.



*From Thomas Pittman.*

[CANTERBURY, July 16, 1821.]

In the old palace of King Ethelbert, in the ancient monastery of St. Augustine are—two Racket-Players! who have found the true city of God, the court in respect whereof St. James's with the approaching ceremony is nought. A massy stone wall of thirteen hundred years' duration, even as a board placed by the hand of modern art, fair and smooth as Belphœbe's forehead, forms its point. No holes or crannies throw out the well-directed ball. No jutting rocks or pendent precipices spoil the hit and the temper. All is smooth. Eleven yards from each other are two abutments, round which monks formerly prayed or seemed to pray, and courtiers lied, and seemed to speak the truth. These bound the court, and form delicious side walls; but alas! they terminate abruptly before they have proceeded five yards. Endless, however, is the variety these quickly-ending walls occasion. Of chalky foundation, firm, even, and hard is the ground; eighty-six feet in length, ever widening as it recedes from the wall. Close behind the court, but not too close, and down a slight descent, is a large square bowling-green, encompassed by old cloister walls covered with vines and trees, and edged with flowers of all sorts, the rose being one. Immense arches, ivy-covered towers, time mutilated, at magnificent distances—the house itself, like one of those chapels which we see adjoining cathedrals—all show the real forte of a monk to have been architecture, not divinity. The keep, the stragglng abutments, all, all declare that—

“The way they still remembered, of King Nine,  
Of old Assaracus and Inachus divine.  
But nothing gloomy, all cheerful, lively pleasing, gay,

In spot more delicious, though but feigned,  
 Long or Joe Davis never played, or Spines  
 Or Hazlitt vollied."

The inhabitants are not altogether unworthy of the place. For country people they are excellent. Racket is a great humaniser of the species, and ought to be encouraged—

"Tonbridge is decent, Cooper hath a heart,  
 And Austin ale, the which he will impart  
 With liberal hand to all who pay."

They are, in fact, very civil. Our coming has revived the game, stirred up the ashes of a cheerful fire, inspirited the players. Many matches are in embryo, and the coronation is forgotten.

Many Margate, Ramsgate, and Dover coaches go from the Bricklayers' Arms at a quarter before eight every morning—and all through Canterbury, to which the fare on the outside is only 14s.

Do come. You never saw so pretty a place. It beats Netley Abbey, and is older. The court is really admirable, and has the property of drying in two hours after the longest succession of hard rains. Good chalk has no fellow. The only false hops are in the beer, which is damnable; everything else is fair. Do come, and inquire for "John Austin, at *The Old Palace*;" he is our landlord, where we have bed and board, and he keeps the court. That ever I should live in a Fives Court! Come, and you will see fine play from yours very truly,

THOMAS PITTMAN.

One of the old racket-players here says: "Jack Davis was the finest player I ever saw, and, by God, there is nobody can come near him."

WILLIAM HAZLITT, Esq.,  
 No. 9 Southampton Buildings,  
 Chancery Lane, London.

Here is a note from Colburn about *Table-Talk* :—

DEAR SIR,—I send herewith all the 2nd vol., except the end of the 16th essay on the *Fear of Death*. We want one essay yet to make out the volume of a tolerable size—which one it is desirable to bring in before the present 16th. Let me beg you will send me presently one of the essays you mentioned as being just ready, otherwise I shall not be able to publish by the 1st June, which is very important.—Yours truly,  
H. COLBURN.

There follows a series of notes from Mr. Baldwin, the publisher, respecting the *London Magazine*.

MY DEAR SIR,—I must not any longer neglect to avail myself of your kind offer to assist in filling up the chasm, made by the death of our lamented friend,<sup>1</sup> in the *Magazine*; and I know not any subject which would be thought more interesting than a continuation of the *Living Authors*, nor any pen so fitted for the subject as yours. Pray select any one you may think most fit, and render us your powerful assistance towards making our next number equal to its predecessors.

In a day or two I shall probably request an interview with (you) on the subject of an editor.—I am always, my dear Sir, most faithfully yours,

ROBERT BALDWIN.

P. N. ROW, *March 5th*, 1821.

WILLIAM HAZLITT, Esq.,  
9 Southampton Buildings.

MY DEAR SIR,—The portion of your capital article on Mr. Crabbe, which I enclose herewith, will, if inserted as it now stands, place us in a very

<sup>1</sup> Mr. John Scott.

awkward dilemma. Mr. Croly had communicated some articles during Mr. Scott's life, which he highly valued, and he is likely now to become a more frequent correspondent. There is also an article prepared on his second part of Paris for the present number, which will not altogether harmonise with your remarks in the paper on Crabbe. All this I should not so much care for, if it were not that the series of *Living Authors* ought to be as from the editor, not from a casual correspondent, and ought not, therefore, to want harmony with other parts of the *Magazine*.

Now I think the difficulty may be easily got over by omitting Croly's name, and contrasting the poetry of Crabbe with that of *another school*. Almost every line, except the first three or four, may then be retained, and instead of ringing the change on *Crabbe* and *Croly*, it will be *he* and *they*. Indeed this is done at the bottom of page six. Thus we shall avoid personality, yet hit the mark.

Wishing to make this article the first of the number, I have given the rest to the composers, but I do not venture to make myself, or suffer any other person to make, the desired alteration.—I remain, my dear Sir, most faithfully yours,

ROBERT BALDWIN.

P. N. Row, *April 17, 1821.*

WILLIAM HAZLITT, Esq.

P. N. Row, *May 9, 1821.*

MY DEAR SIR,—The arrangement with Messrs. Taylor and Hessey is completed, and Mr. Taylor will take an early opportunity of calling on you, unless you should think proper to look in upon them in a day or two. I sincerely hope that such an arrangement will be made as shall be quite satisfactory to yourself; I am sure it is to their interest that it should be so. I should have

much at heart the welfare of the *Magazine*, even if we had no pecuniary interest remaining; but upon their success depends greatly the sale of a considerable quantity of back stock, and of course we shall do all in our power to promote that success.

You will have the kindness to send me the article on Pope at your earliest convenience.—I am, my dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

ROBERT BALDWIN.

WILLIAM HAZLITT, Esq.,  
Southampton Buildings.

Mr. Hessey's letter illustrates the obsolete usage of authors going to their booksellers, and discussing matters comfortably over tea and toast.

MY DEAR SIR,—Mr. Taylor was all this morning on the point of setting out to call upon you, as he wanted much to have some conversation with you, but a constant succession of callers-in prevented him. Will you do us the favour to take your breakfast with us in the morning, between nine and ten, when we shall have a chance of being uninterrupted for an hour or two.—Believe me, dear Sir, yours very sincerely,

J. A. HESSEY.

FLEET STREET, *May 29th.*

W. HAZLITT, Esq.,  
9 Southampton Buildings.

MY DEAR SIR,—The enclosed cheque is made out, deducting the discount (£2, 16s. 6d. on £70). If there is any part of that time expired, we shall be your debtors for the difference.—I am, my dear Sir, yours very truly,

JOHN TAYLOR.

FLEET STREET, *23rd July, 1821.*

WM. HAZLITT, Esq.,  
9 Southampton Buildings.



I suspect that at one moment there was some arrangement contemplated by which Mr. Hazlitt would have taken the management of the *London Magazine*. Several passages in these letters point to this, and can refer to nothing else. But that he ever actually officiated as editor is more than I have been able to learn. Mr. Landseer evidently had reason to suppose his influence there was considerable, and a postscript to the letter to Hunt, of April 21, 1821, seems to support that view.

33 FOLEY STREET, *Tuesday evening.*

DEAR SIR,—I wish you would be at the trouble of informing me, by post, if my letters can *not* appear in your next magazine—that is to say—as soon as you get another from Mr. Baldwin. I have this additional reason for wishing to know soon, that perhaps now, while there are no parliamentary debates, I might be able to get them into a morning paper in case Mr. B. should decline them.—Yours, dear Sir, very sincerely,

J. LANDSEER.

Mr. HAZLITT,  
9 Southampton Buildings.

The two subjoined notes from Miss Walker represent all that seems to exist. I have seen a statement, that the writer addressed many others to Hazlitt; but there is substantial ground for the conclusion that this was an invention or falsehood, not the only one propagated in connection with this correspondent. The tone of both communications speaks for itself.

LONDON, *Jan'y. 17th* [1822].

SIR,—Doctor Read sent the *London Magazine*, with compliments and thanks; no Letters or Parcels,

except the one which I have sent with the *Magazine*, according to your directions. Mr. Lamb sent for the things which you left in our care, likewise a cravat which was not with them. I send my thanks for your kind offer,<sup>1</sup> but must decline accepting it. Baby is quite well. The first floor is occupied at present; it is very uncertain when it will be disengaged. My Family send their best respects to you. I hope, Sir, your little son is quite well.—  
From yours respectfully, S. WALKER.

[Endorsed in a different hand:]

W. HAZLITT, Esq.

SIR,—I should not have disregarded your injunction not to send any letters that came, had I not promised the gentleman who left the enclosed to forward it the earliest opportunity, as he said it was of *consequence*. Mr. Patmore called the day after you left town. My mother & myself are much obliged by your kind offer,<sup>2</sup> but must decline accepting it. All my family send their best respects, in which they are joined by yours truly,  
S. WALKER.

A Book has been left entitled *Somers' Security for Englishmen's Lives*. Likewise your MSS. of the *Table-Talk* from Mr. Colburn.

*To Henry Colburn.*

DEAR SIR,—Did you receive the extracts from Donne in good time for the Essay, as I feel uneasy about it? Could I see the proof?—Your obliged, humble servant,  
W. HAZLITT.

<sup>1</sup> Of orders for the play.

<sup>2</sup> Of tickets for the play. This letter was franked.

*To the Same.*

[1822.]

