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A R E O P A G I T I C A;
 A
 S P E E C H
 O F
 M^r. J O H N M I L T O N
 For the Liberty of V N L I C E N C ' D
 P R I N T I N G,
 To the P A R L A M E N T of E N G L A N D.

Τὸ ἀδ' ἄρα εἶναι, εἴ τις θέλῃ πόλιν
 Χρησὶν π βέλδμ' εἰς μέσσην φέρειν, ἔχει.
 Καὶ γὰρ ὁ χερσῶν, λαμψέης ἐστ', ὁ μὴ θέλων,
 Σιγῆ, π' ἔπειτα ἐστὶν ἰουίτερον πόλιν;
 Euripid. Hicetid.

*This is true Liberty when free born men
 Having to advise the public may speak free,
 Which he who can, and will, deserv's high praise,
 Who neither can nor will, may hold his peace;
 What can be juster in a State then this?*
 Euripid. Hicetid.

L O N D O N,
 Printed in the Year, 1644.

AREOPAGITICA;

A

SPEECH

OF

Mr. *JOHN MILTON*

For the Liberty of UNLICENC'D PRINTING,
To the PARLAMENT of *ENGLAND*.

*This is true Liberty when free born men
Having to advise the public may speak free,
Which he who can, and will, deserv's high praise,
Who neither can nor will, may hold his peace;
What can be juster in a State then this?*

Eurip. Hicetid.

For the Liberty of unlicenc'd Printing.

They who to States and Governours of the Commonwealth direct their Speech, High Court of Parliament, or wanting such accesse in a private condition, write that which they foresee may advance the publick good; I suppose them as at the beginning of no meane endeavour, not a little alter'd and mov'd inwardly in their mindes: Some with doubt of what will be the successe, others with fear of what will be the censure; some with hope, others with confidence of what they have to speake. And me perhaps each of these dispositions, as the subject was whereon I enter'd, may have at other times variously affected; and likely might in these formost expressions now also disclose which of them sway'd most, but that the very attempt of this addresse thus made, and the thought of whom it hath recourse to, hath

got the power within me to a passion, farre more welcome then incidentall to a Preface. Which though I stay not to confesse ere any aske, I shall be blamelesse, if it be no other, then the joy and gratulation which it brings to all who wish and promote their Countries liberty; whereof this whole Discourse propos'd will be a certaine testimony, if not a Trophye. For this is not the liberty which wee can hope, that no grievance ever should arise in the Commonwealth, that let no man in this World expect; but when complaints are freely heard, deeply consider'd and speedily reform'd, then is the utmost bound of civill liberty attain'd, that wise men looke for. To which if I now manifest by the very sound of this which I shall utter, that wee are already in good part arriv'd, and yet from such a steepe disadvantage of tyranny and superstition grounded into our principles as was beyond the manhood of a *Roman* recovery, it will bee attributed first, as is most due, to the strong assistance of God our deliverer, next to your faithfull guidance and undaunted Wisdome, Lords and Commons of *England*. Neither is it in Gods esteeme the diminution of his glory, when honourable things are spoken of good men and worthy Magistrates; which if I now first should begin to doe, after so fair a progresse of your laudable deeds, and such a long obligation upon the whole Realme to your indefatigable virtues, I might be justly reckn'd among the tardiest, and the unwillingest of them that praise yee. Nevertheless there being three principall things, without which all praising is but Courtship and flattery, First, when that only is prais'd which is solidly worth praise: next, when greatest likelihoods are brought that such things are truly and really in those persons to whom they are ascrib'd, the other, when he who praises, by shewing that such his actuall perswasion is of whom he writes, can demonstrate that he flatters not; the former two of these I have heretofore endeavour'd, rescuing the employment from him who went about to impaire your merits with a triviall and malignant *Encomium*; the latter as belonging chiefly to mine owne acquittall, that whom I so extoll'd I did not flatter, hath been reserv'd opportunely to this occasion. For he who freely magnifies what hath been nobly done, and fears not to declare as freely what might be done better, gives ye the best cov'nant of his fidelity; and that his loyalest affection and his hope waits on your proceedings. His highest praising is not flattery, and his plainest advice is a kinde of praising; for though I should affirme and hold by argument, that it would fare better with truth, with learning, and the Commonwealth, if one of your publisht Orders which I should name, were call'd in, yet at the same time it could not but much redound to the lustre of your milde and equall Government, when as private persons are hereby animated to thinke ye better pleas'd with publick advice, then other statistes have been delighted heretofore with publicke flattery. And men will then see

what difference there is between the magnanimity of a trienniall Parliament, and that jealous hautinesse of Prelates and cabin Counsellours that usurpt of late, when as they shall observe yee in the midd'st of your Victories and successes more gently brooking writt'n exceptions against a voted Order, then other Courts, which had produc't nothing worth memory but the weake ostentation of wealth, would have endur'd the least signifi'd dislike at any sudden Proclamation. If I should thus farre presume upon the meek demeanour of your civill and gentle greatnesse, Lords and Commons, as what your publisht Order hath directly said, that to gainsay, I might defend my selfe with ease, if any should accuse me of being new or insolent, did they but know how much better I find ye esteem it to imitate

10 the old and elegant humanity of Greece, then the barbarick pride of a *Hunnish* and *Norwegian* statelines. And out of those ages, to whose polite wisdom and letters we ow that we are not yet *Gothes* and *Jutlanders*, I could name him who from his private house wrote that discourse to the Parliament of *Athens*, that perswades them to change the forme of *Democracy* which was then establisht. Such honour was done in those dayes to men who profest the study of wisdom and eloquence, not only in their own Country, but in other Lands, that Cities and Sinories heard them gladly, and with great respect, if they had aught in publick to admonish the State. Thus did *Dion Prusaëus*, a stranger and a privat Orator counsell the *Rhodians* against a former Edict: and I abound with other like examples, which to set heer would be superfluous. But if from the industry of a life wholly dedicated to

20 studious labours, and those naturall endowments haply not the worst for two and fifty degrees of northern latitude, so much must be derogated, as to count me not equall to any of those who had this priviledge, I would obtain to be thought not so inferior, as your selves are superior to the most of them who receiv'd their counsell: and how farre you excell them, be assur'd, Lords and Commons, there can no greater testimony appear, then when your prudent spirit acknowledges and obeyes the voice of reason from what quarter soever it be heard speaking; and renders ye as willing to repeal any Act of your own setting forth, as any set forth by your Predecessors.

If ye be thus resolv'd, as it were injury to think ye were not; I know not what should withhold me from presenting ye with fit instance wherein to shew both that love of truth

30 which ye eminently professe, and that uprightnesse of your judgement which is not wont to be partiall to your selves; by judging over again that Order which ye have ordain'd *to regulate Printing, That no Book, pamphlet, or paper shall be henceforth Printed, unlesse the same be first approv'd and licenc't by such, or at least one of such as shall be thereto appointed.* For that part

which preserves justly every mans Copy to himselfe, or provides for the poor, I touch not, only wish they be not made pretenses to abuse and persecute honest and painfull Men, who offend not in either of these particulars. But that other clause of Licencing Books, which we thought had dy'd with his brother *quadregesimal* and *matrimonial* when the Prelats expir'd, I shall now attend with such a Homily, as shall lay before ye, first the inventors of it to bee those whom ye will be loath to own; next what is to be thought in generall of reading, what ever sort the Books be; and that this Order avails nothing to the suppressing of scandalous, seditious, and libellous Books, which were mainly intended to be supprest. Last, that it will be primely to the discouragement of all learning, and the stop of Truth, not only by disexercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindring and cropping the discovery that might bee yet further made both in religious and civill Wisdome.

I deny not, but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how Bookes demeane themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors: For Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are; nay they do preserve as in a violl the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragons teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet on the other hand, unlesse warinesse be us'd, as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image; but hee who destroyes a good Booke, kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the Earth; but a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great losse; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the losse of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole Nations fare the worse. We should be wary therefore what persecution we raise against the living labours of publick men, how we spill that season'd life of man preserv'd and stor'd up in Books; since we see a kinde of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdome, and if it extend to the whole impression, a kinde of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elementall life, but strikes at that ethereall and fift essence, the breath of reason it selfe, slaies an immortality rather then a life. But lest I should be condemn'd of introducing licence, while I oppose Licencing, I

refuse not the paines to be so much Historicall, as will serve to shew what hath been done by ancient and famous Commonwealths, against this disorder, till the very time that this project of licencing crept out of the *Inquisition*, was caught up by our Prelates, and hath caught some of our Presbyters.

In *Athens* where Books and Wits were ever busier then in any other part of *Greece*, I finde but only two sorts of writings which the Magistrate car'd to take notice of; those either blasphemous and Atheisticall, or Libellous. Thus the Books of *Protagoras* were by the Iudges of *Areopagus* commanded to be burnt, and himselfe banisht the territory for a discourse begun with his confessing not to know *whether there were gods, or whether not*: And against defaming, it was decreed that none should be traduc'd by name, as was the manner of *Vetus Comædia*, whereby we may guesse how they censur'd libelling: And this course was quick enough, as *Cicero* writes, to quell both the desperate wits of other Atheists, and the open way of defaming, as the event shew'd. Of other sects and opinions, though tending to voluptuousnesse, and the denying of divine providence, they tooke no heed. Therefore we do not read that either *Epicurus*, or that libertine school of *Cyrene*, or what the *Cynick* impudence utter'd, was ever question'd by the Laws. Neither is it recorded that the writings of those old Comedians were suppresst, though the acting of them were forbid; and that *Plato* commended the reading of *Aristophanes*, the loosest of them all, to his royall scholler *Dionysius*, is commonly known, and may be excus'd, if holy *Chrysostome*, as is reported, nightly studied so much the same Author and had the art to cleanse a scurrilous vehemence into the stile of a rousing Sermon. That other leading city of *Greece*, *Lacedæmon*, considering that *Lycurgus* their Law-giver was so addicted to elegant learning, as to have been the first that brought out of *Ionia* the scatter'd workes of *Homer*, and sent the poet *Thales* from *Creet* to prepare and mollifie the *Spartan* surlinesse with his smooth songs and odes, the better to plant among them law and civility, it is to be wonder'd how muselesse and unbookish they were, minding nought but the feats of Warre. There needed no licencing of Books among them for they dislik'd all, but their owne *Laconick Apothegms*, and took a slight occasion to chase *Archilochus* out of their City, perhaps for composing in a higher straine then their own souldierly ballats and roundels could reach to: Or if it were for his broad verses, they were not therein so cautious, but they were as dissolute in their promiscuous conversing; whence *Euripides* affirms in *Andromache*, that their women were all unchaste. Thus much may give us light after what sort Bookes were prohibited among the Greeks. The Romans also for many ages train'd up only to a military roughnes, resembling most

the *Lacedaemonian* guise, knew of learning little but what their twelve Tables, and the *Pontifick* College with their *Augurs* and *Flamins* taught them in Religion and Law, so unacquainted with other learning, that when *Carneades* and *Critolaus*, with the *Stoick Diogenes* coming Embassadors to *Rome*, tooke thereby occasion to give the City a tast of their Philosophy, they were suspected for seducers by no lesse a man then *Cato* the Censor, who mov'd it in the Senat to dismisse them speedily, and to banish all such *Attick* bablers out of *Italy*. But *Scipio* and others of the noblest Senators withstood him and his old *Sabin* austerity; honour'd and admir'd the men; and the Censor himself at last in his old age fell to the study of that whereof before hee was so scrupulous. And yet at the same time *Navius* and *Plautus* the first Latine comedians had fill'd the City with all the borrow'd Scenes of *Menander* and *Philemon*. Then began to be consider'd there also what was to be don to libellous books and Authors; for *Navius* was quickly cast into prison for his unbridl'd pen, and releas'd by the *Tribunes* upon his recantation: We read also that libels were burnt, and the makers punisht by *Augustus*. The like severity no doubt was us'd if ought were impiously writt'n against their esteemed gods. Except in these two points, how the world went in Books, the Magistrat kept no reckning. And therefore *Lucretius* without impeachment versifies his Epicurism to *Memmius*, and had the honour to be set forth the second time by *Cicero* so great a father of the Commonwealth; although himselfe disputes against that opinion in his own writings. Nor was the Satyricall sharpnesse, or naked plainnes of *Lucilius*, or *Catullus*, or *Flaccus*, by any order prohibited. And for matters of State, the story of *Titus Livius*, though it extoll'd that part which *Pompey* held, was not therefore suppresst by *Octavius Caesar* of the other Faction. But that *Naso* was by him banisht in his old age, for the wanton Poems of his youth, was but a meer covert of State over some secret cause: and besides, the Books were neither banisht nor call'd in. From hence we shall meet with little else but tyranny in the Roman Empire, that we may not marvell, if not so often bad, as good Books were silenc't. I shall therefore deem to have bin large enough in producing what among the ancients was punishable to write, save only which, all other arguments were free to treat on.

By this time the Emperors were become Christians, whose discipline in this point I doe not finde to have bin more severe then what was formerly in practice. The Books of those whom they took to be grand Hereticks were examin'd, refuted, and condemn'd in the general Councils; and not till then were prohibited, or burnt by authority of the Emperor. As for the writings of Heathen authors, unlesse they were plaine invectives

against Christianity, as those of *Porphyrius* and *Proclus*, they met with no interdict that can be cited, till about the year 400. in a *Carthaginian* Council, wherein Bishops themselves were forbid to read the Books of Gentiles, but Heresies they might read: while others long before them on the contrary scrupl'd more the Books of Hereticks, then of Gentiles. And that the primitive Councils and Bishops were wont only to declare what Books were not commendable, passing no furer, but leaving it to each ones conscience to read or to lay by, till after the yeare 800. is observ'd already by *Padre Paolo* the great unmasker of the *Trentine* Council. After which time the Popes of *Rome*, engrossing what they pleas'd of Politicall rule into their owne hands, extended their dominion over mens eyes, as they had

10 before over their judgements, burning and prohibiting to be read, what they fancied not; yet sparing in their censures, and the Books not many which they so dealt with: till *Martin* the 5. by his Bull not only prohibited, but was the first that excommunicated the reading of hereticall Books; for about that time *Wicklef* and *Husse* growing terrible, were they who first drove the Papall Court to a stricter policy of prohibiting. Which cours *Leo* the 10, and his successors follow'd, untill the Councell of Trent, and the Spanish Inquisition engendring together brought forth, or perfeted those Catalogues, and expurging Indexes that rake through the entralls of many an old good Author, with a violation wors then any could be offer'd to his tomb. Nor did they stay in matters Hereticall, but any subject that was not to their palat, they either condemn'd in a prohibition, or had it strait into the new

20 Purgatory of an Index. To fill up the measure of encroachment, their last invention was to ordain that no Book, pamphlet, or paper should be Printed (as if *St. Peter* had bequeath'd them the keys of the Presse also out of Paradise) unlesse it were approv'd and licenc't under the hands of 2 or 3 glutton Friars. For example:

Let the Chancellor *Cini* be pleas'd to see if in this present work be contain'd ought that may withstand the Printing.

Vincent Rabbatta, Vicar of Florence.

I have seen this present work, and finde nothing athwart the Catholick faith and good manners: in witness whereof I have given, &c.

Nicolò Cini, Chancellor of Florence.

30 Attending the precedent relation, it is allow'd that this present work of *Davanzati* may be printed.

Vincent Rabbatta, &c.

It may be printed, *July* 15.

Friar Simon Mompei d'Amelia, Chancellor of the holy office in Florence.

Sure they have a conceit, if he of the bottomlesse pit had not long since broke prison, that this quadruple exorcism would barre him down. I fear their next designe will be to get into their custody the licensing of that which they say *Claudius* intended, but went not through with. Voutsafe to see another of their forms the Roman stamp:

Imprimatur, If it seem good to the reverend Master of the holy Palace.

Belcastro Vicegerent.

Imprimatur

Friar Nicolò Rodolphi, Master of the holy Palace.

10 Sometimes 5 *Imprimaturs* are seen together dialogue-wise in the Piazza of one Title page, complementing and ducking each to other with their shav'n reverences, whether the Author, who stands by in perplexity at the foot of his Epistle, shall to the Presse or to the sponge. These are the prety responsories, these are the dear Antiphonies, that so bewicht of late our Prelats, and their Chaplaines with the goodly Eccho they made; and besotted us to the gay imitation of a lordly *Imprimatur*, one from Lambeth house, another from the West end of *Pauls*; so apishly Romanizing, that the word of command still was set downe in Latine; as if the learned Grammaticall pen that wrote it, would cast no ink without Latine: or perhaps, as they thought, because no vulgar tongue was worthy to expresse the pure conceit of an *Imprimatur*, but rather, as I hope, for that our English, the language of men
20 ever famous, and formost in the atchievements of liberty, will not easily finde servile letters anow to spell such a dictatorie presumption in English. And thus ye have the Inventors and the originall of Book-licencing ript up and drawn as lineally as any pedigree. We have it not, that can be heard of, from any ancient State, or politie, or Church, nor by any Statute left us by our Ancestors elder or later; nor from the moderne custom of any reformed Citty, or Church abroad; but from the most Antichristian Council and the most tyrannous Inquisition that ever inquir'd. Till then Books were ever as freely admitted into the World as any other birth; the issue of the brain was no more stiff'd then the issue of the womb: no envious *Juno* sate cros-leg'd over the nativity of any mans intellectuall off spring; but if it prov'd a Monster, who denies, but that it was justly burnt, or sunk into the Sea. But that
30 a Book in wors condition then a peccant soul, should be to stand before a Jury ere it be borne to the World, and undergo yet in darknesse the judgement of *Radamanth* and his Collegues, ere it can pass the ferry backward into light, was never heard before, till that

mysterious iniquity, provokt and troubl'd at the first entrance of Reformation, sought out new limbo's and new hells wherein they might include our Books also within the number of their damned. And this was the rare morsell so officiously snatcht up, and so ilfavourdly imitated by our inquisituriert Bishops, and the attendant minorites their Chaplains. That ye like not now these most certain Authors of this licencing order, and that all sinister intention was farre distant from your thoughts, when ye were importun'd the passing it, all men who know the integrity of your actions, and how ye honour Truth, will clear yee readily.

10 But some will say, What though the inventors were bad, the thing for all that may be good? It may be so; yet if that thing be no such deep invention, but obvious, and easie for any man to light on, and yet best and wisest Commonwealths through all ages, and occasions have foreborne to use it, and falsest seducers, and oppressors of men were the first who tooke it up, and to no other purpose but to obstruct and hinder the first approach of Reformation; I am of those who beleeve, it will be a harder alchymy then *Lullius* ever knew, to sublimat any good use out of such an invention. Yet this only is what I request to gain from this reason, that it may be held a dangerous and suspicious fruit, as certainly it deserves, for the tree that bore it, untill I can dissect one by one the properties it has. But I have first to finish, as was propounded, what is to be thought in generall of reading Books, what ever sort they be, and whether be more the benefit, or the harm that thence proceeds?

20 Not to insist upon the examples of *Moses*, *Daniel*, & *Paul*, who were skilfull in all the learning of the Ægyptians, Caldeans, and Greeks, which could not probably be without reading their Books of all sorts; in *Paul* especially, who thought it no defilement to insert into holy Scripture the sentences of three Greek Poets, and one of them a Tragedian, the question was, notwithstanding sometimes controverted among the Primitive Doctors, but with great odds on that side which affirm'd it both lawfull and profitable, as was then evidently perceiv'd, when *Julian* the Apostat, and suttlest enemy to our faith, made a decree forbidding Christians the study of heathen learning: for, said he, they wound us with our own weapons, and with our owne arts and sciences they overcome us. And indeed the Christians were put so to their shifts by this crafty means, and so much in danger to decline
30 into all ignorance, that the two *Apollinariii* were fain as a man may say, to coin all the seven liberall Sciences out of the Bible, reducing it into divers forms of Orations, Poems, Dialogues, ev'n to the calculating of a new Christian grammar. But, saith the Historian

Socrates, The providence of God provided better then the industry of *Apollinarius* and his son, by taking away that illiterat law with the life of him who devis'd it. So great an injury they then held it to be depriv'd of *Hellenick* learning; and thought it a persecution more undermining, and secretly decaying the Church, then the open cruelty of *Decius* or *Dioclesian*. And perhaps it was the same politick drift that the Divell whipt St. *Jerom* in a lenten dream, for reading *Cicero*; or else it was a fantasm bred by the feaver which had then seis'd him. For had an Angel bin his discipliner, unlesse it were for dwelling too much upon Ciceronianisms, & had chastiz'd the reading, not the vanity, it had bin plainly partiall; first to correct him for grave *Cicero*, and not for scurrill *Plautus*, whom he confesses to have bin reading not long before; next to correct him only, and let so many more ancient Fathers wax old in those pleasant and florid studies without the lash of such a tutoring apparition; insomuch that *Basil* teaches how some good use may be made of *Margites*, a sportfull Poem, not now extant, writ by *Homer*, and why not then of *Morgante*, an Italian Romanze much to the same purpose. But if it be agreed we shall be try'd by visions, there is a vision recorded by *Eusebius* far ancients then this tale of *Jerom* to the Nun *Eustochium*, and besides has nothing of a feavor in it. *Dionysius Alexandrinus* was about the year 240, a person of great name in the Church for piety and learning, who had wont to avail himself much against hereticks by being conversant in their Books; untill a certain Presbyter laid it scrupulously to his conscience, how he durst venture himselfe among those defiling volumes. The worthy man loath to give offence fell into a new debate with himselfe what was to be thought; when suddenly a vision sent from God, it is his own Epistle that so averrs it, confirm'd him in these words: Read any books what ever come to thy hands, for thou art sufficient both to judge aright, and to examine each matter. To this revelation he assented the sooner, as he confesses, because it was answerable to that of the Apostle to the Thessalonians, Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. And he might have added another remarkable saying of the same Author; To the pure, all things are pure, not only meats and drinks, but all kinde of knowledge whether of good or evill; the knowledge cannot defile, nor consequently the books, if the will and conscience be not defil'd. For books are as meats and viands are; some of good, some of evill substance; and yet God in that unapocryphall vision, said without exception, Rise *Peter*, kill and eat, leaving the choice to each mans discretion. Wholesome meats to a vitiated stomach differ little or nothing from unwholesome; and best books to a naughty mind are not unaplicable to occasions of evill. Bad meats will scarce breed good nourishment in the healthiest concoction; but herein the difference is of bad books, that they to a discreet and judicious Reader serve in many

respects to discover, to confute, to forewarn, and to illustrate. Wherof what better witnes
 can ye expect I should produce, then one of your own now sitting in Parliament, the chief
 of learned men reputed in this land, Mr. *Selden*, whose volume of naturall & national laws
 proves, not only by great authorities brought together, but by exquisite reasons and
 theorems almost mathematically demonstrative, that all opinions, yea errors, known, read,
 and collated, are of main service & assistance toward the speedy attainment of what is
 truest. I conceive therefore, that when God did enlarge the universall diet of mans body,
 saving ever the rules of temperance, he then also, as before, left arbitrary the dyeting and
 repasting of our minds; as wherein every mature man might have to exercise his owne
 10 leading capacity. How great a vertue is temperance, how much of moment through the
 whole life of man? yet God committs the managing so great a trust, without particular Law
 or prescription, wholly to the demeanour of every grown man. And therefore when he
 himself tabl'd the Jews from heaven, that Omer which was every mans daily portion of
 Manna, is computed to have bin more then might have well suffic'd the heartiest feeder
 thrice as many meals. For those actions which enter into a man, rather then issue out of
 him, and therefore defile not, God uses not to captivat under a perpetuall childhood of
 prescription, but trusts him with the gift of reason to be his own chooser; there were but
 little work left for preaching, if law and compulsion should grow so fast upon those things
 which hertofore were govern'd only by exhortation. *Salomon* informs us that much reading
 20 is a wearines to the flesh; but neither he, nor other inspir'd author tells us that such, or
 such reading is unlawfull: yet certainly had God thought good to limit us herein, it had bin
 much more expedient to have told us what was unlawfull, then what was wearisome. As
 for the burning of those Ephesian books by St. *Pauls* converts, tis reply'd the books were
 magick, the Syriack so renders them. It was a privat act, a voluntary act, and leaves us to a
 voluntary imitation: the men in remorse burnt those books which were their own; the
 Magistrat by this example is not appointed; these men practiz'd the books, another might
 perhaps have read them in some sort usefully. Good and evill we know in the field of this
 World grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involv'd and
 interwoven with the knowledge of evill, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be
 30 discern'd, that those confused seeds which were impos'd on *Psyche* as an incessant labour
 to cull out, and sort asunder, were not more intermixt. It was from out the rinde of one
 apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evill as two twins cleaving together leapt forth
 into the World. And perhaps this is that doom which *Adam* fell into of knowing good and
 evill, that is to say of knowing good by evill. As therefore the state of man now is; what

wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd virtue, unexercis'd & unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental whiteness; Which was the reason why our sage and serious Poet *Spencer*, whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than *Scotus* or *Aquinas*, describing true temperance under the person of *Guion*, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon, and the bow of earthly bliss that he might see and know, and yet abstain. Since therefore the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with less danger scout into the regions of sin and falsity than by reading all manner of tracts, and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read. But of the harm that may result hence three kinds are usually reckon'd.

20 First, is fear'd the infection that may spread; but then all human learning and controversy in religious points must remove out of the world, yea the Bible it self; for that oftentimes relates blasphemy not nicely, it describes the carnal sense of wicked men not unelegantly, it brings in holiest men passionately murmuring against providence through all the arguments of *Epicurus*: in other great disputes it answers dubiously and darkly to the common reader: And ask a Talmudist what ails the modesty of his marginal Keri, that *Moses* and all the Prophets cannot persuade him to pronounce the textual Chetiv. For these causes we all know the Bible it self put by the Papist into the first rank of prohibited books. The ancientest Fathers must be next remov'd, as *Clement* of *Alexandria*, and that *Eusebian* book of Evangelick preparation, transmitting our ears through a hoard of

30 heathenish obscenities to receive the Gospel. Who finds not that *Irenaeus*, *Epiphanius*, *Jerom*, and others discover more heresies than they well confute, and that oft for heresie which is the truer opinion. Nor boots it to say for these, and all the heathen Writers of greatest infection, if it must be thought so, with whom is bound up the life of human learning, that they writ in an unknown tongue, so long as we are sure those languages are known as well

to the worst of men, who are both most able, and most diligent to instill the poison they suck, first into the Courts of Princes, acquainting them with the choicest delights, and criticisms of sin. As perhaps did that *Petronius* whom *Nero* call'd his *Arbiter*, the Master of his revels; and that notorious ribald of *Arezzo*, dreaded, and yet dear to the Italian Courtiers. I name not him for posterities sake, whom *Harry* the 8. nam'd in merriment his Vicar of hell. By which compendious way all the contagion that foreine books can infuse, will find a passage to the people farre easier and shorter then an Indian voyage, though it could be sail'd either by the North of *Cataio* Eastward, or of *Canada* Westward, while our Spanish licencing gags the English Presse never so severely. But on the other side that infection

10 which is from books of controversie in Religion, is more doubtfull and dangerous to the learned, then to the ignorant; and yet those books must be permitted untoucht by the licencer. It will be hard to instance where any ignorant man hath bin ever seduc't by Papisticall book in English, unlesse it were commended and expounded to him by some of that Clergy: and indeed all such tractats whether false or true are as the Prophetie of *Isaiab* was to the *Eunuch*, not to be *understood without a guide*. But of our Priests and Doctors how many have bin corrupted by studying the comments of Jesuits and *Sorbonists*, and how fast they could transfuse that corruption into the people, our experience is both late and sad. It is not forgot, since the acute and distinct *Arminius* was perverted meerly by the perusing of a namelesse discourse writt'n at *Delf*, which at first he took in hand to confute.

20 Seeing therefore that those books, & those in great abundance which are likeliest to taint both life and doctrine, cannot be suppresst without the fall of learning, and of all ability in disputation, and that these books of either sort are most and soonest catching to the learned, from whom to the common people whatever is hereticall or dissolute may quickly be convey'd, and that evill manners are as perfectly learnt without books a thousand other ways which cannot be stopt, and evill doctrine not with books can propagate, except a teacher guide, which he might also doe without writing, and so beyond prohibiting, I am not able to unfold, how this cautelous enterprise of licencing can be exempted from the number of vain and impossible attempts. And he who were pleasantly dispos'd could not well avoid to lik'n it to the exploit of that gallant man who thought to pound up the crows

30 by shutting his Parkgate. Besides another inconvenience, if learned men be the first receivers out of books & dispredders both of vice and error, how shall the licensors themselves be confided in, unlesse we can conferr upon them, or they assume to themselves above all others in the Land, the grace of infallibility, and uncorruptednesse? And again if it be true, that a wise man like a good refiner can gather gold out of the

drossiest volume, and that a fool will be a fool with the best book, yea or without book, there is no reason that we should deprive a wise man of any advantage to his wisdom, while we seek to restrain from a fool, that which being restrain'd will be no hindrance to his folly. For if there should be so much exactnesse always us'd to keep that from him which is unfit for his reading, we should in the judgement of *Aristotle* not only, but of *Salomon*, and of our Saviour, not voutsafe him good precepts, and by consequence not willingly admit him to good books; as being certain that a wise man will make better use of an idle pamphlet, then a fool will do of sacred Scripture. 'Tis next alleg'd we must not expose ourselves to temptations without necessity, and next to that, not imploy our time

10 in vain things. To both these objections one answer will serve, out of the grounds already laid, that to all men such books are not temptations, nor vanities; but usefull drugs and materialls wherewith to temper and compose effective and strong med'cins, which mans life cannot want. The rest, as children and childish men, who have not the art to qualifie and prepare these working mineralls, well may be exhorted to forbear, but hinder'd forcibly they cannot be by all the licencing that Sainted Inquisition could ever yet contrive; which is what I promis'd to deliver next, That this order of licencing conduces nothing to the end for which it was fram'd; and hath almost prevented me by being clear already while thus much hath bin explaining. See the ingenuity of Truth, who when she gets a free and willing

20 hand, opens herself faster then the pace of method and discours can overtake her. It was the task which I began with, To shew that no Nation, or well instituted State, if they valu'd books at all, did ever use this way of licencing; and it might be answer'd, that this is a piece of prudence lately discover'd. To which I return, that as it was a thing slight and obvious to think on, so if it had bin difficult to finde out, there wanted not among them long since, who suggested such a cours; which they not following, leave us a pattern of their judgement, that it was not the not knowing, but the not approving, which was the cause of their not using it. *Plato*, a man of high authority, indeed, but least of all for his Commonwealth, in the book of his laws, which no City ever yet receiv'd, fed his fancie with making many edicts to his ayrie Burgomasters, which they who otherwise admire him, wish had bin rather buried and excus'd in the *genial* cups of an *Academick* night-sitting. By

30 which laws he seems to tolerat no kind of learning, but by unalterable decree, consisting most of practicall traditions, to the attainment whereof a Library of smaller bulk then his own dialogues would be abundant. And there also enacts that no Poet should so much as read to any privat man, what he had writt'n, untill the Judges and Law-keepers had seen it, and allow'd it: But that *Plato* meant this Law peculiarly to that Commonwealth which he

had imagin'd, and to no other, is evident. Why was he not else a Law-giver to himself, but a transgressor, and to be expell'd by his own Magistrats; both for the wanton epigrams and dialogues which he made, and his perpetuall reading of *Sopbron Mimus* and *Aristophanes*, books of grossest infamy, and also for commending the latter of them, though he were the malicious libeller of his chief friends, to be read by the Tyrant *Dionysius*, who had little need of such trash to spend his time on? But that he knew this licencing of Poems had reference and dependence to many other proviso's there set down in his fancied republic, which in this world could have no place: and so neither he himself, nor any Magistrat, or City ever imitated that cours, which tak'n apart from those other collaterall injunctions, must needs

10 be vain and fruitlesse. For if they fell upon one kind of strictnesse, unlesse their care were equall to regulat all other things of like aptnes to corrupt the mind, that single endeavour they knew would be but a fond labour; to shut and fortifie one gate against corruption, and be necessitated to leave others round about wide open. If we think to regulat Printing, thereby to rectifie manners, we must regulat all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No musick must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and *Dorick*. There must be licencing dancers, that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such *Plato* was provided of; It will ask more then the work of twenty licencers to examin all the lutes, the violins, and the ghittarrs in every house; they must not be suffer'd to prattle as they doe, but must

20 be licenc'd what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigalls, that whisper softnes in chambers? The Windows also, and the *Balcone's* must be thought on, there are shrewd books, with dangerous Frontispices set to sale; who shall prohibit them, shall twenty licencers? The villages also must have their visitors to enquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebbeck reads ev'n to the ballatry, and the gammuth of every *municipal* fidler, for these are the Countrymans *Arcadia's* and his *Monte Mayors*. Next, what more Nationall corruption, for which England hears ill abroad, then houshold gluttony; who shall be the rectors of our daily rioting? and what shall be done to inhibit the multitudes that frequent those houses where drunk'nes is sold and harbour'd? Our garments also should be referr'd to the licencing of some more sober work-masters to see them cut into

30 a lesse wanton garb. Who shall regulat all the mixt conversation of our youth, male and female together, as is the fashion of this Country, who shall still appoint what shall be discour's'd, what presum'd, and no furdur? Lastly, who shall forbid and separat all idle resort, all evill company? These things will be, and must be; but how they shall be lest hurtfull, how lest enticing, herein consists the grave and governing wisdom of a State. To

sequester out of the world into *Atlantick* and *Eutopian* polities which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evill, in the midd'st whereof God hath plac't us unavoidably. Nor is it *Plato's* licencing of books will doe this, which necessarily pulls along with it so many other kinds of licencing, as will make us all both ridiculous and weary, and yet frustrat; but those unwritt'n, or at least unconstraining laws of vertuous education, religious and civill nurture, which *Plato* there mentions, as the bonds and ligaments of the Commonwealth, the pillars and the sustainers of every writt'n Statute; these they be which will bear chief sway in such matters as these, when all licencing will be easily eluded. Impunity and remissenes, for certain are the bane

10 of a Commonwealth, but here the great art lyes to discern in what the law is to bid restraint and punishment, and in what things perswasion only is to work. If every action which is good, or evill in man at ripe years, were to be under pittance, and prescription, and compulsion, what were vertue but a name, what praise could be then due to well-doing, what gramercy to be sober, just or continent? many there be that complain of divin Providence for suffering *Adam* to transgresse, foolish tongues! when God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had bin else a meer artificiall *Adam*, such an *Adam* as he is in the motions. We our selves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force: God therefore left him free, set before him a provoking object, ever almost in his eyes herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the

20 praise of his abstinence. Wherefore did he creat passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these rightly temper'd are the very ingredients of vertu? They are not skilfull considerers of human things, who imagin to remove sin by removing the matter of sin; for, besides that it is a huge heap increasing under the very act of diminishing, though some part of it may for a time be withdrawn from some persons, it cannot from all, in such a universall thing as books are; and when this is done, yet the sin remains entire. Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure, he has yet one jewell left, ye cannot bereave him of his covetousnesse. Banish all objects of lust, shut up all youth into the severest discipline that can be exercis'd in any hermitage, ye cannot make them chaste, that came not thither so: such great care and wisdom is requir'd to the right managing of this point. Suppose we

30 could expell sin by this means; look how much we thus expell of sin, so much we expell of vertue: for the matter of them both is the same; remove that, and ye remove them both alike. This justifies the high providence of God, who though he command us temperance, justice, continence, yet powrs out before us ev'n to a profusenes all desirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and satiety. Why should we then affect a

rigour contrary to the manner of God and of nature, by abridging or scanting those means, which books freely permitted are, both to the triall of vertue and the exercise of truth. It would be better done to learn that the law must needs be frivolous which goes to restrain things, uncertainly and yet equally working to good, and to evill. And were I the chooser, a dram of well-doing should be preferr'd before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evill-doing. For God sure esteems the growth and compleating of one vertuous person, more then the restraint of ten vitious. And albeit whatever thing we hear or see, sitting, walking, travelling, or conversing may be fitly call'd our book, and is of the same effect that writings are, yet grant the thing to be prohibited were only books, it appears that this order

10 hitherto is far insufficient to the end which it intends. Do we not see, not once or oftner, but weekly that continu'd Court-libell against the Parliament and City, Printed, as the wet sheets can witnes, and dispers't among us, for all that licencing can doe. yet this is the prime service a man would think, wherein this order should give proof of it self. If it were executed, you'l say. But certain, if execution be remisse or blindfold now, and in this particular, what will it be hereafter and in other books? If then the order shall not be vain and frustrat, behold a new labour, Lords and Commons, ye must repeal and proscribe all scandalous and unlicenc't books already printed and divulg'd; after ye have drawn them up into a list, that all may know which are condemn'd, and which not; and ordain that no

20 forrein books be deliver'd out of custody, till they have bin read over. This office will require the whole time of not a few overseers, and those no vulgar men. There be also books which are partly usefull and excellent, partly culpable and pernicious; this work will ask as many more officials, to make expurgations, and expunctions, that the Commonwealth of Learning be not damnify'd. In fine, when the multitude of books encrease upon their hands, ye must be fain to catalogue all those Printers who are found frequently offending, and forbidd the importation of their whole suspected *typography*. In a word, that this your order may be exact, and not deficient, ye must reform it perfectly according to the model of *Trent* and *Sevil*, which I know ye abhorre to doe. Yet though ye should condescend to this, which God forbid, the order still would be but fruitlesse and defective to that end whereto ye meant it. If to prevent sects and schisms, who is so unread

30 or so uncatechis'd in story, that hath not heard of many sects refusing books as a hindrance, and preserving their doctrine unmixt for many ages, only by unwritt'n traditions. The Christian faith, for that was once a schism, is not unknown to have spread all over *Asia*, ere any Gospel or Epistle was seen in writing. If the amendment of manners be aym'd at,

look into Italy and Spain, whether those places be one scruple the better, the honester, the wiser, the chaster, since all the inquisitionall rigor that hath been executed upon books.

Another reason, whereby to make it plain that this order will misse the end it seeks, consider by the quality which ought to be in every licencer. It cannot be deny'd but that he who is made judge to sit upon the birth, or death of books whether they may be wafted into this world, or not, had need to be a man above the common measure, both studious, learned, and judicious; there may be else no mean mistakes in the censure of what is passable or not; which is also no mean injury. If he be of such worth as behoovs him, there cannot be a more tedious and unpleasing Journey-work, a greater losse of time levied upon his head, then to be made the perpetuall reader of unchosen books and pamphlets, oftimes huge volumes. There is no book that is acceptable unlesse at certain seasons; but to be enjoyn'd the reading of that at all times, and in a hand scars legible, whereof three pages would not down at any time in the fairest Print, is an imposition I cannot beleve how he that values time, and his own studies, or is but of a sensible nostrill should be able to endure. In this one thing I crave leave of the present licensors to be pardon'd for so thinking: who doubtlesse took this office up, looking on it through their obedience to the Parliament, whose command perhaps made all things seem easie and unlaborious to them; but that this short triall hath wearied them out already, their own expressions and excuses to them who make so many journeys to sollicit their licence, are testimony enough. Seeing therefore those who now possesse the imployment, by all evident signs wish themselves well ridd of it, and that no man of worth, none that is not a plain unthrift of his own hours is ever likely to succeed them, except he mean to put himself to the salary of a Presse-corrector, we may easily foresee what kind of licensors we are to expect hereafter, either ignorant, imperious, and remisse, or basely pecuniary. This is what I had to shew, wherein this order cannot conduce to that end, whereof it bears the intention.

I lastly proceed from the no good it can do, to the manifest hurt it causes, in being first the greatest discouragement and affront, that can be offer'd to learning and to learned men. It was the complaint and lamentation of Prelats, upon every least breath of a motion to remove pluralities, and distribute more equally Church revennu's, that then all learning would be for ever dasht and discourag'd. But as for that opinion, I never found cause to think that the tenth part of learning stood or fell with the Clergy: nor could I ever but hold it for a sordid and unworthy speech of any Churchman who had a competency left him. If

therefore ye be loath to dishearten utterly and discontent, not the mercenary crew of false pretenders to learning, but the free and ingenuous sort of such as evidently were born to study, and love learning for it self, not for lucre, or any other end, but the service of God and of truth, and perhaps that lasting fame and perpetuity of praise which God and good men have consented shall be the reward of those whose published labours advance the good of mankind, then know, that so far to distrust the judgement & the honesty of one who hath but a common repute in learning, and never yet offended, as not to count him fit to print his mind without a tutor and examiner, lest he should drop a scism, or something of corruption, is the greatest displeasure and indignity to a free and knowing spirit that can be

10 put upon him. What advantage is it to be a man over it is to be a boy at school, if we have only scapt the ferular, to come under the fescu of an *Imprimatur*? if serious and elaborat writings, as if they were no more then the theam of a Grammar lad under his Pedagogue must not be utter'd without the cursory eyes of a temporizing and extemporizing licencer. He who is not trusted with his own actions, his drift not being known to be evill, and standing to the hazard of law and penalty, has no great argument to think himself reputed in the Commonwealth wherin he was born, for other then a fool or a foreiner. When a man writes to the world, he summons up all his reason and deliberation to assist him; he searches, meditats, is industrious, and likely consults and conferrs with his judicious friends; after all which done he takes himself to be inform'd in what he writes, as well as any that

20 writ before him; if in this the most consummat act of his fidelity and ripenesse, no years, no industry, no former proof of his abilities can bring him to that state of maturity, as not to be still mistrusted and suspected, unlesse he carry all his considerat diligence, all his midnight watchings, and expence of *Palladian* oyl, to the hasty view of an unleasur'd licencer, perhaps much his younger, perhaps far his inferiour in judgement, perhaps one who never knew the labour of book-writing, and if he be not repulst, or slighted, must appear in Print like a punie with his guardian, and his censors hand on the back of his title to be his bayl and surety, that he is no idiot, or seducer, it cannot be but a dishonour and derogation to the author, to the book, to the priviledge and dignity of Learning. And what

30 if the author shall be one so copious of fancie, as to have many things well worth the adding, come into his mind after licencing, while the book is yet under the Presse, which not seldom happ'ns to the best and diligentest writers; and that perhaps a dozen times in one book. The Printer dares not go beyond his licenc't copy; so often then must the author trudge to his leav-giver, that those his new insertions may be viewd; and many a jaunt will be made, ere that licencer, for it must be the same man, can either be found, or found at

leisure; mean while either the Presse must stand still, which is no small damage, or the author loose his accuratest thoughts, & send the book forth wors then he had made it, which to a diligent writer is the greatest melancholy and vexation that can befall. And how can a man teach with authority, which is the life of teaching, how can he be a Doctor in his book as he ought to be, or else had better be silent, whenas all he teaches, all he delivers, is but under the tuition, under the correction of his patriarchal licencer to blot or alter what precisely accords not with the hidebound humor which he calls his judgement. When every acute reader upon the first sight of a pedantick licence, will be ready with these like words to ding the book a coits distance from him, I hate a pupil teacher, I endure not an instructor

10 that comes to me under the wardship of an overseeing fist. I know nothing of the licencer, but that I have his own hand here for his arrogance; who shall warrant me his judgement? The State Sir, replies the Stationer, but has a quick return, The State shall be my governours, but not my criticks; they may be mistak'n in the choice of a licencer, as easily as this licencer may be mistak'n in an author: This is some common stuffe: and he might adde from Sir *Francis Bacon*, That *such authoriz'd books are but the language of the times*. For though a licencer should happ'n to be judicious more then ordnary, which will be a great jeopardy of the next succession, yet his very office and his commission enjoyns him to let passe nothing but what is vulgarly receiv'd already. Nay, which is more lamentable, if the work of any deceased author, though never so famous in his life time, and even to this day, come to

20 their hands for licence to be Printed, or Reprinted, if there be found in his book one sentence of a ventrous edge, utter'd in the height of zeal, and who knows whether it might not be the dictat of a divine Spirit, yet not suiting with every low decrepit humor of their own, though it were *Knox* himself, the Reformer of a Kingdom that spake it, they will not pardon him their dash: the sense of that great man shall to all posterity be lost, for the fearfulness or the presumptuous rashnesse of a perfunctory licencer. And to what an author this violence hath bin lately done, and in what book of greatest consequence to be faithfully publisht, I could now instance, but shall forbear till a more convenient season. Yet if these things be not resented seriously and timely by them who have the remedy in their power, but that such iron moulds as these shall have authority to know out the choicest

30 periods of exquisitest books, and to commit such a treacherous fraud against the orphan remainders of worthiest men after death, the more sorrow will belong to that haples race of men, whose misfortune it is to have understanding. Henceforth let no man care to learn, or care to be more then worldly wise; for certainly in higher matters to be ignorant and slothfull, to be a common stedfast dunce will be the only pleasant life, and only in request.