DEAR SIR,—Could you favour me with a proof of the *Fight* this evening, or on Monday? I wish you would desire the printer to return me the copy. I hope to leave for Scotland next week, and shall begin the new volume of the *Table-Talk*, as soon as I set out.—I am, dear Sir, your much obliged, humble servant,

W. HAZLITT.

*Saturday evening.*

*From J. A. Hessey [Taylor & Hessey].*

MY DEAR SIR,—I have the pleasure to send you, enclosed, a cheque for twenty pounds. I have not had time to make out the account; but from a slight glance of it, I think the paper on the *Marbles*,<sup>1</sup> just received, will pretty nearly balance it. Shall we put your signature, *W. H.* or *I.*, at the foot of the paper? Please to send a line by bearer to answer this question, and to say you have received the cheque—a pleasing journey to you.—Yours very truly,

J. A. HESSEY.

*Jan. 23, 1822.*

We shall be glad to receive the remainder of the essay as soon as it is ready. I think Vinkebooms<sup>2</sup> will have no objection to play his part in the controversy.

W. HAZLITT, Esq.

The next *morçeau* has ostensible reference to a plan for exchanging for some of his own works, which he had given to an acquaintance, others

<sup>1</sup> The *Elgin Marbles*.

<sup>2</sup> T. G. Wainewright.

supposed to be more likely to prove acceptable. The writer was now on his return to England from his Scottish tour in 1822.

*To J. A. Hessey.*

[1822.]

MY DEAR SIR,—Will you oblige me by letting me [have] the following, prettily bound: viz., *Vicar of Wakefield*, *Man of Feeling*, and *Nature and Art*? I am here for a day or two, but am going to Salisbury. I have been to New Lanark.—Yours ever truly,

W. HAZLITT.

I wish you could send me a small gilt memorandum book, green with gold stiles.

Messrs. TAYLOR & HESSEY,  
91 Fleet Street.

*To Messrs. Taylor & Hessey.*

DEAR SIR,—I have just received your kind letter, with the contents, for which I am much obliged to you. I send the enclosed, but fear it is hardly worth the while. Yet it may oblige a meritorious artist here and keep my word unbroken.

W. H.

I expect to be in town, and will do the *Leonardo*, unless W.<sup>1</sup> likes.

[Endorsed:] Messrs. TAYLOR & HESSEY,  
Fleet Street, London.

By the Edinburgh Mail, April 16 [1822].

At the commencement of 1823 the failure of Warren, the publisher of *Table-Talk*, and possibly other causes, involved Hazlitt in serious trouble, and exposed him to what was probably an unique experience. The detention was presumably a brief

<sup>1</sup> Wainewright.

one, but Hazlitt was immensely distressed by the incident. It never passed from his mind. I trust and think that it was in the power of Talfourd to alleviate the blow.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have been arrested this morning, and am at a loss what to do. Would you give me a call to talk the matter over, and see if your influence could procure me any terms of accommodation? I am sorry to plague you about my troublesome affairs.—Believe me, very truly, your obliged friend and servant,  
W. HAZLITT.

5 COLEMAN ST. BUILDINGS, Feb. 12.

[Endorsed:] T. N. TALFOURD, Esq.,  
26 Henrietta Street, Brunswick Square.

Hazlitt had been in 1818 the central and prominent figure in the successful prosecution against *Blackwood* which led to the magazine losing Murray as its London agent; but the attacks on him and his friends were not discontinued, and five years later there came to the new representative of the Tory organ in the metropolis a note foreshadowing a renewal of hostilities.

April 17, 1823.

SIR,—Unless you agree to give up the publication of *Blackwood's Magazine*, I shall feel myself compelled to commence an action against you for damages sustained from repeated slanders and false imputations in that work on me.

W. HAZLITT.

4 CHAPEL STREET WEST, CURZON STREET.

[Endorsed] Mr. THOMAS CADELL,  
Bookseller, Strand.

Cadell immediately forwarded this cartel to Edinburgh, and anxiously solicited instructions. But



whether *Blackwood* or *Ebony* himself took any cognizance there is nothing within my knowledge to shew. The incisive note breathes the air of a lawyer's chambers.

STRAND, Saturday, 3 o'clock, April 18, 1823.

DEAR SIR,—Annexed is a copy of a letter I have just received, the contents of which certainly make me feel somewhat uncomfortable. This is the first appeal to me, accompanied with a threat, as publisher of your Magazine, and though Mr. H. may be considered deserving of censure upon most occasions, my feelings would not be of the most agreeable nature, were my name brought before the publick by him as disseminator of slanderous & false imputations. I shall therefore be glad if you will now suggest the mode best calculated to avert the impending storm, and I will take care to act accordingly.—Yours in haste,

(Signed) T. CADELL.

Mr. W. BLACKWOOD, Bookseller, Edinburgh.

A few lines to Hood betray a lingering reminiscence of the *Liber Amoris* episode, while it shews the survival of the wounded sensibility arising out of the mortifying catastrophe which had led him some months earlier in the year to approach Talfourd:—

[Flyleaf lost: dated, probably by recipient, July 19, 1823.]

MY DEAR HOOD,—I wish you would tell Taylor that something happened which hurt my mind, and prevented my going to Petworth. I had only the heart to come down here, and see my little boy, who is gone from hence. I will do *Blenheim* for next month. I used to think she read and perhaps approved these articles. But whatever I can do, implying an idea of taste or elegance, only makes

me more odious to myself, and tantalises me with feelings which I can never hope to excite in others—wretch that I am, and am to be, till I am nothing!—  
Yours truly, W. HAZLITT.

WINTERSLOW HUT, *Saturday, July 19.*

*To the Editor of the "London Magazine."*<sup>1</sup>

SIR,—Will you have the kindness to insert in the LION'S HEAD the two following passages from a work of mine published some time since? They exhibit rather a striking coincidence with the reasonings of the *Opium Eater* in your late number on the discoveries of Mr. Malthus, and as I have been a good deal abused for my scepticism on that subject, I do not feel quite disposed that any one else should run away with the credit of it. I do not wish to bring any charge of plagiarism in this case; I only beg to put in my own claim of priority. The first passage I shall trouble you with relates to the geometrical and arithmetical series. . . . [Here comes the passage.] This passage, allowing for the difference of style, accords pretty nearly with the reasoning in the *Notes from the Pocket-Book of an Opium-Eater*. I should really like to know what answer Mr. Malthus has to this objection, if he would deign one—or whether he thinks it best to impose upon the public by his silence? So much for his mathematics: now for his logic, which the *Opium-Eater* has also attacked, and with which I long ago stated my dissatisfaction in manner and form following. [Here comes the second quotation.]

This, Mr. Editor, is the writer whom "our full

<sup>1</sup> November 1823. A reply to a paper by De Quincey in the October number. With a virtual admission on the part of the latter in the December issue the matter dropped.

senate call all-in-all-sufficient." There must be a tolerably large *bonus* offered to men's interests and prejudices to make them swallow incongruities such as those here alluded to; and I am glad to find that our ingenious and studious friend the *Opium-Eater* agrees with me on this point, too, almost in so many words.—I am, Sir, your obliged friend and servant,

W. HAZLITT.

The *Sketches of the Picture Galleries* appeared in 1824, and may help to account for his inquiry from an anonymous correspondent as to the whereabouts of a certain painting:—

[December 1823?]

DEAR SIR,—I will be much obliged to you if you will let me know the name & subject of Guerin's picture at Lucien Buonaparte's.—Yours truly,

W. HAZLITT.

Hazlitt appears to have courted the seclusion of Winterslow Hut to a more than usual extent in 1823, doubtless as a means of placing himself at a distance from the scene of a late painful incident and where he could prepare for the press his *Sketches of the Picture Galleries*. He had been at Winterslow, as we see, in July, and a rather long letter to Talfourd finds him again there on December 1. The *Table-Talk*, originally published in book-form by Warren, was reprinted in 1824 under the auspices of Colburn, whether through the medium of Talfourd or otherwise, I do not know.

WINTERSLOW HUT,  
December 1 [1823].

MY DEAR SIR,—I stand exceedingly indebted to you for your kind intentions & exertions in my favour. I am at present driven almost into a corner.

What with uneasiness of mind & this failure of Warren's, I hardly know what to do. Could you ask Colburn (with whom I have already communicated) whether he will give me £200 for 20 Essays, advancing one Hundred, that is, the amount for the first Ten essays, which I will engage to complete & deliver in Two months from the present time, & which he may make use of either for the magazine or in a Volume with what title he pleases—only in the former case I wish to reserve right of copy. I am busy about Lady Morgan, & will do it *con amore* if I can but get out of this present hobble. I have about £50 to pay as soon as I get back to town, which the Review of Lady M. alone would do, but I am too uncomfortable, I fear, to get through it properly, circumstanced as I am. 50, you will say then, would do. Be it so; but I should work much better for the other. Also, propose to him (if you please) the *Picturesque Tour in Italy* [with] an account of the Vatican at the same price [£200], with one Hundred for my expences. The truth is, I seem to have been hurt in my mind lately, [and contin]ual effort to no purpose is too [much for] any patience, & mine is nearly exhausted. My dear Talfourd, if you have a girl that loves you, & that you have a regard for, lose no time in marrying, and think yourself happy, whatever else may happen. Excuse this from yours very truly, W. H.

*P.S.* A thought has just struck me, that if Colburn chose to buy Warren's volume, he might use the Essays for the magazine in the first instance (they are all *virgins* but one) & publish the book afterwards, & in the meantime I will write a new series; that is, I will sell him 40 Essays or *Table-Talk* for £400, to do what he pleases with, he advancing me £100 down, & I giving him up half the

copy *instanter*. The subjects are not at all blown upon.

[Endorsed] T. N. TALFOURD, Esq.,  
Pump Court, Temple, London.<sup>1</sup>

The succeeding letter is the only one with which I have met from old Mrs Hazlitt to her grandchild. She had removed, after her husband's death, to Alphington, but eventually returned to Crediton. See a letter of my grandmother to my father, *post*.

ALPHINGTON, July 21, 1824,  
*My birthday, aged 78.*

MY DEAR WILLIAM,<sup>2</sup>—We were all very glad to hear from you that you were well and happy; and also that your Father and Mrs Hazlitt<sup>3</sup> were comfortable together. I wish your cousin Will<sup>4</sup> had a Father and Mother to take care of him, for *she* has left him at lodgings to take care of himself, and what they are about I cannot guess, for they have not written a line for some time to him or to me, nor has Mary<sup>5</sup> written to Harriet<sup>6</sup> or Will from Plymouth, where her visit must be nearly ended. Your Aunt met Mrs. Upham in Exeter, and she took her arm and inquired how I was. He made a bow, but spoke not, He remains very fond of the Child,<sup>7</sup> which is very fortunate, and indeed every one must who has a feeling heart, for he is a most beautiful and engaging Child.

We are all expecting you in a fortnight, and

<sup>1</sup> From the autograph, by the favour of Mr. Bertram Dobell.

<sup>2</sup> My father.

<sup>3</sup> My grandfather and his second wife.

<sup>4</sup> The only son of John Hazlitt.

<sup>5</sup> Mary, second daughter of the same.

<sup>6</sup> Harriet Hazlitt, eldest daughter of John Hazlitt.

<sup>7</sup> Mrs. Upham's (Harriet Hazlitt's) son James, by her first husband, Captain Stewart.



think it better to keep at one good school than changing. You will hear from your mamma before you return, I suppose; I don't think she will write to us from where she is. We expect to be travelling to Crediton this day seven weeks, where we shall be glad to see you at C.mass. You see I cannot write straight, and I am tired, so you will excuse my writing more. Your Aunt and Miss E.<sup>1</sup> join me in kind love to you, your Father, and Mrs. Hazlitt.

Tell Father to write to me by you, and now and then besides, and before he goes abroad; I don't like his going; so many die there; such stagnant waters surrounding the towns, and all over the country. We are reading Mrs. Piozzi's travels in Italy.—I remain, my dear Child,

your affectionate  
Grandmother Grace Hazlitt

We have heard a good deal of the way in which Hazlitt used the term *Sir* in addressing even his most intimate friends, and he soon acquired the habit of extending the practice to his own son. It amounted to what Mercier says in his *Tableau de Paris*, "Le Père appelle son fils monsieur." But in the unique note below he figures as *Baby*.

VEVEY, NEAR GENEVA [1825].

DEAR BABY,—We are got as far as Vevey in Switzerland on our way back. I propose returning by Holland in the end of August, and I shall see you, I hope, the beginning of September.

The journey has answered tolerably well. I was

<sup>1</sup> Miss Emmett.

sorry to hear of poor Miss Emmett's<sup>1</sup> death, and I hope Grandmother and Peggy are both well. I got your letter at Florence, where I saw Mr. Leigh Hunt and Mr. Landor. I have a very bad pen.

The *Table-Talk* and the *Spirit of the Age* have been reprinted at Paris; but I do not know how they have succeeded. The *Advice to a School-boy* is in the first. If you should be in London, remember me to all friends, or give my love to my Mother and Peggy.—I am, dear Baby, your ever affectionate father,

W. HAZLITT.

We are stopping here. Write to me, and tell me all the news.

Master HAZLITT, at Mrs HAZLITT'S,  
Crediton, near Exeter, England.

*To John Black.*

[1825.]

DEAR BLACK,—Will you insert this,<sup>2</sup> or hand it over to J. Hunt?<sup>3</sup>—Yours ever,

W. H.

I shall be at home in about a month. I have been to Chamouny.

VEVEY, *August 31st* [Enclosure].

THE DAMNED AUTHOR'S ADDRESS TO HIS  
REVIEWERS.

The rock I'm told on which I split  
Is bad economy of wit—  
An affectation to be thought  
That which I am & yet am not,

<sup>1</sup> Niece of the Irish patriot. She resided with the Hazlitts at Crediton.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Morning Chronicle*.

<sup>3</sup> For the *Examiner*.

Deep, brilliant, new, & all the rest :  
 Help, help, thou great economist  
 Of what thou ne'er thyself possesst,  
 Of financiers the ruthless Moloch,  
 Dry, plodding, husky, stiff Maculloch !  
 Or to avoid the consequences  
 I may incur from corporate dunces,  
 I'll write as Allen writes the livelong day ;  
 Whate'er his Lordship says, I'll say—  
 ('To hint what ne'er was said before  
 Is but to be set down a *bore*  
 By all the learned Whigs and Dames  
 Who fear you should out-write Sir James) <sup>1</sup>—  
 I'll swear that every strutting elf  
 Is just what he conceives himself,  
 Or draws his picture to his life  
 As all the world would—and *his wife* !  
 From Mackintosh I'll nature learn,  
 With Sydney Smith false glitter spurn ;  
 Lend me, oh ! Brougham, thy modesty,  
 Thou, Thomas Moore, simplicity ;  
 Mill,<sup>2</sup> scorn of juggling politics ;  
 Thy soul of candour, Chevenix ;  
 And last, to make my measure full,  
 Teach me, great Jeffrey, to be dull !

The communication is addressed outside the sheet to Thomas Hodgkin, Esq., 16 Gough Square, Fleet Street, London, which is partly struck through, and No. 5 Brunswick Terrace, White Conduit Street, Pentonvill, substituted. In the left hand corner is : *Affranchi jusqu'à Calais.*

The next, being the epistle before Knowles's *Alfred*, takes the form of a letter.

<sup>1</sup> Sir James Mackintosh. Both Mackintosh and his wife had always been well disposed.

<sup>2</sup> John Stuart Mill.

## DEDICATION,

*To Wm. Hazlitt, Esq.*

MY DEAR HAZLITT,—In dedicating this play to you, I acknowledge a debt, which I can never repay. I will not say how many years ago it was, while I was the boy whose attempts at dramatic composition you had the patience to peruse and criticize, and the good nature to cheer. How happy your approbation used to make me—how gratified (*sic*) I felt for your strictures, given with an anxiety and kindness that effectually guarded self-love from being painfully chafed, and ensured deference and improvement by convincing me of their sincerity. I could show you some of my Juvenile performances which I have kept by me to this day, with your pencil marks upon them—to me, believe me, their highest value; and I could repeat to you a passage or two which you once recited to me from the works of a common-respected friend,<sup>1</sup> as an example of the solid strength that gives sinews to simplicity.

Never do I reflect on the success that has attended my plays without attributing the better half of it to you; and sweet is the sense of obligation, for you have ever displayed the most steadfast friendship and single-hearted disinterestedness towards your devoted Servant,

J. S. KNOWLES.

GLASGOW, *May* 1826.

At Florence he was introduced by Leigh Hunt to Walter Savage Landor, of whom he formed a very pleasant impression. From Rome Hazlitt wrote to him the following letter,<sup>2</sup> the postscript to which shews him in the light of an observant antiquary:—

<sup>1</sup> *Charles Lamb, Esq.*, in Knowles's hand at the foot of the leaf.

<sup>2</sup> Forster Coll. S.K.M. orig.

ROME, April 9 [1825].

DEAR SIR,—I did not receive your obliging letter till a day or two ago. Mrs. H. and myself crossed the mountains pretty well, but had rather a tedious journey. Rome hardly answers your expectations; the ruins do not prevail enough over the modern buildings, which are commonplace things. One or two things are prodigiously fine. I have got pleasant lodgings, but find everything very bad and dear. I have thought of going to spend a month at Albino, but am not quite sure. If I do not, I shall return to Florence next week and proceed to Venice. I should be glad, if I settle at Albino, if you could manage to come over and stop a little. I have done what I was obliged to write for the Papers, and am now a leisure man, I hope, for the rest of the summer. I am much gratified that you are pleased with the *Spirit of the Age*. Somebody ought to like it, for I am sure there will be plenty to cry out against it. I hope you did not find any sad blunders in the second volume; but you can hardly suppose the depression of body and mind under which I wrote some of these articles. I bought a little Florentine edition of Petrarch and Dante the other day, and have made out one page. Pray remember me to Mrs. Landor, and believe me to be, dear Sir, your much obliged friend and servant,

W. HAZLITT.

33 via Gregoriana.

Jacobo III.  
 Jacobo II. Magnae Brit. Regis Filio.  
 Karolo Edwardo,  
 Et Henrico Decano Patrum Cardinalem,  
 Jacobo III. Filiis,  
 Regiae Stirpis Stuardiae Postremis,  
 Anno M.V.CCC.XIX.  
 Beati Mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.



What do you think of this inscription on Canova's monument to the Stuarts in St. Peter's . . . ordered by the R. Revd. Su[perior?] . . . Southey for his opinion.

[Endorsed] WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, Esq.,  
Poste Restante, Florence.

The subjoined correspondence with Cowden Clarke and Henry Hunt refers to the laborious and ill-starred *Life of Napoleon*, which had been contemplated by one unaccustomed to work on so large a scale and so unacquainted with the technicalities inseparable from such an undertaking, as far back as 1825, and which was finally brought to completion amid the greatest difficulties in regard to health and distance from authorities in 1830. Volumes i. and ii. were published separately in 1828, but when the former was ready, the author, in a note to Clarke, which has survived in a mere fragment, asks, "Do you think it would be amiss to give Buckingham the first vol. for next week's *Athenæum*, though Hunt, &c., do not write in it? The public are to be won like a widow—

'With brisk attacks and urging,  
Not slow approaches, like a virgin.'