And as it is a particular disesteem of every knowing person alive, and most injurious to the writt'n labours and monuments of the dead, so to me it seems an undervaluing and vilifying of the whole Nation. I cannot set so light by all the invention, the art, the wit, the grave and solid judgement which is in England, as that it can be comprehended in any twenty capacities how good soever, much lesse that it should not passe except their superintendence be over it, except it be sifted and strain'd with their strainers, that it should be uncurrant without their manuall stamp. Truth and understanding are not such wares as to be monopoliz'd and traded in by tickets and statutes, and standards. We must not think to make a staple commodity of all the knowledge in the Land, to mark and licence it like
 10 our broad cloath, and our wooll packs. What is it but a servitude like that impos'd by the Philistims, not to be allow'd the sharpening of our own axes and coulter, but we must repair from all quarters to twenty licencing forges. Had any one writt'n and divulg'd erroneous things & scandalous to honest life, misusing and forfeiting the esteem had of his reason among men, if after conviction this only censure were adjudg'd him, that he should never henceforth write, but what were first examin'd by an appointed officer, whose hand should be annext to passe his credit for him, that now he might be safely read, it could not be apprehended lesse then a disgracefull punishment. Whence to include the whole Nation, and those that never yet thus offended, under such a diffident and suspectfull prohibition, may plainly be understood what a disparagement it is. So much the more, when dettors
 20 and delinquents may walk abroad without a keeper, but unoffensive books must not stirre forth without a visible jaylor in thir title. Nor is it to the common people lesse then a reproach; for if we be so jealous over them, as that we dare not trust them with an English pamphlet, what doe we but censure them for a giddy, vitious, and ungrounded people; in such a sick and weak estate of faith and discretion, as to be able to take nothing down but through the pipe of a licencer. That this is care or love of them, we cannot pretend, whenas in those Popish places where the Laity are most hated and dispis'd the same strictnes is us'd over them. Wisdom we cannot call it, because it stops but one breach of licence, nor that neither; whenas those corruptions which it seeks to prevent, break in faster at other doores which cannot be shut.

30 And in conclusion it reflects to the disrepute of our Ministers also, of whose labours we should hope better, and of the proficiencie which thir flock reaps by them, then that after all this light of the Gospel which is, and is to be, and all this continuall preaching, they should be still frequented with such an unprincip'l'd, unedify'd, and laick rabble, as that the

whiffe of every new pamphlet should stagger them out of their catechism, and Christian walking. This may have much reason to discourage the Ministers when such a low conceit is had of all their exhortations, and the benefiting of their hearers, as that they are not thought fit to be turn'd loose to three sheets of paper without a licencer, that all the Sermons, all the Lectures preacht, printed, vented in such numbers, and such volumes, as have now wellnigh made all other books unsalable, should not be armor enough against one single *enchiridion*, without the castle of St. *Angelo* of an *Imprimatur*.

And lest som should perswade ye, Lords and Commons, that these arguments of lerned mens discouragement at this your order, are meer flourishes, and not reall, I could
 10 recount what I have seen and heard in other Countries, where this kind of inquisition tyrannizes; when I have sat among their lerned men, for that honor I had, and bin counted happy to be born in such a place of *Philosophic* freedom, as they suppos'd England was, while themselvs did nothing but bemoan the servil condition into which lerning amongst them was brought; that this was it which had damp't the glory of Italian wits; that nothing had bin there writt'n now these many years but flattery and fustian. There it was that I found and visited the famous *Galileo* grown old, a prisner to the Inquisition, for thinking in Astronomy otherwise then the Franciscan and Dominican licencers thought. And though I knew that England then was groaning loudest under the Prelaticall yoaik, neverthelesse I took it as a pledge of future happines, that other Nations were so perswaded
 20 of her liberty. Yet was it beyond my hope that those Worthies were then breathing in her air, who should be her leaders to such a deliverance, as shall never be forgott'n by any revolution of time that this world hath to finish. When that was once begun, it was as little in my fear, that what words of complaint I heard among lerned men of other parts utter'd against the Inquisition, the same I should hear by as lerned men at home utterd in time of Parlament against an order of licencing; and that so generally, that when I had disclos'd my self a companion of their discontent, I might say, if without envy, that he whom an honest *quaestorship* had indear'd to the *Sicilians*, was not more by them importun'd against *Verres*, then the favourable opinion which I had among many who honour ye, and are known and respected by ye, loaded me with entreaties and perswasions, that I would not despair to lay
 30 together that which just reason should bring into my mind, toward the removal of an undeserved thraldom upon lerning. That this is not therefore the disburdning of a particular fancie, but the common grievance of all those who had prepar'd their minds and studies above the vulgar pitch to advance truth in others, and from others to entertain it,

thus much may satisfie. And in their name I shall for neither friend nor foe conceal what the generall murmur is; that if it come to inquisitioning again, and licencing, and that we are so timorous of our selvs, and so suspicious of all men, as to fear each book, and the shaking of every leaf, before we know what the contents are, if some who but of late were little better then silenc't from preaching, shall come now to silence us from reading, except what they please, it cannot be guest what is intended by som but a second tyranny over learning: and will soon put it out of controversie that Bishops and Presbyters are the same to us both name and thing. That those evils of Prelaty which before from five or six and twenty Sees were distributivly charg'd upon the whole people, will now light wholly upon

10 learning, is not obscure to us: whenas now the Pastor of a small unlearned Parish, on the sudden shall be exalted Archbishop over a large dioces of books, and yet not remove, but keep his other cure too, a mysticall pluralist. He who but of late cry'd down the sole ordination of every novice Batchelor of Art, and deny'd sole jurisdiction over the simplest Parishioner, shall now at home in his privat chair assume both these over worthiest and excellentest books and ablest authors that write them. This is not, Yee Covnants and Protestations that we have made, this is not to put down Prelaty, this is but to chop an Episcopacy; this is but to translate the Palace *Metropolitan* from one kind of dominion into another, this is but an old canonicall sleight of *commuting* our penance. To startle thus

20 betimes at a meer unlicenc't pamphlet will after a while be afraid of every conventicle, and a while after will make a conventicle of every Christian meeting. But I am certain that a State govern'd by the rules of justice and fortitude, or a Church built and founded upon the rock of faith and true knowledge, cannot be so pusillanimous. While things are yet not constituted in Religion, that freedom of writing should be restrain'd by a discipline imitated from the Prelats, and learnt by them from the Inquisition to shut us up all again into the brest of a licencer, must needs give cause of doubt and discouragement to all learned and religious men. Who cannot but discern the finenes of this politic drift, and who are the contrivers; that while Bishops were to be baited down, then all Presses might be open; it was the peoples birthright and priviledge in time of Parlament, it was the breaking forth of light. But now the Bishops abrogated and voided out of the Church, as if our Reformation

30 sought no more, but to make room for others into their seats under another name, the Episcopall arts begin to bud again, the cruse of truth must run no more oyle, liberty of Printing must be enthrall'd again under a Prelaticall commission of twenty, the privilege of the people nullify'd, and which is wors, the freedom of learning must groan again, and to her old fetters; all this the Parlament yet sitting. Although their own late arguments and

defences against the Prelats might remember them that this obstructing violence meets for the most part with an event utterly opposite to the end which it drives at: instead of suppressing sects and schisms, it raises them and invests them with a reputation: *The punishing of wits enhaunces their authority*, saith the Vicount St. Albans, *and a forbiidd'n writing is thought to be a certain spark of truth that flies up in the faces of them who seeke to tread it out.* This order therefore may prove a nursing mother to sects, but I shall easily shew how it will be a step-dame to Truth: and first by disinating us to the maintenance of what is known already.

Well knows he who uses to consider, that our faith and knowledge thrives by
 10 exercise, as well as our limbs and complexion. Truth is compar'd in Scripture to a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetuall progression, they sick'n into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition. A man may be a heretick in the truth; and if he beleeveth things only because his Pastor sayes so, or the Assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds, becomes his heresie. There is not any burden that some would gladly post off to another, then the charge and care of their Religion. There be, who know not that there be of Protestants and professors who live and dye in as arrant an implicit faith, as any lay Papist of Loretto. A wealthy man addicted to his pleasure and to his profits, finds Religion to be a traffick so entangl'd, and of so many piddling accounts, that of all mysteries he cannot skill to keep a stock going
 20 upon that trade. What should he doe? faine he would have the name to be religious, faine he would bear up with his neighbours in that. What does he therefore, but resolves to give over toying, and to find himself out some factor, to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; some Divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole ware-house of his religion, with all the locks and keyes into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion; esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety. So that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but is become a dividuall movable, and goes and comes neer him, according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night,
 30 praies, is liberally supped, and sumptuously laid to sleep, rises, is saluted, and after the malmsey, or some well spic't bruage, and better breakfasted then he whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between *Betheny* and *Ierusalem*, his Religion

walks abroad at eight, and leavs his kind entertainer in the shop trading all day without his religion.

Another sort there be who when they hear that all things shall be order'd, all things regulated and setl'd, nothing writt'n but what passes through the custom-house of certain Publicans that have the tunaging and the poundaging of all free spok'n truth, will strait give themselves up into your hands, mak'em & cut'em out what religion ye please; there be delights, there be recreations and jolly pastimes that will fetch the day about from sun to sun, and rock the tedious year as in a delightfull dream. What need they torture their heads with that which others have tak'n so strictly, and so unalterably into their own pourveying.

10 These are the fruits which a dull ease and cessation of our knowledge will bring forth among the people. How goodly, and how to be wisht were such an obedient unanimity as this, what a fine conformity would it starch us all into? doubtles a stanch and solid peece of frame-work, as any January could freeze together.

Nor much better will be the consequence ev'n among the clergy themselves; it is no new thing never heard of before, for a *parochiall* Minister, who has his reward, and is at his *Hercules* pillars in a warm benefice, to be easily inclinable, if he have nothing else that may rouse up his studies, to finish his circuit in an English concordance and a *topic folio*, the gatherings and savings of a sober graduatship, a *Harmony* and a *Catena*, treading the constant round of certain common doctrinall heads, attended with their uses, motives, marks and

20 means, out of which as out of an alphabet or sol fa by forming and transforming, joyning and dis-joyning variously a little book-craft, and two hours meditation might furnish him unspeakably to the performance of more then a weekly charge of sermoning: not to reck'n up the infinit helps of interlinearies, breviaries, *synopses*, and other loitering gear. But as for the multitude of Sermons ready printed and pil'd up, on every text that is not difficult, our London trading St. *Thomas* in his vestry, and adde to boot St. *Martin*, and St. *Hugh*, have not within their hallow'd limits more vendible ware of all sorts ready made: so that penury he never need fear of Pulpit provision, having where so plenteously to refresh his magazin. But if his rear and flanks be not impal'd, if his back dore be not secur'd by the rigid licencer, but that a bold book may now and then issue forth, and give the assault to some of his old

30 collections in their trenches, it will concern him then to keep waking, to stand in watch, to set good guards and sentinells about his receiv'd opinions, to walk the round and counter-round with his fellow inspectors, fearing lest any of his flock be seduc't, who also then

would be better instructed, better exercis'd and disciplin'd. And God send that the fear of this diligence which must then be us'd, doe not make us affect the lazines of a licencing Church.

For if we be sure we are in the right, and doe not hold the truth guiltily, which becomes not, if we our selves condemn not our own weak and frivolous teaching, and the people for an untaught and irreligious gadding rout, what can be more fair, then when a man judicious, learned, and of a conscience, for aught we know, as good as theirs that taught us what we know, shall not privily from house to house, which is more dangerous, but openly by writing publish to the world what his opinion is, what his reasons, and
 10 wherefore that which is now thought cannot be sound. Christ urg'd it as wherewith to justifie himself, that he preacht in publick; yet writing is more publick then preaching; and more easie to refutation, if need be, there being so many whose businesse and profession meerly it is, to be the champions of Truth; which if they neglect, what can be imputed but their sloth, or unability?

Thus much we are hinder'd and dis-inur'd by this cours of licencing toward the true knowledge of what we seem to know. For how much it hurts and hinders the licensors themselves in the calling of their Ministry, more then any secular employment, if they will discharge that office as they ought, so that of necessity they must neglect either the one duty or the other, I insist not, because it is a particular, but leave it to their own conscience,
 20 how they will decide it there.

There is yet behind of what I purpos'd to lay open, the incredible losse, and detriment that this plot of licencing puts us to, more then if som enemy at sea should stop up all our hav'ns and ports, and creeks, it hinders and retards the importation of our richest Marchandize, Truth: nay it was first establishd and put in practice by Antichristian malice and mystery on set purpose to extinguish, if it were possible, the light of Reformation, and to settle falshood; little differing from that policie wherewith the Turk upholds his *Alcoran*, by the prohibition of Printing. 'Tis not deny'd, but gladly confest, we are to send our thanks and vows to heav'n louder then most of Nations, for that great measure of truth which we enjoy, especially in those main points between us and the Pope, with his appertinences the
 30 Prelats: but he who thinks we are to pitch our tent here, and have attain'd the utmost prospect of reformation, that the mortall glasse wherein we contemplate, can shew us, till

we come to *beatific* vision, that man by this very opinion declares, that he is yet farre short of Truth.

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on: but when he ascended, and his Apostles after Him were laid asleep, then strait arose a wicked race of deceivers, who as that story goes of the *Egyptian Typhon* with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good *Osiris*, took the virgin Truth, hewd her lovely form into a thousand peeces, and scatter'd them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the carefull search that *Isis* made for the mangl'd body of *Osiris*, went up and down gathering
 10 up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall doe, till her Masters second comming; he shall bring together every joynt and member, and shall mould them into an immortall feature of lovelines and perfection. Suffer not these licencing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking, that continue to do our obsequies to the torn body of our martyr'd Saint. We boast our light; but if we look not wisely on the Sun it self, it smites us into darknes. Who can discern those planets that are oft *Combust*, and those stars of brightest magnitude that rise and set with the Sun, untill the opposite motion of their orbs bring them to such a place in the firmament, where they may be seen evning or morning. The light which we have gain'd, was giv'n us, not to be ever staring on,
 20 but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge. It is not the unfrocking of a Priest, the unmitring of a Bishop, and the removing him from off the *Presbyterian* shoulders that will make us a happy Nation, no, if other things as great in the Church, and in the rule of life both economicall and politicall be not lookt into and reform'd, we have lookt so long upon the blaze that *Zuinglius* and *Calvin* hath beacon'd up to us, that we are stark blind. There be who perpetually complain of schisms and sects, and make it such a calamity that any man dissents from their maxims. 'Tis their own pride and ignorance which causes the disturbing, who neither will hear with meeknes, nor can convince, yet all must be suppresst which is not found in their *Syntagma*. They are the troublers, they are the dividers of unity, who neglect and permit not others to unite those
 30 dissever'd peeces which are yet wanting to the body of Truth. To be still searching what we know not, by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it (for all her body is *homogeneous*, and proportionall), this is the golden rule in *Theology* as well as in Arithmetick,

and makes up the best harmony in a Church; not the forc't and outward union of cold, and neutrall, and inwardly divided minds.

Lords and Commons of England, consider what Nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governours: a Nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, suttle and sinewy to discours, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore the studies of learning in her deepest Sciences have bin so ancient, and so eminent among us, that Writers of good antiquity, and ablest judgement have bin perswaded that ev'n the school of *Pythagoras*, and the *Persian* wisdom took beginning from the old Philosophy of this Iland. And that wise
 10 and civill Roman, *Julius Agricola*, who govern'd once here for *Cæsar*, preferr'd the naturall wits of Britain, before the labour'd studies of the French. Nor is it for nothing that the grave and frugal *Transylvanian* sends out yearly from as farre as the mountanous borders of *Russia*, and beyond the *Hercynian* wildernes, not their youth, but their stay'd men, to learn our language, and our *theologic* arts. Yet that which is above all this, the favour and the love of heav'n we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propending towards us. Why else was this Nation chos'n before any other, that out of her as out of *Sion* should be proclam'd and sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of Reformation to all *Europ*. And had it not bin the obstinat perversenes of our Prelats against the divine and admirable spirit of *Wicklef*, to suppress him as a schismatic and *innovator*, perhaps
 20 neither the *Bohemian Husse* and *Jerom*, no nor the name of *Luther*, or of *Calvin* had bin ever known: the glory of reforming all our neighbours had bin compleatly ours. But now, as our obdurat Clergy have with violence demean'd the matter, we are become hitherto the latest and backwardest Schollers, of whom God offer'd to have made us the teachers. Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the generall instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly expresse their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, ev'n to the reforming of Reformation it self: what does he then but reveal Himself to his servants, and as his manner is, first to his English-men; I say as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of his counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast City: a City of refuge, the mansion house of liberty,
 30 encompassed and surrounded with his protection; the shop of warre hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed Justice in defence of beleaguer'd Truth, then there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and idea's wherewith to present, as with

their homage and their fealty the approaching Reformation: others as fast reading, trying
 all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement. What could a man require
 more from a Nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge. What wants there to
 such a towardly and pregnant soile, but wise and faithfull labourers, to make a knowing
 people, a Nation of Prophets, of Sages, and of Worthies. We reck'n more then five months
 yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks, had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white
 already. Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much
 writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. Under
 these fantastic terrors of sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after
 10 knowledge and understanding which God hath stirr'd up in this city. What some lament
 of, we rather should rejoyce at, should rather praise this pious forwardnes among men, to
 reassume the ill deputed care of their Religion into their own hands again. A little generous
 prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and som grain of charity might win all these
 diligences to joyn, and unite into one generall and brotherly search after Truth; could we
 but forgoe this Prelaticall tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into
 canons and precepts of men. I doubt not, if some great and worthy stranger should come
 among us, wise to discern the mould and temper of a people, and how to govern it,
 observing the high hopes and aims, the diligent alacrity of our extended thoughts and
 reasonings in the pursuance of truth and freedom, but that he would cry out as *Pirrhus* did,
 20 admiring the Roman docility and courage, if such were my *Epirots*, I would not despair the
 greatest design that could be attempted to make a Church or Kingdom happy. Yet these
 are the men cry'd out against for schismaticks and sectaries; as if, while the Temple of the
 Lord was building, some cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars, there
 should be a sort of irrationall men who could not consider there must be many schisms
 and many dissections made in the quarry and in the timber, ere the house of God can be
 built. And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity,
 it can but be contiguous in this world; neither can every peece of the building be of one
 form; nay rather the perfection consists in this, that out of many moderat varieties and
 brotherly dissimilitudes that are not vastly disproportionall arises the goodly and the
 30 gracefull symmetry that commends the whole pile and structure. Let us therefore be more
 considerat builders, more wise in spirituall architecture, when great reformation is
 expected. For now the time seems come, wherein *Moses* the great Prophet may sit in heav'n
 rejoycing to see that memorable and glorious wish of his fulfill'd, when not only our sev'nty
 Elders, but all the Lords people are become Prophets. No marvell then though some men,

and some good men too perhaps, but young in goodnesse, as *Joshua* then was, envy them. They fret, and out of their own weaknes are in agony, lest these divisions and subdivisions will undoe us. The adversarie again applauds, and waits the hour, when they have brancht themselves out, saith he, small anough into parties and partitions, then will be our time. Fool! he sees not the firm root, out of which we all grow, though into branches: nor will be ware untill he see our small divided maniples cutting through at every angle of his ill united and unweildy brigade. And that we are to hope better of all these supposed sects and schisms, and that we shall not need that solicitude honest perhaps though over timorous of them that vex in this behalf, but shall laugh in the end, at those malicious
 10 applauders of our differences, I have these reasons to perswade me.

First, when a City shall be as it were besieg'd and blockt about, her navigable river infested, inrodes and incursions round, defiance and battell oft rumour'd to be marching up ev'n to her walls, and suburb trenches, that then the people, or the greater part, more then at other times, wholly tak'n up with the study of highest and most important matters to be reform'd, should be disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discoursing, ev'n to a rarity, and admiration, things not before discourst or writt'n of, argues first a singular good will, contentednesse and confidence in your prudent foresight, and safe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives it self to a gallant bravery and well grounded contempt of their enemies, as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us,
 20 as his was, who when Rome was nigh besieg'd by *Hanibal*, being in the City, bought that peece of ground at no cheap rate, whereon *Hanibal* himself encampt his own regiment. Next it is a lively and cherfull presage of our happy successe and victory. For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to rationally faculties, and those in the acutest, and the pertest operations of wit and suttlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is, so when the cherfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversie, and new invention, it betok'ns us not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatall decay, but casting off the old and wrincl'd skin of corruption to outlive these pangs and wax young
 30 again, entring the glorious waies of Truth and prosperous vertue destin'd to become great and honourable in these latter ages. Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: Methinks I see her as an Eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazl'd eyes at the full

midday beam; purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain it self of heav'nly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amaz'd at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticat a year of sects and schisms.

What would ye doe then, should ye suppress all this flowry crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this City, should ye set an *Oligarchy* of twenty ingrossers over it, to bring a famin upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measur'd to us by their bushel? Beleeve it, Lords and Commons, they who counsell ye to such a suppressing, doe as good as bid ye suppress your selves; and I will soon shew
 10 how. If it be desir'd to know the immediat cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assign'd a truer then your own mild, and free, and human government; it is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchast us, liberty which is the nurse of all great wits; this is that which hath rarify'd and enlighten'd our spirits like the influence of heav'n; this is that which hath enfranchis'd, enlarg'd and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now lesse capable, lesse knowing, lesse eagarly pursuing of the truth, unlesse ye first make your selves, that made us so, lesse the lovers, lesse the founders of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutish, formall, and slavish, as ye found us; but you then must first
 20 become that which ye cannot be, oppressive, arbitrary, and tyrannous, as they were from whom ye have free'd us. That our hearts are now more capacious, our thoughts more erected to the search and expectation of greatest and exactest things, is the issue of your owne vertu propagated in us; ye cannot suppress that unlesse ye reinforce an abrogated and mercillesse law, that fathers may dispatch at will their own children. And who shall then stick closest to ye, and excite others? not he who takes up armes for cote and conduct, and his four nobles of Danegelt. Although I dispraise not the defence of just immunities, yet love my peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

What would be best advis'd then, if it be found so hurtfull and so unequal to suppress opinions for the newnes, or the unsutablenes to a customary acceptance, will
 30 not be my task to say; I only shall repeat what I have learnt from one of your own honourable number, a right noble and pious Lord, who had he not sacrific'd his life and fortunes to the Church and Commonwealth, we had not now mist and bewayl'd a worthy

and undoubted patron of this argument. Ye know him I am sure; yet I for honours sake, and may it be eternall to him, shall name him, the Lord *Brooke*. He writing of Episcopacy, and by the way treating of sects and schisms, left Ye his vote, or rather now the last words of his dying charge, which I know will ever be of dear and honour'd regard with Ye, so full of meeknes and breathing charity, that next to his last testament, who bequeath'd love and peace to his Disciples, I cannot call to mind where I have read or heard words more mild and peacefull. He there exhorts us to hear with patience and humility those, however they be miscall'd, that desire to live purely, in such a use of Gods Ordinances, as the best guidance of their conscience gives them, and to tolerat them, though in some disconformity

10 to our selves. The book itself will tell us more at large being publisht to the world, and dedicated to the Parliament by him who both for his life and for his death deserves, that what advice he left be not laid by without perusall.

And now the time in speciall is, by priviledge to write and speak what may help to the furder discussing of matters in agitation. The temple of *Janus* with his two *controversal* faces might now not insignificantly be set open. And though all the windes of doctrin were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously, by licencing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falshood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the wors, in a free and open encounter. Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. He who hears what praying there is for light and clearer knowledge to be sent

20 down among us, would think of other matters to be constituted beyond the discipline of *Geneva*, fram'd and fabric't already to our hands. Yet when the new light which we beg for shines in upon us, there be who envy, and oppose, if it come not first in at their casements. What a collusion is this, whenas we are exhorted by the wise man to use diligence, *to seek for wisdom as for hidd'n treasures* early and late, that another order shall enjoyn us to know nothing but by statute. When a man hath bin labouring the hardest labour in the deep mines of knowledge, hath furnisht out his findings in all their equipage, drawn forth his reasons as it were a battell raung'd, scatter'd and defeated all objections in his way, calls out his adversary into the plain, offers him the advantage of wind and sun, if he please; only

30 that he may try the matter by dint of argument, for his opponents then to skulk, to lay ambushments, to keep a narrow bridge of licencing where the challenger should passe, though it be valour anough in souldiership, is but weaknes and cowardice in the wars of Truth. For who knows not that Truth is strong next to the Almighty; she needs no policies, nor stratagemes, nor licencings to make her victorious, those are the shifts and the defences

that error uses against her power: give her but room, & do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old *Proteus* did, who spake oracles only when he was caught & bound, but then rather she turns herself into all shapes, except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as *Micaiah* did before *Ahab*, untill she be adjur'd into her own likenes. Yet is it not impossible that she may have more shapes then one. What else is all that rank of things indifferent, wherein Truth may be on this side, or on the other, without being unlike her self. What but a vain shadow else is the abolition of *those ordinances, that hand writing nayl'd to the crosse*, what great purchase is this Christian liberty which *Paul* so often boasts of. His doctrine is, that he who eats or eats not, regards a day, or regards it not, may doe either to the Lord. How many other things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief strong hold of our hypocrisie to be ever judging one another. I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a slavish print upon our necks; the ghost of a linnen decency yet haunts us. We stumble and are impatient at the least dividing of one visible congregation from another, though it be not in fundamentalls; and through our forwardnes to suppress, and our backwardnes to recover any enthral'd peece of truth out of the gripe of custom, we care not to keep truth separated from truth, which is the fiercest rent and disunion of all. We doe not see that while we still affect by all means a rigid externall formality, we may as soon fall again into a grosse conforming stupidity, a stark and dead congealment of *wood and hay and stubble* forc't and frozen together, which is more to the sudden degenerating of a Church then many *subdichotomies* of petty schisms. Not that I can think well of every light separation, or that all in a Church is to be expected *gold and silver and pretious stones*: it is not possible for man to sever the wheat from the tares, the good fish from the other frie; that must be the Angels Ministry at the end of mortall things. Yet if all cannot be of one mind, as who looks they should be? this doubtles is more wholesome, more prudent, and more Christian that many be tolerated, rather then all compell'd. I mean not tolerated Popery, and open superstition, which as it extirpats all religions and civill supremacies, so it self should be extirpat, provided first that all charitable and compassionat means be us'd to win and regain the weak and the misled: that also which is impious or evil absolutely either against faith or maners no law can possibly permit, that intends not to unlaw it self: but those neighboring differences, or rather indifferences, are what I speak of, whether in some point of doctrine or of discipline, which though they may be many, yet need not interrupt *the unity of Spirit*, if we could but find among us *the bond of peace*. In the mean while if any one would write, and bring his helpfull hand to the slow-moving Reformation which we

labour under, if Truth have spok'n to him before others, or but seem'd at least to speak, who hath so bejesuited us that we should trouble that man with asking licence to doe so worthy a deed? and not consider this, that if it come to prohibiting, there is not ought more likely to be prohibited then truth it self; whose first appearance to our eyes blear'd and dimm'd with prejudice and custom, is more unsightly and unplaussible then many errors, ev'n as the person is of many a great man slight and contemptible to see to. And what doe they tell us vainly of new opinions, when this very opinion of theirs, that none must be heard, but whom they like, is the worst and newest opinion of all others; and is the chief cause why sects and schisms doe so much abound, and true knowledge is kept at distance

10 from us; besides yet a greater danger which is in it. For when God shakes a Kingdome with strong and healthfull commotions to a generall reforming, 'tis not untrue that many sectaries and false teachers are then busiest in seducing; but yet more true it is, that God then raises to his own work men of rare abilities, and more then common industry not only to look back and revise what hath bin taught heretofore, but to gain furder and goe on, some new enlighten'd steps in the discovery of truth. For such is the order of Gods enlightning his Church, to dispense and deal out by degrees his beam, so as our earthly eyes may best sustain it. Neither is God appointed and confin'd, where and out of what place these his chosen shall be first heard to speak; for he sees not as man sees, chooses not as man chooses, lest we should devote our selves again to set places, and assemblies,

20 and outward callings of men; planting our faith one while in the old Convocation house, and another while in the Chapell at Westminster; when all the faith and religion that shall be there canoniz'd, is not sufficient without plain convincement, and the charity of patient instruction to supple the least bruise of conscience, to edifie the meanest Christian, who desires to walk in the Spirit, and not in the letter of human trust, for all the number of voices that can be there made; no though *Harry* the 7. himself there, with all his leige tombs about him, should lend them voices from the dead, to swell their number. And if the men be erroneous who appear to be the leading schismaticks, what witholds us but our sloth, our self-will, and distrust in the right cause, that we doe not give them gentle meeting and gentle dismissions, that we debate not and examin the matter throughly with liberall and

30 frequent audience; if not for their sakes, yet for our own? seeing no man who hath tasted learning, but will confesse the many waies of profiting by those who not contented with stale receipts are able to manage, and set forth new positions to the world. And were they but as the dust and cinders of our feet, so long as in that notion they may yet serve to polish and brighten the armoury of Truth, ev'n for that respect they were not utterly to be

cast away. But if they be of those whom God hath fitted for the speciall use of these times with eminent and ample gifts, and those perhaps neither among the Priests, nor among the Pharisees, and we in the hast of a precipitant zeal shall make no distinction, but resolve to stop their mouths, because we fear they come with new and dangerous opinions, as we commonly forejudge them ere we understand them, no lesse then woe to us, while thinking thus to defend the Gospel, we are found the persecutors.

There have bin not a few since the beginning of this Parliament, both of the Presbytery and others who by their unlicen't books to the contempt of an *Imprimatur* first broke that triple ice clung about our hearts, and taught the people to see day: I hope that
 10 none of those were the perswaders to renew upon us this bondage which they themselves have wrought so much good by contemning. But if neither the check that *Moses* gave to young *Joshua*, nor the countermand which our Saviour gave to young *John*, who was so ready to prohibit those whom he thought unlicenc't, be not enough to admonish our Elders how unacceptable to God their testy mood of prohibiting is, if neither their own remembrance what evill hath abounded in the Church by this lett of licencing, and what good they themselves have begun by transgressing it, be not enough, but that they will perswade, and execute the most *Dominican* part of the Inquisition over us, and are already with one foot in the stirrup so active at suppressing, it would be no unequall distribution in the first place to suppress the suppressors themselves; whom the change of their
 20 condition hath puft up, more then their late experience of harder times hath made wise.

And as for regulating the Presse, let no man think to have the honour of advising ye better then your selves have done in that Order publisht next before this, that no book be Printed, unlesse the Printers and the Authors name, or at least the Printers be register'd. Those which otherwise come forth, if they be found mischievous and libellous, the fire and the executioner will be the timeliest and the most effectuall remedy, that mans prevention can use. For this *authentic* Spanish policy of licencing books, if I have said aught, will prove the most unlicenc't book it self within a short while; and was the immediat image of a Star-chamber decree to that purpose made in those very times when that Court did the rest of those her pious works, for which she is now fall'n from the Starres with *Lucifer*.
 30 Whereby ye may guesse what kinde of State prudence, what love of the people, what care of Religion, or good manners there was at the contriving, although with singular hypocrisie it pretended to bind books to their good behaviour. And how it got the upper hand of your

precedent Order so well constituted before, if we may beleve those men whose profession gives them cause to enquire most, it may be doubted there was in it the fraud of some old *patentees* and *monopolizers* in the trade of book-selling; who under pretence of the poor in their Company not to be defrauded, and the just retaining of each man his severall copy, which God forbid should be gainsaid, brought divers glosing colours to the House, which were indeed but colours, and serving to no end except it be to exercise a superiority over their neighbours, men who doe not therefore labour in an honest profession to which learning is indetted, that they should be made other mens vassalls. Another end is thought was aym'd at by some of them in procuring by petition this Order, that having power in
10 their hands, malignant books might the easier scape abroad, as the event shews. But of these *Sophisms* and *Elenchs* of marchandize I skill not: This I know, that errors in a good government and in a bad are equally almost incident; for what Magistrate may not be misinform'd, and much the sooner, if liberty of Printing be reduc't into the power of a few; but to redresse willingly and speedily what hath bin err'd, and in highest authority to esteem a plain advertisement more then others have done a sumptuous bribe, is a vertue (honour'd Lords and Commons) answerable to Your highest actions, and whereof none can participat but greatest and wisest men.

The End.

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THE
 SHORTEST-WAY
 WITH THE
 DISSENTERS:
 OR
 PROPOSALS
 FOR THE
 ESTABLISHMENT
 OF THE
 CHURCH.

LONDON:
 Printed in the Year MDCCII.

REFLECTIONS

Upon a Late Scandalous and Malicious

PAMPHLET

ENTITUL'D,

*The shortest Way with the Dissen-
 ters ; or Proposals for the
 Establishment of the Church.*

To which the said PAMPHLET is
 prefix'd entire by it self.



LONDON,
 Printed in the Year 1703.

The Shortest Way with the Dissenters: or, Proposals for the Establishment of the Church

[Daniel DeFoe]

London, Printed in the Year MDCCII¹

SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE tells us a story in his collection of *Fables*, of the Cock and the Horses. The Cock was gotten to roost in the stable among the horses; and there being no racks or other conveniences for him, it seems, he was forced to roost upon the ground. The horses jostling about for room, and putting the Cock in danger of his life, he gives them this grave advice, "Pray, Gentlefolks! let us stand still! for fear we should tread upon one another!"

There are some people in the World, who, now they are *unperched*, and reduced to an equality with other people, and under strong and very just apprehensions of being further treated as they deserve, begin, with AESOP'S Cock, to preach up Peace and Union and
10 the Christian duty of Moderation; forgetting that, when they had the Power in their hands, those Graces were strangers in their gates!

It is now, near fourteen years,² that the glory and peace of the purest and most flourishing Church in the world has been eclipsed, buffeted, and disturbed by a sort of men, whom, GOD in His Providence, has suffered to insult over her, and bring her down. These have been the days of her humiliation and tribulation. She has borne with an

¹ [All annotations by J Drew]. 1702. The date is of crucial significance, of course: on 8 March 1702, William III, England's Dutch Protestant King, and friend to Dissenters, had died, leading to the coronation of Anne, who was narrowly and ostentatiously Anglican/Church of England in her sympathies. Her accession to the throne (23rd April 1702) was welcomed by the Tories and 'Church' party, but, as her single-minded opposition to other viewpoints became apparent to those beyond the court, both Roman Catholics and Dissenters had reasons to be dismayed. See <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/560>

² 1702 minus 14 = 1688, another key date: the year of the so-called 'Glorious Revolution': the forced abdication of James II (Queen Anne's father), who was rightly suspected of plotting to return the nations over which he ruled to Roman Catholicism, and the arranged accession of William of Orange, married to Mary (Queen Anne's elder sister--see previous note). William was a 'Broad Church' Protestant, sympathetic to a wide variety of religious positions, and a firm advocate of religious toleration. The speaker obviously considers the end of William's reign and the accession of Anne to be a blessing. This helps the reader define his political position. with pinpoint accuracy.

invincible patience, the reproach of the wicked: and GOD has at last heard her prayers, and delivered her from the oppression of the stranger.

And now, they find their Day is over! their power gone! and the throne of this nation possessed by a Royal, *English*, true, and ever constant member of, and friend to, the Church of England! Now, they find that they are in danger of the Church of England's just resentments! Now, they cry out, "Peace!" "Union!" "Forbearance!" and "Charity!": as if the Church had not too long harboured her enemies under her wing! and nourished the viperous blood, till they hiss and fly in the face of the Mother that cherished them!

No, Gentlemen! the time of mercy is past! your Day of Grace is over! you should
10 have practised peace, and moderation, and charity, if you expected any yourselves!

We have heard none of this lesson, for fourteen years past! We have been huffed and bullied with your *Act of Toleration!*³ You have told us, *you* are the Church established by Law, as well as others! have set up your canting Synagogues⁴ at our Church doors! and the Church and her members have been loaded with reproaches, with Oaths, Associations, Abjurations, and what not! Where has been the mercy, the forbearance, the charity you have shewn to tender consciences of the Church of England that could not take Oaths *as fast as you made them?* that having sworn allegiance to their lawful and rightful King, could not dispense with that Oath, *their King being still alive;* and swear to your new hodge podge of a Dutch⁵ Government? These have been turned out of their Livings, and they and their
20 families left to starve! their estates double taxed to carry on a war they had no hand in, and you got nothing by!

What account can you give of the multitudes you have forced to comply, against their consciences, with your new sophisticated Politics, who, like New Converts in France, sin because *they cannot starve?* And now the tables are turned upon you; *you* must not be persecuted! it is not a Christian spirit!

³ 1689. One of the first pieces of legislation enacted during William III's reign: it promoted freedom of worship for Dissenters and other 'Non Conformists' i.e. those whose preferred forms of Christian worship did not coincide with those of the Church of England. See

<http://www.thegloriousrevolution.org/docs/tolerationact.htm>

⁴ 'Canting synagogues' -- a particularly snide description, managing to insult both non-Conformists and practising Jews.

⁵ A further swipe at the deceased Dutch-born William of Orange/William III. This will continue on the next page ('a mock King' ... 'the management of your Dutch monarch'), where, effectively, the speaker considers William to have been merely the puppet of the Low-Church/Non-Conformist party he detests--as though there is a large mass of Enemies against whom the speaker is fighting: faintly paranoid!

You have butchered one King!⁶ deposed another King!⁷ and made a Mock King of a third! and yet, you could have the face to expect to be employed and trusted by the fourth! Anybody that did not know the temper of your Party, would stand amazed at the impudence as well as the folly to think of it!

Your management of your Dutch Monarch, who you reduced to a mere King of Cl[ub]s, is enough to give any future Princes such an idea of your principles, as to warn them sufficiently from coming into your clutches; and, GOD be thanked! the Queen is out of your hands! Knows you! and will have a care of you!

10 There is no doubt but the Supreme Authority of a nation has in itself, a Power, and *a right to that Power*, to execute the Laws upon any part of that nation it governs. The execution of the known Laws of the land, and that with but a gentle hand neither, was all that the Fanatical Party of this land have ever called Persecution. This they have magnified to a height, that the sufferings of the Huguenots in France⁸ were not to be compared with them. Now to execute the known Laws of a nation upon those who transgress them, after having first been voluntarily consenting to the making of those Laws, can never be called Persecution, but Justice. But Justice is always Violence to the party offending! for every man is innocent in his own eyes.

20 The first execution of the Laws against Dissenters in England, was in the days of King JAMES I.; and what did it amount to? Truly, the worst they suffered was, at their own request, to let them go to New England, and erect a new colony; and give them great privileges, grants, and suitable powers; keep them under protection, and defend them against all invaders; and receive no taxes or revenue from them!

This was the cruelty⁹ of the Church of England! Fatal lenity! It was the ruin of that excellent Prince, King CHARLES I. Had King JAMES sent all the Puritans in England away to the West Indies; we had been a national unmix'd Church! the Church of England had been kept undivided and entire!

⁶ Charles I, executed in 1649.

⁷ James II, who fled the throne in 1688. See earlier note.

⁸ Huguenots, the name given to Protestants in France, who had no national Church to shelter them, and who were the victims of the infamous 'St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre' in August/September 1572 (5--30,000 fatalities). Tens of thousands emigrated in succeeding decades/centuries, many to what is now French-speaking Canada.

⁹ 'the cruelty of the Church of England': double irony! In other words, While Defoe actually DOES consider the Church of England to be cruel, his speaker--invented as a mouthpiece for views Defoe opposes--wants to suggest that his beloved Church has only erred in being too soft on Dissenters.

To requite the lenity of the Father, they take up arms against the Son, conquer, pursue, take, imprison, and a last to death the Anointed of GOD, and destroy the very Being and Nature of Government: setting up a sordid Impostor, who had neither title to govern, nor understanding to manage, but supplied that want, with power, bloody and desperate counsels and craft, without conscience.