When the next reached Clarke it was drawing close to the end of the year. The second volume was not yet in a fit state for the printer:—

DEAR SIR,—I thought all the world agreed with me at present that Buonaparte was better than the Bourbons, or that a tyrant was better than tyranny. In my opinion, no one of an understanding above the rank of a lady's waiting-maid could ever have doubted this, though I alone said it ten years ago. It might be impolicy then and now for what I know, for the

world stick to an opinion in appearance long after they have given it up in reality. I should like to know whether the preface is thought impolitic by some one who agrees with me in the main point, or by some one who differs with me and makes this excuse not to have his opinion contradicted? In Paris (*jubes, regina, renovare dolorem*<sup>1</sup>) the preface was thought a masterpiece, the best and only possible defence of Buonaparte, and quite new *there!* It would be an impertinence in me to write a *Life of Buonaparte* after Sir W.<sup>2</sup> without some such object as that expressed in the preface. After all, I do not care a *damn* about the preface. It will get me on four pages somewhere else. Shall I retract my opinion altogether, and foreswear my own book? Rayner is right to cry out: I think I have tipped him fair and foul copy, a lean rabbit and a fat one. The remainder of vol. ii. will be ready to go on with, but not the beginning of the third. The appendixes had better be at the end of the second vol. Pray get them if you can: you have my Siéyes, have you not? One of them is there. I have been nearly in the other world. My regret was "to die and leave the world 'rough' copy." Otherwise I had thought of an epitaph and a good end. *Hic jacent reliquie mortales Gulielmi Hazlitt, auctoris non intelligibilis: natus Maidstoniæ in comi[ta]tu Cantia, Apr. 10, 1778. Obiit Winterslowe, Dec. 1827.* I think of writing an epistle to C. Lamb, Esq., to say that I have passed near the shadowy world, and have had new impressions of the vanity of this, with hopes of a better.<sup>3</sup> Don't you think this would be good policy? Don't mention it to the severe author of the *Press*, a poem,<sup>4</sup> but methinks the idea *arridet* Hone. He would give sixpence to see me floating, upon a pair

<sup>1</sup> A quotation from Virgil's *Æneid*.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Walter Scott.

<sup>3</sup> This passage recalls the hoax of 1807.

<sup>4</sup> M'Creery the printer.

of borrowed wings, half way between heaven and earth, and edifying the good people at my departure, whom I shall only scandalize by remaining. At present my study and contemplation is the leg of a stewed fowl. I have behaved like a saint, and been obedient to orders.

*Non fit pugil*, &c., I got a violent spasm by walking fifteen miles in the mud, and getting into a coach with an old lady who would have the window open. Delicacy, moderation, complaisance, the *suaviter in modo*, whisper it about, my dear Clarke, these are my faults and have been my ruin. Yours ever,

W. H.

December 7 [1827].

I can't go to work before Sunday or Monday. By then the doctor says he shall have made a new man of me.

Pray how's your sister ?

[C. COWDEN CLARKE, Esq.]

The next speaks for itself:—

*To David Constable.*

DEAR SIR,—I have to thank you for your obliging letter, which I received in due course. It has come into my head that I could make a little volume of outlines or elements of the following subjects. 1. Of Law. 2. Of Morals. 3. Of the Human Mind. 4. Of Taste. 5. Of Political Economy. 6. Of English Grammar. On all of these but the fifth, I have something new to offer. Do you think you could print such a work (I would leave the price to you) or that it might possibly do for the *Miscellany*? You will perhaps see that the papers have taken to praise me: I suppose they are tired of abusing me. As to Titian, I have no theory: but one of our wise-

acres at Rome (seeing a sketch of it in the room of a young artist there) asked if it was not intended for Christ and the woman of Samaria? If you want to see how dry I can be in the way of elementary analysis, Ritchie has a book of mine *On Human Action* which no one can charge with being florid or *ad captandum vulgus*.—I remain, dear Sir, your truly obliged, humble servant,

W. HAZLITT.

WINTERSLOW, NEAR SALISBURY,  
*Jan'y. 10th, 1828.*

How the years slide on!

If I should go to Paris in the spring, could you find any use for a series of papers on French plays and players? I am a great admirer of their theatre—as much so as I abominate their style of art.

[Endorsed] DAVID CONSTABLE, Esq.,  
 St. Vincent's Street, Edinburgh.

*To Henry Hunt.*

DEAR SIR,—I am obliged by the £2, and am glad the account is no more against me. The Appendix, Nos. 4 & 5, must be given at the end of vol. iv. (to be said so in a note). No. 6, Character of Marat by Brissot, will be found infallibly at the end of one of Miss Williams's volumes from France, year 1794, which can be had at any library, Saunders and Ottley's certainly. Also, I sent it up to Clarke some time ago. Tell him, I received the letter, and am much gratified by it, vanity apart. I am not surprised at what you tell me; but drowning men catch at Buckinghams. Still so far, so good. What follows is important, not a drowning, but a shooting matter. You *must* give me one cancel at p. 209, vol ii., and alter the word *Buccaneer* to *Cruiser*. An Erratum won't do. Second, do learn the width of

the valley of the Nile from some authentic person (*forsan* Travels in Mesopotamia), and if it be more than five leagues (which I suspect it must be), cancel and change to fifteen, fifty, or whatever be the actual number. It is *five* in Napoleon's *Memoirs*, followed by Thibaudeau *in vitá*. Is the Preface to go? You'll see I can bear it out, and perhaps play the devil with some people. Don't you think an account in the *Examiner* would tell in just now, after the *London Review* and *Athenæum*, and give us a kind of prepossession of the ground? Tell St. John I wrote to thank him last week; but I find I directed the letter wrong to 150 instead of 159. Have the kindness (if you have room) to insert the inclosed paragraph. I see your leader of Sunday confirms my theory of good-natured statesmen.—Yours ever very truly,  
W. H.

*P.S.*—I won't send Clarke any more of my Georgics—Buckingham *had* an article the day before, which I dare say he has yet, unless he has given it to Colburn to keep. Pray send me down the second vol. corrected in a day or two. I won't send any more to B[uckingham] unless he *remits*, which he does not seem inclined to do. I think this book will put your uncle's head above water, and I hope he will keep it there—to vex the rogues. I wish he had not spoken so of Hook, but Colburn *has a way with him!*

January 18, 1828.

Hazlitt, however, thought it imperative to write one more to Clarke a fortnight later—

[February 1, 1828.]

DEAR CLARKE,—“To you Duke Humphrey must unfold his grief” in the following queries.



1. Is it unworthy of our dignity and injurious to our interest to have the *Life* noticed favourably in a journal that is not the pink of classical elegance?

2. Are we to do nothing to secure (beforehand) a favourable hearing to it, lest we should be suspected or charged with being accomplices in the success of our own work by the Charing Cross Gang who would ruin you and me out of their sheer dogmatism and malignity?

3. Must we wait for Mr. Southern to give his opinion, before we dare come before the public even in an extract? Or be first hung up by our enemies, in order to be cut down by our zealous Whig and Reform friends?

4. When the house is beset by robbers, are we to leave the doors open, to shew our innocence and immaculateness of intention?

5. Were you not pleased to see the extracts from Hunt's book in the *Athenæum*? and do you not think they were of service? Why then judge differently of mine?

6. There is a puff of Haydon in the *Examiner*, like blue ruin, *out of pure generosity*. But with respect to our ourselves we shut our mouths up like a maidenhood, lest it should look like partiality. So Hunt said he could not notice my lectures, or give me a good word, because I had praised him in the *Edinburgh*, and it would be thought a collusion.

7. You sent me L. H.'s letter in the *Chronicle*, which I was glad to see, particularly that part relating to a literary cut-throat; but why, my dear Clarke, did you not send me the puff of myself in the *London Review*, which I was perhaps—perhaps not—more pleased to see?

If you continue to use me so ill, I shall complain to your sister. "Think of that, Master Brook."<sup>1</sup> I

<sup>1</sup> A quotation from *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

like the *Companion*<sup>1</sup> very well. Do not suppose I am vexed; I am only frightened.—Yours ever very truly,  
W. H.

The failure of the publishers of the *Life* involved that of their undertaking,<sup>2</sup> and the disappointment and worry accelerated and embittered the end.

The eye for practical detail again displays itself in a letter to the postmaster at Salisbury in respect to the postal service:—

WINTERSLOW, NEAR SALISBURY,  
Oct. 6, 1828.

SIR,—I live at this place, the distance of which from Winterslow Hut is a mile and a half, and from Winterslow Hut to Salisbury six miles and a half. Each letter or newspaper I receive (brought out from Salisbury) is charged 4d. additional, which I understand is too much. This imposition is accompanied with impertinence and collusion, which make it worse. I sent a man down last night for a newspaper, which I was particularly anxious to see, and it was refused to be given up, because the messenger had not brought the 2d., though the landlady has in her possession 2d. of mine that had been left as change out of a letter paid for yesterday. This happens whenever the landlady at the Hut (Mrs. Hine) is in the humour, and the object is to keep the 2d. for the letter-carrier the next day. Nor is this all. The letters received in so unpleasant a manner do not reach Winterslow till the morning or middle of the next day after they arrive in Salisbury. They are brought out by the Guard at night, and sent up to the village at their leisure the next morning. For the additional 4d. many persons would be glad to fetch them out from Salisbury the same day,

<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt's work so called.

<sup>2</sup> When my father was once at Middleburg, in Zeeland, a bookseller shewed him a Dutch translation of the *Life*.

so that they would be received here two hours after they reach Salisbury, which would be a great convenience, and in some cases an object of importance.—I am, Sir, your very obedient, humble servant,

W. HAZLITT.<sup>1</sup>

In these otherwise trivial communications we are introduced to Hazlitt as a man of affairs and the world; and he was both in the best sense. Those who could form an estimate of him only when his health and spirits had succumbed to disappointment and worry were necessarily very indifferent judges of his temperament and carriage, while the hopes of his youth were unshattered, and his whole heart and thought were in his work. Repeated illustrations of his assiduous attention to detail occur in the present volume.

The two remaining notes belong to 1830 and to the Frith Street days, where the scene was so soon to close:—

DEAR SIR,—I should feel most extremely obliged if you could possibly favour me with a couple of orders for to-morrow night (Tuesday).—I remain, dear Sir, very respectfully yours, W. HAZLITT.

*Monday, 14th June,*  
6 FRITH STREET, SOHO.

[Endorsed] [GEORGE] BARTLEY,<sup>2</sup> Esq.,  
Covent Garden Theatre.

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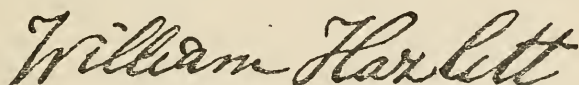
<sup>1</sup> In 1856 my father and I paid a visit to Winterslow village and Hut. We put up at Amesbury, and walked to Stonehenge. At the Hut I found my grandfather still a living tradition. We trod the fine elastic turf of the down, called at the Stoddart house in the village containing the rooms in which Hazlitt wrote, and were provided with refreshments by the representatives of the Armsteads, who were there in W. H.'s times. We passed through Clarendon Wood, where my father told me that he used to gather nuts when a boy. It was the nutting season, and they were waiting to be picked. A son of Judd, the Winterslow carrier, was stationmaster at Barnes when I resided there.

<sup>2</sup> George Bartley, the actor, and for some years manager of Covent Garden.

A note to the President of the Royal Academy was found inside the paper cover of an incomplete copy of the *Conversations of Northcote*, 1830, which the author thus appears to have forwarded for Shee's inspection:—

Mr. Hazlitt takes the liberty to leave this little work with Mr. Shee, but would feel obliged to have it returned to him at No. 6 Frith Street. When the vol. is published, Mr. H. will have the honour of leaving a perfect copy of it with Mr. Shee.

[6 FRITH STREET, SOHO, 1830.]



Signature of Hazlitt in 1829.

II.—FIVE LETTERS FROM SARAH HAZLITT TO  
HER SISTER-IN-LAW AND HER SON (1824–31).

*To Miss Hazlitt.*

5 RUE ST. GERMAIN,  
FAUXBOURG ST. GERMAIN À PARIS,  
21st July 1824.

MY DEAR PEGGY,—I have been settled in this place nearly a fortnight, and devote my whole time to walking and riding about and seeing all I can, and I find it very amusing. I had rather a rough passage to Calais, and very cold, and I was very sick, so that I was glad when we landed at six in the evening. I found Mr. Roberts (the master of the Hotel there, to whom my brother gave me a letter of recommendation) waiting on the beach for such customers as

the packet might bring ; he sent a boy with me to the place where people are searched and their passports examined. I got through it all without the least difficulty, and then reached his house, where I staid two days very comfortably. It is a very dull town with but little going on ; however I went to the Fete of Basseville, about a mile out of the town, which was much like one of our fairs, with dancing in a garden called the little Vauxhall. Wednesday morning at nine I set out by the Paris Diligence, and arrived there about five Thursday evening. I got out to see the country as much as I could, but the rain poured in torrents a great part of the time, and I was obliged to keep in the inside ; but it cleared up on Thursday morning, and the road improved, being before very flat and dreary. I did not pass through any towns that I should like to live in. Mr. Roberts gave me a recommendation to an Hotel here, but I did not stay long, as it was much too expensive, and knowing no person and so little of the language, I could not have done at all, but that it came into my head to find out where the Voitures for Versailles went from, and go and beg Mrs. Kenney's advice and assistance, which I did, and she was very hearty and kind. The weather coming on stormy, with thunder and lightning, she made up a bed for me that night, and the next morning sent her daughter into town with me lodging hunting, and after some time we got this place for one month certain ; removed my luggage from the inn, and she saw me comfortably settled, and returned by six in the evening, but I could not have done at all without her for an interpreter at the various places we went to. I am particularly lucky to be waited on and have a fire lighted so that I can breakfast at home in the English fashion, as it is much cheaper, but not at all usual here, where people get their breakfast at



a Café and their dinner at a Restaurateur's, but I sometimes even dine here by buying some cold meat at a cook's shop. I do not find it dearer than living in London. I am very near the Louvre, and have been there once, but I mean to visit it often if I can, though it is at present shut up, in order to hang up some pictures of living artists. I was very sorry to find that the *Transfiguration*, *Tancred and Clorinda*, and most of those that William copied were gone; it was quite a disappointment to me; it will be some time before I can find out where half those that remain, according to the catalogue, are hung. I tried yesterday to see those in the Luxembourg Gallery, but could not succeed, but I rambled about the garden, and I am every day in the garden of the Tuilleries. On Sunday I went to the Jardin des Plantes, from whence I had by far the finest view of Paris I have yet seen, a perfect Panorama. There are many wild beasts too, not shut up in dens, but each at liberty to walk in its own grass plat, with a tasty house to retire to when they choose, and a pond for those birds who require it. I never saw animals so healthily and comfortably provided for. I have also seen Notre Dame, and many other of their churches, and yesterday was present at a wedding and a christening. I am surprised at myself to see how well I get on with an entire French family, where not one individual understands a word of English. It is a complete lodging house, not an inn, and a Restaurateur lives below, where people may dine if they choose it; I have done so twice, but I have found another of Mrs. Kenney's recommending which I like much better. It is now time to ask how you are going on? I hope mother is better and Miss Emmett tolerable. I suppose you will soon begin to think of packing for your new abode. Have you heard from Mrs. Williams? This

writing paper is not so good as the English, it quite blots, and there are no knives that will cut ; if I had been aware of it I would have brought one, for I am obliged to use my penknife to cut bread and everything else !

With love to mother and Miss E., I am, my dear Peggy, your affectionate sister,  
S. HAZLITT.

[Endorsed] Miss HAZLITT,  
Alphington, near Exeter, Devon, England.

*To her Son.*<sup>1</sup>

NO. 5 RUE ST. GERMAIN,  
FAUXBOURG ST. GERMAIN, 26 July 1824.

MY DEAR CHILD,—Your letter, which I received on Saturday, was not directed properly, though I had given you the address very correctly ; it was also very badly and carelessly written. This shows the use of your master's seeing your letters, as he would not have permitted them to have been sent in such an improper way. You say you called on *him* about a fortnight after I went, &c., &c., and leave me to guess who you mean. I am at a loss whether you mean Lamb or Coulson, but I suppose it is one of them. You say you think you shall go to Mrs. Armstead's, but do not tell me when, or how long you are to stay there. It is not at all worth while for you to send for my first letter. You should also have mentioned whether your Uncle John had left town, and if he had . . . and whether he would remain in Down Street till he left England, and the name of the booksellers who had given him this . . . and how long he meant to stay abroad. You told me scarcely any-

<sup>1</sup> A few words have been obliterated, or otherwise lost, here and there in these letters. The circumstance is indicated by dots.

thing. I wonder how . . . and I suppose he has not . . . As to myself, I am spending all my time in going about and seeing all I can. Yesterday I was all the morning at the Luxembourg Gallery of pictures; it is appropriated to the works of living artists, but in general they are poor, washy, sprawling things, and reminded me strongly of two lines of Peter Pindar:—

“But if the *pictures* I am forced to blame,  
I'll say most handsome things about the *frame*.”

However, there are a few redeeming ones, which I think really good. The pictures at the Louvre I have not been able to see again as yet, as it unfortunately still continues shut, but I hope it will re-open soon, as I should wish to visit it several times, for as yet I have but a very imperfect notion of them, though I spent nearly one whole day there; but among the modern productions those by Vernet strike me as approaching very nearly to the sea pieces of Claude Lorrain; indeed they are admirable, and the comparison will show you that I think so. I am very sorry to find my eyes failing me so much as they do; these pictures try them sadly; after poring over so many, I can scarcely distinguish anything. I should only see a few at a time, but I am not willing to miss any. The other day I walked to the ruins of the Bastille with Miss Mercier; it was an immense building covering a great extent of ground, and one rejoices to see such a horrible engine of despotism levelled with the dust; how many poor wretches have been shut up in those dungeons for life, without even knowing of what they were accused, and their friends ignorant of where they were, or what was their fate. I have also seen the Temple, where the late Queen of France was confined. At the Palace of Versailles I saw the small door in her chamber through which

she escaped when they sought her there. All the rooms of that palace are most splendidly ornamented with burnished gold, but totally devoid of furniture except pictures; the suites of rooms are magnificent; the garden, orangery, fountains, sheet of water, &c., &c., are quite in the French style, that is, stiff and formal, with close-cut grass, trees, &c., &c., all perfectly neat, and terraced like the old fashion in England formerly; but the Parks here at St. Cloud and the other Palaces are very fine, indeed they are rather extensive woods. You would like to be with me in some of my Sunday walks; the day is spent so utterly different from ours here; it is a day of peculiar gaiety and enjoyment. The Boulevards, a kind of Mall with trees, is full of people sitting in parties, taking wine, coffee, liquors, cakes, or whatever they choose, under awnings at the doors of the coffee-houses, and Restaurateurs, that is, houses where they go to dine; and among the trees are crowds of people walking, others riding in roundabouts, others weighing themselves in scales, others playing at a round table such as we have at the fairs, in which if the hand stops at a certain point you win a piece of cake, or whatever they are playing for, others playing on instruments, some bawling before shows, some dancing, some going to the Play; for here the Theatres are open on Sundays, as well as other days; in short a perfect fair, and the same is going on at all the barriers or outskirts of the town, standings of toys, ginger-bread, caps, ribbons, &c., &c. The public gardens too are all full, all chattering, laughing, and merry. There were the same standings of toys, eatables, &c., the same playing at nine-pins and dancing, romping, drinking wine on the grass, and amusement going on yesterday (Sunday) in the gardens of the royal palace at St. Cloud, where the king at present resides, about six miles from Paris, and crowds of

carriages of all descriptions to convey the people backwards and forwards. You must direct your letter exactly thus if you write again—

A Madame Madame HAZLITT,  
5 Rue St. Germain,  
Fauxbourg St. Germain,  
à Paris.

Tell me when you go to school, and how your Grandmother and Aunt are, and give my love to them.<sup>1</sup>

*Your aff<sup>l</sup> mother  
J. Hazlitt*

[Endorsed :] Master HAZLITT,  
Mrs. HAZLITT,  
Alphington, near Exeter,  
Devon, England.

*To the Same.*

PARIS, 5 RUE ST. GERMAIN,  
FAUXBOURG ST. GERMAIN.