Had not King JAMES I. withheld the full execution of the Laws: had he given them strict justice, he had cleared the nation of them! And the consequences had been plain; his son had never been murdered by them, nor the Monarchy overwhelmed.¹⁰ It was too much mercy shewn them that was the ruin of his posterity, and the ruin of the nation's peace.

10 One would think the Dissenters should not have the face to believe, that we are to be wheedled and canted into Peace and Toleration, when they know that they have once requited us with a Civil War, and once with an intolerable and unrighteous Persecution, for our former civility.

Nay, to encourage us to be easy with them, it is apparent that they never had the upper hand of the Church, but they treated her with all the severity, with all the reproach and contempt as was possible! What Peace and what Mercy did they shew the loyal Gentry of the Church of England, in the time of their triumphant Commonwealth?¹¹ How did they put all the Gentry of England to ransom, whether they were actually in arms for the King or not! making people compound for their estates, and starve their families! How did
20 they treat the Clergy of the Church of England! sequester the Ministers! devour the patrimony of the Church, and divide the spoil, by sharing the Church lands among their soldiers, and turning her Clergy out to starve! Just such measures as they have meted, should be measured to them again!

Charity and Love is the known doctrine of the Church of England, and it is plain She has put it in practice towards the Dissenters, even beyond what they ought, till She has been wanting to herself, and in effect unkind to her own sons: particularly, in the too much lenity of King JAMES I., mentioned before. Had he so rooted the Puritans from the face of the land, which he had an opportunity early to have done; they had not had the power to vex the Church as since they have done.

30 In the days of King CHARLES II., how did the Church reward their bloody doings, with lenity and mercy! Except the barbarous Regicides of the pretended Court of Justice,

¹⁰ The speaker blames the lack of past severity against Dissenters for being the cause of the English Civil War...

¹¹ i.e. during Cromwell's Protectorate, the English Commonwealth, 1649--59.

not a soul suffered,¹² for all the blood in an unnatural war! King CHARLES came in all mercy and love, cherished them, preferred them, employed them, withheld the rigour of the law; and oftentimes, even against the advice of his Parliament, gave them Liberty of Conscience: and how did they requite him? With the villainous contrivance to depose and murder him and his successor, at the Rye [House] Plot!

King JAMES [II.], as if mercy was the inherent quality of the Family, began his reign with unusual favour to them. Nor could their joining with the Duke of MONMOUTH¹³ against him, move him to do himself justice upon them. But that mistaken Prince, thinking to win them by gentleness and love, proclaimed a Universal Liberty to them! and rather
10 discountenanced the Church of England than them! How they required him, all the World knows!

The late reign [of WILLIAM III.] is too fresh in the memory of all the World to need a comment. How under pretence of joining with the Church in redressing some grievances, they pushed things to that extremity, in conjunction with some mistaken Gentlemen, as to *depose* the late King: as if the grievance of the Nation could not have been redress but by the absolute ruin of the Prince! Here is an instance of their Temper, their Peace, and Charity!

To what height they carried themselves during the reign of a King of their own! how they crope into all Places of Trust and Profit! how they insinuated themselves into the
20 favour of the King, and were at first preferred to the highest Places in the nation! how they engrossed the Ministry! and, above all, how pitifully they managed! is too plain to need any remarks.

But particularly, their Mercy and Charity, the spirit of Union they tell us so much of, has been remarkable in Scotland. If any man would see the spirit of a Dissenter, let him look into Scotland! There, they made entire conquest of the Church! trampled down the sacred Orders and suppressed the Episcopal Government, with an absolute, and, as they supposed, irretrievable victory! though it is possible, *they may find themselves mistaken!*

¹² The speaker conveniently ignores the infamous 'Corporation' and 'Test Acts' imposed during Charles II's reign (1660-85; 1661, 1673, 1678), which discriminated against both Roman Catholics and Dissenters. The Acts imposed on candidates a 'test' of fitness for public office through proof of adherence to the Church of England principles, and pronounced severe penalties on 'recusants' found guilty of non-conformity.

¹³ Monmouth, a handsome bastard son of Charles II's, led an unsuccessful rebellion against James II, just after the latter's accession to the throne; it added to the ferment leading to James's abdication/deposition shortly after. But not before Monmouth had been executed, and the so-called 'bloody assizes' of the man James appointed to try the rebels, Judge Jeffries, who sentenced 320 to death and 800 to be transported to the West Indies. Gentle?!

Now it would be a very proper question to ask their impudent advocate, the *Observer*,¹⁴ “Pray how much mercy and favour did the members of the Episcopal Church find in Scotland, from the Scotch Presbyterian Government?” and I shall undertake for the Church of England, that the Dissenters shall still receives as much here, though they deserve but little.

In a small treatise of *The Sufferings of the Episcopal Clergy in Scotland*, it will appear what usage they met with! How they not only lost their Livings; but, in several places, were plundered and abused in their persons! the Ministers that could not conform, were turned out, with numerous families and no maintenance, and hardly charity enough left to relieve
10 them with a bit of bread. The cruelties of the Party were innumerable, and are not to be attempted in this short Piece.

And now, to prevent the distant cloud which they perceive to hang over their heads from England, with a true Presbyterian policy, they put it for a Union of Nations!¹⁵ that England might unite their Church with the Kirk of Scotland, and their Assembly of Scotch canting Long-Cloaks in our Convocation. What might have been, if our Fanatic Whiggish Statesmen continued, GOD only knows! but we hope we are out of fear of that now.

It is alleged by some of the faction, and they have begun to bully us with it, that “if we won’t unite them, they will not settle the Crown with us again; but when Her Majesty dies, will choose a King for themselves!”

20 If they won’t we must make them! and it is not the first time we have let them know that we are able! The Crowns of these Kingdoms have not so far disowned the Right of Succession,¹⁶ but they may retrieve it again; and if Scotland thinks to come off from a Successive to an Electric State of Government; England has not promised, not to assist

¹⁴ 'The Observer' was a newspaper written by Roger L'Estrange (see first note) to promote his anti-Whig/Royalist agenda, so it is puzzling why Defoe's speaker--conceived, ostensibly as one of L'Estrange's camp--should write about the publication disparagingly. It is one of a number of places where Defoe seems to want to (or at least manages) to confuse the reader as to his standpoint, and hence 'real world' identity.

¹⁵ This looks forward to the 1707 Acts of Union that united Scotland and England politically as a single state, 'Great Britain' (rather than two distinct kingdoms which shared--since the accession of James I & VI in 1603)--the same monarch), which would not be passed until 1707. Although passed during the reign of Queen Anne, and her tory-led administration, the Union was perceived as a middle-class, Whig initiative, which would bring Scottish Non-Conformists ('Presbyterians') tino political alliance with the English. Hence the speaker's palpable disdain....

¹⁶ Another remark that plays provocatively into the controversy over how to choose a safely Protestant successor to Queen Anne, whose biological difficulties in giving birth to healthy children (seventeen pregnancies in seventeen years [1684-1700]) were already clear before her accession. This follows the English 'Act of Settlement' in 1701 (which settled the throne on the Protestant House of Hanover) and precedes the Scottish Parliament's defensive response through the Act of Security in 1704. The speaker voices widely held concerns over aspects of the Union, and not just ones held by English tory bigots. Again, Defoe's irony cuts in several directions, and it is hard to see how it could present an argument for toleration that would uniformly affect its readers.

the Right Heir, and put him into possession, without any regards to their ridiculous *Settlements*.

THESE are the Gentlemen! these their ways of treating the Church, both at home and abroad!

Now let us examine the Reasons they pretend to give, why we should be favourable to them? why we should continue and tolerate them among us?

First.¹⁷ *They are very numerous, they say. They are a great part of the nation, and we cannot suppress them!*

To this, may be answered,

10 First. They are not so numerous as the Protestants in France: and yet the French King effectually cleared the nation of them, at once; and we don't find he misses them at home!

But I am not of the opinion, they are so numerous as is pretended. Their Party is more numerous than their Persons; and those mistaken people of the Church who are misled and deluded by their wheedling artifices to join with them, make their Party the greater: but those will open their eyes when the Government shall set heartily about the Work, and come off from them, as some animals, which they say, always desert a house when it is likely to fall.

20 Secondly. The more numerous, the more dangerous; and therefore the more need to suppress them! and GOD has suffered us to bear them as goads in our sides, for not utterly extinguishing them long ago.

Thirdly. If we are to allow them, only because we cannot suppress them; then it ought to be tried, Whether we can or not? And I am of opinion, it is easy to be done! and could prescribe Ways and Means, if it were proper: but I doubt not the Government will find effectual methods for the rooting of the contagion from the face of this land.

Another argument they use, which is this. *That this is a time of war, and we have need to unite against the common enemy.*

¹⁷ In this part of the pamphlet, Defoe utilises the rhetorical strategy known as 'refutatio' in which, with an appearance of reasonableness, an opponent's argument is considered--then demolished. Bad Argument is thus followed by (Good) Counter-Argument. Only here, the supposed Bad Argument is actually what Defoe supports!

We answer, This common enemy¹⁸ had been no enemy, if they had not made him so! He was quiet, in peace, and no way disturbed and encroached upon us; and we know no reason we had to quarrel with him.

But further. We make no question but we are able to deal with this common enemy without their help: but why must we unite with them, because of the enemy? Will they go over to the enemy, if we do not prevent it, by a Union with them? We are very well contented [that] they should! and make no question, we shall be ready to deal with them and the common enemy too; and better without them than with them! Besides, if we have a common enemy, there is the more need to be secure against our private enemies! If there
10 is one common enemy, we have the less need to have an enemy in our bowels!

It was a great argument some people used against suppressing the Old Money,¹⁹ that “it was a time of war, and it was too great a risque for the nation to run! If we should not master it, we should be undone!” And yet the sequel proved the hazard was not so great, but it might be mastered, and the success [*i.e.*, of the new coinage] was answerable. The suppressing the Dissenters is not a harder work! nor a work of less necessity to the Public! We can never enjoy a settled uninterrupted union and tranquility in this nation, till the spirit of Whiggism, Faction, and Schism is melted down like the Old Money!

To talk of difficulty is to frighten ourselves with Chimeras and notions of a powerful Party, which are indeed a Party without power. Difficulties often appear greater at a
20 distance than when they are searched into with judgment, and distinguished from the vapours and shadows that attend them.

We are not to be frightened with it! This Age is wiser than that, by all our own experience, and theirs too! King CHARLES I. had early suppressed this Party, if he had taken more deliberate measures! In short, it is not worth arguing, to talk of their arms. Their MONMOUTHS, and SHAFTESBURYs, and ARGYLES are gone! Their Dutch Sanctuary is at an end! Heaven has made way for their destruction! and if we do not close with the Divine occasion, we are to blame ourselves! and may hereafter remember, that we

¹⁸ The 'common Enemy' here is the Bourbon monarchy of Louis XIV, the 'Sun King,' in France.

¹⁹ The speaker references the Coin Act of 1696, sometimes referred to as the 'Great Recoinage of 1696'. It was an attempt to discourage--by introducing penalties for High Treason-- the clipping or paring-down of silver coins, a practice which, by the 1690s, had badly damaged the entire English economy. It was already clear by 1702 that the Act had had very mixed results, a judgement later financial historians have endorsed. The speaker's glib use of the analogy ('melted down like the old Money') might be expected therefore to come across as both unconvincing and vindictive.

had, once, an opportunity to serve the Church of England, by extirpating²⁰ her implacable enemies; and having let slip the Minute that Heaven presented, may experimentally complain, *Post est Occasio CALVO!*

Here are some popular Objections in the way.

As First, *The Queen has promised them, to continue them in their tolerated Liberty; and has told us* She will be a religious observer of her word.

10 What Her Majesty will do, we cannot help! but what, as the Head of the Church, she ought to do, is another case. Her Majesty has promised to protect and defend the Church of England, and if she cannot effectually do that, without the destruction of the Dissenters; she must, of course, dispense with one promise to comply with another!

But to answer this cavil more effectually. Her Majesty did never promise to maintain the Toleration to the destruction of the Church; but it was upon supposition that it may be compatible with the well-being and safety of the Church, which she had declared she would take especial care of. Now if these two Interests clash, it is plain Her Majesty's intentions are to uphold, protect, defend, and establish the Church! and this, we conceive is impossible [*that is, while maintaining the Toleration*].

Perhaps it may be said, *That the Church is in no immediate danger from the Dissenters; and therefore it is time enough.*

20 But this is a weak answer. For first. If the danger be real, the distance of it is no argument against, but rather a spur to quicken us to Prevention, lest it be too late hereafter.

And secondly. Here is the opportunity, and the only one perhaps, that ever the Church had to secure herself, and destroy her enemies.

The Representatives of the Nation have now an opportunity! The Time is come, which all good men have wished for!²¹ that the Gentlemen of England may serve the Church of England, now they are protected and encouraged by a Church of England Queen!

²⁰ 'extirpate': to pull up by the roots, destroy totally, exterminate.... The speaker's advocacy of massacre and genocide on religious grounds becomes increasingly vehement. In a way, the very haziness of some of his positions--and the consequent difficulty we have of mapping Defoe's implied position, assuming he even has one--contributes to our increasing sense of horror. The speaker incites his readers/listeners to murder a portion of their own society, and yet the very identity of that 'portion', and the justification for their murder, is (deliberately?) over-complex.

²¹ Do some of these arguments about national security start to sound curiously familiar? [This is not an annotation but a query relating to the contemporary Brexit scene.]

*What will you do for your Sister in the day that she shall be spoken for?*²²

If ever you will establish the best Christian Church in the World?

If ever you will suppress the Spirit of Enthusiasm?

If ever you will free the nation from the viperous brood that have so long sucked the blood of their Mother?

If ever you will leave your Posterity free from faction and rebellion, this is the time. This is the time to pull up this heretical Weed of Sedition, that has so long disturbed the Peace of the Church, and poisoned the good corn!

But, says another hot and cold Objector, *This is renewing Fire and Faggot! reviving the Act, De heretico comburendo!*²³ *This will be cruelty in its nature! and barbarous to all the World!*

I answer, It is cruelty to kill a snake or a toad in cold blood, but the poison of their nature makes it a charity to our neighbours, to destroy those creatures! not for any personal injury received, but for prevention; not for the evil they have done, but the evil they may do! Serpents, toads, vipers, &c., are noxious to the body, and poison the sensitive life: these poison the soul! corrupt our posterity! ensnare our children! destroy the vitals of our happiness, our future felicity! and contaminate the whole mass!

Shall any Law be given to such wild creatures! Some beasts are for sport, and the huntsmen give them the advantages of ground: but some are knocked on the head, by all possible ways of violence and surprise!

I do not prescribe Fire and Faggot! but as SCIPIO said of Carthage, *Delenda est Carthago!*²⁴ They are to be rooted out of this nation, if ever we will live in peace! serve GOD!

²² A biblical quotation, fully 'in character' for Defoe's conception of the speaker as a rabid Church of England priest, preaching hate from the pulpit. It comes from the erotically-charged 'Song of Solomon' in the Old Testament, which, in powerfully mystic metaphor, attempts to outline the future relationship between Christ the Church. The reference is to Chapter 8, verse 8: *We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she is spoken for.* In Biblical commentaries, this ambiguous passage is usually construed as being about the level of concern that it is appropriate for the Church to show towards those who are not yet converted--whether heathens, Jew/gentile, or, as presumably here, Dissenters. Compare the difficulties into which the two missionaries in Chapter of *A Passage to India* get over this issue of who to include/exclude [Book I, chapter 4]). The irony, as usual, is complex; but a) the speaker seems to wholly misapply the spirit of the quotation b) hence 'do for' (your little sister) takes on an unexpected secondary sense (not necessarily the modern slang one--just that the answer seems to presage aggression not loving preparation) c) the speaker implies, through the application of the quotation, that Dissenters are as benighted as non-Christians.

²³ The Act *De Haeretico Comburendo* (Lat. 'concerning the heretic who must be burned'...) was passed in 1401 during the reign of Henry IV, and prescribed burning at the stake of all proven heretics, in reaction to the spread of new private forms of Christian worship outwith Church control, following the dissemination of John Wycliff's translation of the Bible into vernacular English in the 1390s.

²⁴ Another common quotation, familiar to all those schooled in Roman history, and the 'Punic Wars' (264-246 BC). The analogy is not a good one, but it perhaps serves to distract, by repeating a schoolboy lesson, from the speaker's incitement to violence and simultaneous disavowal of responsibility for method.

or enjoy our own! As for the manner, I leave it to those hands, who have a Right to execute GOD'S Justice on the Nation's and the Church's enemies.

But, if we must be frightened from this Justice, under the[se] specious pretences, and odious sense of cruelty; nothing will be effected! It will be more barbarous to our own children and dear posterity, when they shall reproach their fathers, as we ours, and tell us, "You had an Opportunity to root out this cursed race from the World, under the favour and protection of a True Church of England Queen! and out of your foolish pity, you spared them: because, forsooth, you would not be cruel! And now our Church is suppressed and persecuted, our Religion trampled under foot, our estates plundered; our
 10 persons imprisoned, and dragged to gaols, gibbets, and scaffolds! Your sparing this Amalekite race²⁵ is our destruction! Your mercy to them, proves cruelty to your poor posterity!"

How just will such reflections be, when our posterity shall fall under the merciless clutches of this uncharitable Generation! when our Church shall be swallowed up in Schism, Faction, Enthusiasm, and Confusion! when our Government shall be devolved upon Foreigners, and our Monarchy dwindled into a Republic!

It would be more rational for us, if we must spare this Generation, to summon our own to a general massacre: and as we have brought them into the World free, to send them out so; and not betray them to destruction by our supine negligence, and then cry "It is
 20 mercy!"

Moses was a merciful meek man; and yet with what fury did he run through the camp, and cut the throats of three and thirty thousand of his dear Israelites that were fallen into idolatry.²⁶ What was the reason? It was mercy to the rest, to make these examples! to prevent the destruction of the whole army.

How many millions of future souls, [shall] we save from infection and delusion, if the present race of Poisoned Spirits were purged from the face of the land!

²⁵ Another biblical reference, to a troubling passage in the Book of Samuel in the Old Testament. Through Samuel, God commands Saul, as leader of the Israelites, to attack the Amalekite people: 'Now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass' (Chapter 15; verse 3): 'And [Saul] ...utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword'. The rest of the Chapter describes how Saul is rejected by God as a disobedient follower, because he and his people spared some fine Amalekite cattle to sacrifice to the Lord, despite having been specifically instructed to kill everything; the expression 'burnt offerings' derives from this discussion.

²⁶ Yet another Old Testament allusion (to the massacre of 3,000 Israelites by the sons of Levi, on Moses' command; Exodus Chapter 32: verse 28). It confirms (perhaps) the reader's suspicion that the speaker is wholly deaf to the New Testament's Gospel of mercy and forgiveness, and schooled, in an unbalanced way, in the Pentateuch's doctrine of 'eye for an eye'...

It is vain to trifle in this matter! The light foolish handling of them by mulcts, fines, &c.; 'tis their glory and their advantage! If the Gallows instead of the Counter, and the galleys instead of the fines; were the reward of going to a conventicle, to preach or hear, there would not be so many sufferers! The spirit of martyrdom is over! They that will go to church to be chosen Sheriffs and Mayors, would go to forty churches, rather than be hanged!

10 If one severe Law were made, and punctually executed, that *Whoever was found at a Conventicle should be banished the nation, and the Preacher be hanged*; we should soon see an end of the tale! They would all come to church again, and one Age would make us all One again!

To talk of Five Shillings a month for not coming to the Sacrament, and One Shilling per week, for not coming to Church: this is such a way of converting people as was never known! This is selling them a liberty to transgress, for so much money!

If it be not a crime, why don't we give them full license? and if it be, no price ought to compound for the committing of it! for that is selling a liberty to people to sin against GOD and the Government!

If it be a crime of the highest consequence, both against the peace and welfare of the nation, the Glory of GOD, the good of the Church, and the happiness of the soul: let us rank it among capital offences! and let it receive punishment in proportion to it!

20 We hang men for trifles, and banish them for things not worth naming; but that an offence against GOD and the Church, against the welfare of the World, and the dignity of Religion shall be bought off for FIVE SHILLINGS: this is such a shame to a Christian Government, that it is with regret I transmit it to posterity.²⁷

If men sin against GOD, affront His ordinances, rebel against His Church, and disobey the precepts of their superiors; let them suffer, as such capital crimes deserve! so will Religion flourish, and this divided nation be once again united.

And yet the title of *barbarous* and *cruel* will soon be taken off from this Law too. I am not supposing that all the Dissenters in England should be hanged or banished. But as in

²⁷ And yet, Defoe's speaker *does* have his moments! There's a real relish in his exposure of the absurdity of the halfway house of fining Non-Conformists and recusants, using laws dating back to the time of Elizabeth I. A fully committed Non-Conformist such as Defoe would no doubt see this as an absurdity, but from the other side of the fence. Is it fortunate or unfortunate that Defoe, as Devil's advocate, gives him such good lines to say? There is danger of the satire backfiring radically here, if all the pamphlet does is convince readers of the justice of the speaker's harangue.

case of rebellions and insurrections, if a few of the ringleaders suffer, the multitude are dismissed; so a few obstinate people being made examples, there is no doubt but the severity of the Law would find a stop in the compliance of the multitude.

To make the reasonableness of this matter out of question, and more unanswerably plain, let us examine for what it is, that this nation is divided into Parties and factions? and let us see how they can justify a Separation? or we of the Church of England can justify our bearing the insults and inconveniences of the Party.

One of their leading Pastors, and a man of as much learning as most among them, in his *Answer* to a Pamphlet entitled *An Enquiry into the Occasional Conformity*, hath these words, p. 27: “Do the Religion of the Church and the Meeting Houses make two religions? Wherein do they differ? The Substance of the same Religion is common to them both, and the Modes and Accidents are the things in which only they differ.” P. 28: “Thirty-nine *Articles* are given us for the Summary of our Religion: thirty-six contain the Substance of it, wherein we agree; three are additional Appendices, about which we have some differences.”²⁸

Now, if as, by their own acknowledgment, the Church of England is a true Church; and the difference is only in a few “Modes and Accidents”: why should we expect that they will suffer the gallows and galleys, corporal punishment and banishment, for these trifles? There is no question, but they will be wiser! Even their own principles won’t bear them out in it!

They will certainly comply with the Laws, and with Reason! And though, at the first, severity may seem hard, the next Age will feel nothing of it! the contagion will be rooted out. The disease being cured, there will be no need of the operation!²⁹ But if they should venture to transgress, and fall into the pit; all the World must condemn their obstinacy, as being without ground from their own principles.

²⁸ Another teasing, complex reference to the ongoing pamphlet war being waged at the turn of the century. Defoe himself is attributed with authorship of the *Enquiry into Occasional Conformity* (the practice whereby, to avoid the Penal Laws that prevented Dissenters etc. from holding public office, the latter publicly attended divine service in the Church of England but in private continued to worship in Non-conformist chapels). Recent research in the journal *Eighteenth Century Studies* emphasizes that Defoe was inconsistently opposed both to the practice of 'Occasional Conformity' and to the laws that were supposed to prevent it. It is a moot point whether Defoe is just throwing sand in the reader's eyes here (by alluding to the response to one of his own works in a way that would disguise his authorship of this one) OR whether he's trying to make a genuine point about how trifling the doctrinal differences between Anglicans and Dissenters really are.

²⁹ Note the use of medical metaphor as applied not so much to the body politic, but to the spiritual health of the nation.

Thus the pretence of cruelty will be taken off, and the Party actual suppressed; and the disquiets they have so often brought upon the Nation, prevented.

Their numbers and their wealth make them haughty; and that is so far from being an argument to persuade us to forbear them, that it is a warning to us, without any more delay, to reconcile them to the Unity of the Church, or remove them from us.

At present, Heaven be praised! they are not so formidable as they have been, and it is our own fault if ever we suffer them to be so! Providence and the Church of England seem to join in this particular, that now, the Destroyers of the Nation's Peace may be overturned! and to this end, the present opportunity seems to put into our hands.

10 To this end³⁰, Her present Majesty seems reserved to enjoy the Crown, that the Ecclesiastic as well as Civil Rights of the Nation may be restored by her hand.

To this end, the face of affairs has received such a turn in the process of a few months as never has been before. The leading men of the Nation, the universal cry of the People, the unanimous request of the Clergy agree in this, that the Deliverance of our Church is at hand!

For this end, has Providence given such a Parliament! such a Convocation! such a Gentry! and such a Queen! as we never had before.

20 And what may be the consequences of a neglect of such opportunities? The Succession of the Crown has but a dark prospect! Another Dutch turn may make the hopes of it ridiculous, and the practice impossible! Be the House of our future Princes ever so well inclined, they will be Foreigners! Many years will be spent in suiting the Genius of Strangers to this Crown, and the Interests of the Nation! and how many Ages it may be, before the English throne be filled with so much zeal and candour, so much tenderness and hearty affection to the Church, as we see it now covered with, who can imagine?

It is high time, then, for the friends of the Church of England to think of building up and establishing her in such a manner, that she may be no more invaded by Foreigners, nor divided by factions, schisms, and error.

If this could be done by gentle and easy methods, I should be glad! but the wound is corroded, the vitals begin to mortify, and nothing but amputation of members can

³⁰ Note use of the rhetorical device of *anaphora*: 'to this end', to this end' etc. We are now entering the *peroratio* of the speaker's discourse--where a raising of pitch, unabashed hyperbole, and an absence of reasoned argument may be detected: the speaker draws the threads of his argument together, as well as his converted listeners, under the banner of 'Unity' (as many wily politicians have done before and since!).

complete the cure! All the ways of tenderness and compassion, all persuasive arguments have been made use of in vain!

The humour of the Dissenters has so increased among the people, that they hold the Church in defiance! and the House of GOD is an abomination among them! Nay, they have brought up their posterity in such prepossessed aversion to our Holy Religion, that the ignorant mob think we are all idolaters and worshippers of BAAL! and account it a sin to come within the walls of our churches!

The primitive Christians were not more shy of a heathen temple,³¹ or of meat offered to idols; nor the Jews, of swine's flesh, than some of our Dissenters are of the church and the *Divine Service* solemnized therein.

The Obstinacy must be rooted out, with the profession of it! While the Generation are left at liberty daily to affront GOD Almighty, and dishonour His holy worship; we are wanting in our duty to GOD, and to our Mother the Church of England.

How can we answer it to GOD! to the Church! and to our posterity; to leave them entangled with Fanaticism! Error, and Obstinacy, in the bowels of the nation? to leave them an enemy in their streets, that, in time, may involve them in the same crimes, and endanger the utter extirpation of the Religion of the Nation!

What is the difference betwixt this, and being subject to the power of the Church of Rome?³² from whence we have reformed. If one be an extreme to the one hand, and one on another: it is equally destructive to the Truth to have errors settled among us, let them be of what nature they will! Both are enemies of our Church, and of our peace! and why should it not be as criminal to admit an Enthusiast as a Jesuit? why should the Papist with his Seven Sacraments be worse than the Quaker with no Sacraments at all? Why should Religious Houses be more intolerable than Meeting Houses?

Alas, the Church of England! What with Popery on one hand, and Schismatics on the other, how has She been crucified between two thieves. NOW, LET US CRUCIFY THE THIEVES!³³

³¹ The speaker's *peroratio* is weakened by the descent into detail here. Once again, the *exemplum* does more harm than good, as it casts the Dissenters in the role of the minority of faithful Israelites and followers of Moses, in Exodus--as opposed to that of the Amalekites (see earlier note). This alteration of position--from traditional villains to traditional heroes--is disconcerting, at this late stage in the day.

³² The speaker plays the long-delayed anti-Catholic card.

³³ An iconic image on which to end. Very powerful indeed, but while this does accord a position of crucial importance to the speaker's only New Testament/Gospel allusion, and makes mention of the idea of Mercy (see next page), the latter comes almost as an afterthought, after the intensity of 'Now, let us Crucifie the

Let her foundations be established upon the destruction of her enemies! The doors of Mercy being always open to the returning part of the deluded people, let the obstinate be ruled with the rod of iron!

Let all true sons of so holy and oppressed a Mother, exasperated by her afflictions, harden their hearts against those who have oppressed her!

*And may God Almighty put it into the hearts of all the friends of Truth, to lift up a Standard against Pride and ANTICHRIST! that the Posterity of the Sons of Error may be rooted out from the face of this land, for ever!*³⁴

thieves.' Again, the position in which the allusion places the speaker and his listeners is counter-productive: they are placed in the role of the unenlightened Judaeo-Roman authorities who ordered the crucifixion of Jesus alongside the two thieves. Christ's forgiveness of one of the two thieves (Luke 23:43) does not transfer easily to them.

³⁴ The final italicised paragraph is almost an inversion of the part of the Eucharistic prayer common to the Roman Catholic, Anglican and most Non-conformist Churches of the time known as the *sursum corda*, in which the presiding priest exhorts his congregation to 'lift up your hearts'. The cadences and typography of this final part of the pamphlet seem perfectly designed to mimic the Liturgy, while pointing up the speaker's entire lack of true Christian charity.

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A Modest Proposal

For Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland, from Being a
Burden on Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to
the Publick

[Jonathan Swift]

Edited and annotated by Jack Lynch

Swift was Irish, and though he much preferred living in England, he resented British policies toward the Irish. In a letter to Pope of 1729, he wrote, “Imagine a nation the two-thirds of whose revenues are spent out of it, and who are not permitted to trade with the other third, and where the pride of the women will not suffer [allow] them to wear their own manufactures even where they excel what come from abroad: This is the true state of Ireland in a very few words.” His support for Irish causes has made him a renowned figure in modern Ireland. The paragraph numbers have been added for this edition. [Jack Lynch]

[1] It is a melancholly Object to those, who walk through this great Town,¹ or travel in the Country, when they see the *Streets*, the *Roads*, and *Cabbin-Doors*, crowded with *Beggars* of the female Sex, followed by three, four, or six Children, *all in Rags*, and importuning every Passenger for an Alms. These *Mothers* instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in Stroling, to beg Sustenance for their *helpless Infants*, who, as they grow up either turn *Thieves* for want of work, or leave their *dear native Country to fight for the Pretender in Spain*,² or sell themselves to the *Barbadoes*.³

[2] I think it is agreed by all Parties, that this prodigious number of Children, in the Arms, or on the Backs, or at the *beels* of their *Mothers*, and frequently of their Fathers, is *in the present deplorable state of the Kingdom*, a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap and easy method of making these Children sound and useful Members of the common-wealth would deserve so well of the publick, as to have his Statue set up for a preserver of the Nation.

[3] But my Intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the Children of *professed beggars*, it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of Infants at a certain Age, who are born of Parents in effect as little able to support them, as those who demand our Charity in the Streets.

[4] As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many Years, upon this important Subject, and maturely weighed the several *Schemes of other Projectors*,⁴ I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true a Child, *just dropt from it's Dam*,⁵ may be supported by her Milk, for a Solar year with little other Nourishment, at most not above the Value of two Shillings, which the Mother may certainly get, or the Value in *Scraps*, by her lawful Occupation of begging, and it is exactly at one year Old that I propose to provide for them, in such a manner, as, instead of being a Charge upon their *Parents*, or the *Parish*,⁶ or *wanting*⁷ *Food and Raiment* for the rest of their Lives, they shall, on the Contrary, contribute to the Feeding and partly to the Cloathing of many Thousands.

10 [5] There is likewise another great Advantage in my Scheme, that it will prevent those *voluntary Abortions*, and that horrid practice of *Women murdering their Bastard Children*, alas! too frequent among us, Sacrificing the *poor innocent Babes*, I doubt,⁸ more to avoid the Expence, than the Shame, which would move Tears and Pity in the most Savage and inhuman breast.

[6] The number of Souls in this Kingdom being usually reckoned one Million and a half, Of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand Couple whose Wives are breeders, from which number I Substract thirty Thousand Couples, who are able to maintain their own Children, although I apprehend⁹ there cannot be so many, under *the present distresses of the Kingdom*, but this being granted, there will remain an hundred and seventy thousand Breeders. I again Subtract fifty Thousand for those Women who
 20 miscarry, or whose Children dye by accident, or disease within the Year. There only remain an hundred and twenty thousand Children of poor Parents annually born: The question therefore is, How this number shall be reared, and provided for, which, as I have already said, under the present Situation of Affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed, for we can *neither employ them in Handicraft, or Agriculture*; we neither build Houses, (I mean in the Country) nor cultivate Land:¹⁰ they can very seldom pick up a Livelyhood *by Stealing* until they arrive at six years Old, except where they are of towardly parts,¹¹ although, I confess they learn the Rudiments much earlier; during which time they can however be properly looked upon only as *Probationers*, as I have been informed by a
 30 principal Gentleman in the County of *Cavan*, who protested to me, that he never knew above one or two Instances under the Age of six, even in a part of the Kingdom *so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that Art*.

[7] I am assured by our Merchants, that a Boy or Girl, before twelve years Old, is no saleable Commodity, and even when they come to this Age, they will not yield above three Pounds, or three Pounds and half a Crown at most on the Exchange, which cannot turn

to Account either to the Parents or the Kingdom, the Charge of Nutriments and Rags having been at least four times that Value.

[8] I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be lyable to the least Objection.

[9] I have been assured by a very knowing *American* of my acquaintance in *London*, that a young healthy Child well Nursed is at a year Old, a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome Food, whether *Stewed, Roasted, Baked, or Boyled*, and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a *Fricasie*, or *Ragoust*.¹²

10 [10] I do therefore humbly offer it to *publick consideration*, that of the hundred and twenty thousand Children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for Breed, whereof only one fourth part to be Males, which is more than we allow to *Sheep, black Cattle, or Swine*, and my reason is, that these Children are seldom the Fruits of Marriage, *a Circumstance not much regarded by our Savages*, therefore, *one Male* will be sufficient to serve *four Females*. That the remaining hundred thousand may at a year Old be offered in Sale to the *persons of Quality*,¹³ and *Fortune*, through the Kingdom, always advising the Mother to let them Suck plentifully in the last Month, so as to render them Plump, and Fat for a good Table. A Child will make two Dishes at an Entertainment for Friends, and when the Family dines alone, the fore or hind Quarter will make a reasonable Dish, and seasoned with a little Pepper or Salt will be very good Boiled on the fourth Day, especially in *Winter*.

20 [11] I have reckoned upon a Medium, that a Child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar Year if tollerably nursed increaseth to 28 Pounds.

[12] I grant this food will be somewhat dear,¹⁴ and therefore very *proper for Landlords*,¹⁵ who, as they have already devoured most of the Parents, seem to have the best Title to the Children.

[13] Infant's flesh will be in Season throughout the Year, but more plentiful in *March*, and a little before and after; for we are told by a grave Author¹⁶ an eminent *French* physitian, that *Fish being a prolifick Dyet*, there are more Children born in *Roman Catholick Countries* about nine Months after *Lent*, than at any other Season, therefore reckoning a Year after *Lent*, the Markets will be more glutted than usual, because the Number of *Popish Infants*, is
30 at least three to one in this Kingdom, and therefore it will have one other Collateral advantage by lessening the Number of *Papists* among us.

[14] I have already computed the Charge of nursing a Beggars Child (in which list I reckon all *Cottagers, Labourers*, and four fifths of the *Farmers*) to be about two Shillings *per Annum*, Rags included; and I believe no Gentleman would repine to give Ten Shillings for the

Carcass of a good fat Child, which, as I have said will make four Dishes of excellent Nutritive Meat, when he hath only some particular friend, or his own Family to Dine with him. Thus the Squire will learn to be a good Landlord, and grow popular among his Tenants, the Mother will have Eight Shillings neat profit, and be fit for Work till she produceth another Child.

[15] Those who are more thrifty (*as I must confess the Times require*) may flay the Carcass; the Skin of which, Artificially¹⁷ dressed, will make admirable *Gloves for Ladies*, and *Summer Boots for fine Gentlemen*.

10 [16] As to our City of *Dublin*, Shambles¹⁸ may be appointed for this purpose, in the most convenient parts of it, and Butchers we may be assured will not be wanting, although I rather recommend buying the Children alive, and dressing them hot from the Knife, as we do *roasting Pigs*.

[17] A very worthy Person, a *true Lover of his Country*, and whose Virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased, in discoursing on this matter, to offer a refinement upon my Scheme. He said, that many Gentlemen of this Kingdom, having of late destroyed their Deer, he conceived that the want of Venison might be well supplied by the Bodies of young Lads and Maidens, not exceeding fourteen Years of Age, nor under twelve; so great a Number of both Sexes in every County being now ready to Starve, for want of Work and Service: And these to be disposed of by their Parents if alive, or otherwise by their nearest Relations.

20 But with due deference to so excellent a friend, and so deserving a Patriot, I cannot be altogether in his Sentiments, for as to the Males, my *American* acquaintance assured me from frequent Experience, that their flesh was generally Tough and Lean, like that of our School-boys, by continual exercise, and their Taste disagreeable, and to Fatten them would not answer the Charge. Then as to the Females, it would, I think, with humble Submission, *be a loss to the Publick*, because they soon would become Breeders themselves: And besides it is not improbable that some scrupulous People might be apt to Censure such a Practice, (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon Cruelty, which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest objection against any Project, how well soever intended.

[18] But in order to justify my friend, he confessed, that this expedient was put into his

30 head by the famous *Sallmanaazor*,¹⁹ a Native of the Island *Formosa*, who came from thence to *London*, above twenty Years ago, and in Conversation told my friend, that in his Country when any young Person happened to be put to Death, the Executioner sold the Carcass to *Persons of Quality*, as a prime Dainty, and that, in his Time, the Body of a plump Girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to Poison the Emperor, was sold to his Imperial

Majesty's prime Minister of State, and other great *Mandarins*:²⁰ of the Court, *in Joints from the Gibbet*,²¹ at four hundred Crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same use were made of several plump young Girls in this Town, who, without one single Groat²² to their Fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a Chair,²³ and appear at a *Play-House*, and *Assemblies* in Foreign fineries, which they never will Pay for; the Kingdom would not be the worse.

[19] Some Persons of a desponding Spirit are in great concern about that vast Number of poor People, who are aged, diseased, or maimed, and I have been desired to imploy my thoughts what Course may be taken, to ease the Nation of so grievous an Incumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known, that they are
 10 every Day *dying*, and *rotting*, by *cold*, and *famine*, and *filth*, and *vermin*, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the younger Labourers they are now in almost as hopeful a Condition. They cannot get Work, and consequently pine away from want of Nourishment, to a degree, that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common Labour, they have not strength to perform it, and thus the Country and themselves are happily delivered from the Evils to come.

[20] I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the Proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

[21] For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen *the Number of Papists*, with
 20 whom we are Yearly over-run, being the principal Breeders of the Nation, as well as our most dangerous Enemies, and who stay at home on purpose with a design *to deliver the Kingdom to the Pretender*, hoping to take their Advantage by the absence *of so many good Protestants*,²⁴ who have chosen rather to leave their Country, than stay at home, and pay Tythes against their *Conscience*, to an idolatrous *Episcopal Curate*.

[22] *Secondly*, the poorer Tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by Law may be made lyable to Distress,²⁵ and help to pay their Landlord's Rent, their Corn and Cattle being already seized, and *Money a thing unknown*.

[23] *Thirdly*, Whereas the Maintainance of an hundred thousand Children, from two Years
 30 old, and upwards, cannot be computed at less than Ten Shillings a piece *per Annum*, the Nation's Stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds *per Annum*, besides the profit of a new Dish, introduced to the Tables of all *Gentlemen of Fortune* in the Kingdom, who have any refinement in Taste, and the Money will circulate among our selves, the Goods being entirely of our own Growth and Manufacture.

[24] *Fourthly*, The constant Breeders, besides the gain of Eight Shillings *Sterling per Annum*, by the Sale of their Children, will be rid of the Charge of maintaining them after the first Year.

[25] *Fifthly*, this food would likewise bring great *Custom to Taverns*, where the Vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts²⁶ for dressing it to perfection, and consequently have their Houses frequented by all the *fine Gentlemen*, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good Eating, and a skillful Cook, who understands how to oblige his Guests will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

10 [26] *Sixthly*, This would be a great Inducement to Marriage, which all wise Nations have either encouraged by Rewards, or enforced by Laws and Penalties. It would encrease the care and tenderness of Mothers towards their Children, when they were sure of a Settlement for Life, to the poor Babes, provided in some sort by the Publick to their Annual profit instead of Expencc, we should soon see an honest Emulation among the married women, *whicb of them could bring the fattest Child to the Market*, Men would become as fond of their *Wives*, during the Time of their Pregnancy, as they are now of their *Mares* in Foal, their *Cows* in Calf, or *Sows* when they are ready to Farrow, nor offer to Beat or Kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a Miscarriage.

20 [27] Many other advantages might be enumerated: For Instance, the addition of some thousand Carcases in our exportation of Barreled Beef. The Propagation of *Swines Flesh*, and Improvement in the Art of making good *Bacon*, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of *Pigs*, too frequent at our Tables, which are no way comparable in Taste, or Magnificence to a well grown, fat Yearling Child, which Roasted whole will make a considerable Figure at a *Lord Mayor's Feast*, or any other Publick Entertainment. But this, and many others I omit being studious of Brevity.

[28] Supposing that one thousand Families in this City, would be constant Customers for Infants Flesh, besides others who might have it at *Merry-meetings*, particularly at *Weddings* and *Christenings*, I compute that *Dublin* would take off Annually about twenty thousand Carcases, and the rest of the Kingdom (where probably they will be Sold somewhat Cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

30 [29] I can think of no one Objection, that will possibly be raised against this Proposal, unless it should be urged, that the Number of People will be thereby much lessened in the Kingdom. This I freely own,²⁷ and it was indeed one Principal design in offering it to the World. I desire the Reader will observe, that I Calculate my Remedy *for this one individual Kingdom of IRELAND, and for no other that ever was, is, or, I think, ever can be upon Earth.*

Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients:²⁸ *Of taxing our Absentees at five Shillings a pound:*²⁹ *Of using neither Cloaths, nor household Furniture, except what is of our own Growth and Manufacture: Of utterly rejecting the Materials and Instruments that promote Foreign Luxury: Of curing the Expenciveness of Pride, Vanity, Idleness, and Gaming in our Women: Of introducing a Vein of Parsimony, Prudence and Temperance: Of learning to Love our Country, wherein we differ even from LAPLANDERS, and the Inhabitants of TOPINAMBOO:*³⁰ *Of quitting our Animositities, and Factions, nor Act any longer like the Jews, who were Murdering one another at the very moment their City was taken:*³¹ *Of being a little Cautious not to Sell our Country and Consciences for nothing: Of teaching Landlords to have at least one degree of Mercy towards their Tenants. Lastly of putting a Spirit of Honesty, Industry and Skill into our Shop-keepers, who, if a Resolution could now be taken to Buy only our Native Goods, would immediately unite to Cheat and Exact*³² *upon us in the Price, the Measure, and the Goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair Proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.*

[30] Therefore I repeat, let no Man talk to me of these and the like Expedients, till he hath at least a Glimpse of Hope, that there will ever be some hearty and sincere attempt to put them into Practice.