MY DEAR CHILD,—The 25th of August was the fête of St. Louis, which is the highest holliday they have in France; the Louvre was re-opened on that day, after having been shut up from the first week I came here. Every Theatre in Paris was open *gratis*, and thronged to excess. In the evening the military bands played and sung before the palace of the Tuilleries, and the gardens were illuminated, and so full that the getting out was quite a crush. There was a fair, shows, dancing parties, drinking parties,

<sup>1</sup> In the original, written at the top of the letter, upside down.



others bivouacking on the ground: the whole splendidly lighted up: sales of china, games of chance, roundabouts, ups and downs, and diversions of all sorts in the Champs Elysees just without the town. In the Place de Louis Quinze were very splendid fireworks; the city was illuminated; but I saw no transparencies. The palais Bourbon, the pillars wreathed with green lamps to represent vines, had a very beautiful effect; the people seemed all happy and joyous, without any drunkenness or confusion. I went to the Grand Opera, which opened at half-past twelve at noon: as you may suppose, the entrance was very difficult, owing to the immense crowd: and I could not have got in without a gentleman: when we attained the pit I should have been borne down by the crowd, but that some officers of the Gens d'Armes, who saw me, took me up in their arms and lifted me over the barrier into the Gallerie, as it is called (a seat between the Pit and the boxes), where they were; and I was instantly freed from all pressure, and had the best place in the house, both for seeing and hearing. The house is large and magnificent, more so than the Opera House in London, and the performance, both in singing and dancing, very delightful, and in the Ballet I recognised the story of Cinderella and the glass slipper, which amused my childhood; and I assure you it lost none of its attractions by the representation; for it acted very well, and the dancing was beautiful. The appearance of the house too: splendid as it was, and so crowded in every part that you might have walked on the people's heads (to use a common phrase): was very imposing.

The fête, that was to have been at Versailles on the same day, was put off till the following Sunday; to give people an opportunity of seeing both. I went there on the Saturday night to be in readiness,

and even then it was very difficult to get a conveyance; the stages were all full and the hackney coaches and cabriolets, &c., raised to three, four, and five times their usual prices: for the French would not miss a fête on any account: however I succeeded at last; but there were not so many things to be seen here. In the morning I went to the Church of the Gens d'Armes (Nôtre Dame) to hear high Mass, and see the consecration of the holy bread, which was afterwards distributed to the people, and in the afternoon we repaired to the gardens of the Palace, where an immense number of well disposed people were assembled to see the Jets d'eau, or playing of the waters in the various fountains; in one of them is a figure of a woman seen through the mist of the spray, in others clusters of tritons, sea-nymphs, &c., throwing up columns of water, and the effect of the crowds of people seated on the sloping banks of grass round the fountains, and seen through the mist of the spray, is singularly beautiful, and I am glad I went; for there is nothing at all like it to be met with in England: and I suppose there were a million of people assembled: all drest in their best, joyous and happy, and seeming in extacies with their entertainment, and here it ended: and all retired peaceably to their own homes. But I felt curtailed of my pleasures, as I had been told of the Royal family going through the gardens in state: of illuminations and fire-works: none of which took place. I staid with Mrs. Kenney till Tuesday: indeed she has been very kind, and shewn me every attention. I frequently go over there for two or three days together. Kenney is still in London; his farce succeeds very well. Write immediately as soon as you hear from your father and tell me. . . . I believe I shall remain in this lodging till October and then I wish to go to Rouen, but I have not yet decided when, or which

way, I shall return to England. I like France very well in many things; there is abundance of fine fruit, and I half live on greengages, peaches, &c., &c., but the heat at present is quite overpowering. I fear you disappointed poor Mrs. Armstead in not going to her. I suppose you saw Penton when you were at Crediton; it is a very pretty cottage, and I think will suit Grandmother and Miss E. admirably, but poor Peggy will have a sad fatiguing job to move there; I suppose she is in the midst of it now. Give my love to them all when you write, and say I am quite well and comfortable. Comp<sup>ts</sup> to Mr. and Mrs. Evans. If I understand you right, your father intends remaining abroad for a year or more. The fine old pictures in the Louvre are still shut up, and the works of living artists *exposed*, as may be truly said, in their room, for such an immense number of glaring daubs never before offended my eye; it is perfectly disgusting and wearying to wade through them; they are much more *au fait* at patterns for needlework. God bless you, my son; be a good child, and make all the progress you can in your learning, that you may be able to make your way respectably in the world, and be a comfort to me and every one connected with you. I would endeavour to bring you home some trifle, if I knew of anything you particularly wished for, but I do not; if you think of anything mention it. Once again, farewell, and believe me ever your tender and affectionate mother,

SARAH HAZLITT.

4th September 1824.

[Endorsed:] Master HAZLITT,  
 Rev. WM. EVANS'S,  
 Parkwood, Tavistock, Devon,  
 England.

*To the Same.*

25th September 1824.

MY DEAR CHILD,—You will rejoice at receiving a letter from me with the information that I am returned safe to England. I left Paris on Saturday morning (the 18th) at six o'clock, and arrived in London the following Wednesday at Noon, by the way of Rouen and Dieppe, which is a much finer road than that by Calais, but the accommodations at the Inns not half so good. Unfortunately, I was taken very ill at Dieppe, and obliged to go on board so, and was unable to get out of bed till I arrived at Brighton, when it was dark; and the town being very full, it was difficult to get a bed, especially as I was a perfect stranger, and knew not where to seek one, and so weak with sickness I could hardly walk. However, I went into the Library on the beach, and mentioned my situation to a gentleman and lady I saw there, and they were so kind and polite, as to go with me themselves, and procure me a bed at the Pavilion Hotel, where I was obliged to remain all the next day. When I came away, your father desired his love to you; he intended sending you a letter by me, but did not find himself well enough to write. He is most splendidly situated as to rooms, and gets his food cooked in the English way, which is a very great object to him; but, as may be supposed, it is terribly expensive. He did not agree with Taylor and Hessey about the book<sup>1</sup> at last, so that he will sell it to the best bidder on his return.

Meanwhile it is coming out in numbers in the

<sup>1</sup> *Notes of a Journey through France and Italy*, 8vo, 1826. The volume was published by Hunt & Clarke.

*Morning Chronicle.* I called there yesterday with a message from him to Mr. Black, and found the third article was inserted that very day, so I bought it and shall send it to your Grandmother to see, and desire her to forward it to you; and you must keep it carefully to give me, when we meet. I have not seen the two first. I have taken apartments for a month at Mr. Baylis's, 51 Stafford Place, Pimlico. I have seen Martin,<sup>1</sup> and Coulson, and Sophy,<sup>2</sup> who are all well. I also saw my brother, who desired to be remembered to you, and hoped you had had a good deal of amusement with your fleet balls.

I am much better now, but not quite rec[overed from] my journey. To-morrow will be your birthday. [I] sincerely wish you many happy returns of it, [and trust] that I shall enjoy some future ones with you.

If you wish to write to your father, his address is

A Monsieur,  
Monsieur HAZLITT,  
Hotel Des Etrangers,  
Rue Vivienne,  
Paris,

and he meant to remain there about three weeks longer, and then proceed to Rome.

Write soon, and tell me how you are, and every little thing that occurs to you; it will all be interesting to your affectionate and anxious Mother,

S. HAZLITT.

Your father talked of sending you some money

<sup>1</sup> Martin Burney.

<sup>2</sup> Sophy Harwood, granddaughter of Holcroft. She married an Exeter merchant, named Cole. This lady is said to have been the original of Holcroft's novel of *Anna St. Ives*.



by me, but found himself rather short. He could only spare me 2 Napoléons of what he owed.

[Endorsed] Master HAZLITT,  
Rev. WILLIAM EVANS'S,  
Parkwood, Tavistock, Devon.<sup>1</sup>

*To the Same.*

CREDITON, 10th July 1831.

MY DEAREST WILLIAM,—Your letter, which I received by the maund last night, has afforded me the sincerest pleasure, though not very much astonishment. I certainly did think that some pretty powerful attachment drew you so frequently to Broad Street, and accordingly I felt some anxiety for the cause, when I thought your visits there had slackened, but I am very glad to find that my fears of some disappointment to your hopes of happiness were groundless. Your choice has my warmest approbation; I like and respect Mr. Reynell's family generally, and think they have brought up their children with that prudence, economy, and good management so essential to comfort and happiness in marriage, and I have no doubt that Catherine is perfectly amiable and good, and calculated to make you a good, affectionate, and tender wife, one who will be like your second self, to whom all your thoughts, cares, pleasures, and in short every occurrence, will be unhesitatingly confided, as hers to you: in short, my dear child, let neither of you have any secrets or separate schemes unconfided to the other; in your property let both equally participate, and feel they

<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt arranged for him to join him and his second wife at Paris, whither Mr. John Hunt took him. He was one of the party during the remainder of the time.

have a right to do so; but to her, as the mistress of a family, it may more especially belong to keep a strict account of all expenses, and frequently look them over together, that you may on no account exceed your income, and as much as possible pay ready money for everything, and as your income increases you must endeavour to lay by a little every year in case of a family or illness, as well as to make a provision for old age. I know you will take this prosing dull advice in good part from a mother, to whom your welfare and happiness are most dear; you have a very kind and affectionate heart, combined with prudence; and the stimulus of being in time enabled to make a comfortable settlement in the world will be a spur to you, and sweeten every effort; neither are you inclined to any vice and extravagance; and I think you could not have made a wiser and a better choice of a companion and friend for life than you have done; it meets my unqualified approbation, and I beg you will say to Catherine that as soon as there is any probability of a tolerable maintenance for you, I shall most joyfully receive her as a beloved daughter, and have no doubt that your mutual happiness will be the result. It gives me additional pleasure that your poor father knew and approved of the affair, and felt happy in the prospect of your future felicity; he knew your choice personally, much better than I did, for she was quite a child when I last saw her, and she probably has not much recollection of me; but I think she was next to John, whether elder or younger I do not remember: there cannot be much difference between her age and yours. I am very glad that there is a prospect of your soon obtaining a permanent situation as reporter in a Morning Paper; you do quite right to attend constantly and get all the practice you can, as it will give you a facility not

otherwise to be obtained. I hope Ann will keep her resolution of leaving Martin,<sup>1</sup> and that she will be enabled to take and furnish respectably a lodging-house. I am sure it would succeed, and she is admirably adapted to conduct such an establishment, and make all her inmates comfortable. Her conduct to Martin has been beyond all praise; she has a thousand good qualities, and he neither knew or valued her worth, but is irrevocably given up to sensuality and vice. I am very sorry for it. Have you ever seen Knowles, or is the assistance he is going to give you in consequence of a letter from you? I am glad to hear of every fresh acquisition to your store of materials. Procter has not written any more *Recollections*, has he? I have sent the two large hams that were done for Patmore, but if he has not paid the money for what he has already had, or has receded from the assistance he professed affording you in literary matters (which I very much suspect), I should not wish you to let him have them at all. I had much rather you gave one to the Reynells, and get them to keep the other one for you, and dress it when you want it. You can return this hamper yourself immediately, and in it the letters from Jeffrey, Coleridge, &c. I will thank you to take the two Malta packets to the Colonial Office, with my respects to the gentleman at the head of it as before, and request he will have the kindness to forward those small parcels,<sup>2</sup> containing some caps of my working for my nieces. I hope Mr. Webster will be enabled to pay me up the whole now, for truly we can only muster a few shillings in the house amongst us all, and I am also very anxious on your account, as I fear you must be at a loss for a little cash yourself. Edwin Drake is

<sup>1</sup> Martin Burney.