[31] But as to my self, having been wearied out for many Years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of Success, I fortunately fell upon this Proposal, which as it is wholly new, so it hath something Solid and Real, of no Expence and little Trouble, full in our own Power, and whereby we can incur no Danger in *disobliging* England. For this kind of Commodity will not bear Exportation, the Flesh being of too tender a Consistance, to admit a long continuance in Salt, *although perhaps I could name a Country, which would be glad to Eat up our whole Nation without it.*³³

[32] After all I am not so violently bent upon my own Opinion, as to reject any Offer, proposed by wise Men, which shall be found equally Innocent, Cheap, Easy and Effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in Contradiction to my Scheme, and offering a better, I desire the Author, or Authors will be pleased maturely to consider two points. *First*, As things now stand, how they will be able to find Food and Raiment for a hundred thousand useless Mouths and Backs. And *Secondly*, there being a round Million of Creatures in humane Figure, throughout this Kingdom, whose whole Subsistence put into a common Stock, would leave them in Debt two Millions of Pounds *Sterling* adding those, who are Beggars by Profession, to the Bulk of Farmers, Cottagers and Labourers with their Wives and Children, who are Beggars in Effect; I desire those *Politicians*, who dislike my Overture, and may perhaps be so bold to attempt an Answer, that they will first ask the

Parents of these Mortals, whether they would not at this Day think it a great Happiness to have been sold for Food at a year Old, in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual Scene of Misfortunes, as they have since gone through, by the *oppression of Landlords*, the Impossibility of paying Rent without Money or Trade, the want of common Sustenance, with neither House nor Cloaths to cover them from Inclemencies of Weather, and the most inevitable Prospect of intailing the like, or greater Miseries upon their Breed for ever.

[33] I Profess in the sincerity of my Heart that I have not the least personal Interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary Work having no other Motive than the *publick Good of my Country*, by *advancing our Trade, providing for Infants, relieving the Poor, and giving some Pleasure to the Rich*. I have no Children, by which I can propose to get a single Penny; the youngest being nine Years old, and my Wife past Child-bearing.

Notes [by Jack Lynch]

1. Dublin.
2. The *Pretender* was the descendant of King James II of the House of Stuart, expelled from Britain in 1689. James and his descendants were Catholic, so they took refuge in Catholic countries.
3. Many poor Irish were forced to seek a living in the New World.
4. *Projector*, “One who forms schemes or designs” (Johnson).
5. *Dam*, “The mother: used of beasts, or other animals not human,” or “A human mother: in contempt or detestation” (Johnson).
6. Parishes were responsible for the support of those unable to work.
7. *Wanting*, “lacking.”
8. *Doubt*, “suspect” or “imagine.”
9. *Apprehend*, “fear.”
10. Britain imposed strict regulations on Irish agriculture.
11. *Towardsly parts*, “ready abilities.”
12. *Fricasee*, “A dish made by cutting chickens or other small things in pieces, and dressing them with strong sauce” (Johnson); *ragout*, “Meat stewed and highly seasoned” (Johnson).
13. *Quality*, “Rank; superiority of birth or station” (Johnson).
14. *Dear*, “expensive.”
15. British landlords took much of the blame for Ireland’s condition, and generally with good reason.
16. Swift’s note: “Rabelais.”
17. *Artificially*, “skillfully.”
18. *Shambles*, “meat markets.”
19. George Psalmanazar, an impostor who claimed to be from Formosa (modern Taiwan). His *Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa* (1704) described their

- religious practices: every year 18,000 young boys were sacrificed to the gods, and the parishioners ate their raw hearts.
20. *Mandarin*, “A Chinese nobleman or magistrate” (Johnson).
 21. *Gibbet*, “A gallows; the post on which malefactors are hanged, or on which their carcasses are exposed” (Johnson).
 22. A *groat* is worth four pence; proverbially, any small amount.
 23. *Chair*, “A vehicle born by men; a sedan” (Johnson).
 24. Dissenters or Nonconformists, whose principles Swift rejected.
 25. *Distress*, “arrest for debt.”
 26. *Receipts*, “[From *recipe*.] Prescription of ingredients for any composition” (Johnson).
 27. *Own*, “admit.”
 28. These “expedients” are serious proposals, several of which Swift advocated in his other publications.
 29. *Five shillings a pound* is a twenty-five percent tax.
 30. *Topinambo*, a district in Brazil.
 31. Titus sacked the Second Temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
 32. *Exact*, “impose.”
 33. Swift is making a coy reference to England.

‘Splendide Mendax – Verba
Volant, Scripta Manent.’

Lithograph by David O’Kane
to the Salvage Press edition of
the *Modest Proposal* (2017) with
poems by Jessica Traynor



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A N D

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It is a Complaint which has been made from time to time, and which seems to have lately become more frequent, that *English* Oratory, however forcible in Argument, or elegant in Expression, is deficient and inefficient, because our Speakers want the Grace and Energy of Action.

Among the numerous Projectors who are desirous to refine our Manners, and improve our Faculties, some are willing to supply the Deficiency of our Speakers; we have had more than one Exhortation to study the neglected Art of moving the Passions, and have been encouraged to believe that our Tongues, however feeble in themselves, may, by the Help of our Hands and Legs, obtain an uncontrollable Dominion over the most stubborn Audience, animate the Insensible, enrage the Careless, force Tears from the Obdurate, and Money from the Avaricious.

If by Slight of Hand, or Nimbleness of Foot, all these Wonders can be performed, he that shall neglect to attain the free Use of his Limbs may be justly censured as criminally lazy; but I am afraid that no Specimen of any such Efforts will easily be shewn. If I could once find a Speaker in *Change-Alley* raising the Price of Stocks by the Power of persuasive Gestures, I should very zealously recommend the Study of his Art; but having hitherto seen no Action by which Language was much assisted, I have been hitherto inclined to doubt whether my Countrymen are not blam'd too hastily for their calm and motionless Utterance.

Foreigners of many Nations accompany their Speech with Action; but why should their Example have more Influence upon us than ours upon them? Customs are not to be changed but for better; let those who desire to reform us, shew the Benefits of the Change proposed. When the *Frenchman* waves his Hands and writhes his Body in recounting the Revolutions of a Game at Cards, or the *Napolitan*, who tells the Hour of the Day, shews upon his Fingers the Number which he mentions, I do not perceive that their manual Exercise is of much Use, nor have any Image more deeply impressed by their Bustle and Vehemence of Communication.

Upon the *English* Stage there is no Want

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of Action, but the Difficulty of making it at once various and proper, and its perpetual tending to become ridiculous, notwithstanding all the Advantages which Art and Show, and Custom and Prejudice can give it, may prove how little it can be admitted into any other Place, where it can have no Recommendation but from Truth and Nature.

The Use of English Oratory is only at the Bar, in the Parliament, and in the Church. Neither the Judges of our Laws, nor the Representatives of our People would be much affected by laboured Gesticulation, or believe any Man the more because he rolled his Eyes, or puffed his Cheeks, or spread abroad his Arms, or stamped the Ground, or thumped his Breast, or turned his Eyes sometimes to the Ceiling and sometimes to the Floor: Upon Men, intent only upon Truth, the Arm of an Orator has little Power; a credible Testimony, or a cogent Argument, will overcome all the Art of Modulation, and all the Violence of Contortion.

It is well known, that in the City which may be called the Parent of Oratory, all the Arts of mechanical Persuasion were banished from the Court of Supreme Judicature. The Judges of the *Areopagus* considered Action and Vociferation as a foolish Appeal to the external Senses, and unworthy to be practised before those who had no Desire of idle Amusement, and whose only Pleasure was to discover Right.

Whether Action may not be yet of use in Churches, where the Preacher addresses a mingled Audience, may deserve Enquiry. It is certain that the Senses are more powerful as the Reason is weaker; and that he whose Ears convey little to his Mind, may sometimes listen with his Eyes, till Truth may gradually take possession of his Heart. If there be any use of Gesticulation, it must be applied to the Ignorant and Rude, who will be more affected by Vehemence than delighted by Propriety. In the Pulpit little Action can be proper, for Action can illustrate nothing but that to which it may be referred by Nature or by Custom. He that imitates by his Hand a Motion which he describes, explains it by natural Similitude; he that lays his Hand on his Breast when he expresses Fury, enforces his Words by a customary Allusion. But Theology has few Topics to which Action can be appropriated; that Action which is vague and indeterminate will at last settle thro' Habit, and habitual Peculiarities are quickly ridiculous.

It is perhaps the Character of the English to despise Trifles, and that Art may surely be accounted a Trifle which is at once useless and ostentatious, which can seldom be practised with Propriety, and which, as the Mind is more cultivated, is less powerful. Yet as all innocent means are to be used for the Propagation of Truth, I would not deter those who are employed in Preaching to common Congregations, from any Practice which they may find persuasive, for, compared with the Conversion of Sinners, Propriety and Elegance are less than nothing.



The WESTMINSTER JOURNAL. N^o 917

By THO. TOUCHIT, of *Spring Gardens*, Esq;
To the AUTHOR, &c.

SIR,
NOTHING is a more ridiculous and false Allegation than to compliment the Right Honourable Gentleman who is supposed to conduct our foreign Councils at this Time, at the Expence of his Predecessors in Office. And yet this is the perpetual fullsome Strain of some of our present political Writings, and even the *T—ne* itself has been insulted by Addresses in the same fullsome Style.

That the Spirit of this Nation, since that Gentleman came into the Administration, has been properly exerted, I admit, and to must all Men of Knowledge and Candour. But they must at the same Time deny that it has been retrieved, because that would imply that before his Time it had been lost. The Spirit of this Nation was as nobly exerted in the Fields of *Fontenoy* and *La Feldt*, as it was in the Plains of *Minden* and *Quebec*. The Difference of Success with generous Minds makes none in Merit; but that Difference lay not in the Spirit of the Nation, but in the Circumstances of the Times. In the last War (to use the Words of our present most Christian Foe, who is not guilty of saying a great many good Things) *We not only Paid all, but Fought all*. We depended on Allies whose repeated Experience of the Good-Nature of the *British* Nation led them to make us their Property, and we were brought into that Dependance: How? Why, the Ministry, by the Roarings, the Ravings, and the Bellowsings of the People, misled by concealed *Jacobites*, disappointed Parliament-men, and independent Electors, were forced, against their own best Senses, to undertake the Support of the *King*.

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UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Rambler 114,

Saturday, 20 April 1750

By Samuel Johnson

——— *Audi,**Nulla unquam de morte hominis cunctatio longa est.*

Juvenal, VI.220–21.

——— When man's life is in debate,

The judge can ne'er too long deliberate.

Dryden.

[1] Power and superiority are so flattering and delightful, that, fraught with temptation and exposed to danger as they are, scarcely any virtue is so cautious, or any prudence so timorous, as to decline them. Even those that have most reverence for the laws of right, are pleased with shewing that not fear, but choice, regulates their behaviour; and would be thought to comply, rather than obey. We love to overlook the boundaries which we do not wish to pass; and, as the Roman satirist remarks, he that has no design to take the life of another, is yet glad to have it in his hands.

10 [2] From the same principle, tending yet more to degeneracy and corruption, proceeds the desire of investing lawful authority with terror, and governing by force rather than persuasion. Pride is unwilling to believe the necessity of assigning any other reason than her own will; and would rather maintain the most equitable claims by violence and penalties, than descend from the dignity of command to dispute and expostulation.

[3] It may, I think, be suspected, that this political arrogance has sometimes found its way into legislative assemblies, and mingled with deliberations upon property and life. A slight perusal of the laws by which the measures of vindictive and coercive justice are established, will discover so many disproportions between crimes and punishments, such capricious distinctions of guilt, and such confusion of remissness and severity, as can scarcely be believed to have been produced by publick wisdom, sincerely and calmly studious of publick happiness.

20 [4] The learned, the judicious, the pious Boerhaave relates, that he never saw a criminal dragged to execution without asking himself, "Who knows whether this man is not less

culpable than me?" On the days when the prisons of this city are emptied into the grave, let every spectator of the dreadful procession put the same question to his own heart. Few among those that crowd in thousands to the legal massacre, and look with carelessness, perhaps with triumph, on the utmost exacerbations of human misery, would then be able to return without horror and dejection. For, who can congratulate himself upon a life passed without some act more mischievous to the peace or prosperity of others, than the theft of a piece of money?

[5] It has been always the practice, when any particular species of robbery becomes prevalent and common, to endeavour its suppression by capital denunciations. Thus, one
10 generation of malefactors is commonly cut off, and their successors are frightened into new expedients; the art of thievery is augmented with greater variety of fraud, and subtilized to higher degrees of dexterity, and more occult methods of conveyance. The law then renews the pursuit in the heat of anger, and overtakes the offender again with death. By this practice, capital inflictions are multiplied, and crimes very different in their degrees of enormity are equally subjected to the severest punishment that man has the power of exercising upon man.

[6] The lawgiver is undoubtedly allowed to estimate the malignity of an offence, not merely by the loss or pain which single acts may produce, but by the general alarm and anxiety arising from the fear of mischief, and insecurity of possession: he therefore exercises the
20 right which societies are supposed to have over the lives of those that compose them, not simply to punish a transgression, but to maintain order, and preserve quiet; he enforces those laws with severity that are most in danger of violation, as the commander of a garrison doubles the guard on that side which is threatned by the enemy.

[7] This method has been long tried, but tried with so little success, that rapine and violence are hourly encreasing; yet few seem willing to despair of its efficacy, and of those who employ their speculations upon the present corruption of the people, some propose the introduction of more horrid, lingering and terrifick punishments; some are inclined to accelerate the executions; some to discourage pardons; and all seem to think that lenity has given confidence to wickedness, and that we can only be rescued from the the talons of
30 robbery by inflexible rigour, and sanguinary justice.

[8] Yet since the right of setting an uncertain and arbitrary value upon life has been disputed, and since experience of past times gives us little reason to hope that any reformation will be effected by a periodical havock of our fellow-beings, perhaps it will not be useless to consider what consequences might arise from relaxations of the law, and a more rational and equitable adaptation of penalties to offences.

[9] Death is, as one of the ancients observes, *to tôn phoberôn phoberôtaton*, “of dreadful things the most dreadful”; an evil, beyond which nothing can be threatened by sublunary power, or feared from human enmity or vengeance. This terror should, therefore, be reserved as the last resort of authority, as the strongest and most operative of prohibitory sanctions, and placed before the treasure of life, to guard from invasion what cannot be restored. To equal robbery with murder is to reduce murder to robbery, to confound in common minds the gradations of iniquity, and incite the commission of a greater crime to prevent the detection of a less. If only murder were punished with death, very few robbers would stain their hands in blood; but when, by the last act of cruelty no new danger is incurred, and greater security may be obtained, upon what principle shall we bid them forbear?

[10] It may be urged, that the sentence is often mitigated to simple robbery; but surely this is to confess, that our laws are unreasonable in our own opinion; and, indeed, it may be observed, that all but murderers have, at their last hour, the common sensations of mankind pleading in their favour. From this conviction of the inequality of the punishment to the offence proceeds the frequent solicitation of pardons. They who would rejoice at the correction of a thief, are yet shocked at the thought of destroying him. His crime shrinks to nothing, compared with his misery; and severity defeats itself by exciting pity.

[11] The gibbet, indeed, certainly disables those who die upon it from infesting the community; but their death seems not to contribute more to the reformation of their associates than any other method of separation. A thief seldom passes much of his time in recollection or anticipation, but from robbery hastens to riot, and from riot to robbery; nor, when the grave closes upon his companion, has any other care than to find another.

[12] The frequency of capital punishments therefore rarely hinders the commission of a crime, but naturally and commonly prevents its detection, and is, if we proceed only upon prudential principles, chiefly for that reason to be avoided. Whatever may be urged by casuists or politicians, the greater part of mankind, as they can never think that to pick the

pocket and to pierce the heart is equally criminal, will scarcely believe that two malefactors so different in guilt can be justly doomed to the same punishment; nor is the necessity of submitting the conscience to human laws so plainly evinced, so clearly stated, or so generally allowed, but that the pious, the tender, and the just, will always scruple to concur with the community in an act which their private judgment cannot approve.

[13] He who knows not how often rigorous laws produce total impunity, and how many crimes are concealed and forgotten for fear of hurrying the offender to that state in which there is no repentance, has conversed very little with mankind. And whatever epithets of reproach or contempt this compassion may incur from those who confound cruelty with
10 firmness, I know not whether any wise man would wish it less powerful, or less extensive.

[14] If those whom the wisdom of our laws has condemned to die, had been detected in their rudiments of robbery, they might by proper discipline and useful labour, have been disentangled from their habits, they might have escaped all the temptations to subsequent crimes, and passed their days in reparation and penitence; and detected they might all have been, had the prosecutors been certain, that their lives would have been spared. I believe, every thief will confess, that he has been more than once seized and dismissed; and that he has sometimes ventured upon capital crimes, because he knew, that those whom he injured would rather connive at his escape, than cloud their minds with the horrors of his death.

[15] All laws against wickedness are ineffectual, unless some will inform, and some will
20 prosecute; but till we mitigate the penalties for mere violations of property, information will always be hated, and prosecution dreaded. The heart of a good man cannot but recoil at the thought of punishing a slight injury with death; especially when he remembers, that the thief might have procured safety by another crime, from which he was restrained only by his remaining virtue.

[16] The obligations to assist the exercise of publick justice are indeed strong; but they will certainly be overpowered by tenderness for life. What is punished with severity contrary to our ideas of adequate retribution, will be seldom discovered; and multitudes will be suffered to advance from crime to crime, till they deserve death, because if they had been sooner prosecuted, they would have suffered death before they deserved it. This scheme of
30 invigorating the laws by relaxation, and extirpating wickedness by lenity, is so remote from common practice, that I might reasonably fear to expose it to the publick, could it be

supported only by my own observations: I shall, therefore, by ascribing it to its author, Sir Thomas More, endeavour to procure it that attention, which I wish always paid to prudence, to justice, and to mercy.

[Folly of false pretences to importance. A journey in a stage coach.]

***Adventurer* No. 84. Saturday, August 25, 1753**

Samuel Johnson

— — — — — Tolle periculum,
 Jam vaga prosiliet frenis natura remotis. — HOR[ace]. Lib. ii. Sat. vii. 73.
 But take the danger and the shame away,
 And vagrant nature bounds upon her prey. FRANCIS.

To *The Adventurer*.

Sir,

It has been observed, I think, by Sir William Temple, and after him by almost every other writer, that England affords a greater variety of characters than the rest of the world. This is ascribed to the liberty prevailing amongst us, which gives every man the privilege of being wise or foolish his own way, and preserves him from the necessity of hypocrisy or the servility of imitation. That the position itself is true, I am not completely satisfied. To be nearly acquainted with the people of different countries can happen to very few; and in life, as in every thing else beheld at a distance, there appears an even uniformity: the petty discriminations which diversify the natural character, are not discoverable but by a close inspection; we, therefore, find them most at home, because there we have most opportunities of remarking them. Much less am I convinced, that this peculiar diversification, if it be real, is the consequence of peculiar liberty; for where is the government to be found that superintends individuals with so much vigilance, as not to leave their private conduct without restraint? Can it enter into a reasonable mind to imagine, that men of every other nation are not equally masters of their own time or houses with ourselves, and equally at liberty to be parsimonious or profuse, frolick or sullen, abstinent or luxurious? Liberty is certainly necessary to the full play of predominant

humours; but such liberty is to be found alike under the government of the many or the few, in monarchies or commonwealths.

How readily the predominant passion snatches an interval of liberty, and how fast it expands itself when the weight of restraint is taken away, I had lately an opportunity to discover, as I took a journey into the country in a stage-coach; which, as every journey is a kind of adventure, may be very properly related to you, though I can display no such extraordinary assembly as Cervantes has collected at Don Quixote's inn.

10 In a stage coach, the passengers are for the most part wholly unknown to one another, and without expectation of ever meeting again when their journey is at an end; one should therefore imagine, that it was of little importance to any of them, what conjectures the rest should form concerning him. Yet so it is, that as all think themselves secure from detection, all assume that character of which they are most desirous, and on no occasion is the general ambition of superiority more apparently indulged.

On the day of our departure, in the twilight of the morning, I ascended the vehicle with three men and two women, my fellow travellers. It was easy to observe the affected elevation of mien with which every one entered, and the supercilious servility with which they paid their compliments to each other. When the first ceremony was despatched, we sat silent for a long time, all employed in collecting importance into our faces, and endeavouring to strike reverence and submission into our companions.

20 It is always observable that silence propagates itself, and that the longer talk has been suspended, the more difficult it is to find any thing to say. We began now to wish for conversation; but no one seemed inclined to descend from his dignity, or first propose a topick of discourse. At last a corpulent gentleman, who had equipped himself for this expedition with a scarlet surtout and a large hat with a broad lace, drew out his watch, looked on it in silence, and then held it dangling at his finger. This was, I suppose, understood by all the company as an invitation to ask the time of the day, but nobody appeared to heed his overture; and his desire to be talking so far overcame his resentment, that he let us know of his own accord it was past five, and that in two hours we should be at breakfast.

His condescension was thrown away: we continued all obdurate; the ladies held up their heads; I amused myself with watching their behaviour; and of the other two, one seemed to employ himself in counting the trees as we drove by them, the other drew his hat over his eyes, and counterfeited a slumber. The man of benevolence, to shew that he was not depressed by our neglect, hummed a tune, and beat time upon his snuff-box.

Thus universally displeased with one another, and not much delighted with ourselves, we came at last to the little inn appointed for our repast; and all began at once to recompense themselves for the constraint of silence, by innumerable questions and orders to the people that attended us. At last, what every one had called for was got, or declared
10 impossible to be got at that time, and we were persuaded to sit round the same table; when the gentleman in the red surtout looked again upon his watch, told us that we had half an hour to spare, but he was sorry to see so little merriment among us; that all fellow travellers were for the time upon the level, and that it was always his way to make himself one of the company. “I remember,” says he, “it was on just such a morning as this, that I and my Lord Mumble and the Duke of Tenterden were out upon a ramble: we called at a little house as it might be this; and my landlady, I warrant you, not suspecting to whom she was talking, was so jocular and facetious, and made so many merry answers to our questions, that we were all ready to burst with laughter. At last the good woman happening to
20 overhear me whisper the duke and call him by his title, was so surprised and confounded, that we could scarcely get a word from her; and the duke never met me from that day to this, but he talks of the little house, and quarrels with me for terrifying the landlady.”

He had scarcely time to congratulate himself on the veneration which this narrative must have procured for him from the company, when one of the ladies having reached out for a plate on a distant part of the table, began to remark, “the inconveniences of travelling, and the difficulty which they who never sat at home without a great number of attendants, found in performing for themselves such offices as the road required; but that people of quality often travelled in disguise, and might be generally known from the vulgar by their condescension to poor innkeepers, and the allowance which they made for any defect in their entertainment; that for her part, while people were civil and meant well, it was never
30 her custom to find fault, for one was not to expect upon a journey all that one enjoyed at one’s own house.”

A general emulation seemed now to be excited. One of the men who had hitherto said nothing, called for the last newspaper; and having perused it a while with deep pensiveness, "It is impossible," says he, "for any man to guess how to act with regard to the stocks; last week it was the general opinion that they would fall; and I sold out twenty thousand pounds in order to a purchase: they have now risen unexpectedly; and I make no doubt but at my return to London I shall risk thirty thousand pounds among them again."

10 A young man, who had hitherto distinguished himself only by the vivacity of his looks, and a frequent diversion of his eyes from one object to another, upon this closed his snuff-box, and told us that "he had a hundred times talked with the chancellor and the judges on the subject of the stocks; that for his part he did not pretend to be well acquainted with the principles on which they were established, but had always heard them reckoned pernicious to trade, uncertain in their produce, and unsolid in their foundation; and that he had been advised by three judges, his most intimate friends, never to venture his money in the funds, but to put it out upon land security, till he could light upon an estate in his own country."

20 It might be expected, that upon these glimpses of latent dignity, we should all have begun to look round us with veneration; and have behaved like the princes of romance, when the enchantment that disguises them is dissolved, and they discover the dignity of each other; yet it happened, that none of these hints made much impression on the company; every one was apparently suspected of endeavouring to impose false appearances upon the rest; all continued their haughtiness in hopes to enforce their claims; and all grew every hour more sullen, because they found their representations of themselves without effect.

Thus we travelled on four days with malevolence perpetually increasing, and without any endeavour but to outvie each other in superciliousness and neglect; and when any two of us could separate ourselves for a moment we vented our indignation at the sauciness of the rest.

30 At length the journey was at an end; and time and chance, that strip off all disguises, have discovered that the intimate of lords and dukes is a nobleman's butler, who has furnished a shop with the money he has saved; the man who deals so largely in the funds, is the clerk of a broker in Change-alley; the lady who so carefully concealed her quality,

keeps a cook-shop behind the Exchange; and the young man who is so happy in the friendship of the judges, engrosses and transcribes for bread in a garret of the Temple. Of one of the women only I could make no disadvantageous detection, because she had assumed no character, but accommodated herself to the scene before her, without any struggle for distinction or superiority.

10 I could not forbear to reflect on the folly of practising a fraud, which, as the event showed, had been already practised too often to succeed, and by the success of which no advantage could have been obtained; of assuming a character, which was to end with the day; and of claiming upon false pretences honours which must perish with the breath that paid them.

But, Mr. Adventurer, let not those who laugh at me and my companions, think this folly confined to a stage-coach. Every man in the journey of life takes the same advantage of the ignorance of his fellow travellers, disguises himself in counterfeited merit, and hears those praises with complacency which his conscience reproaches him for accepting. Every man deceives himself while he thinks he is deceiving others; and forgets that the time is at hand when every illusion shall cease, when fictitious excellence shall be torn away, and ALL must be shown to ALL in their real state.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

VIATOR.

The Idler No. 22 [The Vulture's View of Mankind]

Saturday, 9 September 1758.

Samuel Johnson

Many naturalists are of opinion, that the animals which we commonly consider as mute, have the power of imparting their thoughts to one another. That they can express general sensations is very certain; every being that can utter sounds, has a different voice for pleasure and for pain. The hound informs his fellows when he scents his game; the hen calls her chickens to their food by her cluck, and drives them from danger by her scream.

Birds have the greatest variety of notes; they have indeed a variety, which seems almost sufficient to make a speech adequate to the purposes of a life, which is regulated by instinct, and can admit little change or improvement. To the cries of birds, curiosity or superstition has been always attentive, many have studied the language of the feathered tribes, and some have boasted that they understood it.

The most skilful or most confident interpreters of the silvan dialogues have been commonly found among the philosophers of the East, in a country where the calmness of the air, and the mildness of the seasons, allow the student to pass a great part of the year in groves and bowers. But what may be done in one place by peculiar opportunities, may
10 be performed in another by peculiar diligence. A shepherd of Bohemia has, by long abode in the forests, enabled himself to understand the voice of birds, at least he relates with great confidence a story of which the credibility may be considered by the learned.

“As I was sitting, (said he) within a hollow rock, and watching my sheep that fed in the valley, I heard two vultures interchangeably crying on the summit of the cliff. Both voices were earnest and deliberate. My curiosity prevailed over my care of the flock; I climbed slowly and silently from crag to crag, concealed among the shrubs, till I found a cavity where I might sit and listen without suffering, or giving disturbance.

“I soon perceived, that my labour would be well repaid; for an old vulture was sitting on a naked prominence, with her young about her, whom she was instructing in the arts
20 of a vulture’s life, and preparing, by the last lecture, for their final dismissal to the mountains and the skies.

“‘My children,’ said the old vulture, ‘you will the less want my instructions because you have had my practice before your eyes; you have seen me snatch from the farm the household fowl, you have seen me seize the leveret in the bush, and the kid in the pasture, you know how to fix your talons, and how to balance your flight when you are laden with your prey. But you remember the taste of more delicious food; I have often regaled you with the flesh of man.’ ‘Tell us,’ said the young vultures, ‘where man may be found, and how he may be known; his flesh is surely the natural food of a vulture. Why have you never brought a man in your talons to the nest?’ ‘He is too bulky,’ said the mother; ‘when we find
30 a man, we can only tear away his flesh and leave his bones upon the ground.’ ‘Since man is so big,’ said the young ones, ‘how do you kill him. You are afraid of the wolf and of the bear, by what power are vultures superior to man, is man more defenseless than a sheep?’ ‘We have not the strength of man,’ returned the mother, ‘and I am sometimes in doubt whether we have the subtilty; and the vultures would seldom feast upon his flesh, had not

nature, that devoted him to our uses, infused into him a strange ferocity, which I have never observed in any other being that feeds upon the earth. Two herds of men will often meet and shake the earth with noise, and fill the air with fire. When you hear noise and see fire which flashes along the ground, hasten to the place with your swiftest wing, for men are surely destroying one another; you will then find the ground smoking with blood and covered with carcasses, of which many are dismembered and mangled for the convenience of the vulture.’ ‘But when men have killed their prey,’ said the pupil, ‘why do they not eat it? When the wolf has killed a sheep he suffers not the vulture to touch it till he has satisfied himself. Is not man another kind of wolf?’ ‘Man,’ said the mother, ‘is the only beast who
10 kills that which he does not devour, and this quality makes him so much a benefactor to our species.’ ‘If men kill our prey and lay it in our way,’ said the young one, ‘what need shall we have of labouring for ourselves.’ ‘Because man will, sometimes,’ replied the mother, ‘remain for a long time quiet in his den. The old vultures will tell you when you are to watch his motions. When you see men in great numbers moving close together, like a flight of storks, you may conclude that they are hunting, and that you will soon revel in human blood.’ ‘But still,’ said the young one, ‘I would gladly know the reason of this mutual slaughter. I could never kill what I could not eat.’ ‘My child,’ said the mother, ‘this is a question which I cannot answer, tho’ I am reckoned the most subtle bird of the mountain. When I was young I used frequently to visit the ayry of an old vulture who dwelt upon the
20 Carpathian rocks; he had made many observations; he knew the places that afforded prey round his habitation, as far in every direction as the strongest wing can fly between the rising and setting of the summer sun; he had fed year after year on the entrails of men. His opinion was, that men had only the appearance of animal life, being really vegetables with a power of motion; and that as the boughs of an oak are dashed together by the storm, that swine may fatten upon the falling acorns, so men are by some unaccountable power driven one against another, till they lose their motion, that vultures may be fed. Others think they have observed something of contrivance and policy among these mischievous beings, and those that hover more closely round them, pretend, that there is, in every herd, one that gives directions to the rest, and seems to be more eminently delighted with a wide carnage.
30 What it is that intitles him to such pre-eminence we know not; he is seldom the biggest or the swiftest, but he shews by his eagerness and diligence that he is, more than any of the others, a friend to vultures.’”

The Idler No. 103 [This is the Last]

Saturday 5 April 1760

Respicere ad longae jussit spatia ultima vitae. JUV. Sat. x. 275.

Much of the pain and pleasure of mankind arises from the conjectures which every one makes of the thoughts of others; we all enjoy praise which we do not hear, and resent contempt which we do not see. The Idler may, therefore, be forgiven, if he suffers his imagination to represent to him what his readers will say or think when they are informed that they have now his last paper in their hands.

Value is more frequently raised by scarcity than by use. That which lay neglected when it was common, rises in estimation as its quantity becomes less. We seldom learn the true want of what we have till it is discovered that we can have no more.

This essay will, perhaps, be read with care even by those who have not yet attended
10 to any other; and he that finds this late attention recompensed, will not forbear to wish that he had bestowed it sooner.

Though the Idler and his readers have contracted no close friendship, they are, perhaps, both unwilling to part. There are few things not purely evil, of which we can say, without some emotion of uneasiness, *this is the last*. Those who never could agree together, shed tears when mutual discontent has determined them to final separation; of a place which has been frequently visited, though without pleasure, the last look is taken with heaviness of heart; and the Idler, with all his chilness of tranquillity, is not wholly unaffected by the thought that his last essay is now before him.

The secret horror of the last is inseparable from a thinking being, whose life is
20 limited, and to whom death is dreadful. We always make a secret comparison between a part and the whole; the termination of any period of life reminds us that life itself has likewise its termination; when we have done any thing for the last time, we involuntarily reflect that a part of the days allotted us is past, and that as more is past there is less remaining.

It is very happily and kindly provided, that in every life there are certain pauses and interruptions, which force consideration upon the careless, and seriousness upon the light; points of time where one course of action ends, and another begins; and by vicissitudes of fortune or alteration of employment, by change of place or loss of friendship, we are forced to say of something, *this is the last*.

An even and unvaried tenour of life always hides from our apprehension the approach of its end. Succession is not perceived but by variation; he that lives to-day as he lived yesterday, and expects that, as the present day is, such will be the morrow, easily conceives time as running in a circle and returning to itself. The uncertainty of our duration is impressed commonly by dissimilitude of condition; it is only by finding life changeable that we are reminded of its shortness.

This conviction, however forcible at every new impression, is every moment fading from the mind; and partly by the inevitable incursion of new images, and partly by voluntary exclusion of unwelcome thoughts, we are again exposed to the universal fallacy; and we must do another thing for the last time, before we consider that the time is nigh when we shall do no more.

As the last Idler is published in that solemn week which the Christian world has always set apart for the examination of the conscience, the review of life, the extinction of earthly desires, and the renovation of holy purposes; I hope that my readers are already disposed to view every incident with seriousness, and improve it by meditation; and that, when they see this series of trifles brought to a conclusion, they will consider that, by out-living the Idler, they have passed weeks, months and years, which are now no longer in their power; that an end must in time be put to every thing great as to every thing little; that to life must come its last hour, and to this system of being its last day, the hour at which probation ceases, and repentance will be vain; the day in which every work of the hand, and imagination of the heart shall be brought to judgment, and an everlasting futurity shall be determined by the past.

Critical Reading

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Original printing of 'On Gusto' in
The Examiner

ceived by *Bertram*, by whom he is wounded, and rushing in to *Imogene*, expires at her feet. The banditti immediately retire with the plunder of the castle, and *Bertram*, dragging the dead body into a chamber, remained with it in solitary contemplation; *Imogene*, when her husband was slain, rushing out with her child and flying to the convent, acquainted the *Prior* and Knights with her husband's death; they hasten to the castle, and *Clotilde*, the confidant of *Imogene*, showing them the room where *Bertram* remains, they draw their swords and rush towards the door; when the *Prior* interposing, and knocking, calls him forth; he opens the door and comes out, holding the dagger with an air so grand and majestic, that the Knights, struck with his appearance, make way for him, when throwing down the dagger, he surrenders himself and allows them to bind him. In the mean time *Imogene*, frantic with despair, wanders about with her child, whom she loses at last among the rocks, when she is discovered by the *Prior* and some Monks, who are in search of her; while they are seeking her, discovering by the torch-light the Knights conducting *Bertram* down the rocks and hearing the clanking of his chains, they convey *Imogene* to an adjoining cavern, to prevent her seeing him; when he has descended, and while the *Prior* is persuading him to repent, a shriek is heard from the cavern, and *Bertram* stands motionless: then attempting to rush towards it, he is stopped by another shriek, and *Imogene*, bursting from those who are holding her, runs out, but stops on seeing *Bertram*; he approaches her and pronounces her name, and as she is fainting and falling into the arms of *Clotilde*, he catches her in his, and she expires; upon which, snatching a sword from one of the Knights, he mortally stabs himself.

THE ROUND TABLE.

No. 40. SUNDAY, MAY 25, 1816.

Gusto in art is power or passion defining an object.—It is not so difficult to explain this term in what relates to expression (of which it may be said to be the highest degree) as in what relates to things without expression, to the natural appearance of objects, as mere colour or form. The truth is, that there is hardly any object entirely devoid of expression, without some character of power belonging to it, some precise association with pleasure or pain; and it is in giving this truth of character from the truth of feeling, whether in the highest or the lowest degree, but always in the highest degree of which the subject is capable, that gusto consists.

There is a gusto in the colouring of Titian. Not only do his heads seem to think—his bodies seem to feel. This is what the Italians mean by the *morbidezza* of his flesh-colour. It seems sensitive and alive all over; not merely to have the look and texture of flesh, but the feeling in itself. For example, the limbs of his female figures have a luxuriant softness and delicacy, which appears conscious of the pleasure of the beholder. As the objects themselves in nature would produce an impression on the sense, distinct from every other object, and having something divine in it, which the heart owns and the imagination consecrates, the objects in the picture preserve the same impression, absolute, unimpaired, stamped with all the truth of passion, the pride of the eye, and the charms of beauty. Rubens makes his flesh-colour like flowers, *Albano's* is like ivory. Titian's is like flesh, and like nothing else. It is as different from that of other painters, as the skin is from a piece of white or red drapery thrown over it. The blood circulates here and there, the blue veins just appear, the rest is distinguished throughout only by that sort of tingling sensation to the eye, which the body feels within itself. This is gusto.—Vandyke's flesh-colour, though it has great truth and purity, wants gusto. It has not the internal character, the living principle in it. It is a smooth surface, not a warm, moving mass. It is painted without passion, with indifference. The hand only has been concerned. The impression slides off from the eye, and does not, like the touch of Titian's pencil, leave a sting behind it, in the mind of the spectator. The eye does not acquire

a taste or appetite for what it sees. In a word, gusto in painting is where the impression made on one sense excites by affinity those of another.

Michael Angelo's forms are full of gusto. They every where obtrude the sense of power upon the eye. His limbs convey an idea of muscular power, of moral grandeur, and even of intellectual dignity; they are firm, commanding, broad, and massy, capable of executing with ease the determined purposes of the will. His faces have no other expression than his figures, conscious power and capacity. They appear only to think what they shall do, and to know that they can do it. This is what is meant by saying that his style is hard and masculine. It is the reverse of Correggio's, which is effeminate. That by the gusto of Michael Angelo consists in expressing energy of will without proportionable sensibility, Correggio's in expressing exquisite sensibility without energy of will. In Correggio's faces as well as figures we see neither bones nor muscles, but then what a soul is there, full of sweetness and of grace—pure, playful, soft, angelic! There is sentiment enough in a hand painted by Correggio to set up a school of history-painters. Whenever we look at the hands of Correggio's women or of Raphael's, we always wish to touch them.

Again, Titian's landscapes have a prodigious gusto, both in the colouring and forms. We shall never forget one that we saw many years ago in the Orleans Gallery of Acton hunting. It had a brown, mellow, autumnal look. The sky was of the colour of stone. The winds seemed to sing through the rustling branches of the trees, and already you might hear the twanging of bows resounding through the tangled mazes of the wood. Mr. West, we understand, has this landscape. He will know if his description of it is just. The landscape background of the St. Peter Martyr is another well known instance of the power of this great painter to give a romantic interest and an appropriate character to the objects of his pencil, where every circumstance adds to the effect of the scene,—the bold trunks of the tall forest trees, the trailing ground plants, with that cold convent spire rising in the distance, amidst the blue sapphire mountains and the golden sky.

Rubens has a great deal of gusto in his Fauns and Satyrs, and in all that expresses motion, but in nothing else. Rembrandt has it in every thing; every thing in his pictures has a tangible character. If he puts a diamond in the ear of a Burgomaster's wife, it is of the first water; and his furs and stuffs are proof against a Russian winter. Raphael's gusto was only in expression; he had no idea of the character of any thing but the human form. The firmness and poverty of his stile in other respects is a phenomenon in the art. His trees are like sprigs of grass stuck in a book of botanical specimens. Was it that Raphael never had time to go beyond the walls of Rome?

* This may seem obscure. We will therefore avail ourselves of our privilege to explain as Members of Parliament do, when they let fall any thing too paradoxical, novel, or abstract, to be immediately apprehended by the other side of the House. When the Widow Wadman looked over my Uncle Toby's map of the siege of Namur with him, and as he pointed out the approach of his battalion in a monstrous line across the plain to the gate of St. Nicholas, kept her hand constantly pressed against his, if my Uncle Toby had then been an artist and could paint, (as Mr. Fox wished himself to be, that he might draw Bonaparte's conduct to the King of Prussia in the blackest colours) my Uncle Toby would have drawn the hand of his fair cousin in the manner we have above described. We have heard a good story of this same Bonaparte playing off a very ludicrous party of the Widow Wadman's straggle upon as great a Commander-in-Chief as my Uncle Toby was by land. Now, when Sir Isaac Newton, who was sitting smoking with a mistress's hand in his, took her little finger and made use of it as a telescope's stopper, there was here a total absence of mind, or a great want of gusto.

WILLIAM HAZLITT

“On Gusto”

The Examiner, May 26th, 1816

Gusto in art is power or passion defining any object. -It is not so difficult to explain this term in what relates to expression (of which it may be said to be the highest degree) as in what relates to things without expression, to the natural appearances of objects, as mere colour or form. In one sense, however, there is hardly any object entirely devoid of expression, without some character of power belonging to it, some precise association with pleasure or pain: and it is in giving this truth of character from the truth of feeling, whether in the highest or the lowest degree, but always in the highest degree of which the subject is capable, that gusto consists.

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like sprigs of grass stuck in a book of botanical specimens. Was it that Raphael never had time to go beyond the walls of Rome? That he was always in the streets, at church, or in the bath? He was not one of the Society of Arcadians.³⁵

Claude's landscapes, perfect as they are, want gusto. This is not easy to explain. They are perfect abstractions of the visible images of things; they speak the visible language of nature truly. They resemble a mirror or microscope. To the eye only they are more perfect than any other landscapes that ever were or will be painted; they give more of nature, as cognizable by one sense alone; but they lay an equal stress on all visible impressions; they do not interpret one sense by another; they do not distinguish the character of different
 10 objects as we are taught, and can only be taught, to distinguish them by their effect on the different senses. That is, his eye wanted imagination: it did not strongly sympathize with his other faculties. He saw the atmosphere, but he did not feel it. He painted the trunk of a tree or a rock in the foreground as smooth -with as complete an abstraction of the gross, tangible impression, as any other part of the picture; his trees are perfectly beautiful, but quite immovable; they have a look of enchantment. In short, his landscapes are unequalled imitations of nature, released from its subjection to the elements, -as if all objects were
 20 become a delightful fairy vision, and the eye had rarefied and refined away the other senses.

The gusto of the Greek statues is of a very singular kind. The sense of perfect form nearly occupies the whole mind, and hardly suffers it to dwell on any other feeling. It seems
 20 enough for them to be, without acting or suffering. Their forms are ideal, spiritual. Their beauty is power. By their beauty they are raised above the frailties of pain or passion; by their beauty they are deified.

The infinite quantity of dramatic invention in Shakespeare takes from his gusto. The power he delights to show is not intense, but discursive. He never insists on any thing as much as he might, except a quibble. Milton has great gusto. He repeats his blow twice, grapples with and exhausts his subject. His imagination has a double relish of its objects, an inveterate attachment to the things he describes, and to the words describing them.

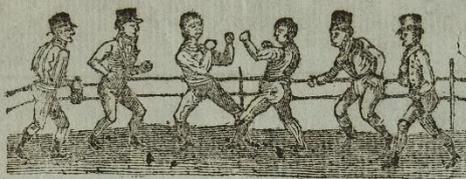
³⁵ Raphael not only could not paint a landscape; he could not paint people in a landscape. He could not have painted the heads or the figures, or even the dresses of the St. Peter Martyr. His figures have always an in-door look, that is, a set, determined, voluntary, dramatic character, arising from their own passions, or a watchfulness of those of others, and want that wild uncertainty of expression, which is connected with the accidents of nature and the changes of the elements. He has nothing romantic about him. [Hazlitt's note.]

“Or where Chineses drive
With sails and wind their cany waggons light.”

* * *

“Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss.”

There is a gusto in Pope's compliments, in Dryden's satires, and Prior's tales; and among prose-writers, Boccaccio and Rabelais had the most of it. We will only mention one other work which appears to us to be full of gusto, and that is the *Beggar's Opera*. If it is not, we are altogether mistaken in our notions on this delicate subject.



An ACCOUNT
OF THE BATTLE BETWEEN
NEAT & HICKMAN,

For Three Hundred Guineas aside, which took place on Tuesday December 11, 1821, on Hungerford Common, in Wiltshire.

PRECISELY at half past twelve o'clock Neat entered the ring attended by his seconds, and was in the act of changing his shoes when the Gaslight Man entered, and threw up his hat: he eyed his man with the greatest significance, and snapped his fingers at him in derision. Neat smiled.

- Round
1. Gas appeared fully confident of success, and went fearlessly up to his man and began work: Neat acted with great caution, but went down from a heavy left-handed hit. Five to one on Gas.
 2. Gas increased in confidence; went in again and bored his man down; Neat was picked up and smiled at his antagonist.
 3. Neat smiling, went to work, and floored his man from a left-handed hit.
 4. In a rally the Gas-man went down; this round turned the odds and Neat became the favourite.
 5. A rally took place, and Gas went down.
 6. Gas went down from a dreadful left-handed hit. Seven to five on Neat.
 7. This was the finest rally in the fight, and many heavy hits exchanged, Gas was struck with the left-hand and fell as if shot.
 8. Neat gave his man a severe left-handed blow and he again went down.
 9. Neat received a left-handed hit and went down.
 10. In a rally Neat went down.
 11. Gas was hit to a stand still by heavy body-blow from Neat's mischievous left hand and dropt like a log.
 12. Neat in a rally went down, but jumped up with much gaiety.
 13. Gas again down from a heavy right and left handed hit—14. Neat down in a rally.
 15. Gas down from a right-handed hit, which was finished with the left. 16. Gas was only brought up to be punished, and again went down from the execution of Neat's right hand; 17. Hickman was with difficulty brought to the scratch, and he only stood up to receive a heavy body blow, which doubled him and he fell and faintly said "Enough."

SHEPHERD, PRINTER, Temple Gate, Bristol.

The Fight

The New Monthly Magazine (February 1822)³⁶

Where there's a will, there's a way. I said so to myself, as I walked down Chancery-lane, about half-past six o'clock on Monday the 10th of December, to inquire at Jack Randall's where the fight the next day was to be; and I found "the proverb" nothing "musty" in the present instance. I was determined to see this fight, come what would, and see it I did, in great style. 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. Courage and modesty are the old English virtues; and may they never look cold and askance on one another! Think, ye fairest of the fair, loveliest of the lovely kind, ye practisers of soft enchantment, how many more ye kill with poisoned baits than
 10 ever fell in the ring; and listed with subdued air and without shuddering, to a tale tragic only in appearance, and sacred to the FANCY!

I was going down Chancery-lane, thinking to 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 author² of "Waverley" would express it. Now Mrs. Randall stood answering the gentlemen'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 to 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-
 20 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 Simpkin, hosier in the Strand, one day when the character of the "Hold 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

³⁶ On 11th December 1821 Hazlitt watched the bare-knuckle prize fight between William Neate and Thomas Hickman. The fight took place at Hungerford, Berkshire. Hazlitt came down from London with some friends and spent the evening before the fight at a Newbury Coaching Inn, making, the next day, "a nine miles' march to Hungerford." The ring was "a mile to the left of Hungerford, on a gentle eminence."

thoughts at a time jubilant like the present, I waited at the door, when, who should issue forth but my friend Jo. Toms, and turning suddenly up Chancery-lane with that 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. We are cold to others only when we are dull in ourselves, and have neither thoughts nor feelings to impart to them. Give a man a topic in his head, a throb of pleasure in his heart, and he will be glad to share it with the first person he meets. Toms 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, and to return with my friend Jack Pigott, talking of what was to happen or of what did happen, with a noble subject always at hand, and liberty to digress to others whenever they offered. Indeed, on my repeating the lines from Spenser in an involuntary fit of enthusiasm,

*What more felicity can fall to creature,
Than to enjoy delight with liberty?*

my last-named ingenious friend stopped me by saying that this, translated into the vulgate, meant "Going to see a fight."

20 Jo. Toms 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 at two, which would go there right out and back again the next day. Now I never travel all night, and said I should get a cast to Newbury by one of the mails. Jo. 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 on 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
30 illluck 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 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
 10 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. Here again I seemed in the contradictory situation of the man in Dryden who exclaims,

I follow Fate, which does too hard pursue!

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,
 20 and I had missed it, as I missed 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 mile-stones disappeared one
 30 after another, the rain kept off; Tom Turtle, 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 moonlight 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 Turtle 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. My friend the trainer was confined in his topics to fighting dogs and men, to bears and badgers; beyond this he was "quite chap-fallen," had not a word to throw at a dog, or indeed very wisely fell asleep, when any other game was started. The whole art of training (I, however, learnt from him), consists in two things, exercise and abstinence, abstinence and exercise, repeated alternately without end. A yolk of an egg with a spoonful of rum in it is the first thing in a morning, and then a walk of six miles till breakfast. This meal consists of a plentiful supply of tea and toast and beef steaks. Then another six or seven miles till dinner-time, and another supply of solid beef or mutton with a pint of porter, and perhaps, at the utmost, a couple of glasses of sherry. Martin trains on water, but this increases his infirmity on another very dangerous side. The Gas-man takes now and then a chirping glass (under the rose) to console him, during a six weeks' probation, for the absence of Mrs. Hickman an agreeable woman, with (I understand) a pretty fortune of two hundred pounds. How matter presses on me! What stubborn things are facts! How inexhaustible is nature and art! "It is well," as I once heard Mr. Richmond observe, "to see a variety." He was speaking of cock-fighting as an edifying spectacle. I cannot deny but that one learns more of what is (I do not say of what ought to be) in this desultory mode of practical study, than from reading the same book twice over, even though it should be a moral treatise. Where was I? I was sitting at dinner with the candidate for the honours of the ring, "where good digestion waits on appetite, and health on both." Then follows an hour of social chat and native glee; and afterwards, to another breathing over heathy hill or dale. Back to supper, and then to bed, and up by six again Our hero

30

Follows the ever-running sun

With profitable ardour -

to the day that brings him victory or defeat in the green fairy circle. Is not this life more sweet than mine? I was going to say; but I will not libel any life by comparing it to mine, which is (at the date of these presents) bitter as coloquintida and the dregs of aconitum!

The invalid in the Bath mail soared a pitch above the trainer, and did not sleep so sound, because he had “more figures and more fantasies.” We talked the hours away merrily. He had faith in surgery, for he had had three ribs set right, that had been broken in a turn-up at Belcher’s, but thought physicians old women, for they had no antidote in their catalogue for brandy. An indigestion is an excellent commonplace for two people that never met before. By way of ingratiating myself, I told him the story of my doctor, who, on my earnestly representing to him that I thought his regimen had done me harm, assured me that the whole pharmacopeia contained nothing comparable to the prescription he had given me; and, as a proof of his undoubted efficacy, said, that, “he had had one gentleman with my complaint under his hands for the last fifteen years.” This anecdote made my companion shake the rough sides of his three great coats with boisterous laughter; and Turtle, starting out of his sleep, swore he knew how the fight would go, for he had had a dream about it. Sure enough, the rascal told us how the first rounds went off, but “his dream,” like others, “denoted a foregone conclusion.” He knew his men. The moon now rose in silver state, and I ventured, with some hesitation, to point out this object of placid beauty, with the blue serene beyond, to the man of science, to which his ear he “seriously inclined,” the more as it gave promise *d’un beau jour* for the morrow, and showed the ring undrenched by envious showers, arrayed in sunny smiles. Just then, all going on well, I thought on my friend Toms, 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 lapells, “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 anyone 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, “he had 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 plain-cloak and the letter decided the thing. Joe,³ 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 place of 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 Toms?" "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, "did 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 got down for nothing. But mum's the word." It's the devil for anyone 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 to too great a temptation to me.

10 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 Matthews in the face, and quite as great a wag) -

20 *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 the siege of Harfleur "standing like greyhounds in the slips," etc. We ordered tea and eggs (beds were soon found to be out of the question) and this fellow's conversation was *sauce piquante*.

30 It did one's heart good to see him brandish his oaken towel and to hear him talk. He made mince-meat of a drunken, stupid, red-faced, quarrelsome, frowsy farmer, whose nose "he moralised 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 sun," said, "There's a scene, by G-d, for Hogarth to paint. I think he and Shakespeare were our two best men at copying life." This confirmed me in my good opinion of him. Hogarth, Shakespeare, 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; Toms gave a youthful shout, and we hastened down a narrow lane to the scene of action.

Reader, have you ever seen a fight? If not, you have a pleasure to come, at least if it is a fight like that between the Gas-man and Bill Neate. The crowd was very great when

we arrived on the spot; open carriages were coming up, with streamers flying and music playing, and the country-people were pouring in over hedge and ditch in all directions, to see their hero beat or be beaten. The odds were still on Gas, but only about five to four. Gully had been down to try Neate, and had backed him considerably, which was a damper to the sanguine confidence of the adverse party. About two hundred thousand pounds were pending. The Gas says, he has lost £3,000 which were promised him by different gentlemen if he had won. He had presumed too much on himself, which had made others presume on him. This spirited and formidable young fellow seems to have taken for his motto the old maxim, that “there are three things necessary to success in life Impudence! Impudence! Impudence!” It is so in matters of opinion, but not in the FANCY, which is the most practical of all things, though even here confidence is half the battle, but only half. Our friend had vapoured and swaggered too much, as if he wanted to grin and bully his adversary out of the fight. “Alas! the Bristol man was not so tamed!” “This is the grave digger” (would Tom Hickman exclaim in the moments of intoxication from gin and success, showing his tremendous right hand), “this will send many of them to their long homes; I haven’t done with them yet!” Why should he though he had licked four of the best men within the hour, yet why should he threaten to inflict dishonourable chastisement on my old master Richmond, a veteran going off the stage, and who has borne his sable honours meekly? Magnanimity, my dear Tom, and bravery, should be inseparable. Or why should he go up to his antagonist, the first time he ever saw him at the Fives Court, and measuring him from head to foot with a glance of contempt, as Achilles surveyed Hector, say to him, “What, are you Bill Neate? I’ll knock more blood out of that great carcase of thine, this day fortnight, than you ever knock’d out of a bullock’s!” It was not manly, ‘twas not fighterlike. If he was sure of the victory (as he was not), the less said about it the better. Modesty should accompany the FANCY as its shadow. The best men were always the best behaved. Jem Belcher, the Game Chicken (before whom the Gas-man could not have lived) were civil, silent men. So is Cribb, so is Tom Belcher, the most elegant of sparrers, and not a man for every one to take by the nose. I enlarged on this topic in the mail (while Turtle was asleep), and said very wisely (as I thought) that impertinence was a part of no profession. A boxer was bound to beat his man, but not to thrust his fist, either actually or by implication, in every one’s face. Even a highwayman, in the way of trade, may blow out your brains, but if he uses foul language at the same time, I should say he was no gentleman. A boxer, I would infer, need not be a blackguard or a coxcomb, more than another. Perhaps I press this point too much on a fallen man Mr. Thomas Hickman has by this time

learnt that first of all lessons, "That man was made to mourn." He has lost nothing by the late fight but his presumption; and that every man may do as well without! By an overdisplay of this quality, however, the public has been prejudiced against him, and the knowing-ones were taken in. Few but those who had bet on him wished Gas to win. With my own prepossessions on the subject, the result of the 11th of December appeared to me as fine a piece of poetical justice as I had ever witnessed. The difference of weight between the two combatants (14 stone to 12) was nothing to the sporting men. Great, heavy, clumsy, long-armed Bill Neate kicked the beam in the scale of the Gas-man's vanity. The amateurs were frightened at his big words, and thought that they would make up for the difference

10 of six feet and five feet nine. Truly, the FANCY are not men of imagination. They judge of what has been, and cannot conceive of anything that is to be. The Gas-man had won hitherto; therefore he must beat a man half as big again as himself and that to a certainty. Besides, there are as many feuds, factions, prejudices, pedantic notions in the FANCY as in the state or in the schools. Mr. Gully is almost the only cool, sensible man among them, who exercises an unbiassed discretion, and is not a slave to his passions in these matters. But enough of reflections, and to our tale. The day, as I have said, was fine for a December morning. The grass was wet, and the ground miry, and ploughed up with multitudinous feet, except that, within the ring itself, there was a spot of virgin-green closed in and unprofaned by vulgar tread, that shone with dazzling brightness in the mid-day sun.

20 was noon now, and we had an hour to wait. This is the trying time. It is then the heart sickens, as you think what the two champions are about, and how short a time will determine their fate. After the first blow is struck, there is no opportunity for nervous apprehensions; you are swallowed up in the immediate interest of the scene but

*Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream*

I found it so as I felt the sun's rays clinging to my back, and saw the white wintry clouds sink below the verge of the horizon. "So," I thought, "my fairest hopes have faded from my side! so will the Gas-man's glory, or that of his adversary, vanish in an hour." The

30 swells were parading in their white box-coats, the outer ring was cleared with some bruises on the heads and shins of the rustic assembly (for the cockneys had been distanced by the sixtysix miles); the time drew near, I had got a good stand; a bustle, a buzz, ran through the crowd, and from the opposite side entered Neate, between his second and bottle-

holder. He rolled along, swathed in his loose great coat, his knock-knees bending under his huge bulk; and, with a modest cheerful air, threw his hat into the ring. He then just looked round, and began quietly to undress; when from the other side there was a similar rush and an opening made, and the Gas-man came forward with a conscious air of anticipated triumph, too much like the cock-of-the-walk. He strutted about more than became a hero, sucked oranges with a supercilious air, and threw away the skin with a toss of his head, and went up and looked at Neate, which was an act of supererogation. The only sensible thing he did was, as he strode away from the modern Ajax, to fling out his arms, as if he wanted to try whether they would do their work that day. By this time they had stripped, and presented a strong contrast in appearance. If Neate was like Ajax, “with Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear” the pugilistic reputation of all Bristol, Hickman might be compared to Diomed, light, vigorous, elastic, and his back glistened in the sun, as he moved about, like a panther’s hide. There was now a dead pause attention was awe-struck. Who at that moment, big with a great event, did not draw his breath short did not feel his heart throb? All was ready. They tossed up for the sun, and the Gas-man won. They were lead up to the scratch shook hands, and went at it.

In the first round everyone thought it was all over. After making play a short time, the Gas-man flew at his adversary like a tiger, struck five blows in as many seconds, three first, and then following him as he staggered back, two more, right and left, and down he fell, a might ruin. There was a shout, and I said, “There is no standing this.” Neate seemed like a lifeless lump of flesh and bone, round which the Gas-man’s blows played with the rapidity of electricity or lighting, and you imagined he would only be lifted up to be knocked down again. It was as if Hickman held a sword or a fire in the right hand of his, and directed it against an unarmed body. They met again, and Neate seemed, not cowed, but particularly cautious. I saw his teeth clenched together and his brows knit close against the sun. He held out both his arms at full-length straight before him, like two sledge-hammers, and raised his left an inch or two higher. The Gas-man could not get over this guard they struck mutually and fell, but without advantage on either side. It was the same in the next round; but the balance of power was thus restored the fate of the battle was suspended. No one could tell how it would end. This was the only moment in which opinion was divided; for, in the next, the Gas-man aiming a mortal blow at his adversary’s neck, with his right hand, and failing from the length he had to reach, the other returned it with his left at full swing, planted a tremendous blow on his cheek-bone and eyebrow, and made a red ruin of that

side of his face. The Gas-man went down, and there was another shout a roar of triumph as the waves of fortune rolled tumultuously from side to side. This was a settler. Hickman got up, and “grinned horrible a ghastly smile,” yet he was evidently dashed in his opinion of himself; it was the first time he had ever been so punished; all one side of his face was perfect scarlet, and his right eye was closed in dingy blackness, as he advanced to the fight, less confident, but still determined. After one or two rounds, not receiving another such remembrancer, he rallied and went at it with his former impetuosity. But in vain. His strength had been weakened, his blows could not tell at such a distance, he was obliged to fling himself at his adversary, and could not strike from his feet; and almost as regularly as

10 he flew at him with his right hand, Neate warded the blow, or drew back out of its reach, and felled him with the return of his left. There was little cautious sparring no half-hits no tapping and trifling, none of the *petit-maître*ship of the art they were almost all knock-down blows: the fight was a good stand-up fight. The wonder was the half-minute time. If there had been a minute or more allowed between each round, it would have been intelligible how they should by degrees recover strength and resolution; but to see two men smashed to the ground, smeared with gore, stunned, senseless, the breath beaten out of their bodies; and then, before you recover from the shock, to see them rise up with new strength and courage, stand steady to inflict or receive mortal offence, and rush upon each other, “like two clouds over the Caspian” this is the most astonishing thing of all: this is the high and

20 heroic state of man! From this time forward the event became more certain every round; and about the twelfth it seemed as if it must have been over. Hickman generally stood with his back to me; but in the scuffle, he had changed positions, and Neate just then made a tremendous lunge at him, and hit him full in the face. It was doubtful whether he would fall backwards or forwards; he hung suspended for about a second or two, and then fell back, throwing his hands in the air, and with his face lifted up to the sky. I never saw anything more terrific than his aspect just before he fell. All traces of life, of natural expression, were gone from him. His face was like a human skull, a death’s head, spouting blood. The eyes were filled with blood, the nose streamed with blood, the mouth gaped blood. He was not like an actual man, but like a preternatural, spectral appearance, or like

30 one of the figures in Dante’s “Inferno.” Yet he fought on after this for several rounds, still striking the first desperate blow, and Neate standing on the defensive, and using the same cautious guard to the last, as if he had still all his work to do; and it was not till the Gas-man was so stunned in the seventeenth or eighteenth round, that his senses forsook him, and he could not come to time, that the battle was declared over. Ye who despise the

FANCY, do something to show as much pluck, or as much self-possession as this, before you assume a superiority which you have never given a single proof of by any one action in the whole course of your lives! When the Gas-man came to himself, the first words he uttered were, "Where am I? What is the matter!" "Nothing is the matter, Tom you have lost the battle, but you are the bravest man alive." And Jackson whispered to him, "I am collecting a purse for you, Tom." Vain sounds, and unheard at that moment! Neate instantly went up and shook him cordially by the hand, and seeing some old acquaintance, began to flourish with his fists, calling out, "Ah, you always said I couldn't fight What do you think now?" But all in good humour, and without any appearance of arrogance; only

10 it was evident Bill Neate was pleased that he had won the fight. When it was all over, I asked Cribb if he did not think it was a good one? He has, "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 Toms; I returned with Jack Pigott, whom I met on the ground. Toms is a rattle-brain; Pigott 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. Pigott 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

20 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 overhauls: and just as we had agreed with a couple of country-lads to carry his superfluous wearingapparel to the next town, we were overtaken by a return post-chaise, into which I got, Pigott 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

30 onehorse 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 the 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 Pigott had passed the preceding night at Hungerford, as we 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 *O procul este profani* not real flash-men, but interlopers, noisy pretenders, butchers from Tothillfields, brokers from

10 Whitechapel, who called immediately for pipes and tobacco, hoping it would not be disagreeable to the gentlemen, and began to insist that it was a cross. Pigott 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 Jack 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 particular satisfaction that it was a volume of the *New Eloise*." 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

20 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

30 George Stevenson, who was called the Fighting Coachman, in the year 1770, with the late Mr. Windham. This beginning flattered the spirit of prophecy within me and rivetted my attention. He went on "George Stevenson was coachman to a friend of my father's. He was an old man when I saw him some years afterwards. He took hold of his own arm and said, 'There was muscle here once, but now it is no more than this young gentleman's.' He

added, ‘Well, no matter; I have been here long, I am willing to go hence, and I hope I have done no more harm than another man.’ Once,” said my unknown companion, “I asked him if he had ever beat Broughton? He said Yes; that he had fought with him three times, and the last time he fairly beat him, though the world did not allow it. ‘I’ll tell you how it was, master. When the seconds lifted us up in the last round, we were so exhausted that neither of us could stand, and we fell upon one another, and as Master Broughton fell uppermost, the mob gave it in his favour, and he was said to have won the battle. But,’ says he, ‘the fact was, that as his second (John Cuthbert) lifted him up, he said to him, “I’ll fight no more, I’ve had enough;” ‘which,’ says Stevenson, ‘you know gave me the victory.

10 And to prove to you that this was the case, when John Cuthbert was on his death-bed, and they asked him if there was anything on his mind which he wished to confess, he answered, “Yes, that there was one thing he wished to set right, for that certainly Master Stevenson won that last fight with Master Broughton; for he whispered him as he lifted him up in the last round of all, that he had had enough.”“““This,” said the Bath gentleman, “was a bit of human nature;” and I have written this account of the fight on purpose that it might not be lost to the world. He also stated as a proof of the candour of mind in this class of men, that Stevenson acknowledged that Broughton could have beat him in his best day; but that he (Broughton) was getting old in their last encounter. When we stopped in Piccadilly, I wanted to ask the gentleman some questions about the late Mr. Windham, but had not

20 courage. I got out, resigned my coat and green silk handkerchief to Pigott (loth to part with these ornaments of life), and walked home in high spirits.

P.S. Toms 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. I hope he will relish my account of it.

Critical Reading

All these, and other pieces by Hazlitt, are in *William Hazlitt: The Fight and Other Writings*, ed. Tom Paulin and David Chandler (London: Penguin Classics, 2000) **SLN**. Also useful is William Hazlitt, *The Plain Speaker: The Key Essays*, intro Tom Paulin, ed. Duncan Wu (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998) **SLN**.

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GOING TO SEE A MAN HANGED.

By

William Makepeace Thackeray

Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country (July 1840)

X—, who had voted with Mr. Ewart for the abolition of the punishment of death, was anxious to see the effect on the public mind of an execution, and asked me to accompany him to see Courvoisier killed. We had not the advantage of a sheriffs order, like the “six hundred noblemen and gentlemen” who were admitted within the walls of the prison; but determined to mingle with the crowd at the foot of the scaffold, and take up our positions at a very early hour.

As I was to rise at three in the morning, I went to bed at ten, thinking that five hours' sleep would be amply sufficient to brace me against the fatigues of the coming day. But, as might have been expected, the event of the morrow was perpetually before my eyes
10 through the night, and kept them wide open. I heard all the clocks in the neighbourhood chime the hours in succession; a dog from some court hard by kept up a pitiful howling; at one o'clock, a cock set up a feeble melancholy crowing; shortly after two the daylight came peeping grey through the window-shutters; and by the time that X-arrived, in fulfilment of his promise, I had been asleep about half-an-hour. He, more wise, had not gone to rest at all, but had remained up all night at the Club along with Dash and two or three more. Dash is one of the most eminent wits in London, and had kept the company merry all night with appropriate jokes about the coming event. It is curious that a murder is a great inspirer of jokes. We all like to laugh and have our fling about it; there is a certain grim pleasure in the circumstance -a perpetual jingling antithesis between life and death,
20 that is sure of its effect.



In mansion or garret, on down or straw, surrounded by weeping friends and solemn oily doctors, or tossing unheeded upon scanty hospital beds, there were many people in this great city to whom that Sunday night was to be the last of any that they should pass on earth here. In the course of half-a-dozen dark wakeful hours, one had leisure to think of these (and a little, too, of that certain supreme night, that shall come at one time

or other, when he who writes shall be stretched upon the last bed, prostrate in the last struggle, taking the last look of dear faces that have cheered us here, and lingering -one moment more -ere we part for the tremendous journey); but, chiefly, I could not help thinking, as each clock sounded, what is he doing now -has he heard it in his little room in Newgate yonder -Eleven o'clock. He has been writing until now, can hold out no longer, and is very weary. "Wake me at four," says he, "for I have still much to put down." From
 20 eleven to twelve the gaoler hears how he is grinding his teeth in his sleep. At twelve he is up in his bed and asks, "Is it the time --" He has plenty more time yet for sleep; and he sleeps, and the bell goes on tolling. Seven hours more -five hours more. Many a carriage is clattering through the streets, bringing ladies away from evening parties; many bachelors are reeling home after a jolly night; Covent Garden is alive; and the light coming through the cell-window turns the gaoler's candle pale. Four hours more! "Courvoisier," says the gaoler, shaking him, "it's four o'clock now, and I've woke you as you told me; but there's no call for you to get up yet." The poor wretch leaves his bed, however, and makes his last toilet; and then falls to writing, to tell the world how he did the crime for which he has
 30 suffered. This time he will tell the truth and the whole truth. They bring him his breakfast "from the coffee-shop opposite -tea, coffee, and thin bread and butter." He will take nothing, however, but goes on writing. He has to write to his mother -the pious mother far away in his own country -who reared him and loved him; and even now has sent him her forgiveness and her blessing. He finishes his memorials and letters, and makes his will, disposing of his little miserable property of books and tracts that pious people have

furnished him with. “Ce 6 Juillet, 1840. Francois Benjamin Courvoisier vous donne ceci, mon ami, pour souvenir.” He has a token for his dear friend the gaoler; another for his dear friend the under-sheriff. As the day of the convict’s death draws nigh, it is painful to see how he fastens upon everybody who approaches him, how pitifully he clings to them and loves them.

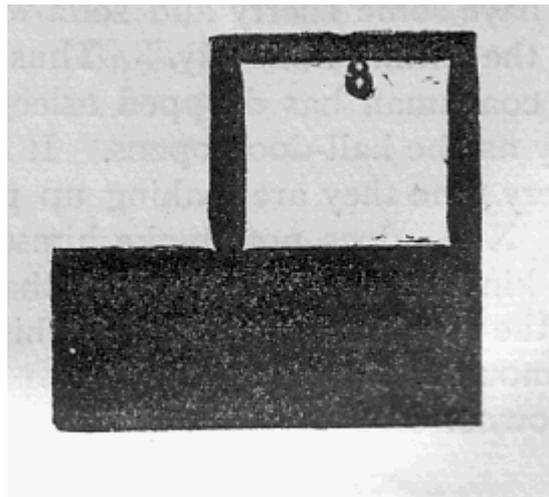
While these things are going on within the prison (with which we are made accurately acquainted by the copious chronicles of such events which are published subsequently), X-’s carriage has driven up to the door of my lodgings, and we have partaken of an elegant dejeuner that has been prepared for the occasion. A cup of coffee at half-past three in the morning is uncommonly pleasant; and X-enlivens us with the repetition of the jokes that Dash has just been making. Admirable, certainly -they must have had a merry night of it, that’s clear; and we stoutly debate whether, when one has to get up so early in the morning, it is best to have an hour or two of sleep, or wait and go to bed afterwards at the end of the day’s work. That fowl is extraordinarily tough -the wing, even, is as hard as a board; a slight disappointment, for there is nothing else for breakfast. “Will any gentleman have some sherry and soda-water before he sets out? It clears the brains famously.” Thus primed, the party sets out. The coachman has dropped asleep on the box, and wakes up wildly as the hall-door opens. It is just four o’clock. About this very time they are waking up poor -pshaw! who is for a cigar? X-does not smoke himself; but vows and protests, in the kindest way in the world, that he does not care in the least for the new drab-silk linings in his carriage. Z-, who smokes, mounts, however, the box. “Drive to Snow Hill.” says the owner of the chariot. The policemen. who are the only people in the street, and are standing by, look knowing -they know what it means well enough.

How cool and clean the streets look, as the carriage startles the echoes that have been asleep in the corners all night. Somebody has been sweeping the pavements clean in the night-time surely; they would not soil a lady’s white satin shoes, they are so dry and neat. There is not a cloud or a breath in the air, except Z--’s cigar, which whiffs off, and soars straight upwards in volumes of white pure smoke. The trees in the squares look bright and green -as bright as leaves in the country in June. We who keep late hours don’t know the beauty of London air and verdure; in the early morning they are delightful -the most fresh and lively companions possible. But they cannot bear the crowd and the bustle of mid-day. You don’t know them then -they are no longer the same things. We have come to Gray’s

Inn; there is actually dew upon the grass in the gardens; and the windows of the stout old red houses are all in a flame.

As we enter Holborn the town grows more animated; and there are already twice as many people in the streets as you see at mid-day in a German Residenz or an English provincial town. The ginshop keepers have many of them taken their shutters down, and many persons are issuing from them pipe in hand. Down they go along the broad bright street, their blue shadows marching after them; for they are all bound the same way, and are bent like us upon seeing the hanging.

10 It is twenty minutes past four as we pass St. Sepulchre's: by this time many hundred people are in the street, and many more are coming up Snow Hill. Before us lies Newgate Prison; but something a great deal more awful to look at, which seizes the eye at once, and makes the heart beat, is



There it stands black and ready, jutting out from a little door in the prison. As you see it, you feel a kind of dumb electric shock, which causes one to start a little, and give a sort of gasp for breath. The shock is over in a second; and presently you examine the object before you with a certain feeling of complacent curiosity. At least, such was the effect that the gallows produced upon the writer, who is trying to set down all his feelings as they occurred, and not to exaggerate them at all.

20 After the gallows-shock had subsided, we went down into the crowd, which was very numerous, but not dense as yet. It was evident that the day's business had not begun. People sauntered up, and formed groups, and talked; the new-comers asking those who seemed habitués of the place about former executions; and did the victim hang with his face towards the clock or towards Ludgate Hill? and had he the rope round his neck when

he came on the scaffold, or was it put on by Jack Ketch afterwards -and had Lord W-taken a window, and which was he -I may mention the noble Marquis's name, as he was not at the exhibition. A pseudo W-was pointed out in an opposite window, towards whom all the people in our neighbourhood looked eagerly, and with great respect too.

The mob seemed to have no sort of ill-will against him, but sympathy and admiration. This noble lord's personal courage and strength have won the plebs over to him. Perhaps his exploits against policemen have occasioned some of this popularity; for the mob hate them, as children the schoolmaster.

Throughout the whole four hours, however, the mob was extraordinarily gentle and
 10 good-humoured. At first we had leisure to talk to the people about us; and I recommend
 X--'s brother senators of both sides of the House to see more of this same people and to
 appreciate them better. Honourable Members are battling and struggling in the House;
 shouting, yelling, crowing, hear-hearing, pooh-poohing, making speeches of three
 columns, and gaining "great Conservative triumphs," or "signal successes of the Reform
 cause," as the case may be. Three hundred and ten gentlemen of good fortune, and able
 for the most part to quote Horace, declare solemnly that unless Sir Robert comes in, the
 nation is ruined. Three hundred and fifteen on the other side swear by their great gods that
 the safety of the empire depends upon Lord John; and to this end they quote Horace too.
 I declare that I have never been in a great London crowd without thinking of what they
 20 call the two "great" parties in England with wonder. For which of the two great leaders do
 these people care, I pray you? When Lord Stanley withdrew his Irish Bill the other night,
 were they in transports of joy, like worthy persons who read the Globe and the Chronicle?
 or when he beat the Ministers, were they wild with delight, like honest gentlemen who read
 the Post and the Times? Ask yonder ragged fellow, who has evidently frequented debating-
 clubs, and speaks with good sense and shrewd good-nature. He cares no more for Lord
 John than he does for Sir Robert; and, with due respect be it said, would mind very little if
 both of them were ushered out by Mr. Ketch, and took their places under yonder black
 beam. What are the two great parties to him, and those like him? Sheer wind, hollow
 humbug, absurd clap-traps; a silly mummery of dividing and debating, which does not in
 30 the least, however it may turn, affect his condition. It has been so ever since the happy
 days when Whigs and Tories began; and a pretty pastime no doubt it is for both. August
 parties, great balances of British freedom: are not the two sides quite as active, and eager,

and loud, as at their very birth, and ready to fight for place as stoutly as ever they fought before -But lol in the meantime, whilst you are jangling and brawling over the accounts, Populus, whose estate you have administered while he was an infant, and could not take care of himself -Populus, has been growing and growing, till he is every bit as wise as his guardians. Talk to our ragged friend. He is not so polished, perhaps, as a member of the "Oxford and Cambridge Club;" he has not been to Eton; and never read Horace in his life; but he can think just as soundly as the, best of you; he can speak quite as strongly in his own rough way; he has been reading all sorts of books of late years, and gathered together no little information. He is as good a man as the common run of us; and there are ten million more men in the country, as good as he -ten million, for whom we, in our infinite superiority, are acting as guardians, and to whom, in our bounty, we give -exactly nothing. Put yourself in their position, worthy sir. You and a hundred others find yourselves in some lone place, where you set up a government. You take a chief, as is natural; he is the cheapest order-keeper in the world. You establish half-a-dozen worthies, whose families you say shall have the privilege to legislate for you for ever; half-a-dozen more, who shall be appointed by a choice of thirty of the rest: and the other sixty, who shall have no choice, vote, place, or privilege at all. Honourable sir, suppose that you are one of the last sixty: how will you feel, you who have intelligence, passions, honest pride, as well as your neighbour; how will you feel towards your equals, in whose hands lie all the power and all the property of the community -Would you love and honour them, tamely acquiesce in their superiority, see their privileges, and go yourself disregarded without a pang? you are not a man if you would. I am not talking of right or wrong, or debating questions of government. But ask my friend there, with the ragged elbows and no shirt, what he thinks -You have your party, Conservative or Whig, as it may be. You believe that an aristocracy is an institution necessary, beautiful, and virtuous. You are a gentleman, in other words, and stick by your party.

And our friend with the elbows (the crowd is thickening hugely all this time) sticks by his. Talk to him of Whig or Tory, he grins at them: of virtual representation, pish! He is a democrat, and will stand by his friends, as you by yours; and they are twenty millions, his friends, of whom a vast minority now, a majority a few years hence, will be as good as you. In the meantime we shall continue electing, and debating, and dividing, and having every day new triumphs for the glorious cause of Conservatism, or the glorious cause of Reform, until --

What is the meaning of this unconscionable republican tirade -a propos of a hanging -Such feelings, I think, must come across any man in a vast multitude like this. What good sense and intelligence have most of the people by whom you are surrounded; how much sound humour does one hear bandied about from one to another! A great number of coarse phrases are used, that would make ladies in drawing-rooms blush; but the morals of the men are good and hearty. A ragamuffin in the crowd (a powdery baker in a white sheep's-wool cap) uses some indecent expression to a woman near: there is an instant cry of shame, which silences the man, and a dozen people are ready to give the woman protection. The crowd has grown very dense by this time, it is about six o'clock, and there is great heaving, and pushing, and swaying to and fro; but round the women the men have formed a circle, and keep them as much as possible out of the rush and trample. In one of the houses, near us, a gallery has been formed on the roof. Seats were here let, and a number of persons of various degrees were occupying them. Several tipsy dissolute-looking young men, of the Dick Swiveller cast, were in this gallery. One was lolling over the sunshiny tiles, with a fierce sodden face, out of which came a pipe, and which was shaded by long matted hair, and a hat cocked very much on one side. This gentleman was one of a party which had evidently not been to bed on Sunday night, but had passed it in some of those delectable night-houses in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. The debauch was not over yet, and the women of the party were giggling, drinking, and romping, as is the wont of these delicate creatures; sprawling here and there, and falling upon the knees of one or other of the males. Their scarves were off their shoulders, and you saw the sun shining down upon the bare white flesh, and the shoulder-points glittering like burning-glasses. The people about us were very indignant at some of the proceedings of this debauched crew, and at last raised up such a yell as frightened them into shame, and they were more orderly for the remainder of the day. The windows of the shops opposite began to fill apace, and our before-mentioned friend with ragged elbows pointed out a celebrated fashionable character who occupied one of them; and, to our surprise, knew as much about him as the Court Journal or the Morning Post. Presently he entertained us with a long and pretty accurate account of the history of Lady -, and indulged in a judicious criticism upon her last work. I have met with many a country gentleman who had not read half as many books as this honest fellow, this shrewd proletaire in a black shirt. The people about him took up and carried on the conversation very knowingly, and were very little behind him

in point of information. It was just as good a company as one meets on common occasions. I was in a genteel crowd in one of the galleries at the Queen's coronation; indeed, in point of intelligence, the democrats were quite equal to the aristocrats. How many more such groups were there in this immense multitude of nearly forty thousand, as some say -How many more such throughout the country? I never yet, as I said before, have been in an English mob without the same feeling for the persons who composed it, and without wonder at the vigorous orderly good sense and intelligence of the people.

The character of the crowd was as yet, however, quite festive. Jokes bandying about here and there, and jolly laughs breaking out. Some men were endeavouring to climb up a
 10 leaden pipe on one of the houses. The landlord came out, and endeavoured with might and main to pull them down. Many thousand eyes turned upon this contest immediately. All sorts of voices issued from the crowd, and uttered choice expressions of slang. When one of the men was pulled down by the leg, the waves of this black mob-ocean laughed innumerable; when one fellow slipped away, scrambled up the pipe, and made good his lodgment on the shelf, we were all made happy, and encouraged him by loud shouts of admiration. What is there so particularly delightful in the spectacle of a man clambering up a gas-pipe? Why were we kept for a quarter of an hour in deep interest gazing upon this remarkable scene -Indeed it is hard to say: a man does not know what a fool he is until he
 20 tries; or, at least, what mean follies will amuse him. The other day I went to Astley's and saw clown come in with a fool's-cap and pinafore, and six small boys who represented his schoolfellows. To them enters schoolmaster; horses clown, and flogs him hugely on the back part of his pinafore. I never read anything in Swift, Boz, Rabelais, Fielding, Paul de Kock, which delighted me so much as this sight, and caused me to laugh so profoundly. And why? What is there so ridiculous in the sight of one miserably rouged man beating another on the breech? Tell us where the fun lies in this and the before-mentioned episode of the gas-pipe? Vast, indeed, are the capacities and ingenuities of the human soul that can find, in incidents so wonderfully small, means of contemplation and amusement.

Really the time passed away with extraordinary quickness. A thousand things of the sort related here came to amuse us. First the workmen knocking and hammering at the
 30 scaffold, mysterious clattering of blows was heard within it, and a ladder painted black was carried round, and into the interior of the edifice by a small side door. We all looked at this little ladder and at each other -things began to be very interesting. Soon came a squad of

policemen; stalwart rosy-looking men, saying much for City feeding; well-dressed, well-limbed, and of admirable good-humour. They paced about the open space between the prison and the barriers which kept in the crowd from the scaffold. The front line, as far as I could see, was chiefly occupied by blackguards and boys -professional persons, no doubt, who saluted the policemen on their appearance with a volley of jokes and ribaldry. As far as I could judge from faces, there were more blackguards of sixteen and seventeen than of any maturer age; stunted, sallow, ill-grown lads, in ragged fustian, scowling about. There were a considerable number of girls, too, of the same age: one that Cruikshank and Boz might have taken as a study for Nancy. The girl was a young thief's mistress evidently; if attacked, ready to reply without a particle of modesty; could give as good ribaldry as she got; made no secret (and there were several inquiries) as to her profession and means of livelihood. But with all this, there was something good about the girl; a sort of devil-may-care candour and simplicity that one could not fail to see. Her answers to some of the coarse questions put to her, were very ready and good-humoured. She had a friend with her of the same age and class, of whom she seemed to be very fond, and who looked up to her for protection. Both of these women had beautiful eyes. Devil-may-care's were extraordinarily bright and blue, an admirably fair complexion, and a large red mouth full of white teeth. Au reste, ugly, stunted, thick-limbed, and by no means a beauty. Her friend could not be more than fifteen. They were not in rags, but had greasy cotton shawls, and old faded rag-shop bonnets. I was curious to look at them, having, in late fashionable novels, read many accounts of such personages. Bah! what figments these novelists tell us! Boz, who knows life well, knows that his Miss Nancy is the most unreal fantastical personage possible; no more like a thief's mistress than one of Gesner's shepherdesses resembles a real country wench. He dare not tell the truth concerning such young ladies. They have, no doubt, virtues like other human creatures; nay, their position engenders virtues that are not called into exercise among other women. But on these an honest painter of human nature has no right to dwell; not being able to paint the whole portrait, he has no right to present one or two favourable points as characterising the whole; and therefore, in fact, had better leave the picture alone altogether. The new French literature is essentially false and worthless from this very error -the writers giving us favourable pictures of monsters, and (to say nothing of decency or morality) pictures quite untrue to nature.