<sup>2</sup> To the writer's brother, Sir John Stoddart.

expected here some time next month, to the great joy of his mother, who has not seen him these two years; and all the rest are most anxious for the promised pleasure.

I once more assure you that, so far from making myself uneasy at the news you tell me, it is a source of great satisfaction to me, and I hail it as the harbinger of future comfort to us all, and am as ever, with great truth, your most anxious and affectionate mother,

S. HAZLITT.

Grandmother and Aunt desire their kindest love and best wishes; the latter will write to you herself.

I do not much like these *Johnsoniana*, &c. I think Cooke's *Topographical Library* that I have seen advertised seems a good work; if I meet with one of the papers, I will send it to you. Should those silk stockings which I have done for myself, be too small for you, you may know where to bestow them satisfactorily *now*. I think you may enclose the small maund you have in this large one, or otherwise it will do to send some more books in. If you are not in haste to receive back the letters I mentioned, I could return them by Edwin Drake, but perhaps that would be two months hence.

[Endorsed] Mr. HAZLITT.

### III.—SOME EARLY CORRESPONDENCE OF THE LATER HAZLITTS (1830-1865).

During the greater part of Hazlitt's life a free admission to any theatre, especially Covent Garden, was a matter of course. But it seems to have been thought even there by some of the subordinates, that the death of the critic himself determined the old

relationship, and my father, one evening early in November 1830, was refused admission at the barrier. He therefore wrote to Charles Kemble, and received instant redress.

T. R., C. GARDEN,  
10th November 1830.

DEAR SIR,—There must be some mistake: but where it lies I cannot tell. I certainly ordered your name to be put upon our free-list, and on referring to it this morning, there I found the name, and Mr. Notter assured me it had been there ever since I had spoken concerning it. I can only regret that you should have been disappointed, and request that should the Door-keeper make such another blunder, you will immediately enquire for Mr. Notter, who is always to be found at the Theatre till nine or ten o'clock, and he will take care to rectify the mistake. —I am, dear Sir, very truly yours, C. KEMBLE.

The difficulty and misunderstanding do not seem, however, to have been quite overcome, for my father had farther occasion to write in consequence of the order of the performances having been changed, and certain orders obtained by him becoming unavailable.

15 WARDOUR STREET, SOHO [1831].

MY DEAR SIR,—I am quite ashamed to make you this request, as you have already been so kind to me: a good fortnight ago, I had promised me by divers editorial authorities tickets, five for Monday, and have since delighted the little children of a very kind friend of mine, with the prospect of the Pantomime, and the elders with anticipations of *Catherine of Cleves*. On Friday, after having diligently collected my tickets, I find, on consulting the bill, to my horror and astonishment, that to give the blessed



martyr Charles the 1st a better chance, there will be no performance.

Why here's a go!

As the indiscreet *blackbird* in the pantomime plaintively singeth.

Remedy for this disappointment, which as my friends live somewhat out of town would be rather awful, have I none (for the attempt to repeat the tickets from the same sources the next day would be perfectly useless) unless that of throwing myself on your *paternal feelings*, and beg you to give me directly or indirectly a pass for two. This with one, which I think I can get, and my own would do capitally,—for Tuesday night, which being so very soon after Monday, the disappointment can be obviated.—I am, dear Sir, with respect, your obliged, faithful serv<sup>t</sup>.

*William Hazlitt.*

A word directed as above would be immediately received; if successful with you, I have to send to Bethnal Green: or rather I will call in half-an-hour if you please. When are we to see *Charles the Second*? When the *Recruiting Officer*? Long live the noble Captain Plume.

Kemble at once replied:—

79 GREAT RUSSELL STREET.

DEAR SIR,—There are no orders whatever written for Covent Garden Theatre by the proprietors, but your fair bevy will be admitted under your auspices. I shall leave word with the Box-keeper, that you may not be disappointed.—Truly yours, dear Sir,

C. KEMBLE.

WILLIAM HAZLITT, Esq.

It would not be quite proper to dismiss these letters without explaining the peculiar obligations under which Mrs. Siddons and the Kembles lay to Hazlitt, whose services in bringing their merits before the public contributed most importantly to their professional success. These criticisms of his later life appeared, for the most part, in the *Atlas* newspaper, and have not till quite recently been reprinted; and unfortunately, when the collective edition of Hazlitt's writings was undertaken a few years ago, certain numbers of the periodical were unrecoverable. But our family had known Charles Kemble at a much earlier period, and in 1807 John Hazlitt executed a very striking miniature of this distinguished performer. It was perhaps through Godwin, again, that we became acquainted with them. They had taken the leading part in his *Antonio* so far back as 1800. My grandfather was probably an aid to this gifted family as he was to the elder Kean.

A letter from Bulwer signifies alarm at an announcement in the *Athenæum* that the *Literary Remains* of Hazlitt then in the press were to be accompanied by an Introductory Essay by the writer. The book actually contained what is now termed an Appreciation.

*From Sir E. Lytton Bulwer.*

ALBANY, Feb. 14, 1835.

MY DEAR SIR,—I saw to my great surprise an announcement in the *Athenæum* that some of your father's works were to appear with an *Introductory Essay* by myself. I trust this is a mistake—the few lines I sent you, at your request, were I expressly understood to be inserted *among other papers* relative to your father's genius — and was desired not as a Criticism but as the individual opinion of a Cotent-

porary. A paper thus composed—short, sketchy, and hastily written—might perhaps have interest as an opinion, but would be utterly worthless as an essay—wholly beneath the importance of the subject and my own trifling reputation. An Introductory Essay to your father's works should take a man six months, and implies profound inquiry into Metaphysics, Art, and the wide realm of Criticism in general—and my letter can no more be called an Introductory Essay than Sidney Smith's letter to Sir J. Mackintosh's son could be called an Introductory Essay to Sir J. Mackintosh's writings. I must request you, therefore to contradict this announcement in the *Athenæum*, which will come perhaps more graciously from you than myself, and put the matter on its right footing. It seems to me as if the title should have run somewhat thus:—Works (or Selections from the Works) of W. H., with critical remarks by Mr. —, Mr. E. L. B——. Mr. —, &c. I cannot figure away as Cavalier Seul, but am contented and honoured to stand up as one of the company. But if I had had time I should have been rejoiced to have attempted a proper analysis of your father's genius and productions. Big paper made its bow to him, an Introductory Essay should take his proportions. Pray see to this.—Y<sup>rs.</sup> truly, E. L. BULWER.

The publication of the *Literary Remains* in 1836 had the effect of bringing into contact with the editor the widow of Shelley, who apparently contemplated at this time a Life of her father, William Godwin. Mrs. Shelley, in a note below, commends the way in which my father had executed his pious task, and concludes, from the friendship between Godwin and Hazlitt, no doubt, that our collections must contain some material likely to serve the object, which the writer had in view. The letters from Hazlitt, here

promised, were never sent; nor does Godwin himself, in his communication of 1831, when they might have been biographically serviceable, refer to them as being in his possession. They are, I presume, the two, which the late Mr. Kegan Paul printed in his book, and to which I have elsewhere adverted.

*From Mrs. Shelley.*

SIR,—I am at this moment occupied in editing the Memoirs & Correspondence of my Father, Mr. Godwin. If among your Father's papers are found any letters or notes of his, you would confer an obligation on me by letting me have them. I have a few notes from Mr. Hazlitt to my Father, which I will look out, & send you, if you wish.

I wish I may perform my task as well as you have done yours. I read your Memoirs of your Father with great pleasure; Mr. Talfourd's Essay is very beautiful, & worthy its subject.

As I am leaving Town, will you direct to me at Hookham's Library, 15 Old Bond St., & oblige me by an early answer?—I am, Sir, your obdt<sup>r</sup> servant,

MARY SHELLEY.

My father replied to this on the following day from 6 Percy Street, Bedford Square, and regretted that among the papers he had found only one or two letters from Lamb, one or two from Leigh Hunt, and several from Knowles.

It was some years after this—in 1839—that my father reprinted Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein* in the *Romancist*, and sent the author a copy of the number containing the story. She sent him the annexed note:—

SIR,—Many thanks for the Paper. It is astonishing to me how much can be got for 2d.

I must have every Wednesday enlivened by your sheet, & should be obliged to you to give orders that it should be sent me. I am flattered by your reprinting my Tale. Bentley & Colburn bought the copyright of *Frankenstein*, when it was printed in the Standard Novels. *Frankenstein* was first published in 1819, I think; so perhaps the book is common property. But I do not know what the laws are.—Wishing you every success, I am, Sir, yours Obed<sup>t</sup>,  
M. W. SHELLEY.

41a PARK ST., 5 Nov.