But yonder, glittering through the crowd in Newgate Streets --, the Sheriff's carriages are slowly making their way. We have been here three hours! Is it possible that they can

have passed so soon? Close to the barriers where we are, the mob has become so dense that it is with difficulty a man can keep his feet. Each man, however, is very careful in protecting the women, and all are full of jokes and good-humour. The windows of the shops opposite are now pretty nearly filled by the persons who hired them. Many young dandies are there with moustaches and cigars; some quiet fat family-parties, of simple honest tradesmen and their wives, as we fancy, who are looking on with the greatest imaginable calmness, and sipping their tea. Yonder is the sham Lord W -, who is flinging various articles among the crowd; one of his companions, a tall, burly man, with large moustaches, has provided himself with a squirt, and is aspersing the mob with brandy-and-
 10 water. Honest gentleman! high-bred aristocrat! genuine lover of humour and wit! I would walk some miles to see thee on the treadmill, thee and thy Mohawk crew!

We tried to get up a hiss against these ruffians, but only had a trifling success; the crowd did not seem to think their offence very heinous; and our friend, the philosopher in the ragged elbows, who had remained near us all the time, was not inspired with any such savage disgust at the proceedings of certain notorious young gentlemen, as I must confess fills my own particular bosom. He only said, "So-and-so is a lord, and they'll let him off," and then discoursed about Lord Ferrers being hanged. The philosopher knew the history pretty well, and so did most of the little knot of persons about him, and it must be a gratifying thing for young gentlemen to find that their actions are made the subject of this
 20 kind of conversation.

Scarcely a word had been said about Courvoisier all this time. We were all, as far as I could judge, in just such a frame of mind as men are in when they are squeezing at the pit-door of a play, or pushing for a review or a Lord Mayor's show. We asked most of the men who were near us, whether they had seen many executions -most of them had, the philosopher especially; whether the sight of them did any good -"For the matter of that, no; people did not care about them at all; nobody ever thought of it after a bit." A countryman, who had left his drove in Smithfield, said the same thing; he had seen a man hanged at York, and spoke of the ceremony with perfect good sense, and in a quiet sagacious way.

30 J. S -, the famous wit, now dead, had, I recollect, a good story upon the subject of executing, and of the terror which the punishment inspires. After Thistlewood and his companions were hanged, their heads were taken off, according to the sentence, and the

executioner, as he severed each, held it up to the crowd, in the proper orthodox way, saying, "Here is the head of a traitor!" At the sight of the first ghastly head the people were struck with terror, and a general expression of disgust and fear broke from them. The second head was looked at also with much interest, but the excitement regarding the third head diminished. When the executioner had come to the last of the heads, he lifted it up, but, by some clumsiness, allowed it to drop. At this the crowd yelled out, "Ah, Butter-fingers!" the excitement had passed entirely away. The punishment had grown to be a joke -Butter-fingers was the word -a pretty commentary, indeed, upon the august nature of public executions, and the awful majesty of the law.

10 It was past seven now; the quarters rang and passed away; the crowd began to grow very eager and more quiet, and we turned back every now and then and looked at St. Sepulchre's clock. Half-an-hour, twenty-five minutes. What is he doing now? He has his irons off by this time. A quarter: he's in the press-room now, no doubt. Now at last we had come to think about the man we were going to see hanged. How slowly the clock crept over the last quarter! Those who were able to turn round and see (for the crowd was now extraordinarily dense) chronicled the time, eight minutes, five minutes; at last -ding, dong, dong, dong! -the bell is tolling the chimes of eight.

20 Between the writing of this line and the last, the pen has been put down, as the reader may suppose, and the person who is addressing him has gone through a pause of no very pleasant thoughts and recollections. The whole of the sickening, ghastly, wicked scene passes before the eyes again; and, indeed, it is an awful one to see, and very hard and painful to describe.

As the clock began to strike, an immense sway and movement swept over the whole of that vast dense crowd. They were all uncovered directly, and a great murmur arose, more awful, bizarre, and indescribable than any sound I had ever before heard. Women and children began to shriek horribly.

30 I don't know whether it was the bell I heard; but a dreadful quick feverish kind of jangling noise mingled with the noise of the people, and lasted for about two minutes. The scaffold stood before us, tenantless and black; the black chain was hanging down ready

from the beam. Nobody came. "He has been respited," some one said; another said, "He has killed himself in prison."

Just then, from under the black prison-door, a pale quiet head peered out. It was shockingly bright and distinct; it rose up directly, and a man in black appeared on the scaffold, and was silently followed by about four more dark figures. The first was a tall grave man: we all knew who the second man was. "That's he -that's he!" you heard the people say, as the devoted man came up.

I have seen a cast of the head since, but, indeed, should never have known it. Courvoisier bore his punishment like a man, and walked very firmly. He was dressed in a
 10 new black suit, as it seemed: his shirt was open. His arms were tied in front of him. He opened his hands in a helpless kind of way, and clasped them once or twice together. He turned his head here and there, and looked about him for an instant with a wild imploring look. His mouth was contracted into a sort of pitiful smile. He went and placed himself at once under the beam, with his face towards St. Sepulchre's. The tall grave man in black twisted him round swiftly in the other direction, and, drawing from his pocket a night-cap, pulled it tight over the patient's head and face. I am not ashamed to say that I could look no more, but shut my eyes as the last dreadful act was going on which sent this wretched guilty soul into the presence of God.

If a public execution is beneficial -and beneficial it is, no doubt, or else the wise laws
 20 would not encourage forty thousand people to witness it -the next useful thing must be a full description of such a ceremony, and all its entourages, and to this end the above pages are offered to the reader. How does an individual man feel under it -In what way does he observe it, -how does he view all the phenomena connected with it, -what induces him, in the first instance, to go and see it, -and how is he moved by it afterwards? The writer has discarded the magazine "We" altogether, and spoken face to face with the reader, recording every one of the impressions felt by him as honestly as he could.

I must confess, then (for "I" is the shortest word, and the best in this case), that the sight has left on my mind an extraordinary feeling of terror and shame. It seems to me that I have been abetting an act of frightful wickedness and violence, performed by a set of
 30 men against one of their fellows; and I pray God that it may soon be out of the power of any man in England to witness such a hideous and degrading sight. Forty thousand persons

(say the Sheriffs), of all ranks and degrees, -mechanics, gentlemen, pickpockets, members of both Houses of Parliament, street-walkers, newspaper-writers, gather together before Newgate at a very early hour; the most part of them give up their natural quiet night's rest, in order to partake of this hideous debauchery, which is more exciting than sleep, or than wine, or the last new ballet, or any other amusement they can have. Pickpocket and Peer each is tickled by the sight alike, and has that hidden lust after blood which influences our race. Government, a Christian Government, gives us a feast every now and then: it agrees -that is to say, a majority in the two Houses agrees -that for certain crimes it is necessary that a man should be hanged by the neck. Government commits the criminal's soul to the
 10 mercy of God, stating that here on earth he is to look for no mercy; keeps him for a fortnight to prepare, provides him with a clergymen to settle his religious matters (if there be time enough, but Government can't wait); and on a Monday morning, the bell tolling, the clergyman reading out the word of God, "I am the resurrection and the life," "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away," -on a Monday morning, at eight o'clock, this man is placed under a beam, with a rope connecting it and him; a plank disappears from under him, and those who have paid for good places may see the hands of the Government agent, Jack Ketch, coming up from his black hole, and seizing the prisoner's legs, and pulling them, until he is quite dead -strangled.

Many persons, and well-informed newspapers, say that it is mawkish sentiment to
 20 talk in this way, morbid humanity, cheap philanthropy, that any man can get up and preach about. There is the *Observer*, for instance, a paper conspicuous for the tremendous sarcasm which distinguishes its articles, and which falls cruelly foul of the *Morning Herald*. "Courvoisier is dead," says the *Observer*: "he died as he had lived -a villain; a lie was in his mouth. Peace be to his ashes. We war not with the dead." What a magnanimous *Observer*! From this, *Observer* turns to the *Herald*, and says, "Fiat justitia, ruat cælum. So much for the *Herald*.

We quote from memory, and the quotation from the *Observer* possibly is, -"De mortuis nil nisi bonum; "or, "Onme ignotum pro magnifico; "or, "Sero nunquam est ad bonos mores via;" or, "Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes emollit mores nec sinit esse feros:"
 30 all of which pithy Roman apophthegms would apply just as well.

"Peace be to his ashes. He died, a villain." This is both benevolence and reason. Did he die a villain -The *Observer* does not want to destroy him body and soul, evidently, from

that pious wish that his ashes should be at peace. Is the next Monday but one after the sentence the time necessary for a villain to repent in -May a man not require more leisure -a week more -six months more -before he has been able to make his repentance sure before Him who died for us all --for all, be it remembered, -not alone for the judge and jury, or for the sheriffs, or for the executioner who is pulling down the legs of the prisoner, -but for him too, murderer and criminal as he is, whom we are killing for his crime. Do we want to kill him body and soul? Heaven forbid! My Lord in the black cap specially prays that Heaven may have mercy on him; but he must be ready by Monday morning.

10 Look at the documents which came from the prison of this unhappy Courvoisier during the few days which passed between his trial and execution. Were ever letters more painful to read -At first, his statements are false, contradictory, lying. He has not repented then. His last declaration seems to be honest, as far as the relation of the crime goes. But read the rest of his statement, the account of his personal history, and the crimes which he committed in his young days, -then "how the evil thought came to him to put his hand to the work," -it is evidently the writing of a mad, distracted man. The horrid gallows is perpetually before him; he is wild with dread and remorse. Clergymen are with him ceaselessly; religious tracts are forced into his hands; night and day they ply him with the heinousness of his crime, and exhortations to repentance. Read through that last paper of his; by Heaven, it is pitiful to read it.

20 See the Scripture phrases brought in now and anon; the peculiar terms of tract-phraseology (I do not wish to speak of these often meritorious publications with disrespect); one knows too well how such language is learned, -imitated from the priest at the bedside, eagerly seized and appropriated, and confounded by the poor prisoner.

But murder is such a monstrous crime (this is the great argument), -when a man has killed another it is natural that he should be killed. Away with your foolish sentimentalists who say no -it is natural. That is the word, and a fine philosophical opinion it is -philosophical and Christian. Kill a man and you must be killed in turn: that is the unavoidable sequitur. You may talk to a man for a year upon the subject, and he will always reply to you, "It is natural, and therefore it must be done. Blood demands blood."

30 Does it -The system of compensations might be carried on ad infinitum, -an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, as by the old Mosaic law. But (putting the fact out of the

question, that we have had this statute repealed by the Highest Authority), why, because you lose your eye, is that of your opponent to be extracted likewise? Where is the reason for the practice? And yet it is just as natural as the death dictum, founded precisely upon the same show of sense. Knowing, however, that revenge is not only evil, but useless, we have given it up on all minor points. Only to the last we stick firm, contrary though it be to reason and to Christian law.

10 There is some talk, too, of the terror which the sight of this spectacle inspires, and of this we have endeavoured to give as good a notion as we can in the above pages. I fully confess that I came away down Snow Hill that morning with a disgust for murder, but it was for the murder I saw done. As we made our way through the immense crowd, we came upon two little girls of eleven and twelve years: one of them was crying bitterly, and begged, for Heaven's sake, that some one would lead her from that horrid place. This was done, and the children were carried into a place of safety. We asked the elder girl -and a very pretty one -what brought her into such a neighbourhood? The child grinned knowingly, and said, "We've koom to see the mon hanged! "Tender law, that brings out babes upon such errands, and provides them with such gratifying moral spectacles!

20 This is the 20th of July, and I may be permitted for my part to declare that, for the last fourteen days, so salutary has the impression of the butchery been upon me, I have had the man's face continually before my eyes; that I can see Mr. Ketch at this moment, with an easy air, taking the rope from his pocket; that I feel myself ashamed and degraded at the brutal curiosity which took me to that brutal sight; and that I pray to Almighty God to cause this disgraceful sin to pass from among us, and to cleanse our land of blood.

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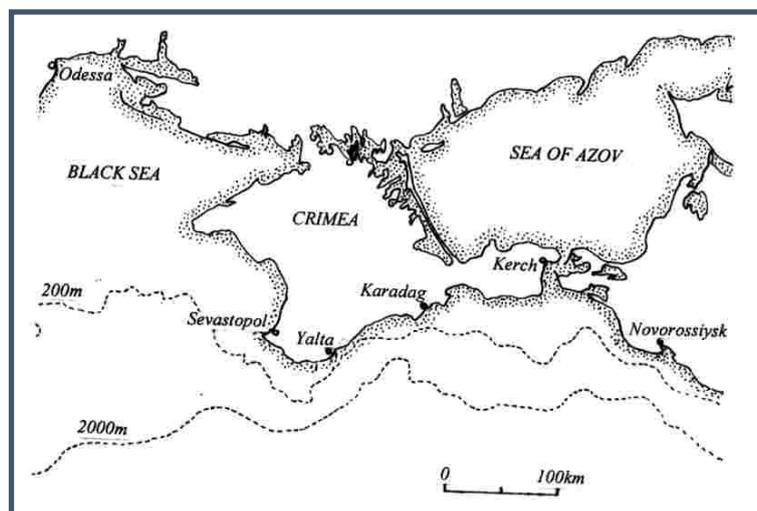
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William Howard Russell

Despatches from the Crimea

First published in *The Times* (1854–55) and reprinted in *The British Expedition to the Crimea* (1858)³⁷

[Russians in Sight]

Up to this moment not an enemy was to be seen; but as the boats began to shove off from the ships, five horsemen slowly rose above the ridge on the elevated ground, to the right of the strip of beach which separated the salt-water lake from the sea in front of us. Two of these men appeared to be officers. The others were irregular cavalry.

After awhile four of them retired to one of the tumuli inland opposite the French fleet. The other retained his position, and was soon the cynosure of all neighbouring eyes. The Russian was within about 1100 yards of us, and through a good telescope we could watch his every action. He rode slowly along by the edge of the cliff, apparently noting the number and disposition of the fleet, and taking notes with
 10 great calmness in a memorandum book. He wore a dark green frock-coat, with a little silver lace, a cap of the same colour, a sash round his waist, and long leather boots. His horse, a fine bay charger, was a strange contrast to the shaggy rough little steeds of his followers. There they were, “the Cossacks,” at last! — stout, compact-looking fellows, with sheep-skin caps, uncouth clothing of indiscriminate cut, high saddles, and little fiery ponies, which carried them with wonderful ease and strength. Each of these Cossacks carried a thick lance of some fifteen feet in length, and a heavy-looking sabre. At times they took rapid turns by the edge of the cliff in front of us — now to the left, now to the rear, of their officer, and occasionally they dipped out of sight, over the hill, altogether. Then they came back, flourishing their lances, and pointed to the

³⁷ Text downloaded and corrected (hence occasional OCR errors) from <https://archive.org/details/britishexpediti00russgoog> [accessed 19/09/2018]. JD.

accumulating masses of the French on their right, not more than half a mile from them, on the shore, or scampered over the hill to report progress as to the lines of English boats advancing to the beach. Their officer behaved very well. He remained for an hour within range of a Minie rifle, and when the “Highflyer” stood in close to shore, while he was coolly making a sketch in his portfolio of our appearance, we all expected she was going to drop a shell over himself and his little party. We were glad our expectations were not realized, if it were only on the chance of the sketch being tolerably good, so that the Czar might really see what our armada was like.

10 [The Landing]

Meantime, the English boats were nearing the shore, not in the order of the programme, but in irregular groups; a company of a regiment of the Light Division, the 7th Fusileers, under Lieutenant-Colonel Yea, I think, landed first on the beach³⁸ to the left of the cliffs; then came a company of the 2nd Battalion of the Rifle Brigade, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Lawrence: a small boat from the “Britannia,” commanded by Lieutenant Vesey, had, however, preceded the Fusileers, and disembarked some men on the beach, who went down into the hollow at the foot of the cliffs. The Russian continued his sketching. Suddenly a Cossack crouched down and pointed with his lance to the ascent of the cliff. The officer turned and looked in the direction. We looked too, and, lo! a cocked hat rose above the horizon. Another figure, with a similar head-dress, came also in view. The first was Sir George Brown, on foot; the second we made out to be the Assistant Quartermaster-general Airey. Sir George had landed immediately after the company of the Fusileers on their right, and having called Colonel Lysons’ attention to the ground where he wished the Light Division to form, he walked on towards the cliff on rising ground on the right of the salt-water lake. The scene was exciting. It was evident the Russian and the Cossack saw Sir George, but that he did not see them. A picket of Fusileers and Riflemen followed the General at a considerable interval. The Prussian got on his horse, the Cossacks followed his example, and one of them cantered to the left to see that the French were

³⁸ No. 1 company of the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusileers now claims the honour, and Colonel Lysons, who was in the boat along with Lieutenant Drew, asserts that he was the first man to spring on shore. [Russell’s Note.]

not cutting off their retreat, while the others stooped down over their saddle-bows and rode stealthily, with lowered lances, towards the Englishmen.

Sir George was in danger, but he did not know it. Neither did the Russians see the picket advancing towards the brow of the hill, for our General was not alone. Sergeant Maunsell and two privates of the 23rd had followed him as he advanced towards the hill; and they had not gone very far when Sir George ordered one of them to go back, and tell the officer commanding the company to advance, and extend his men along the brow of the hill. Sir George was busy scanning the country, and pointing out various spots to the Quarter-master-general. Suddenly they turned and slowly
10 descended the hill — the gold sash disappeared — the cocked hat was eclipsed — Cossacks and officers dismounted and stole along by the side of their horses. They, too, were hid from sight in a short time, and on the brow of the cliff appeared a string of native carts. General Airey had seen these arabas, and applied to Colonel Lysons to know if he could not intercept them. In about five minutes two or three tiny puffs of smoke rose over the cliff, and presently the faint cracks of a rifle were audible to the men in the nearest ships. In a few minutes more the Cossacks were visible, flying like the wind on the road towards Sebastopol, and crossing close to the left of the French lines of skirmishers.

When we landed, we heard that Sir George Brown, whose sight is very
20 indifferent, had a near escape of being taken prisoner. He was the first to land, and pushed on without sending vedettes or men in front, though he took the precaution, very fortunately, to bring up a few soldiers with him. The Cossacks, who had been dodging him, made a dash when they were within less than a hundred yards. The General had to run, and was only saved from capture by the fire of the Fusileers. The Cossacks bolted. The first blood spilt in this campaign was that of a poor boy, an arabajee, who was wounded in the foot by the volley which dislodged them; and our first capture consisted of fourteen arabas, in which were found abundance of delicious fruit and stores of firewood. The Cossacks beat the drivers to hasten them in taking the bullocks out of the carts, nor did they desist in their attempts till one of them was
30 badly hit, and our men were close at hand. The drivers at once came in to us when the Cossacks rode off. Meantime, swarms of boats were putting off from the various ships to carry the English troops to land.

The Light Division got on shore very speedily, and were all landed, with the exception of a few companies, in an hour. The First Division landed simultaneously with a portion of their friends of the leading division; the Duke of Cambridge and his staff being early on the beach with their men, and the Brigadiers Sir C. Campbell and Major-General Bentinck preceding their respective brigades. As the regiments landed, the brigades were formed in contiguous columns at quarter distance. The Light Division was on the left, the First Division the next, and so on in order towards the right. The Second Division was under way ere the whole of the Light or of the First Division had landed. Sir De Lacy Evans got on shore with his staff about half-past ten.

10 By eleven, the Aides and Fusileers had been inspected, and were marching from the left of the line, along the front of the other regiments, towards the right. They ascended the slope of the hill over the cliffs, passing by the pickets and sentries who had been placed on outpost duty by Sir George Brown, and marching straight on over the plain I have described inland. [...]

By twelve o'clock in the day, that barren and desolate beach, inhabited but a short time before only by the seagull and wild-fowl, was swarming with life. From one extremity to the other, bayonets glistened, and red coats and brass-mounted shakoes gleamed in solid masses. The air was filled with our English speech, and the hum of voices mingled with loud notes of command, cries of comrades to each other, the

20 familiar address of "Bill" to "Tom," or of "Pat" to "Sandy," and an occasional shout of laughter. Very amusing was it to watch the loading and unloading of the boats. A gig or cutter, pulled by eight or twelve sailors, with a paddle-box boat, flat, or Turkish pinnace in tow (the latter purchased for the service), would come up alongside a steamer or transport in which troops were ready for disembarkation. The officers of each company first descended, each man in full dress. Over his shoulder was slung his

30 havresack, containing what had been, ere it underwent the process of cooking, four pounds and a-half of salt meat, and a bulky mass of biscuit of the same weight. This was his ration for three days. Besides this, each officer carried his greatcoat, rolled up and fastened in a hoop round his body, a wooden canteen to hold water, a small ration of spirits, whatever change of under-clothing he could manage to stow away, his forage-cap, and, in most instances, a revolver. Each private carried his blanket and greatcoat strapped up into a kind of knapsack, inside which was a pair of boots, a pair of socks, a shirt, and, at the request of the men themselves, a forage-cap; he also carried

his water canteen, and the same rations as the officer, a portion of the mess cooking apparatus, firelock and bayonet of course, cartouch box and fifty rounds of ball-cartridge for Minie, sixty rounds for smooth-bore arms.

As each man came creeping down the ladder. Jack helped him along tenderly from rung to rung till he was safe in the boat, took his firelock and stowed it away, removed his knapsack and packed it snugly under the seat, patted him on the back, and told him “not to be afeerd on the water;” treated “the sojer,” in fact, in a very kind and tender way, as though he were a large but not very sagacious “pet,” who was not to be frightened or lost sight of on any account, and did it all so quickly, that the large
 10 paddle-box boats, containing 100 men, were filled in five minutes. Then the latter took the paddle-box in tow, leaving her, however, in charge of a careful coxswain, and the same attention was paid to getting the “sojer” on shore that was evinced in getting him into the boat; the sailors (half or wholly naked in the surf) standing by at the bows, and handing each man and his accoutrement down the plank to the shingle, for fear “he’d fall off and hurt himself.” Never did men work better than our blue-jackets ; especially valuable were they with horses and artillery; and their delight at having a horse to hold and to pat all to themselves was excessive. When the gun-carriages stuck fast in the shingle, half a dozen herculean seamen rushed at the wheels, and, with a “Give way, my lads — all together,” soon spoked it out with a run, and landed it on the hard sand.
 20 No praise can do justice to the willing labour of these fine fellows. They never relaxed their efforts as long as man or horse of the expedition remained to be landed, and many of them, officers as well as men, were twenty-four hours in their boats.

At one o’clock most of the regiments of the Light Division had moved off the beach over the hill, and across the country towards a village, to which the advanced parties of the French left had already approached. The Second Battalion of the Rifle Brigade led the way, covering the advance with a cloud of skirmishers, and pushed on to the villages of Bagaili and Kamishli, four miles and three-quarters from the beach, and lying in the road between Tchobatar and the Alma; and the other regiments followed in order of their seniority, the artillery, under Captain Anderson, bringing, up
 30 the rear. One wing of the Rifles, under Major Norcott, occupied Kamishli — the other, under Lieutenant-Colonel Lawrence, was installed in Bagaili, and they were supported and connected by a small party of Hussars. By this time the rain began to fall pretty heavily, and the wind rose so as to send a little surf on the beach. [...]

Few of those who were with the expedition will forget the night of the 14th of September. Seldom or never were 27,000 Englishmen more miserable. No tents had been sent on shore, partly because there had been no time to land them, partly because there was no certainty of our being able to find carriage for them in case of a move. Towards night the sky looked very black and lowering; the wind rose, and the rain fell in torrents. The showers increased in violence about midnight, and early in the morning fell in drenching sheets, which pierced through the blankets and great-coats of the houseless and tentless soldiers. It was their first bivouac — a hard trial enough, in all conscience, worse than all their experiences of Bulgaria or Gallipoli, for there they had their tents, and now they learned to value their canvas coverings at their true worth. Let the reader imagine some of these old generals and young lords and gentlemen exposed hour after hour to the violence of pitiless storms, with no bed but the reeking puddle under the saturated blankets, or bits of useless waterproof wrappers, and the twenty-odd thousand poor fellows who could not get “dry bits” of ground, and had to sleep, or try to sleep, in little lochs and watercourses — no fire to cheer them, no hot grog, and the prospect of no breakfast ; — let him imagine this, and add to it that the nice “change of linen” had become a wet abomination, which weighed the poor men’s kits down, and he will admit that this “seasoning” was of rather a violent character — particularly as it came after all the luxuries of dry ship stowage. Sir George Brown slept under a cart tilted over. The Duke of Cambridge, wrapped in a waterproof coat, spent most of the night riding about among his men. Sir de Lacy Evans was the only general whose staff had been careful enough to provide him with a tent. In one respect the rain was of service: it gave the men a temporary supply of water; but then it put a fire out of the question, even if enough wood could have been scraped together to make it. The country was, however, quite destitute of timber.

[Moving inland]

The Katcha is a small and rapid rivulet, with banks like those of the Alma. We found its whole course was marked by neat white cottages, and that it watered the most delicious vineyards and gardens, amid which habitations were placed, but no

inhabitants were visible. Wheeling over the bridge, we turned eastward towards the little village of Eskel, on the left bank. The first building on the road was the Imperial Post-house, with its sign-post of the double-headed eagle, and an illegible inscription. The usual wooden direction-post, with a black and red riband painted round it diagonally on a white ground, informed us we were on our way to Sebastopol, distant about ten miles. The place was abandoned, and the house destitute of the smallest particle of furniture. The road now assumed the character of an English by-way in Devonshire or Hampshire. Low walls at either side were surmounted by fruit trees laden with apples, pears, peaches, and apricots, all ripe and fit for use, and at their foot clustered grapes of the most delicate flavour. The first villa we came to was the residence of a physician or country surgeon. It had been ruthlessly destroyed by the Cossacks. A verandah, laden with clematis, roses, and honeysuckle in front, was filled with broken music-stools, work-tables, and lounging chairs. All the glasses of the windows were smashed. Everything around betokened the hasty flight of the inmates. Two or three side-saddles were lying on the grass outside the hall-door; a parasol lay near them, close to a Tartar saddle and a huge whip. The wine casks were broken and the contents spilt; the barley and corn of the granary were thrown about all over the ground; broken china and glass of fine manufacture were scattered over the pavement outside the kitchen ; — and amid all the desolation and ruin of the place, a cat sat blandly at the threshold, winking her eyes in the sunshine at the new comers.

No pen can describe the scene within. Mirrors in fragments were lying on the floor; the beds had been ripped open, and the feathers littered the rooms a foot deep ; chairs, sofas, fauteuils, bedsteads, bookcases, picture-frames, images of saints, women's needlework, chests of drawers, shoes, boots, books, bottles, physic jars, all smashed or torn in pieces, lay in heaps in every room. Even the walls and doors were hacked with swords. The very genius of destruction had been at work, and had revelled in mischief. The physician's account-book lay open on a broken table: he had been stopped in the very act of debiting a dose to some neighbour, and his entry remained unfinished. Beside his account-book lay a volume of "Madame de Sevigné's Letters" in French, and a Pharmacopoeia in Russian. A little bottle of prussic acid lay so invitingly near a box of bonbons, that I knew it would be irresistible to the first hungry private who had a taste for almonds, and I accordingly poured out the contents to prevent the possible catastrophe. Our men and horses were soon revelling in grapes

and corn ; and we pushed on to Eskel, and established ourselves in a house which had belonged to a Russian officer of rank — at least, many traces of the presence of one were visible.

Every house and villa in the place was a similar scene to that which I have in vain tried to describe. The better the class of the residence, the more complete and pitiable the destruction. Grand pianos, and handsome pieces of furniture covered with silk and damasked velvet, rent to pieces with brutal violence, were found in more than one house; but one of the instruments retained enough of its vital organs to breathe out “God save the Queen” from its lacerated brass ribs, and it was made to do so accordingly — ay, under the very eye of a rigid portrait of his Imperial Majesty the Czar, which hung on the wall above! These portraits of the autocrat were not uncommon in the houses — nearly as common as pictures of saints with gilt and silver glories around their heads. The houses, large and small, consisted of one story only, and magnitude was gained by lateral extension. Each house stood apart, with a large patch of vineyard around it, and a garden of fruit trees, and was fenced in from the road by a stone wall, and a line of poplars or elms. A porch, covered with vines, protected the entrance. The rooms were clean and scrupulously whitewashed. Large outhouses, with wine-presses, stables, &c., complete the farmer’s establishment.

20 [Pillage and plunder]

All the Russian officers with whom I have conversed — all the testimony I have heard or read, coincide on two points — first, that if on the 25th we had moved to Bakschiserai in pursuit of the Russians, we should have found their army in a state of the most complete demoralisation, and might have forced the great majority of them to surrender as prisoners of war in a sort of cut cle sac, from which but few could have escaped. Secondly, that had we advanced directly against Sebastopol, the town would have surrendered after some slight show of resistance to save the honour of the officers. The deduction from these propositions is, that the flank march was the certain precursor of a long siege, of bloody battles and great losses; was an evidence of diffidence, and at the same time of boldness which, though favoured by fortune in its execution, was scarcely justifiable in a military sense, and was an abandonment of the original character of the expedition.

And here I may be permitted to remark, that the statement in the letters (of a Staff-officer) “from Head-quarters,” page 224, to the effect that Lord Lyons could not have disapproved of the flank march because he was not present when Sir John Burgoyne proposed it, and that his manner when he received Lord Raglan at Balaklava, “proved he highly admired “that movement, is calculated to lead to very erroneous impressions in the minds of those who attach any weight to the assertions of that Staff-officer. Lord Lyons when he heard of the flank march, expressed his disapproval of it, and when he met Lord Raglan, he (as I heard from his own lips) told his lordship that he
10 conceived the flank march to be a departure from the spirit in which the expedition was undertaken, and said, “This is strategy, but we are in no condition for strategical operations. We came here for a coup-de-main, but this is strategy!” The effects of that march are now matters beyond argument, and we can only weigh probable results against events — a very difficult equation. Whatever may be the opinions of civilians or military men respecting the flank march, it is certain that to Sir John Burgoyne belongs the credit of originating the idea at the conference which took place between the generals on the Belbek.

On the day of our march from the Katcha, I was, after a long struggle, struck down by fever, fell from my pony into the stream where he was drinking, and was
20 placed by one of the staff surgeons in a jolting araba carrying a part of the baggage of the Light Division, with poor Hughes of the 23rd Regiment, one of the finest men in the British army, who died worn out by hardships in the course of the winter. I saw but little that day except the march of men, and the fine country around and before us. The armies marched close together; the sun was exceedingly powerful, and when from the top of a wooded hill we saw the delicious valley of the Belbek studded with little snow-white cottages, with stately villas, with cosy snug-looking hamlets buried in trees, and fringed with a continuous line of the most gloriously green vineyards, and the noblest orchards of fruit-trees, there was an exclamation, a murmur of delight
30 slopes of the hill-sides, soon swarmed in every garden, and clustered in destructive swarms around every bush. Their halt was, however, a short one.

The word was given to push over the stream, and its bright waters were soon defiled by the tramp of many feet. Just as the araba in which I lay was passing by a

beautiful little chateau, said to belong to a Russian general, I saw a stream of soldiers issue from it, laden with the most incongruous, but at the same time the richest, spoils which a man of taste and wealth could abandon to an enemy; others were engaged inside in smashing the house to atoms, breaking the glasses, throwing mirrors, pictures, and furniture out of the open frames. Shocked by such wanton outrage I inquired the cause, and learned from an officer who was standing by, that the soldiers had not done the smallest mischief till they saw an English staff officer of rank take a bronze statuette out of the house and ride away with it, whereupon the cry arose, "Let us plunder too if our officer sets the example." I could not help thinking what would have been the

10 fate of that officer if he had served under our great Duke.

At the other side of the narrow Valley of the Belbek, the hillsides are exceedingly steep, and were covered with dwarf wood and undergrowth of bushes. It was with difficulty the men crept up to the summit, and the wagons were urged up the rugged and narrow paths. Lord Raglan occupied one of the plundered villas, near the only bridge the Russians had left across the stream. Marshal St. Arnaud encamped on the top of the southern ridge. There was very great confusion in getting the men into their places on this wooded and steep ridge of hills intersected with ravines, and it was long after sunset ere the men finally settled down at their bivouac fires. They had not eaten their scrambling and very heterogeneous suppers, and lain down to rest more

20 than a few hours, when (about 1.30 in the morning) the report of a gun on the hills towards our right woke up the whole of the allied armies. The bugles at once sounded all along our lines, and the men stood to their arms, but there were only a few reports one after the other, and then all was silent. It appeared that the French vedettes saw some Cossacks in their front, and fell back on a picket who were bivouacing by a large fire, when the enemy opened upon them at a long range, either from some of the earthworks of the north side or from field-pieces. The shot whizzed high over head, and one of them passed over the English head-quarters, but as the vedettes reported all quiet in front soon afterwards, the troops piled arms and lay down to sleep again; Cholera was much on the increase, and many fell sick or died during the night.

30 On Monday morning, the 25th, our troops were under arms at 5.30 a.m., and at seven Lord Raglan, Sir John Burgoyne, and other staff officers proceeded to the French head-quarters, to decide on the course to be pursued in the forthcoming attack on Sebastopol. Marshal St. Arnaud was very unwell, but if M. de Bazancourt is to be

credited, he was able to write very unjust entries in his journal, and to speak in a tone of egotistical confidence which his situation rendered painful, and which but for that would have been ridiculous. He says, under the head of the 25th, "The English ought to start first, and do not move till nine o'clock." He must have known that till after nine o'clock it was not decided what course the troops were to take. Again, he speaks of himself as the sole leader, at a time when he had all but resigned the command. "Je les battraï," &c., on the very day when he was obliged to be carried from his tent in Prince Menschikoff's carriage. At the conferences, the French proposed to force the Inkermann bridge across the Tchernaya, and to make a push at the town. Sir John

10 Burgoyne proposed that we should cross the stream by the bridge, at a place called Traktir, or "Bestaurant," near Tchorguna, and by his representations carried the majority of those present with him, as he adduced strong reasons for seizing Balaklava, Kamiesch, and Kazatch, which were as much appreciated by our allies as by the English. It was therefore decided that the armies should continue their march on the ridge between the Belbek and the Tchernaya.

Our march was continuous, but by different routes, the artillery proceeding by a difficult road, which allowed only one horseman to ride by the side of each gun. The Duke of Cambridge's baggage was actually within gunshot of Sebastopol for a quarter of an hour. As Lord Raglan was riding on in front of his staff he found himself, on

20 emerging from a wooded road on the open space in front, in the immediate presence of a body of Russian infantry; which turned out to be the baggage guard of a large detachment of the Russian army marching from Sebastopol to Bakschiserai. They were not more than a few hundred yards distant. Lord Raglan simply turned his horse, and accelerating his pace, he and his staff quietly cantered back to the rear of the first division of Artillery. The cavalry, consisting of a portion of the 11th and 8th Hussars, were quickly got in front; the guns were unlimbered and opened on the retreating mass of Russians; the 2nd battalion of Rifles in skirmishing order threw in a volley of Minie balls, the cavalry executed a charge, and the result was, that after a few rounds the

30 Russians broke and fled along the road in great haste without an attempt at resistance, leaving behind them an enormous quantity of baggage of every description for two miles strewed over the ground in the direction of their flight.

This was fair and legitimate plunder, and the troops were halted and allowed to take what they liked, and what they could carry. They broke open all the carts and

tumbled out the contents on the road, but the pillage was conducted with regularity, and the officers presided over it to see that there was no squabbling, and that no man took more than his share. Immense quantities of wearing apparel, of boots, shirts, coats, dressing cases, valuable ornaments, and some jewellery were found in the baggage carts, as well as a military chest containing some money (there are people who say it held 3000l.). A Russian artillery officer was found in one of the carriages, in a very jovial mood, and had evidently been making rather free with the bottle. Plenty of Champagne was discovered among the baggage, and served to cheer the captors during their cold bivouac that night. A great number of very handsome hussar jackets, richly
 10 laced with silver, and made of fine light-blue cloth, which had never yet been worn, were also taken, and sold by the soldiers for sums varying from 20s. to 30s. a-piece. Fine large winter cloaks of cloth, lined with rich furs, were found in abundance. The enemy were pursued two or three miles on the road to Bakschiserai, but they fled so precipitately the cavalry could not come up with them.

This plunder put the soldiers in great good humour, and they marched on the whole day, in excellent spirits, leaving Sebastopol on their right, till they arrived at the little hamlet of Traktir, on the Tchernaya or Black River, just before sunset, and halted for the night.

20 [Music in Camp]

The silence and gloom of our camp, as compared with the activity and bustle of that of the French, were very striking. No drum, no bugle-call, no music of any kind, was ever heard within our precincts, while our neighbours close by kept up incessant rolls, fanfaronnades, and flourishes, relieved every evening by the fine performances of their military bands. The fact was many of our instruments had been placed in store, and the regimental bands were broken up and disorganized, the men being devoted to the performance of the duties for which the ambulance corps was formed. I think, judging from one's own feelings, and from the expressions of those around, that the want of
 30 music in camp was productive of graver consequences than appeared likely to occur at first blush from such a cause. Every military man knows how regiments, when fatigued on the march, cheer up at the strains of their band, and dress up, keep step, and walk on with animation and vigour when it is playing. At camp, I always observed with

pleasure the attentive auditory who gathered every evening at the first taps of the drum to listen to the music. At Aladyn and Devno the men used to wander off to the lines of the 77th, because it had the best band in the division; and when the bands were silenced because of the prevalence of cholera, out of a humane regard for the feelings of the sick, the soldiers were went to get up singing parties in their tents in lieu of their ordinary entertainment. It seemed to be an error to deprive them of a cheering and wholesome influence at the very time they needed it most. The military band was not meant alone for the delectation of garrison towns, or for the pleasure of the officers in quarters, and the men were fairly entitled to its inspiration during the long and weary
10 march in the enemy's country, and in the monotony of a standing camp ere the beginning of a siege.

[The Battle of Inkermann and the Siege of Sebastopol]

The Zouaves close to us were lying like tigers at the spring, with ready rifles in hand, hidden chin deep by the earthworks which ran along the line of these ridges on our rear; but the quick-eyed Russians were manoeuvring on the other side of the valley, and did not expose their columns to attack. Below the Zouaves we could see the Turkish gunners in the redoubts, all in confusion as the shells burst over them. Just as I came up, the Russians had carried No. 1 redoubt, the farthest and most elevated of
20 all, and their horsemen were chasing the Turks across the interval which lay between it and redoubt No. 2.

At that moment the cavalry, under Lord Lucan, were formed in glittering masses — the Light Brigade, under Lord Cardigan, in advance; the Heavy Brigade, under Biigadier-General Scarlett, in reserve. They were drawn up just in front of their encampment, and were concealed from the view of the enemy by a slight “wave” in the plain. Considerably to the rear of their right, the 93rd Highlanders were drawn up in line, in front of the approach to Balaklava. Above and behind them, on the heights, the marines were visible through the glass, drawn up under arms, and the gunners could be seen ready in the earthworks, in which were placed the ships' heavy guns. The
30 93rd had originally been advanced somewhat more into the plain, but the instant the Russians got possession of the first redoubt they opened fire on them from our own guns, which inflicted some injury, and Sir Colin Campbell “retired” his men to a better

position. Meantime the enemy advanced his cavalry rapidly. To our inexpressible disgust, we saw the Turks in redoubt No. 2 fly at their approach.

They ran in scattered groups across towards redoubt No. 3, and towards Balaklava; but the horse-hoof of the Cossack was too quick for them, and sword and lance were busily plied among the retreating herd. The yells of the pursuers and pursued were plainly audible. As the Lancers and Light Cavalry of the Russians advanced they gathered up their skirmishers with great speed and in excellent order — the shifting trails of men, which played all over the valley like moonlight on the water, contracted, gathered up, and the little peloton in a few moments became a solid column. Then up came their guns, in rushed their gunners to the abandoned redoubt, and the guns of No. 2 redoubt soon played with deadly effect upon the dispirited defenders of No. 3 redoubt. Two or three shots in return from the earthworks, and all was silent. The Turks swarmed over the earthworks, and ran in confusion towards the town, firing their muskets at the enemy as they ran. Again the solid column of cavalry opened like a fan, and resolved itself into a “long spray” of skirmishers. It lapped the flying Turks, steel flashed in the air, and down went the poor Moslem quivering on the plain, split through fez and musket-guard to the chin and breast-belt. There was no support for them. It was evident the Russians had been too quick for us. The Turks had been too quick also, for they had not held their redoubts long enough to enable us to bring them help. In vain the naval guns on the heights fired on the Russian cavalry; the distance was too great

for shot or shell to reach. In vain the Turkish gunners in the earthen batteries which were placed along the French entrenchments endeavoured to protect their flying countrymen; their shot flew wide and short of the swarming masses.

The Turks betook themselves towards the Highlanders, where they checked their flight and formed into companies on the flanks of the Highlanders. As the Russian cavalry on the left of their line crowned the hill across the valley, they perceived the Highlanders drawn up at the distance of some half mile, calmly waiting their approach. They halted, and squadron after squadron came up from the rear, till they had a body of some 3500 men along the ridge — Lancers, and Dragoons, and Hussars. Then they moved en echelon, in two bodies, with another in reserve. The cavalry who had been pursuing the Turks on the right were coming up to the ridge beneath us, which concealed our cavalry from view. The Heavy Brigade in advance

was drawn up in two lines. The first line consisted of the Scots Greys, and of their old companions in glory, the Enniskillens; the second, of the 4th Royal Irish, of the 5th Dragoon Guards, and of the 1st Royal Dragoons. The Light Cavalry Brigade was on their left, in two lines also.

The silence was oppressive; between the cannon bursts one could hear the champing of bits and the clink of sabres in the valley below. The Russians on their left drew breath for a moment, and then in one grand line charged in towards Balaklava. The ground flew beneath their horses' feet; gathering speed at every stride, they dashed on towards that thin red streak tipped with a line of steel. The Turks fired a volley at
10 eight hundred yards and ran. As the Russians came within six hundred yards, down went that line of steel in front, and out rang a rolling volley of Minie musketry. The distance was too great; the Russians were not checked, but still swept onwards through the smoke, with the whole force of horse and man, here and there knocked over by the shot of our batteries above. With breathless suspense every one awaited the bursting of the wave upon the line of Gaelic rock; but ere they came within two hundred and fifty yards, another deadly volley flashed from the levelled rifle, and carried terror among the Russians. They wheeled about, opened files right and left, and fled faster than they came. "Bravo, Highlanders! well done!" shouted the excited spectators. But events thickened; the Highlanders and their splendid front were soon
20 forgotten — men scarcely had a moment to think of this fact, that the 93rd never altered their formation to receive that tide of horsemen. "No," said Sir Colin Campbell, "I did not think it worth while to form them even four deep!" The ordinary British line, two deep, was quite sufficient to repel the attack of these Muscovite cavaliers.

Lord Raglan perceived that the intention of the Russians was to attack Balaklava, and sent orders to Lord Lucan to move down his heavy horse to cover the approaches, and they were just moving from their position near the vineyard and orchard, when his lordship seeing that a large body of the enemy's cavalry were coming after him over the ridge, rode after them, wheeled them round, and advanced to meet them. We saw Brigadier-General Scarlett ride along in front of his massive squadrons.
30 The Russians — evidently corps d'elite — their light blue jackets embroidered with silver lace, were advancing on their left, at an easy gallop, towards the brow of the hill. A forest of lances glistened in their rear, and several squadrons of grey-coated dragoons moved up quickly to support them as they reached the summit. The instant

they came in sight, the trumpets of our cavalry gave out the warning blast which told us all that in another moment we should see the shock of battle beneath our very eyes. Lord Raglan, all his staff and escort, and groups of officers, the Zouaves, French generals and officers, and bodies of French infantry on the height, were spectators of the scene as though they were looking on the stage from the boxes of a theatre. Nearly every one dismounted and sat down, and not a word was said. The Russians advanced down the hill at a slow canter, which they changed to a trot, and at last nearly halted. Their first line was at least double the length of ours — it was three times as deep. Behind them was a similar line, equally strong and compact. They evidently despised their insignificant-looking enemy, but their time was come.

The trumpets rang out again through the valley, and the Greys and Enniskilleners went right at the centre of the Russian cavalry. The space between them was only a few hundred yards ; it was scarce enough to let the horses “gather way,” nor had the men quite space sufficient for the full play of their sword arms. The Russian line brought forward each wing as our cavalry advanced, and threatened to annihilate them as they passed on. Turning a little to their left, so as to meet the Russian right, the Greys rushed on with a cheer that thrilled to every heart — the wild shout of the Enniskilleners rose through the air at the same instant. As lightning flashes through a cloud, the Greys and Enniskilleners pierced through the dark masses of Russians. The shock was but for a moment. There was a clash of steel and a light play of sword-blades in the air, and then the Greys and the redcoats disappeared in the midst of the shaken and quivering columns. In another moment we saw them emerging with diminished numbers, and in broken order, charging against the second line. It was a terrible moment. “God help them ! they are lost !” was the exclamation of more than one man, and the thought of many. With unabated fire the noble hearts dashed at their enemy. It was a fight of heroes. The first line of Russians, which had been utterly smashed by our charge, and had fled off at one flank and towards the centre, were coming back to swallow up our handful of men. By sheer steel and sheer courage Enniskillener and Scot were winning their desperate way right through the enemy’s squadrons, and already grey horses and red coats had appeared right at the rear of the second mass, when, with irresistible force, like one bolt from a bow, the 4th Dragoon Guards, riding straight at the right flank of the Russians, and the 5th Dragoon Guards, following close after the Enniskilleners, rushed at the remnants of the first line of the

enemy, went through it as though it were made of pasteboard, and put them to utter rout.

This Russian Horse in less than five minutes after it met our dragoons was flying with all its speed before a force certainly not half its strength. A cheer burst from every lip — in the enthusiasm, officers and men took off their caps and shouted with delight; and thus keeping up the scenic character of their position, they clapped their hands again and again. Lord Raglan at once despatched Lieutenant Curzon, aide-de-camp, to convey his congratulations to Brigadier-General Scarlett, and to say “Well done!” The gallant old officer’s face beamed with pleasure when he received the message. “I beg to thank his lordship very sincerely,” was his reply. The cavalry did not long pursue their enemy. Their loss was very slight, about thirty-five killed and wounded in both affairs. There were not more than four or five men killed outright, and our most material loss was from the cannon playing on our Heavy Dragoons afterwards, when covering the retreat of our Light Cavalry.

[The Charge of the Light Brigade]

Soon after occurred the glorious catastrophe which filled us all with sorrow. It appeared that the Quartermaster-General, Brigadier Airey, thinking that the Light Cavalry had not gone far enough in front when the enemy’s horse had fled, gave an order in writing to Captain Nolan, 10th Hussars, to take to Lord Lucan, directing his Lordship to advance” his cavalry nearer to the enemy. A braver soldier than Captain Nolan the army did not possess. He was known to all his arm of the service for his entire devotion to his profession, and his name must be familiar to all who take interest in our cavalry for his excellent work on our drill and system of remount and breaking horses. I had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and I know he entertained the most exalted opinions respecting the capabilities of the English horse soldier. Properly led, the British Hussar and Dragoon could in his mind break square, take batteries, ride over columns of infantry, and pierce any other cavalry in the world as if they were made of straw. He thought they had not had the opportunity of doing all that was in their power, and that they had missed even such chances as had been offered to them — that, in fact, they were in some measure disgraced. A matchless horseman and a

first-rate swordsman he held in contempt, I am afraid even grape and canister. He rode off with his orders to Lord Lucan.

He is now dead and gone. God forbid I should cast a shade on the brightness of his honour, but I am bound to state what I am told occurred when he reached his Lordship. I should premise that as the Russian cavalry retired, their infantry fell back towards the head of the valley, leaving men in three of the redoubts they had taken, and abandoning the others. They had also placed some guns on the heights over their position on the left of the gorge. Their cavalry joined the reserves, and drew up in six solid divisions, in an oblique line, across the entrance to the gorge. Six battalions of
10 infantry were placed behind them, and about 30 guns were drawn up in front and on the flanks, while masses of infantry were also collected on the hills behind the redoubts on our right. Our cavalry had moved up to the ridge across the valley, on our left, as the ground was broken in front, and had halted in the order I have already mentioned. When Lord Lucan received the order from Captain Nolan, and had read it, he asked, we are told, "Where are we to advance to?". Captain Nolan pointed with his finger to the line of the Russians, and said, "There are the enemy, and there are the guns," or words to that effect, according to the statements made after his death.

It must be premised that Lord Raglan had in the morning only ordered Lord Lucan to move from the position he had taken near the centre redoubt to "the left of
20 the second line of redoubts occupied by the Turks." Seeing that the 93rd and invalids were cut off from the aid of the cavalry, Lord Raglan sent another order to Lord Lucan to send his heavy horse towards Balaklava, and that officer was executing it just as the Russian horse came over the ridge. The Heavy Cavalry charge took place, and the men dismounted on the scene of it. After an interval of half an hour. Lord Raglan again sent an order to Lord Lucan — "Cavalry to advance and take advantage of any opportunity to recover the heights. They will be supported by infantry, which has been ordered to advance upon two fronts." Lord Raglan's reading of this order is, that the infantry had been ordered to advance on two fronts ; but no such interpretation is
30 borne out by the wording of the order. It does not appear either that the infantry had received orders to advance, for the Duke of Cambridge and Sir G. Cathcart state they were not in receipt of such instruction. Lord Lucan advanced his cavalry, however, to the ridge, close to No. 5 redoubt, and while there received from Captain Nolan an order, which is verbatim, as follows : — "Lord Raglan wishes the cavalry to advance

rapidly to the front, follow the enemy, and try to prevent the enemy carrying away the guns; troops of Horse Artillery may accompany. French cavalry is on your left. Immediate.”

Lord Lucan, with reluctance, gave the order to Lord Cardigan to advance upon the guns, conceiving that his orders compelled him to do so. The noble Earl, though he did not shrink, also saw the fearful odds against him. Don Quixote in his tilt against the mill was not near so rash and reckless as the gallant fellows who prepared without a thought to rush on to almost certain death. It is a maxim of war, that “cavalry never act without a support,” that infantry should be close at hand when cavalry carry guns, as the effect is only instantaneous,” and that it is necessary to have on the flank of a line of cavalry some squadrons in column, the attack on the flank being most dangerous. The only support our light cavalry had was the reserve of heavy cavalry at a great distance behind them, the infantry and guns being far in the rear. There were no squadrons in column at all, and there was a plain to charge over, before the enemy’s guns could be reached, of a mile and a half in length.

At ten minutes past eleven our Light Cavalry Brigade advanced. The whole Brigade scarcely made one effective regiment, according to the numbers of continental armies; and yet it was more than we could spare. As they rushed towards the front, the Russians opened on them from the guns in the redoubt on the right, with volleys of musketry and rifles. They swept proudly past, glittering in the morning sun in all the pride and splendour of war. We could scarcely believe the evidence of our senses! Surely that handful of men were not going to charge an army in position? Alas! it was but too true — their desperate valour knew no bounds, and far indeed was it removed from its so-called better part — discretion. They advanced in two lines, quickening their pace as they closed towards the enemy. A more fearful spectacle was never witnessed than by those who, without the power to aid, beheld their heroic countrymen rushing to the arms of death. At the distance of 1200 yards the whole line of the enemy belched forth, from thirty iron mouths, a flood of smoke and flame, through which hissed the deadly balls. Their flight was marked by instant gaps in our ranks, by dead men and horses, by steeds flying wounded or riderless across the plain. The first line was broken — it was joined by the second, they never halted or checked their speed an instant. With diminished ranks, thinned by those thirty guns, which the Russians had laid with the most deadly accuracy, with a halo of flashing steel above

their heads, and with a cheer which was many a noble fellow's death-cry, they flew into the smoke of the batteries; but ere they were lost from view, the plain was strewed with their bodies and with the carcasses of horses. They were exposed to an oblique fire from the batteries on the hills on both sides, as well as to a direct fire of musketry.

Through the clouds of smoke we could see their sabres flashing as they rode up to the guns and dashed between them, cutting down the gunners as they stood. We saw them riding through the guns, as I have said; to our delight we saw them returning, after breaking through a column of Russian infantry, and scattering them like chaff, when the flank fire of the battery on the hill swept them down, scattered and broken
10 as they were. Wounded men and dismounted troopers flying towards us told the sad tale — demi-gods could not have done what they had failed to do. At the very moment when they were about to retreat, a regiment of Lancers was hurled upon their flank. Colonel Shewell, of the 8th Hussars, whose attention was drawn to them by Lieutenant Phillips, saw the danger, and rode his few men straight at them, cutting his way through with fearful loss. The other regiments timied and engaged in a desperate encounter. With courage too great almost for credence, they were breaking their way through the columns which enveloped them, when there took place an act of atrocity without
20 parallel in the modern warfare of civilized nations. The Russian gunners, when the storm of cavalry passed, returned to their guns, and poured murderous volleys of grape and canister on the mass of struggling men and horses. It was as much as our Heavy Cavalry Brigade could do to cover the retreat of the miserable remnants of that band of heroes as they returned to the place they had so lately quitted in all the pride of life. At thirty-five minutes past eleven not a British soldier, except the dead and dying, was left in front of these bloody Muscovite guns.

Captain Nolan, as he rode in advance of the first line, cheering them on, was killed by the first shot fired. Lord Lucan was slightly wounded. Lord Cardigan received a lance thrust through his clothes. Major Halkett, of the Ith Light Dragoons, was killed. Lord Fitzgibbon, of the 8th Hussars, was desperately wounded, and soon after died.

While our affair was going on, the French cavalry made a most brilliant charge
30 at the battery on our left, which was firing on our men, and cut down the gunners; but they could not get off the guns without support, and had to retreat with the loss of two captains and fifty men killed and wounded out of their little force of 200 Chasseurs. The Heavy Cavalry, in columns of squadrons, moved slowly backwards,

covering the retreat of the broken men. The ground was left covered with our men and with hundreds of Russians, and we could see the Cossacks busy searching the dead. Our infantry made a forward movement towards the redoubts after the cavalry came in, and the Russian infantry in advance slowly retired towards the gorge; at the same time the French cavalry pushed forward on their right, and held them in check, pushing out a line of skirmishers, and forcing them to withdraw their guns.

[...]

10 Lord Raglan continued on the hill-side all day, watching the enemy. It was dark ere he returned to his quarters. With the last gleam of day we could see the sheen of the enemy's lances in their old position in the valley; and their infantry gradually crowned the heights on their left, and occupied the road to the village which is beyond Balaklava to the southward. Our Guards were moving back, as I passed them, and the tired troops, French and English, were replaced by a strong French division, which marched down to the valley at five o'clock.

In that fearful cavalry fight we had 13 officers killed or taken, 162 men killed or taken; 27 officers wounded, 224 men wounded. Total killed, wounded, and missing, 426. Horses, killed or missing, 394; horses wounded, 126; total, 520.

20

[The Ruins of Inkermann]

Looking down from the ridge, these ruins were, of course, to one's left hand. To the right the eye followed the sweep of the valley till it was closed in from view by the walls of the ridge, and by the mountains which hemmed in the valley of Balaklava, and one could just catch, on the side of the ridge, the corner of the nearest French earthwork, thrown up to defend our rear, and cover the position towards Balaklava. Below, to the right of the ridge, at the distance of 200 feet from the top) towards the valley, was the Sandbag, or two-gun battery, intended for two guns, which had been withdrawn a few days before, after silencing a Russian battery at Inkermann, because
30 Sir De Lacy Evans conceived that they would only invite attack, and would certainly be taken, unconnected as they would have been with any line of defence. On the left

hand, overlooking this battery, was a road from Balaklava right across our camp through the Second Division's tents on their front, which ran over the ridge and joined the upper road to Inkermann. Some of the Russian columns had climbed up by the ground along this road; others had ascended on the left, in front and to the right of the Sandbag Battery.

The British and the French, many of whom had been murdered by the Russians as they lay wounded, wore terrible frowns on their faces, with which the agonies of death had clad them. Some in their last throes had torn up the earth in their hands, and held the grass between their fingers up towards heaven. All the men who exhibited
10 such signs of pain had been bayoneted; the dead men who lay with an eternal smile on their lips had been shot. But the wounded — for two days they had lain where the hand and the ball had felled them. There were very few, it is true, but all our searching had not discovered the secrets of that blood-stained hill-side, and it was towards noon on the 7th ere the last of our soldiers had been found in his lair and carried to the hospital.

The Russians, groaning and palpitating as they lay around, were far more numerous. Some of these were placed together in heaps, that they might be the more readily removed. Others glared upon you from the bushes with the ferocity of wild
20 beasts, as they hugged their wounds. Some implored, in an unknown tongue, but in accents not to be mistaken, water, or succour; holding out their mutilated and shattered limbs, or pointing to the track of the lacerating ball. The sullen, angry scowl of some of these men was fearful. Fanaticism and immortal hate spake through their angry eyeballs, and he who gazed on them with pity and compassion could at last (unwillingly) understand how these men would in their savage passion kill the wounded, and fire on the conqueror who, in his generous humanity, had aided them as he passed. It was a relief to see that their arms were broken — that their cartridges were lying opened in heaps on the ground. Litter-bearers, French and English, dotted the hillside, toiling painfully up with a heavy burden for the grave, or with some subject for the doctor's care, hunting through the bushes for the dead or dying. Our men had
30 acquired a shocking facility in their diagnosis. A body was before you; there was a shout, "Come here, boys, I see a Russian!" ("or "a Frenchman," or "one of our fellows!") One of the party advanced, raised the eyelid if it was closed, peered into the eye, shrugged his shoulders, saying quietly, "He's dead, he'll wait," and moved back to the

litter; other's pulled the feet, and arrived at equally correct conclusions by that process. The dead were generally stripped of all but their coats. The camp followers and blackguards from Balaklava, and seamen from the ships, anxious for trophies, carried off all they could take from the field.

At particular spots a party of men were seen busy at work. Groups were digging away all along the hill-side, at the distance of forty or fifty yards apart. On going over, you found them around a yawning trench, thirty feet in length by twenty feet in breadth, and six feet in depth, at the bottom of which, in every conceivable attitude, lay packed together with exceeding art some thirty or forty corpses. The grave-diggers
 10 stood chatting on the mounds by the sides, waiting for the arrival of some bearers to complete the number of the dead. They speculated on the appearance of the body which was being borne towards them. "It's Corporal , of the —th, I think," says one. "No ! it's my rear rank man, I can see his red hair plain enough," and so on. They discussed the merits or demerits of dead sergeants or comrades. "Well, he was a hard man: many's the time I was belled through him, but it's all over now!" or "Poor Mick! he had fifteen years' service — a better fellow never stepped."

This scene was going on all about the hill-side. Frenchmen, with litters, were also busy looking out for their dead and wounded, and in sharing the sad labours of the day. At last the number in the trench was completed. The bodies were packed as
 20 closely as possible. Some of them had upraised arms, in the attitude of taking aim; their legs stick up through the mould as it was thrown upon them; others were bent and twisted into shapes like fantoccini. Inch after inch the earth rose upon them, and they were left "alone in their glory." No, not alone; for the hopes, and fears, and affections of hundreds of human hearts lie buried with them!

For about one mile and a half in length by half a mile in depth, the hill-side offered such sights as these. Upwards of 2,000 Russians had been buried by these men.

[The Hospitals of Sevastopol]

Of all the pictures of the horrors of war which have ever been presented to the world,
 30 the hospital of Sebastopol offered the most horrible, heartrending, and revolting. How the poor human body could be mutilated, and yet hold its soul within it, when every

limb is shattered, and every vein and artery is pouring out the life-stream, one might study there at every step, and at the same wonder how little will kill ! The building used as an hospital was one of the noble piles inside the dockyard wall, and was situated in the centre of the row, at right angles to the line of the Redan. The whole row was peculiarly exposed to the action of shot and shell bounding over the Redan, and to the missiles directed at the Barrack Battery; and it bore in sides, roof, windows, and doors, frequent and distinctive proofs of the severity of the cannonade.

Entering one of these doors, I beheld such a sight as few men, thank God, have ever witnessed. In a long, low room, supported by square pillars arched at the top, and dimly lighted through shattered and unglazed window-frames lay the wounded
10 Russians, who had been abandoned to our mercies by their General. The wounded, did I say? No, but the dead — the rotten and festering corpses of the soldiers, who were left to die in their extreme agony, untended, uncared for, packed as close as they could be stowed, some on the floor, others on wretched trestles and bedsteads, or pallets of straw, sopped and saturated with blood, which oozed and trickled through upon the floor,, mingling with the droppings of corruption. With the roar of exploding fortresses in their ears — with shells and shot pouring through the roof and sides of the rooms in which they lay — with the crackling and hissing of fire around them, these poor fellows, who had served their loving friend and master the Czar but too
20 well, were consigned to their terrible fate. Many might have been saved by ordinary care. Many lay, yet alive, with maggots crawling about in their wounds. Many, nearly mad by the scene around them, or seeking escape from it in their extremest agony, had rolled away under the beds, and glared out on the heart-stricken spectator — oh ! with such looks! Many, with legs and arms broken and twisted, the jagged splinters sticking through the raw flesh, implored aid, water, food, or pity, or, deprived of speech by the approach of death, or by dreadful injuries in the head or trunk, pointed to the lethal spot. Many seemed bent alone on making their peace with Heaven. The attitudes of some were so hideously fantastic as to appal and root one to the ground by a sort of dreadful fascination. Could that bloody mass of clothing and white bones ever have
30 been a human being, or that burnt black mass of flesh have ever held a human soul? It was fearful to think what the answer must be. The bodies of numbers of men were swollen and bloated to an incredible degree ; and the features, distended to a gigantic size, with eyes protruding from the sockets, and the blackened tongue lolling out of

the mouth, compressed tightly by the teeth, which had set upon it in the death-rattle, made one shudder and reel round.

In the midst of one of these “chambers of horrors” — for there were many of them — were found some dead and some living English soldiers, and among them poor Captain Yaughan, of the 90th, who afterwards died of his wounds. I confess it was impossible for me to stand the sight, which horrified our most experienced surgeons; the deadly, clammy stench, the smell of gangrened wounds, of corrupted blood, of rotting flesh, were intolerable and odious beyond endurance. But what must have the wounded felt, who were obliged to endure all this, and who passed away
10 without a hand to give them a cup of water, or a voice to say one kindly word to them? Most of these men were wounded on Saturday — many, perhaps, on the Friday before — indeed, it is impossible to say how long they might have been there. In the hurry of their retreat, the Muscovites seem to have carried in dead men to get them out of the way, and to have put them on pallets in horrid mockery. So that their retreat was secured, the enemy cared but little for their wounded. On Monday only did they receive those whom we sent out to them during a brief armistice for the purpose, which was, I believe, sought by ourselves, as our over-crowded hospitals could not contain, and our over-worked surgeons could not attend to any more.

The Great Redan was next visited. Such a scene of wreck and ruin! — all the
20 houses behind it a mass of broken stones — a clock turret, with a shot right through the clock; a pagoda in ruins; another clock-tower, with all the clock destroyed save the dial, with the words, “Barwise, London,” thereon; cook-houses, where human blood was running among the utensils: in one place a shell had lodged in the boiler, and blown it and its contents, and probably its attendants, to pieces. Everywhere wreck and destruction. This evidently was a beau quartier once. The oldest inhabitant could not have recognised it on that fatal day. Climbing up to the Redan, which was fearfully cumbered with the dead, we witnessed the scene of the desperate attack and defence, which cost both sides so much blood. The ditch outside made one sick — it was piled
30 up with English dead, some of them scorched and blackened by the explosion, and others lacerated beyond recognition. The quantity of broken gabions and gun-carriages here was extraordinary; the ground was covered with them. The bomb-proofs were the same as in the Malakoff, and in one of them a music-book was found, with a woman’s name in it, and a canary bird and vase of flowers were outside the entrance.

As the Russian steamers were intact, notwithstanding the efforts of the French battery at the head of the roads near Inkermann to touch them, it was resolved, on the day after the fall of the place, to construct a battery on the ruins of Fort Paul, within 700 yards of the northern shore, under which they had taken refuge. The steamers lay in three irregular lines to the eastward of Fort Catherine, where the deep creeks in the high cliffs gave them some sort of shelter against the fire of the French. There they had been agents of much mischief and injury to the Allies, from the time of the battle of Inkermann. There “was the famous Vladimir,” with her two large funnels and elegant clipper hull; the “Elboeuf,” the steamer which made the celebrated dash into the Black Sea through all our fleet the year before, and burnt some Turkish vessels near Heraclea, just as the “Vladimir” was seen in Odessa harbour in the month of July, 1854; there was the “Gromonossetz,” which had caused such an annoyance from the Dockyard Creek; the “Chersonese,” and “Odessa;” and there were three others with hard, and to me unknown! names, as calmly floating on the water as though no eager eyes were watching from every battery to lay a gun upon them. A number of very capacious dockyard lumps and row-boats were also secured in these creeks, or hung on by the steamers.

On the morning of the 11th, about an hour after midnight, an exceedingly violent storm raged over the camp. The wind blew with such fury as to make the hut in which I was writing rock to and fro, at the same time filling it with fine dust. The fires in Sebastopol, fanned by the wind, spread fast, and the glare of the burning city illuminated the whole arch of the sky towards the north-west. At 2 o’clock A.M. the storm increased in strength, and rain fell heavily; the most dazzling flames of lightning shot over the plateau and lighted up the camp; the peals of thunder were so short and startling as to resemble, while they exceeded in noise, the report of cannon. The rain somewhat lessened the intensity of the fire at Sebastopol, but its flames and those of the lightning at times contended for the mastery. There was, indeed, a great battle raging in the skies, and its thunder mocked to scorn our heaviest cannonade. In the whole course of my life I never heard or saw anything like the deluge of rain which fell at 4 o’clock. It beat on the roof with a noise like that of a cataract: it was a veritable waterspout. The lightning at last grew fainter, and the gusts less violent. At 9.45 the tornado passed over the camp once more — hail, storm, and rain. The ground was converted into a mass of mud.

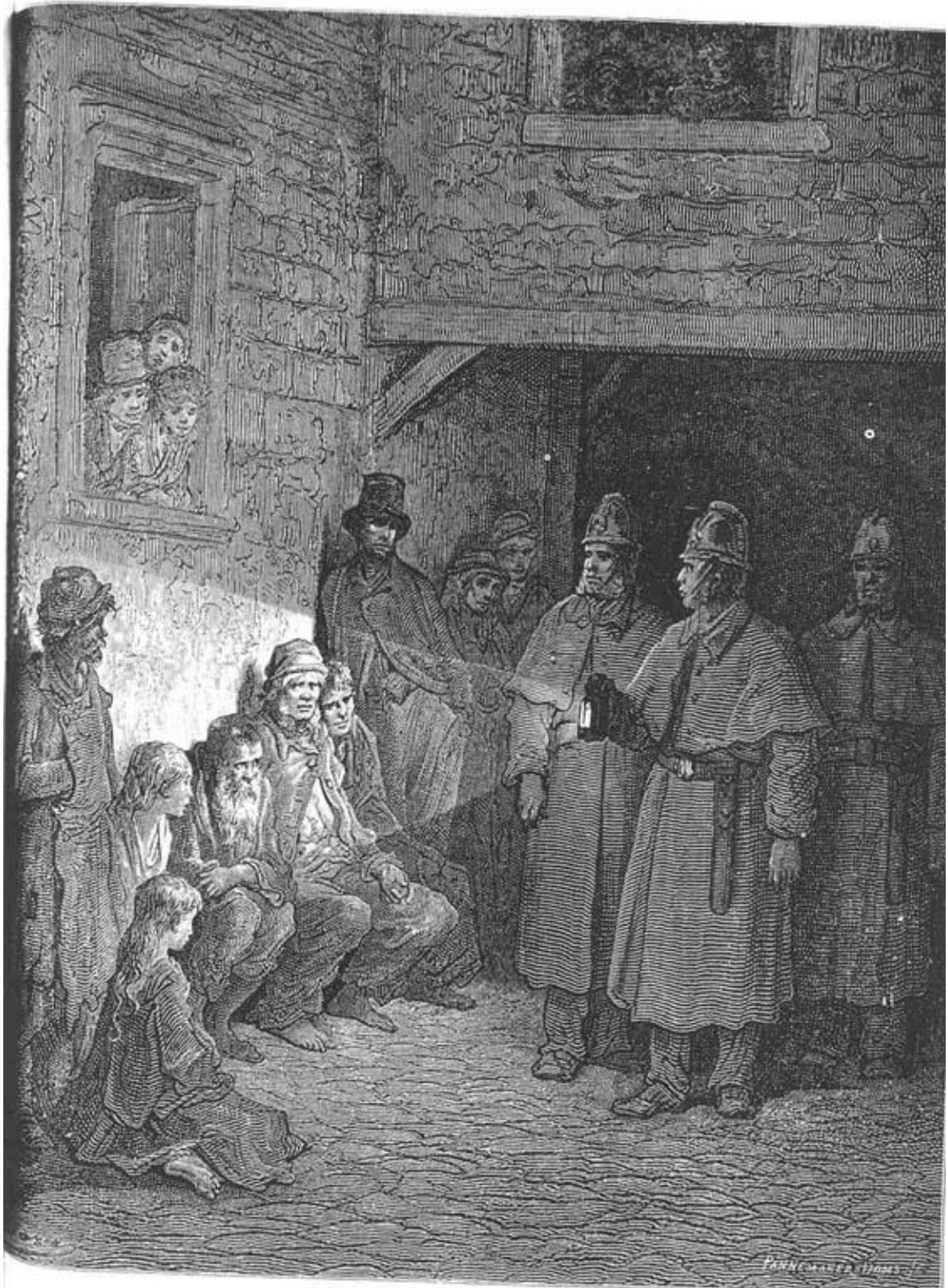
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‘On Duty With Inspector Field’

Charles Dickens

Household Words, 14 June 1850

How goes the night? Saint Giles’s clock is striking nine. The weather is dull and wet, and the long lines of street-lamps are blurred, as if we saw them through tears. A damp wind blows, and rakes the pieman’s fire out, when he opens the door of his little furnace, carrying away an eddy of sparks.

Saint Giles’s clock strikes nine. We are punctual. Where is Inspector Field? Assistant Commissioner of Police is already here, enwrapped in oil-skin cloak, and standing in the shadow of Saint Giles’s steeple. Detective Serjeant, weary of speaking French all day to foreigners unpacking at the Great Exhibition, is already here. Where is Inspector Field?

10 Inspector Field is, to-night, the guardian genius of the British Museum. He is bringing his shrewd eye to bear on every corner of its solitary galleries, before he reports “all right.” Suspicious of the Elgin marbles, and not to be done by cat-faced Egyptian giants, with their hands upon their knees, Inspector Field, sagacious, vigilant, lamp in hand, throwing monstrous shadows on the walls and ceilings, passes through the spacious rooms. If a mummy trembled in an atom of its dusty covering, Inspector Field would say, ‘Come out of that, Tom Green. I know you!’ If the smallest “Gonoph
20 “about town were crouching at the bottom of a classic bath, Inspector Field would nose him with a finer scent than the ogre’s, when adventurous Jack lay trembling in his kitchen copper. But all is quiet, and Inspector Field goes warily on, making little outward show of attending to anything in particular, just recognising the Ichthyosaurus as a familiar acquaintance, and wondering, perhaps, how the detectives did it in the days before the Flood.

Will Inspector Field be long about this work? He may be half-an-hour longer. He sends his compliments by Police Constable, and proposes that we meet at Saint Giles’s Station House, across the road. Good. It were as well to stand by the fire, there, as in the shadow of Saint Giles’s steeple.

Anything doing here to-night? Not much. We are very quiet. A lost boy, extremely calm and small, sitting by the fire, whom we now confide to a

constable to take home, for the child says that if you show him Newgate Street, he can show you where he lives—a raving drunken woman in the cells, who has screeched her voice away, and has hardly power enough left to declare, even with the passionate help of her feet and arms, that she is the daughter of a British officer, and, strike her blind and dead, but she’ll write a letter to the Queen! but who is soothed with a drink of water—in another cell, a quiet woman with a child at her breast, for begging in another, her husband in a smock-frock, with a basket of watercresses in another, a pickpocket—in another, a meek tremulous old pauper man who has been out for a holiday “and has took but a little drop, but it has
 10 overcome him arter so many months in the house “—and that’s all, as yet. Presently, a sensation at the Station House door. Mr. Field, gentlemen!

Inspector Field comes in, wiping his forehead, for he is of a burly figure, and has come fast from the ores and metals of the deep mines of the earth, and from the Parrot Gods of the South Sea Islands, and from the birds and beetles of the tropics, and from the Arts of Greece and Rome, and from the Sculptures of Nineveh, and from the traces of an elder world, when these were not. Is Rogers ready? Rogers is ready, strapped and great-coated, with a flaming eye in the middle of his waist, like a deformed Cyclops. Lead on, Rogers, to Rats’ Castle!

How many people may there be in London, who, if we had brought them
 20 deviously and blindfold, to this street, fifty paces from the Station House, and within call of Saint Giles’s church, would know it for a not remote part of the city in which their lives are passed? How many, who amidst this compound of sickening smells, these heaps of filth, these tumbling houses, with all their vile contents, animate and inanimate, slimily overflowing into the black road, would believe that they breathe this air? How much Red Tape may there be, that could look round on the faces which now hem us in for our appearance here has caused a rush from all points to a common centre—the lowering foreheads, the sallow cheeks, the brutal eyes, the matted hair, the infected, vermin-haunted heaps of rags—and say “I have thought
 30 of this. I have not dismissed the thing. I have neither blustered it away, nor frozen it away, nor tied it up and put it away, nor smoothly said pooh, pooh! to it, when it has been shown to me”?

This is not what Rogers wants to know, however. What Rogers wants to know, is, whether you will clear the way here, some of you, or whether you won’t; because if you don’t do it right on end, he’ll lock you up! What! *You* are there, are you, Bob Miles?

You haven't had enough of it yet, haven't you? You want three months more, do you? Come away from that gentleman! What are you creeping round there for?

"What am I a doing, thinn, Mr. Rogers?" says Bob Miles, appearing, villanous, at the end of a lane of light, made by the lantern.

"I 'll let you know pretty quick, if you don't hook it. WILL you hook it?"

A sycophantic murmur rises from the crowd. "Hook it, Bob, when Mr. Rogers and Mr. Field tells you! Why don't you hook it, when you are told to?"

The most importunate of the voices strikes familiarly on Mr. Rogers's ear. He suddenly turns his lantern on the owner.

10 "What! You are there, are you, Mister Click? You hook it too-come?"

"What for?" says Mr. Click, discomfited, "You hook it, will you!" says Mr. Rogers with stern emphasis. Both Click and Miles do "hook it," without another word, or, in plainer English, sneak away.

"Close up there, my men!" says Inspector Field to two constables on duty who have followed. "Keep together gentlemen; we are going down here. Heads!"

Saint Giles's church strikes half-past ten. We stoop low, and creep down a precipitous flight of steps into a dark close cellar. There is a fire. There is a long deal table. There are benches. The cellar is full of company, chiefly very young men in various conditions of dirt and raggedness. Some are eating supper. There are no girls
20 or women present. Welcome to Rats' Castle, gentlemen, and to this company of noted thieves!

"Well, my lads! How are you, my lads? What have you been doing to-day? Here's some company come to see you, my lads! There s a plate of beefsteak, Sir, for the supper of a fine young man! And there's a mouth for a steak, Sir! Why, I should be too proud of such a mouth as that, if I had it myself! Stand up and show it, Sir! Take off your cap. There's a fine young man for a nice little party, Sir! An't he?"

Inspector Field is the bustling speaker. Inspector Field's eye is the roving eye that searches every corner of the cellar as he talks. Inspector Field's hand is the well-known hand that has collared half the people here, and motioned their brothers,
30 sisters, fathers, mothers, male and female friends, inexorably, to New South Wales. Yet Inspector Field stands in this den, the Sultan of the place. Every thief here, cowers before him, like a schoolboy before his schoolmaster. All watch him, all answer when addressed, all laugh at his jokes, all seek to propitiate him. This cellar-company alone-

to say nothing of the crowd surrounding the entrance from the street above, and making the steps shine with eyes—is strong enough to murder us all, and willing enough to do it; but, let Inspector Field have a mind to pick out one thief here, and take him; let him produce that ghostly truncheon from his pocket, and say, with his business-air, “My lad, I want you! “and all Rats’ Castle shall be stricken with paralysis, and not a finger move against him, as he fits the handcuffs on!

Where’s the Earl of Warwick?—Here he is, Mr. Field! Here’s the Earl of Warwick, Mr. Field! —O there you are, my Lord. Come for’ard. There’s a chest, Sir, not to have a clean shirt on. An’t it? Take your hat off, my Lord. Why, I should be
 10 ashamed if I was you—and an Earl, too—to show myself to a gentleman with my hat on! —The Earl of Warwick laughs, and uncovers. All the company laugh. One pickpocket, especially, laughs with great enthusiasm. O what a jolly game it is, when Mr. Field comes down and don’t want nobody!

So, *you* are here, too, are you, you tall, grey, soldierly-looking, grave man, standing by the fire? —Yes, Sir. Good evening, Mr. Field! Let us see. You lived servant to a nobleman once?—Yes, Mr. Field. —And what is it you do now; I forget? —Well, Mr. Field, I job about as well as I can. I left my employment on account of delicate health. The family is still kind to me. Mr. Wix of Piccadilly is also very kind to me when I am
 20 hard up. Likewise Mr. Nix of Oxford Street. I get a trifle from them occasionally, and rub on as well as I can, Mr. Field. Mr. Field’s eye rolls enjoyingly, for this man is a notorious begging-letter writer.—Good night, my lads! —Good night, Mr. Field, and thank’ee, Sir!

Clear the street here, half a thousand of you! Cut it, Mrs. Stalker—none of that we don’t want you! Rogers of the flaming eye, lead on to the tramps’ lodging-house!

A dream of baleful faces attends to the door. Now, stand back all of you! In the rear, Detective Serjeant plants himself, composedly whistling, with his strong right arm across the narrow passage. Mrs. Stalker, I am something’d that need not be written here, if you won’t get yourself into trouble, in about half a minute, if I see that face of yours again!

30 Saint Giles’s church clock, striking eleven, hums through our hand from the dilapidated door of a dark outhouse as we open it, and are stricken back by the pestilent breath that issues from within. Rogers, to the front with the light, and let us look!

Ten, twenty, thirty—who can count them! Men, women, children, for the most part naked, heaped upon the floor like maggots in a cheese! Ho! In that dark corner

yonder! Does any body lie there? Me Sir, Irish me, a widder, with six children. And yonder? Me Sir, Irish me, with me wife and eight poor babes. And to the left there? Me Sir, Irish me, along with two more Irish boys as is me friends. And to the right there? Me Sir and the Murphy fam'ly, numbering five blessed souls. And what's this, coiling, now, about my foot? Another Irish me, pitifully in want of shaving, whom I have awakened from sleep—and across my other foot lies his wife—and by the shoes of Inspector Field lie their three eldest—and their three youngest are at present squeezed between the open door and the wall. And why is there no one on that little mat before the sullen fire? Because O'Donovan, with wife and daughter, is not come in yet from selling Lucifers! Nor on the bit of sacking in the nearest corner? Bad luck! Because that Irish family is late to night, a-cadging in the streets!

They are all awake now, the children excepted, and most of them sit up, to stare. Whereso ever Mr. Rogers turns the flaming eye, there is a spectral figure rising, unshrouded, from a grave of rags. Who is the landlord here?—I am, Mr. Field! says a bundle of ribs and parchment against the wall, scratching itself.—Will you spend this money fairly, in the morning, to buy coffee for 'em all?—Yes Sir, I will! O he'll do it Sir, he'll do it fair. He's honest! cry the spectres. And with thanks and Good Night sink into their graves again.

Thus, we make our New Oxford Streets, and our other new streets, never heeding, never asking, where the wretches whom we clear out, crowd. With such scenes at our doors, with all the plagues of Egypt tied up with bits of cobweb in kennels so near our homes, we timorously make our Nuisance Bills and Boards of Health, nonentities, and think to keep away the Wolves of Crime and Filth, by our electioneering ducking to little vestrymen, and our gentlemanly handling of Red Tape!

Intelligence of the coffee money has got abroad. The yard is full, and Rogers of the flaming eye is beleaguered with entreaties to show other Lodging Houses. Mine next! Mine! Mine! Rogers, military, obdurate, stiff-necked, immovable, replies not, but leads away; all falling back before him. Inspector Field follows. Detective Serjeant, with his barrier of arm across the little passage, deliberately waits to close the procession. He sees behind him, without any effort, and exceedingly disturbs one individual far in the rear by coolly calling out, “It won't do Mr. Michael! Don't try it!”

After council holden in the street, we enter other lodging houses, public-houses, many lairs and holes; all noisome and offensive; none so filthy and so crowded as where Irish are. In one, The Ethiopian party are expected home presently—were in

Oxford Street when last heard of—shall be fetched, for our delight, within ten minutes. In another, one of the two or three Professors who draw Napoleon Buonaparte and a couple of mackerel, on the pavement, and then let the work of art out to a speculator, is refreshing after his labors. In another, the vested interest of the profitable nuisance has been in one family for a hundred years, and the landlord drives in comfortably from the country to his snug little stew in town. In all, Inspector Field is received with warmth. Coiners and smashers droop before him; pickpockets defer to him; the gentle sex (not very gentle here) smile upon him. Half-drunken hags check themselves in the midst of pots of beer, or pints of gin, to drink to Mr. Field, and pressing to ask the honor of his finishing the draught. One beldame in rusty black has such admiration for him, that she runs a whole street's length to shake him by the hand; tumbling into a heap of mud by the way, and still pressing her attentions when her very form has ceased to be distinguishable through it. Before the power of the law, the power of superior sense—for common thieves are fools beside these men and the power of a perfect mastery of their character, the garrison of Rats' Castle and the adjacent Fortresses make but a skulking show indeed when reviewed by Inspector Field.

Saint Giles's clock says it will be midnight in half-an-hour, and Inspector Field says we must hurry to the Old Mint in the Borough. The cabdriver is low-spirited, and has a solemn sense of his responsibility. Now, what's your fare, my lad?—O yo'U know, Inspector Field, what's the good of asking me!

Say, Parker, strapped and great-coated, and waiting in dim Borough doorway by appointment, to replace the trusty Rogers whom we left deep in Saint Giles's, are you ready? Ready, Inspector Field, and at a motion of my wrist behold my flaming eye.

This narrow street, sir, is the chief part of the Old Mint, full of low lodging-houses, as you see by the transparent canvas-lamps and blinds, announcing beds for travellers! But it is greatly changed, friend Field, from my former knowledge of it; it is infinitely quieter and more subdued than when I was here last, some seven years ago? O yes! Inspector Haynes, a first rate man, is on this station now, and plays the Devil with them!

Well, my lads! How are you to-night, my lads! Playing cards here, eh? Who wins? Why, Mr. Field, I, the sulky gentleman with the damp flat side-curls, rubbing my bleared eye with the end of my neck-kerchief which is like a dirty eel-skin, am losing just at present, but I suppose I must take my pipe out of my mouth, and be submissive to *you*—I hope I see you well, Mr. Field? Aye, all right, my lad. Deputy, who have you

got up-stairs? Be pleased to show the rooms!

Why Deputy, Inspector Field can't say. He only knows that the man who takes care of the beds and lodgers is always called so. Steady, O Deputy, with the flaring candle in the blacking bottle, for this is a slushy back-yard, and the wooden staircase outside the house creaks and has holes in it.

Again, in these confined intolerable rooms, burrowed out like the holes of rats or the nests of insect vermin, but fuller of intolerable smells, are crowds of sleepers, each on his foul trucklebed coiled up beneath a rug. Halloo here! Come! Let us see you! Shew your face! Pilot Parker goes from bed to bed and turns their slumbering heads towards us, as a salesman might turn sheep. Some wake up with an execration and a threat. —What! who spoke? O! If it's the accursed glaring eye that fixes me, go where I will, I am helpless. Here! I sit up to be looked at. Is it me you want? Not you, lie down again! —and I lie down, with a woeful growl.

Wherever the turning lane of light becomes stationary for a moment, some sleeper appears at the end of it, submits himself to be scrutinized, and fades away into the darkness.

There should be strange dreams here, Deputy. They sleep sound enough, says Deputy, taking the candle out of the blacking bottle, snuffing it with his fingers, throwing the snuff into the bottle, and corking it up with the candle; that's all *I* know. What is the inscription, Deputy, on all the discolored sheets? A precaution against loss of linen. Deputy turns down the rug of an unoccupied bed and discloses it. STOP THIEF! To lie at night, wrapped in the legend of my slinking life; to take the cry that pursues me, waking, to my breast in sleep; to have it staring at me, and clamouring for me, as soon as consciousness returns; to have it for my first-foot on New-Year's day, my Valentine, my Birthday salute, my Christmas greeting, my parting with the old year. STOP THIEF!