There is a letter from Talfourd which is well worth preserving, because the writer was one of the links between the age to which Hazlitt belonged and our own. My father, in reprinting the *Round Table*, dedicated it to Talfourd, who thus acknowledges the fact:—

3 SERGEANT'S INN, 3 July 1841.

MY DEAR SIR,—I greatly regret that the pressure of some personal anxiety and of much business has so long delayed my acknowledgment of the receipt of the New Edition of the *Round Table*, and of my grateful sense of the high compliment which the Dedication conveys and perpetuates. Nothing could be more gratifying to my feelings or more flattering to my pride than to find my humble name connected with the memory of one, who was my great Master in the art of Thinking, and the recollection of whose society is dearer to me than the enjoyment of my dearest living friends. I can scarcely flatter myself that if he had lived to read the *Tragedy of Ion*, to which



you so kindly allude, his judgment would have found in it much to approve; but I am sure his partial regard would have induced him to write and say of it all the good he would wish to see in it, and it has often been to me an affecting consideration, that I could never hope for the praise of one, whose lightest commendation I should prize above the most elaborate eulogies. I beg leave to send you (a poor return) a copy of my *Collected Dramas*,<sup>1</sup> and also two smaller attempts, and to assure you it will give me great pleasure at all times to hear of your welfare, and still greater, if I could in any degree promote it.—Believe me to remain, my dear Sir, very truly yours,

T. N. TALFOURD.

W. HAZLITT, Esq.

Talfourd, however, never succoured my father within my knowledge to obtain the practical recognition from the Liberal party of Hazlitt's great service to that cause. I have other letters from him, both before and after his elevation to the Bench, couched in much the same terms, but amounting to nothing. The last was in 1851, just ten years after the one which I have printed, and three prior to my father's attainment, through a very different class of agency—the steadfast help of Sir John Stoddart, Lord Brougham, and one or two others—of an official independence.

Of all the enthusiasts, who came forward after the event with professions of sympathy and regard, Bulwer, however, was one of the most effusive and the most worthless. He declared that the news of Hazlitt's death had created an unparalleled im-

<sup>1</sup> The edition of 1840.

pression on his mind; yet he did not stir hand or foot in reality to assist my father, and was in fact a mere hollow sentimentalist and word-painter. All his cordiality was on paper. He disclaimed the possession of personal influence, and invariably had special reasons for not wishing to speak to those who had.

My father appealed to him as to one of those, who had most emphatically and warmly pronounced their sense of Hazlitt's deserts, ill-treatment by his contemporaries, and title to reward in the person of his descendant; and his rank and weight surely vested in him the power of conferring some more tangible proof of his sincerity than bare phrases; and in point of fact in 1847 he actually offered my father an appointment of £150 a year. My father at that juncture was employed on literary and journalistic work of a sadly casual nature; he was burning the candle at both ends; and before a twelvemonth had elapsed, he succumbed to the pressure. He had to wait six years longer, before Lord Cranworth gave him the Registrarship in Bankruptcy. It was a tremendous risk for us all; but my father's decision in 1847 was justified by the final result.

Here was the case of a man, who had been before the world some thirty years, and while many, who were approached, recognized his merits and his pretensions, hardly a soul seemed to own any memorial of him, or to be able or willing to throw any light on his career, apart from the substantial appreciation of his literary and political services. It was very easy to criticize adversely a work which, like the *Memoirs* of 1867, achieved so much in the direction of forming a consecutive and systematic biography of Hazlitt for the first time; but I could never have written those volumes from ordinary

available channels of knowledge; and the extent, to which I had to gather the data piecemeal from oral and manuscript records, a fragment here, a hint there, and a corroborative circumstance in a third place, is almost incredible.

Nevertheless, when all was done, I had not yet acquired all those remarkable clues, which the gradual purchase of inedited letters through a long course of years (one by one, as they came into the market), and lastly the recovery of Margaret Hazlitt's Diary and other strayed papers, at length afforded me. There is withal much that I still wish to learn or to verify; but though it is not high noon, there is fair daylight, where there was something, even in 1867, like Egyptian darkness. Numerous gaps can now at last be filled up; many errors have been rectified; and several important incidents are for the first time capable of being judged from the true point of view.

I annex a second sample of Bulwer about 1843. It refers to Templeman's editions of some of Hazlitt's works:—

*From Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer to  
William Hazlitt the Younger.*

Excuse this ragged paper. I write in great haste.

MY DEAR SIR,—Do me the favour to believe me most sincerely flattered by the undeserved compliment you have paid me in the Dedication of a great and undying work.

If you are not engaged will you come to me

at Acton next Wednesday? We dine at six and can give you a bed.

Plenty of coaches.—Truly yours,

E. L. BULWER.

We are just beyond the 4 mile stone.

BERRYMEAD PRIORY,  
W. ACTON, *Saturday*.

[Endorsed :] W. HAZLIT [*sic*], Esq.,  
Care of Mr. MILLER, 404 Oxford Street.<sup>1</sup>

E. L. BULWER.

I am now going to allow myself a slight indulgence by admitting one letter to my father from Guizot respecting the English translations of some of his works, and two to myself from Leigh Hunt relative to my treaty with Routledge for an edition of his Poems, and to a copy of my own edition of Henry Constable's Poems, which I had sent him for his acceptance. Both these belong to 1859. A letter to my father from John Payne Collier respecting the so-called Emendations in a copy of Shakespeare, and two or three notes to me and others (out of a considerable number) conclude the short series.

SIR,—Je vous remercie beaucoup des quatre volumes que vous avez voulu m'envoyer. Je suis heureux que mes ouvrages aient rencontré un traducteur tel que vous, et si je rencontré en lisant votre traduction quelques inexactitudes qui méritent d'être remarquées, je m'impresserai de vous les signaler.

<sup>1</sup> I recollect my father going, and finding Bulwer and some man-friend sitting by the fire smoking. I describe the scene elsewhere. I am of the clear opinion that in her view and characterization of her husband Lady Bulwer hit the mark fairly well.

Reçez, je vous prie, l'assurance de ma considération très distinguée.  
 GUIZOT.

BROMPTON, *Juillet* 1848.

RIVERSIDE, MAIDENHEAD,  
 3 Dec. 1858.

DEAR SIR,—Give my best remembrances to your father.

I have not now the edit. of Constable's *Diana*, 4<sup>to</sup>, 1592. I exchanged it with Heber for books I more wanted.

The edit. of 1594, 12<sup>mo</sup>, which you mention, I never saw; but I have always presumed that its contents were the same as the reprint in 12<sup>mo</sup>, made many years ago, and with the erroneous date of 1584 at the bottom of the title-page.

This of course you know, as well as the reprint made by Mr. Littledale for the Roxburghe Club.

The reprint with the date 1584 has various errors of the press, which you will be careful to avoid. I mention one that you may identify it.

The second Decad, Sonnet 1:—

“Thy beauties praise, in glasses of my paine.”

Here, according to my copy of 1592 (of which I kept a memorandum), “praise” ought to be “sight.”

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I am not aware that I have any particulars regarding Constable that are not in biographical and bibliographical works; but if I find any, they shall be at your service.

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I apprehend that my copy of 1592, 4<sup>to</sup>, is now at Britwell, Bucks—the library collected by the late

was not Collier, and I quoted to him in support of such a view that splendid correction of the passage where Mrs. Quickly narrates the end of Falstaff.

I am bound to confess that whenever I applied to Collier for information on literary facts within his presumed knowledge, I always found him anxious to parry inquiry. He usually sent evasive answers to my not unreasonable call for fuller particulars about a book or a statement, for which he was perhaps the sole authority.

In another communication (1865), also to my father, the writer, after entering into some matters of unimportant detail, goes on to refer to his literary amusements, his personal affairs, and his mode of life:—

“This trifling diverts my old age (I am nearly 77), and keeps me from being devoured by ennui and selfishness. Men who have no employment at my time of life think a great deal too much about themselves.

“You are prosperous, and your family I am rejoiced to hear, sufficiently so. They say that it is bad for a family to be too well provided for. I should like to try the experiment, as I told the late Duke of Devonshire, when he asserted that I was richer and happier than he.

“Both my sons and one of my daughters are married, and the two first have large families.

“What a time it is since we met—or rather parted—at Charing Cross, when you told me that you hoped to obtain some office. You have a good one, and deserve it. I have none, and deserve none. I might have been a Police Magistrate or a Colonial Judge, but I refused the first, and my late wife would not let me take the last. She would rather have lived on £300 a year here, than upon £3000

a year in Ceylon or the West Indies. Now 3 or 400 a year is the extent of my income; but I live by the riverside in a charming part of the country, and my daughter keeps my house—never sparingly, but always economically.

“I declare that I am writing almost as badly as you or your son Carew. The fact is that my old hand is rheumatic.

“Good-bye. Health and happiness to you and yours!”

The concluding specimen to myself was a reply to an application for assistance in the preparation of the first *Memoirs*, and is dated June 2, 1867. The interesting portion, after all, is that which immediately concerns Hazlitt:—

“The only remembrance I have of your Grandfather is the note-book I mentioned to you, and which he gave me. You will not be surprised, therefore, at my unwillingness to part with it. If I had any other relic, it should be yours. He was not in the habit of writing to me, and we, of course, often met at the *M[orning] C[hronicle]* Office, and at the Fives Court, where I was fond of seeing him play. He was famous for what was called Volley.”

The manuscript volume here mentioned has been already described by me in the *Memoirs* as the one which was among Collier's books, and as containing the transcript of Coleridge's *Christabel*.

HAMMERSMITH, March 7 [1859].

DEAR W. C. H.,—This comes to say, that I find I made a horrible mistake yesterday respecting “Stella” and “set.” Your reading is so obviously

true, that on coming to the passage in connexion with the context, I saw my blunder directly, and wondered how I could have made it. But I had got a notion in my head, that Ben Jonson had been speaking of the lady as one deceased, *i.e.* in direct allusion to the decease. Very truly yours,

LEIGH HUNT.

The following lines were written about two months prior to his death:—

HAMMERSMITH, *June 11.*

DEAR WILLIAM HAZLITT, — (For I being old, and your father's old friend, and you therefore an everlasting young gentleman in my eyes, I shall never be able to settle into calling you "Mr."), I happen this moment to be greatly driven for time, but nevertheless I cannot lose a moment in thanking you for the letter which this moment I have received. You have done all that I hoped, and more than I expected, and I am your truly obliged and faithful,

LEIGH HUNT.

I trust to have the pleasure of thanking Mr. Reynell personally to-morrow. My state of body is mending, and this good news will help it.



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