And to know that I *must* be stopped, come what will. To know that I am no match for this individual energy and keenness, or this organised and steady system! Come across the street, here, and, entering by a little shop, and yard, examine these intricate passages and doors contrived for escape, flapping and counter-flapping, like the lids of the conjuror's boxes. But what avail they? Who gets in by a nod, and shews their secret working to us? Inspector Field.

Don't forget the old Farm House, Parker!

Parker is not the man to forget it. We are going there, now. It is the old Manor-House of these parts, and stood in the country once. Then, perhaps, there was something, which was not the beastly street, to see from the shattered low fronts of the overhanging wooden houses we are passing under-shut up now, pasted over with bills about the literature and drama of the Mint, and mouldering away. This long paved yard was a paddock or a garden once, or a court in front of the Farm House. Perchance, with a dovecot in the centre, and fowls pecking about-with fair elm trees, then, where discolored chimneystacks and gables are now-noisy, then, with rooks which have yielded to a different sort of rookery. It's likelier than not, Inspector Field
 10 thinks, as we turn into the common kitchen, which is in the yard, and many paces from the house.

Well my lads and lasses, how are you all! Where's Blackey, who has stood near London Bridge these five-and-twenty years, with a painted skin to represent disease? —Here he is, Mr. Field!-How are you, Blackey?Jolly, sa! —Not playing the fiddle to-night, Blackey? Not a night, sa! —A sharp, smiling youth, the wit of the kitchen, interposes. He an't musical to-night, sir. I've been giving him a moral lecture; I've been a talking to him about his latter end, you see. A good many of these are my pupils, sir. This here young man (smoothing down the hair of one near him, reading a Sunday paper) is a pupil of mine. I'm a teaching of him to read, sir. He's a promising
 20 cove, sir. He's a smith, he is, and gets his living by the sweat of the brow, sir. So do I, myself, sir. This young woman is my sister, Mr. Field. She s a getting on very well too. I've a deal of trouble with 'em, sir, but I 'm richly rewarded, now I see 'em all a doing so well, and growing up so creditable. That's a great comfort, that is, an't it, sir? —In the midst of the kitchen (the whole kitchen is in ecstacies with this impromptu "chaff") sits a young, modest, gentle-looking creature, with a beautiful child in her lap. She seems to belong to the company, but is so strangely unlike it. She has such a pretty, quiet face and voice, and is so proud to hear the child admired-thinks you would hardly believe that he is only nine months old! Is she as bad as the rest, I wonder? Inspectorial experience does not engender a belief contrariwise, but prompts
 30 the answer, Not a ha'porth of difference!

There is a piano going in the old Farm House as we approach. It stops. Landlady appears. Has no objections, Mr. Field, to gentlemen being brought, but wishes it were at earlier hours, the lodgers complaining of ill-convenience. Inspector Field is polite and soothing-knows his woman and the sex. Deputy (a girl in this case) shows the way

up a heavy broad old staircase, kept very clean, into clean rooms where many sleepers are, and where painted panels of an older time look strangely on the truckle beds. The sight of white-wash and the smell of soap two things we seem by this time to have parted from in infancy make the old Farm House a phenomenon, and connect themselves with the so curiously misplaced picture of the pretty mother and child long after we have left it, long after we have left, besides, the neighbouring nook with something of a rustic flavor in it yet, where once, beneath a low wooden colonnade still standing as of yore, the eminent Jack Sheppard condescended to regale himself, and where, now, two old bachelor brothers in broad hats (who are whispered in the

10 Mint to have made a compact long ago that if either should ever marry, he must forfeit his share of the joint property) still keep a sequestered tavern, and sit o' nights smoking pipes in the bar, among ancient bottles and glasses, as our eyes behold them.

How goes the night now? Saint George of Southwark answers with twelve blows upon his bell. Parker, good night, for Williams is already waiting over in the region of Ratcliffe Highway, to show the houses where the sailors dance.

I should like to know where Inspector Field was born. In Ratcliffe Highway, I would have answered with confidence, but for his being equally at home wherever we go. He does not trouble his head as I do, about the river at night. He does not care for its creeping, black and silent, on our right there, rushing through sluice gates,

20 lapping at piles and posts and iron rings, hiding strange things in its mud, running away with suicides and accidentally drowned bodies faster than midnight funeral should, and acquiring such various experience between its cradle and its grave. It has no mystery for him. Is there not the Thames Police!

Accordingly, Williams lead the way. We are a little late, for some of the houses are already closing. No matter. You show us plenty. All the landlords know Inspector Field. All pass him, freely and good-humouredly, wheresoever he wants to go. So thoroughly are all these houses open to him and our local guide, that, granting that sailors must be entertained in their own way-as I suppose they must, and have a right to be I hardly know how such places could be better regulated. Not

30 that I call the company very select, or the dancing very gracefuleven so graceful as that of the German Sugar Bakers, whose assembly, by the Minories, we stopped to visit-but there is watchful maintenance of order in every house, and swift expulsion where need is. Even in the midst of drunkenness, both of the lethargic kind and the lively, there is sharp landlord supervision, and pockets are in less peril than out of

doors. These houses show, singularly, how much of the picturesque and romantic there truly is in the sailor, requiring to be especially addressed. All the songs (sung in a hailstorm of halfpence, which are pitched at the singer without the least tenderness for the time or tune—mostly from great rolls of copper carried for the purpose—and which he occasionally dodges like shot as they fly near his head) are of the sentimental sea sort. All the rooms are decorated with nautical subjects. Wrecks, engagements, ships on fire, ships passing lighthouses on iron-bound coasts, ships blowing up, ships going down, ships running ashore, men lying out upon the main yard in a gale of wind, sailors and ships in every variety of peril, constitute the illustrations of fact. Nothing
 10 can be done in the fanciful way, without a thumping boy upon a scaly dolphin.

How goes the night now? Past one. Black and Green are waiting in Whitechapel to unveil the mysteries of Wentworth Street. Williams, the best of friends must part Adieu!

Are not Black and Green ready at the appointed place? O yes! They glide out of shadow as we stop. Imperturbable Black opens the cabdoor; Imperturbable Green takes a mental note of the driver. Both Green and Black then open, each his flaming eye, and marshal us the way that we are going.

The lodging-house we want, is hidden in a maze of streets and courts. It is fast shut. We knock at the door, and stand hushed looking up for a light at one or other
 20 of the begrimed old lattice windows in its ugly front when another constable comes up—supposes that we want “to see the school.” Detective Serjeant meanwhile has got over a rail, opened a gate, dropped down an area, overcome some other little obstacles, and tapped at a window. Now returns. The landlord will send a deputy immediately.

Deputy is heard to stumble out of bed. Deputy lights a candle, draws back a bolt or two, and appears at the door. Deputy is a shivering shirt and trousers by no means clean, a yawning face, a shock head much confused externally and internally.

We want to look for some one. You may go up with the light, and take ‘em all, if you like, says Deputy, resigning it, and sitting down upon a bench in the kitchen with his ten fingers sleepily twisting in his hair. Halloa here! Now then!

30 Show yourselves. That’ll do. It’s not you. Don’t disturb yourself any more! So on, through a labyrinth of airless rooms, each man responding, like a wild beast, to the keeper who has tamed him, and who goes into his cage. What, you haven’t found him, then? says Deputy, when we came down. A woman mysteriously sitting up all night in the dark by the smouldering ashes of the kitchen fire, says it’s only tramps

and cadgers here; it's gonophs over the way.

A man, mysteriously walking about the kitchen all night in the dark, bids her hold her tongue. We come out. Deputy fastens the door and goes to bed again.

Black and Green, you know Bark, lodginghouse keeper and receiver of stolen goods? —O yes, Inspector Field. —Go to Bark's next.

Bark sleeps in an inner wooden hutch, near his street-door. As we parley on the step with Bark's Deputy, Bark growls in his bed. We enter, and Bark flies out of bed. Bark is a red villain and a wrathful, with a sanguine throat that looks very much as if it were expressly made for hanging, as he stretches it out, in pale defiance, over the half-
 10 door of his hutch. Bark's parts of speech are of an awful sort—principally adjectives. I won't, says Bark, have no adjective police and adjective strangers in my adjective premises! I won't, by adjective and substantive! Give me my trousers, and I'll send the whole adjective police to adjective and substantive! Give me, says Bark, my adjective trousers! I'll put an adjective knife in the whole bileing of 'em. I'll punch their adjective heads. I'll rip up their adjective substantives. Give me my adjective trousers! says Bark, and I'll spile the bileing of 'em!

Now, Bark, what's the use of this? Here's Black and Green, Detective Serjeant, and Inspector Field. You know we will come in. —I know you won't! says Bark. Somebody give me my adjective trousers! Bark's trousers seem difficult to find. He
 20 calls for them, as Hercules might for his club. Give me my adjective trousers! says Bark, and I'll spile the bileing of 'em!

Inspector Field holds that it's all one whether Bark likes the visit or don't like it. He, Inspector Field, is an Inspector of the Detective Police, Detective Serjeant is Detective Serjeant, Black and Green are constables in uniform. Don't you be a fool, Bark, or you know it will be the worse for you. —I don't care, says Bark. Give me my adjective trousers!

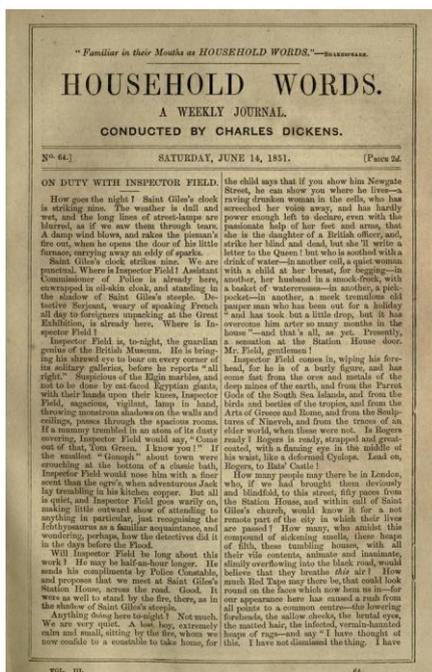
At two o'clock in the morning, we descend into Bark's low kitchen, leaving Bark to foam at the mouth above, and Imperturbable Black and Green to look at him. Bark's kitchen is crammed full of thieves, holding a *conversazione* there by lamp-light. It is by far the most dangerous assembly we have seen yet. Stimulated by the ravings of
 30 Bark, above, their looks are sullen, but not a man speaks. We ascend again. Bark has got his trousers, and is in a state of madness in the passage with his back against a door that shuts off the upper staircase. We observe, in other respects, a ferocious individuality in Bark. Instead of "STOP THIEF!" on his linen, he prints "STOLEN FROM Bark's!"

Now Bark, we are going up stairs! —No, you an't! —You refuse admission to the Police, do you, Bark? —Yes, I do! I refuse it to all the adjective police, and to all the adjective substantives. If the adjective coves in the kitchen was men they'd come up now, and do for you! Shut me that there door! says Bark, and suddenly we are enclosed in the passage. They'd come up and do for you! cries Bark, and waits. Not a sound in the kitchen! They'd come up and do for you! cries Bark again, and waits. Not a sound in the kitchen! We are shut up, half-a-dozen of us, in Bark's house, in the innermost recesses of the worst part of London, in the dead of the night—the house is crammed with notorious robbers and ruffians—and not a man stirs. No, Bark. They know the weight of the law, and they know Inspector Field and Co. too well.

We leave Bully Bark to subside at leisure out of his passion and his trousers, and I dare say, to be inconveniently reminded of this little brush before long. Black and Green do ordinary duty here, and look serious.

As to White, who waits on Holborn Hill to show the courts that are eaten out of Rotten Gray's Inn Lane, where other lodgingshouses are, and where (in one blind alley) the Thieves' Kitchen and Seminary for the teaching of the art to children, is, the night has so worn away, being now almost at odds with morning, which is which, that they are quiet, and no light shines through the chinks in the shutters.

As undistinctive Death will come here, one day, sleep comes now. The wicked cease from troubling sometimes, even in this life.



Down With The Tide

By Charles Dickens

'Down with the Tide' (*Household Words*, 5 February 1853)

A VERY dark night it was, and bitter cold; the east wind blowing bleak, and bringing with it stinging particles from marsh, and moor, and fen—from the Great Desert and Old Egypt, may be. Some of the component parts of the sharp-edged vapour that came flying up the Thames at London might be mummy-dust, dry atoms from the Temple at Jerusalem, camels' foot-prints, crocodiles' hatching places, loosened grains of expression from the visages of bluntnosed sphynxes, waifs and strays from caravans of turbaned merchants, vegetation from jungles, frozen snow from the Himalayas. O! It was very very dark upon the Thames, and it was bitter bitter cold.

10 “And yet,” said the voice within the great peacoat at my side, “you’ll have seen a good many rivers too, I dare say?”

“Truly,” said I, “when I come to think of it, not a few. From the Niagara, downward to the mountain rivers of Italy, which are like the national spirit—very tame, or chafing suddenly and bursting bounds, only to dwindle away again. The Moselle, and the Rhine, and the Rhone; and the Seine, and the Saône; and the St. Lawrence, Mississippi, and Ohio; and the Tiber, the Po, and the Arno; and the—”

Peacoat coughing as if he had had enough of that, I said no more. I could have carried the catalogue on to a teasing length, though, if I had been in the cruel mind.

“And after all,” said he, “this looks so dismal!”

20 “So awful,” I returned, “at night. The Seine at Paris is very gloomy too, at such a time, and is probably the scene of far more crime and greater wickedness; but this river looks so broad and vast, so murky and silent, seems such an image of death in the midst of the great city’s life, that—”

That Peacoat coughed again. He could not stand my holding forth.

We were in a four-oared Thames Police Galley, lying on our oars in the deep shadow of Southwark Bridge—under the corner arch on the Surrey side—having come down with the tide from Vauxhall. We were fain to hold on pretty tight, though close in shore, for the river was swollen and the tide running down very strong. We were watching certain water-rats of human growth, and lay in the deep shade as quiet as mice; our light hidden and our scraps of conversation carried on in whispers. Above us, the massive iron girders of the arch were faintly visible, and below us its ponderous shadow seemed to sink down to the bottom of the stream.

We had been lying here some half an hour. With our backs to the wind, it is true; but
 10 the wind being in a determined temper blew straight through us, and would not take the trouble to go round. I would have boarded a fireship to get into action, and mildly suggested as much to my friend Pea.

“No doubt,” says he as patiently as possible; “but shore-going tactics wouldn’t do with us. River thieves can always get rid of stolen property in a moment by dropping it overboard. We want to take them with the property, so we lurk about and come out upon ‘em sharp. If they see us or hear us, over it goes.”

Pea’s wisdom being indisputable, there was nothing for it but to sit there and be blown through, for another half hour. The water-rats thinking it wise to abscond at the end of that time without commission of felony, we shot out, disappointed, with the tide.

20 “Grim they look, don’t they?” said Pea. Seeing me glance over my shoulder at the lights upon the bridge, and downward at their long crooked reflections in the river.

“Very,” said I, “and make one think with a shudder of Suicides. What a night for a dreadful leap from that parapet!”

“Aye, but Waterloo’s the favourite bridge for making holes in the water from,” returned Pea. “By the bye—avast pulling lads! —would you like to speak to Waterloo on the subject?”

My face confessing to a surprised desire to have some friendly conversation with Waterloo Bridge, and my friend Pea being the most obliging of men, we put about, pulled out of the force of the stream, and in place of going at great speed with the tide, began to
 30 strive against it, close in shore again. Every color but black seemed to have departed from the world. The air was black, the water was black, the barges and hulks were black, the piles

were black, the buildings were black, the shadows were only a deeper shade of black upon a black ground. Here and there, a coal fire in an iron cresset blazed upon a wharf; but, one knew that it too had been black a little while ago, and would be black again soon. Uncomfortable rushes of water suggestive of gurgling and drowning, ghostly rattlings of iron chains, dismal clankings of discordant engines, formed the music that accompanied the dip of our oars and their rattling in the rullocks. Even the noises had a black sound to me—as the trumpet sounded red to the blind man.

Our dexterous boat's crew made nothing of the tide, and pulled us gallantly up to Waterloo Bridge. Here Pea and I disembarked, passed under the black stone archway, and
10 climbed the steep stone steps. Within a few feet of their summit, Pea presented me to Waterloo (or an eminent toll-taker representing that structure), muffled up to the eyes in a thick shawl, and amply greatcoated and fur-capped.

Waterloo received us with cordiality, and observed of the night that it was “a Searcher.” He had been originally called the Strand Bridge, he informed us, but had received his present name at the suggestion of the proprietors, when Parliament had resolved to vote three hundred thousand pound for the erection of a monument in honor of the victory. Parliament took the hint (said Waterloo, with the least flavor of
20 misanthropy), and saved the money. Of course the late Duke of Wellington was the first passenger, and of course he paid his penny, and of course a noble lord preserved it evermore. The treadle and index at the tollhouse (a most ingenious contrivance for rendering fraud impossible), were invented by Mr. Lethbridge, then property-man at Drury Lane Theatre.

Was it suicide, we wanted to know about? said Waterloo. Ha! Well, he had seen a good deal of that work, he did assure us. He had prevented some. Why, one day a woman, poorish looking, came in between the hatch, slapped down a penny, and wanted to go on without the change! Waterloo suspected this, and says to his mate, “give an eye to the gate,” and bolted after her. She had got to the third seat between the piers, and was on the parapet just a going over, when he caught her and gave her in charge. At the police office next morning, she said it was along of trouble and a bad husband. “Likely
30 enough,” observed Waterloo to Pea and myself, as he adjusted his chin in his shawl. “There's a deal of trouble about, you see—and bad husbands too!”

Another time, a young woman at twelve o'clock in the open day, got through, darted along; and, before Waterloo could come near her, jumped upon the parapet, and shot herself over sideways. Alarm given, watermen put off, lucky escape. —Clothes buoyed her up.

“This is where it is,” said Waterloo. “If people jump off straight forwards from the middle of the parapet of the bays of the bridge, they are seldom killed by drowning, but are smashed, poor things; that’s what they are; they dash themselves upon the buttress of the bridge. But, you jump off,” said Waterloo to me, putting his forefinger in a button hole of my great coat; “you jump off from the side of the bay, and you’ll tumble, true, into the stream under the arch. What you have got to do, is to mind how you jump in! There was 10 poor Tom Steele from Dublin. Didn’t dive! Bless you, didn’t dive at all! Fell down so flat into the water, that he broke his breast-bone, and lived two days!”

I asked Waterloo if there were a favorite side of his bridge for this dreadful purpose? He reflected, and thought yes, there was. He should say the Surrey side.

Three decent looking men went through one day, soberly and quietly, and went on abreast for about a dozen yards: when the middle one, he sung out, all of a sudden, “Here goes, Jack!” and was over in a minute.

Body found? Well. Waterloo didn’t rightly recollect about that. They were compositors, they were.

20 He considered it astonishing how quick people were! Why, there was a cab came up one Boxing-night, with a young woman in it, who looked, according to Waterloo’s opinion of her, a little the worse for liquor; very handsome she was too-very handsome. She stopped the cab at the gate, and said she’d pay the cabman then: which she did, though there was a little hankering about the fare, because at first she didn’t seem quite to know where she wanted to be drove to. However she paid the man, and the toll too, and looking Waterloo in the face (he thought she knew him, don’t you see!) said, “I’ll finish it somehow!” Well, the cab went off, leaving Waterloo a little doubtful in his mind, and while it was going on at full speed the young woman jumped out, never fell, hardly staggered, ran along the bridge pavement a little way passing several people, and jumped over from 30 the second opening. At the inquest it was giv’ in evidence that she had been quarrelling at the Hero of Waterloo, and it was brought in jealousy. (One of the results of Waterloo’s experience was, that there was a deal of jealousy about.)

“Do we ever get madmen?” said Waterloo, in answer to an inquiry of mine. “Well, we do get madmen. Yes, we have had one or two; escaped from ‘Sylums, I suppose. One hadn’t a halfpenny; and because I wouldn’t let him through, he went back a little way, stooped down, took a run, and butted at the hatch like a ram. He smashed his hat rarely, but his head didn’t seem no worse—in my opinion on account of his being wrong in it afore. Sometimes people haven’t got a halfpenny. If they are really tired and poor we give ‘em one and let ‘em through. Other people will leave things—pocket-handkerchiefs mostly. I haue taken cravats and gloves, pocket knives, toothpicks, studs, shirt pins, rings (generally from young gents, early in the morning), but handkerchiefs is the general thing.

10 “Regular customers?” said Waterloo. “Lord, yes! We have regular customers. One, such a worn out used-up old file as you can scarcely picter, comes from the Surrey side as regular as ten o’clock at night comes; and goes over, I think, to some flash house on the Middlesex side. He comes back, he does, as reg’lar as the clock strikes three in the morning, and then can hardly drag one of his old legs after the other. He always turns down the water-stairs, comes up again, and then goes on down the Waterloo Road. He always does the same thing, and never varies a minute. Does it every night—even Sundays.”

I asked Waterloo if he had given his mind to the possibility of this particular customer going down the water-stairs at three o’clock some morning, and never coming up again? He didn’t think that of him, he replied. In fact, it was Waterloo’s opinion, founded on his
20 observation of that file, that he know’d a trick worth two of it.

“There’s another queer old customer,” said Waterloo, “comes over, as punctual as the almanack, at eleven o’clock on the sixth of January, at eleven o’clock on the fifth of April, at eleven o’clock on the sixth of July, at eleven o’clock on the tenth of October. Drives a shaggy little, rough poney, in a sort of a rattle-trap arm-chair sort of a thing. White hair he has, and white whiskers, and muffles himself up with all manner of shawls. He comes back again the same afternoon, and we never see more of him for three months. He is a captain in the navy—retired—wery old—wery odd—and served with Lord Nelson. He is particular about drawing his pension at Somerset House afore the clock strikes twelve every quarter. I haue heerd say that he thinks it wouldn’t be according to the Act of Parliament,
30 if he didn’t draw it afore twelve.”

Having related these anecdotes in a natural manner, which was the best warranty in the world for their genuine nature, our friend Waterloo was sinking deep into his shawl

again, as having exhausted his communicative powers and taken in enough east wind, when my other friend Pea in a moment brought him to the surface by asking whether he had not been occasionally the subject of assault and battery in the execution of his duty? Waterloo recovering his spirits, instantly dashed into a new branch of his subject. We learnt how “both these teeth” here he pointed to the places where two front teeth were not—were knocked out by an ugly customer who one night made a dash at him (Waterloo) while his (the ugly customer’s) pal and coadjutor made a dash at the tolltaking apron where the money-pockets were; how Waterloo, letting the teeth go (to Blazes, he observed indefinitely) grappled with the apron-seizer, permitting the ugly one to run away; and how

10 he saved the bank, and captured his man, and consigned him to fine and imprisonment. Also how, on another night, “a Cove” laid hold of Waterloo, then presiding at the horse gate of his bridge, and threw him unceremoniously over his knee, having first cut his head open with his whip. How Waterloo “got right,” and started after the Cove all down the Waterloo Road, through Stamford Street, and round to the foot of Blackfriars Bridge, where the Cove “cut into” a public house. How Waterloo cut in too; but how an aider and abettor of the Cove’s, who happened to be taking a promiscuous drain at the bar, stopped Waterloo; and the Cove cut out again, ran across the road down Holland Street, and where not, and into a beershop. How Waterloo breaking away from his detainer was close upon the Cove’s heels, attended by no end of people who, seeing him running with the blood

20 streaming down his face, thought something worse was “up,” and roared Fire! and Murder! on the hopeful chance of the matter in hand being one or both. How the Cove was ignominiously taken, in a shed where he had run to hide, and how at the Police Court they at first wanted to make a sessions job of it; but eventually Waterloo was allowed to be “spoke to,” and the Cove made it square with Waterloo by paying his doctor’s bill (W. was laid up for a week) and giving him “Three, ten.” Likewise we learnt what we had faintly suspected before, that your sporting amateur on the Derby day, albeit a captain, can be—

30 “if he be,” as Captain Bobadil observes, “so generously minded—” anything but a man of honor and a gentleman; not sufficiently gratifying his nice sense of humor by the witty scattering of flour and rotten eggs on obtuse civilians, but requiring the further excitement of “bilking the toll,” and “pitching into” Waterloo and “cutting him about the head with his whip;” finally being, when called upon to answer for the assault, what Waterloo described as “Minus,” or, as I humbly conceived it, not to be found. Likewise did Waterloo inform us, in reply to my inquiries, admiringly and deferentially preferred through my friend Pea, that the takings at the Bridge had more than doubled in amount, since the

reduction of the toll one half. And being asked if the aforesaid takings included much bad money, Waterloo responded, with a look far deeper than the deepest part of the river, he should think not! and so retired into his shawl for the rest of the night.

Then did Pea and I once more embark in our four-oared galley, and glide swiftly down the river with the tide. And while the shrewd East rasped and notched us, as with jagged razors, did my friend Pea impart to me confidences of interest relating to the Thames Police; we betweenwhiles finding “duty boats” hanging in dark corners under banks, like weeds—our own was a “supervision boat”—and they, as they reported “all right!” flashing their hidden light on us, and we flashing ours on them. These duty boats had one
10 sitter in each: an Inspector: and were rowed “Ran-dan,” which—for the information of those who never graduated, as I was once proud to do, under a fireman-waterman and winner of Kean’s Prize Wherry: who, in the course of his tuition, took hundreds of gallons of rum and egg (at my expense) at the various houses of note above and below bridge; not by any means because he liked it, but to cure a weakness in his liver, for which the faculty had particularly recommended it—may be explained as rowed by three men, two pulling an oar each, and one a pair of sculls.

Thus, floating down our black highway, sullenly frowned upon by the knitted brows of Blackfriars, Southwark, and London, each in his lowering turn, I was shown by my friend Pea that there are, in the Thames Police Force whose district extends from Battersea
20 to Barking Creek, ninety-eight men, eight duty boats, and two supervision boats; and that these go about so silently, and lie in wait in such dark places, and so seem to be nowhere, and so may be anywhere, that they have gradually become a police of prevention, keeping the river almost clear of any great crimes, even while the increased vigilance on shore has made it much harder than of yore to live by “thieving” in the streets. And as to the various kinds of water thieves, said my friend Pea, there were the Tier rangers, who silently dropped alongside the tiers of shipping in the Pool, by night, and who, going to the companion-head, listened for two snores—snore number one, the skipper’s; snore number two, the mate’s-mates and skippers always snoring great guns, and being dead sure to be hard at it if they had turned in and were asleep. Hearing the double fire, down went the Rangers into
30 the skippers’ cabins; groped for the skippers’ inexpressibles, which it was the custom of those gentlemen to shake off, watch, money, braces, boots, and all together, on the floor; and therewith made off as silently as might be. Then there were the Lumpers, or labourers employed to unload vessels. They wore loose canvas jackets with a broad hem in the

bottom, turned inside, so as to form a large circular pocket in which they could conceal, like clowns in pantomimes, packages of surprising sizes. A great deal of property was stolen in this manner (Pea confided to me) from steamers; first, because steamers carry a larger number of small packages than other ships; next, because of the extreme rapidity with which they are obliged to be unladen for their return voyage. The Lumpers dispose of their booty, easily, to marine store dealers, and the only remedy to be suggested is that marine store shops should be licensed, and thus brought under the eye of the police as rigidly as public-houses. Lumpers also smuggle goods ashore for the crews of vessels. The smuggling of tobacco is so considerable, that it is well worth the while of the sellers of smuggled tobacco to use hydraulic presses, to squeeze a single pound into a package small enough to be contained in an ordinary pocket. Next, said my friend Pea, there were the Truckers-less thieves than smugglers, whose business it was to land more considerable parcels of goods than the Lumpers could manage. They sometimes sold articles of grocery, and so forth, to the crews, in order to cloak their real calling, and get aboard without suspicion. Many of them had boats of their own, and made money. Besides these, there were the Dredgermen, who, under pretence of dredging up coals and such like from the bottom of the river, hung about barges and other undecked craft, and when they saw an opportunity, threw any property they could lay their hands on overboard: in order slyly to dredge it up when the vessel was gone. Sometimes, they dexterously used their dredges to whip away anything that might lie within reach. Some of them were mighty neat at this, and the accomplishment was called dry dredging. Then, there was a vast deal of property, such as copper nails, sheathing, hardwood, &c., habitually brought away by shipwrights and other workmen from their employers' yards, and disposed of to marine store dealers, many of whom escaped detection through hard swearing, and their extraordinary artful ways of accounting for the possession of stolen property. Likewise, there were special-pleading practitioners, for whom barges "drifted away of their own selves"-they having no hand in it, except first cutting them loose, and afterwards plundering them-innocents, meaning no harm, who had the misfortune to observe those foundlings wandering about the Thames.

We were now going in and out, with little noise and great nicety, among the tiers of shipping, whose many hulls, lying close together, rose out of the water like black streets. Here and there, a Scotch, an Irish, or a foreign steamer, getting up her steam as the tide made, looked, with her great chimney and high sides, like a quiet factory among the common buildings. Now, the streets opened into clearer spaces, now contracted into alleys;

but the tiers were so like houses, in the dark, that I could almost have believed myself in the narrower byeways of Venice. Everything was wonderfully still; for, it wanted full three hours of flood, and nothing seemed awake but a dog here and there.

So we took no Tier-rangers captive, nor any Lumpers, nor Truckers, nor Dredgemen, nor other evil disposed person or persons; but went ashore at Wapping where the old Thames Police office is now a station-house, and where the old Court, with its cabin windows looking on the river, is a quaint charge room: with nothing worse in it usually than a stuffed cat in a glass case, and a portrait, pleasant to behold, of a rare old Thames Police officer, Mr. Superintendent Evans, now succeeded by his son. We looked
10 over the charge books, admirably kept, and found the prevention so good, that there were not five hundred entries (including drunken and disorderly) in a whole year. Then, we looked into the storeroom; where there was an oakum smell, and a nautical seasoning of dreadnought clothing, rope yarn, boat hooks, sculls and oars, spare stretchers, rudders, pistols, cutlasses, and the like. Then, into the cell, aired high up in the wooden wall through an opening like a kitchen plate-rack: wherein there was a drunken man, not at all warm, and very wishful to know if it were morning yet. Then, into a better sort of watch and ward room, where there was a squadron of stone bottles drawn up, ready to be filled with hot water and applied to any unfortunate creature who might be brought in apparently drowned. Finally we shook hands with our worthy friend Pea, and ran all the way to Tower
20 Hill, under strong Police suspicion occasionally, before we got warm.



The Uncommercial Traveller.

By Charles Dickens

Reprinted as 'Poor Mercantile Jack' (*All the Year Round*, 10 March 1860)

Is the sweet little cherub who sits smiling aloft and keeps watch on the life of Poor Jack, commissioned to take charge of Mercantile Jack, as well as Jack of the national navy? If not, who is? What is the cherub about, and what are we all about, when Poor Mercantile Jack is having his brains slowly knocked out by pennyweights, aboard the brig Beelzebub, or the bark Bowieknife-when he looks his last at that infernal craft, with the first officer's iron boot-heel in his remaining eye, or with his dying body towed overboard in the ship's wake, while the cruel wounds in it do "the multitudinous seas incarnadine"?

Is it unreasonable to entertain a belief that if, aboard the brig Beelzebub or the barque Bowieknife, the first officer did half the damage to cotton that he does to men, there would
 10 presently arise from both sides of the Atlantic so vociferous an invocation of the sweet little cherub who sits calculating aloft, keeping watch on the markets that pay, that such vigilant cherub would, with a winged sword, have that gallant officer's organ of destructiveness out of his head in the space of a flash of lightning?

If it be unreasonable, then I am the most unreasonable of men, for I believe it with all my soul.

This was my thought as I walked the dockquays at Liverpool, keeping watch on poor Mercantile Jack. Alas for me! I have long outgrown the state of sweet little cherub; but there I was, and there Mercantile Jack was, and very busy he was, and very cold he was: the snow yet lying in the frozen furrows of the land, and the north-east winds snipping off the
 20 tops of the little waves in the Mersey, and rolling them into hailstones to pelt him with. Mercantile Jack was hard at it, in the hard weather, as he mostly is in all weathers, poor Jack. He was girded to ships' masts and funnels of steamers, like a forester to a great oak, scraping and painting; he was lying out on yards, furling sails that tried to beat him off; he was dimly discernible up in a world of giant cobwebs, reefing and splicing; he was faintly audible down in holds, stowing and unshipping cargo; he was winding round and round at capstans melodious, monotonous, and drunk; he was of a diabolical aspect, with coaling for the Antipodes; he was washing decks barefoot, with the breast of his red shirt open to

the blast, though it was sharper than the knife in his leathern girdle; he was looking over bulwarks, all eyes and hair; he was standing by at the shoot of the Cunard steamer, off tomorrow, as the stocks in trade of several butchers, poulterers, and fishmongers, poured down into the ice-house; he was coming aboard of other vessels, with his kit in a tarpaulin bag, attended by plunderers to the very last moment of his shoregoing existence. As though his senses when released from the uproar of the elements were under obligation to be confused by other turmoil, there was a rattling of wheels, a clattering of hoofs, a clashing of iron, a jolting of cotton and hides and casks and timber, an incessant deafening disturbance, on the quays, that was the very madness of sound. And as, in the midst of it, he stood swaying about, with his hair blown all manner of wild ways, rather crazedly taking leave of his plunderers, all the rigging in the docks was shrill in the wind, and every little steamer coming and going across the Mersey was sharp in its blowing off, and every buoy in the river bobbed spitefully up and down, as if there were a general taunting chorus of "Come along, Mercantile Jack! Ill-lodged, ill-fed, illused, hocussed, entrapped, anticipated, cleaned out. Come along, Poor Mercantile Jack, and be tempest-tossed till you are drowned!"

The uncommercial transaction which had brought me and Jack together, was this; I had entered the Liverpool police-force, that I might have a look at the various unlawful traps which are every night set for Jack. As my term of service in that distinguished corps was short, and my personal bias in the capacity of one of its members has ceased, no suspicion will attach to my evidence that it is an admirable force. Besides that it is composed, without favour, of the best men that can be picked, it is directed by an unusual intelligence. Its organisation against Fires, I take to be much better than the metropolitan system, and in all respects it tempers its remarkable vigilance with a still more remarkable discretion.

Jack had knocked off work in the docks some hours, and I had taken, for purposes of identification, a photograph-likeness of a thief, in the portrait-room at our head police-office (on the whole, he seemed rather complimented by the proceeding), and I had been on policeparade, and the small hand of the clock was moving on to ten, when I took up my lantern to follow Mr. Superintendent to the traps that were set for Jack. In Mr. Superintendent I saw, as anybody might, a tall, well-looking, well set-up man of a soldierly bearing, with a cavalry air, a good chest, and a resolute but not by any means ungentle face. He carried in his hand a plain black walking-stick of hard wood; and whenever and

wherever, at any after-time of the night, he struck it on the pavement with a ringing sound, it instantly produced a whistle out of the darkness, and a policeman. To this remarkable stick, I refer an air of mystery and magic which pervaded the whole of my perquisition among the traps that were set for Jack.

We began by diving into the obscurest streets and lanes of the port. Suddenly pausing in a flow of cheerful discourse, before a dead wall, apparently some ten miles long, Mr. Superintendent struck upon the ground, and the wall opened and shot out, with military salute of hand to temple, two policemen-not in the least surprised themselves, not in the least surprising Mr. Superintendent.

10 “All right, Sharpeye?” “All right, sir.”

 “All right, Trampfoot?” “All right, sir.”

 “Is Quickear there?” “Here am I, sir.” “Come with us.” “Yes, sir.”

So, Sharpeye went before, and Mr. Superintendent and I went next, and Trampfoot and Quickear marched as rear-guard. Sharpeye, I soon had occasion to remark, had a skilful and quite professional way of opening doorstouched latches delicately, as if they were keys of muscial instruments-opened every door he touched, as if he were perfectly confident that there was stolen property behind it-instantly insinuated himself, to prevent its being shut.

20 Sharpeye opened several doors of traps that were set for Jack, but Jack did not happen to be in any of them. They were all such miserable places that really, Jack, if I were you, I would give them a wider berth. In every trap, somebody was sitting over a fire, waiting for Jack. Now, it was a crouching old woman, like the picture of the Norwood Gipsy in the old sixpenny dreambooks; now, it was a crimp of the male sex in a checked shirt and without a coat, reading a newspaper; now, it was a man crimp and a woman crimp, who always introduced themselves as united in holy matrimony; now, it was Jack’s delight, his (un)lovely Nan; but they were all waiting for Jack, and were all frightfully disappointed to see us.

 “Who have you got up-stairs here?” says Sharpeye, generally. (In the Move-on tone.)

 “Nobody, surr; sure not a blessed sowl!” (Irish feminine reply.)

“What do you mean by nobody? Didn’t I hear a woman’s step go up-stairs when my hand was on the latch?”

“Ah! sure thin you’re rhight, surr, I forgot her! ‘Tis on’y Betsy White, surr. Ah! you know Betsy, surr. Come down, Betsy darlin’, and say the gintlemin.”

Generally, Betsy looks over the banisters (the steep staircase is in the room) with a forcible expression in her protesting face, of an intention to compensate herself for the present trial by grinding Jack finer than usual when he does come. Generally, Sharpeye turns to Mr. Superintendent, and says, as if the subjects of his remarks were wax-work:

10 “One of the worst, sir, this house is. This woman has been indicted three times. This man’s a regular bad one likewise. His real name is Pegg. Gives himself out as Waterhouse.”

“Never had sitch a name as Pegg near me back, thin, since I was in this house, bee the good Lard!” says the woman.

Generally, the man says nothing at all, but becomes exceedingly round-shouldered, and pretends to read his paper with rapt attention. Generally, Sharpeye directs our observation with a look, to the prints and pictures that are invariably numerous on the walls. Always, Trampfoot and Quickear are taking notice on the doorstep. In default of Sharpeye being acquainted with the exact individuality of any gentleman encountered, one of these two is sure to proclaim from the outer air, like a gruff spectre, that Jackson is not Jackson, but knows himself to be Fogle; or that Canlon is Walker’s brother, against whom
20 there was not sufficient evidence; or that the man who says he never was at sea since he was a boy, came ashore from a voyage last Thursday, or sails to-morrow morning. “And that is a bad class of man, you see,” says Mr. Superintendent, when we got out into the dark again, “and very difficult to deal with, who, when he has made this place too hot to hold him, enters himself for a voyage as steward or cook, and is out of knowledge for months, and then turns up again worse than ever.”

When we had gone into many such houses, and had come out (always leaving everybody relapsing into waiting for Jack), we started off to a singing-house where Jack was expected to muster strong.

30 The vocalisation was taking place in a long low room up-stairs; at one end, an orchestra of two performers, and a small platform; across the room, a series of open pews for Jack, with an aisle down the middle; at the other end, a larger pew than the rest, entitled

SNUG, and reserved for mates and similar good company. About the room, some amazing coffeecoloured pictures varnished an inch deep, and some stuffed creatures in cases; dotted among the audience, in Snug and out of Snug, the “Professionals;” among them, of course, the celebrated comic favourite Mr. Banjo Bones, looking very hideous with his blackened face and limp sugar-loaf hat; beside him, sipping rumand-water, Mrs. Banjo Bones, in her natural colours-a little heightened.

It was a Friday night, and Friday night was considered not a good night for Jack. At any rate, Jack did not show in very great force even here, though the house was one to which he much resorts, and where a good deal of money is taken. There was British Jack, a little maudlin and sleepy, lolling over his emptied glass, as if he were trying to read his fortune at the bottom; there was Loafing Jack of the Stars and Stripes, rather an unpromising customer, with his long nose, lank cheek, high cheek-bones, and nothing soft about him but his cabbage-leaf hat; there was Spanish Jack with curls of black hair, rings in his ears, and a knife not far from his hand, if you got into trouble with him; there were Maltese Jack, and Jack of Sweden, and Jack the Finn, looming through the smoke of their pipes, and turning faces that looked as if they were carved out of dark wood, towards the young lady dancing the hornpipe, who found the platform so exceedingly small for it that I had a nervous expectation of seeing her, in the backward steps, disappear through the window. Still, if all hands had been got together, they would not have more than half filled the room. Observe, however, said Mr. Licensed Victualler, the host, that it was Friday night, and, besides, it was getting on for twelve, and Jack had gone aboard. A sharp and watchful man, Mr. Licensed Victualler the host, with tight lips and a complete edition of Cocker’s arithmetic in each eye. Attended to his business himself, he said. Always on the spot. When he heard of talent, trusted nobody’s account of it, but went off by rail to see it. If true talent, engaged it. Pounds a week for talent-four poundfive pound. Banjo Bones was undoubted talent. Hear this instrument that was going to playit was real talent! In truth it was very good; a kind of piano-accordion, played by a young girl of a delicate prettiness of face, figure, and dress, that made the audience look coarser. She sang to the instrument, too; first, a song about village bells, and how they chimed; then a song about how I went to sea; winding up with an imitation of the bagpipes, which Mercantile Jack seemed to understand much the best. A good girl, said Mr. Licensed Victualler. Kept herself select. Sat in Snug, not listening to the blandishments of Mates. Lived with mother. Father dead. Once, a merchant well to do, but over speculated, himself. On delicate inquiry as to salary

paid for item of talent under consideration, Mr. Victualler's pounds dropped suddenly to shillings—still it was a very comfortable thing for a young person like that, you know; she only went on, six times a night, and was only required to be there from six at night to twelve. What was more conclusive was, Mr. Victualler's assurance that he "never allowed any language, and never suffered any disturbance." Sharpeye confirmed the statement, and the order that prevailed was the best proof of it that could have been cited. So, I came to the conclusion that Poor Mercantile Jack might do (as I am afraid he does) much worse than trust himself to Mr. Victualler, and pass his evenings here.

10 But we had not yet looked, Mr. Superintendent—said Trampfoot, receiving us in the street again with military salute—for Dark Jack. True, Trampfoot. Ring the wonderful stick, rub the wonderful lantern, and cause the spirits of the stick and lantern to convey us
20 to the Darkies.

There was no disappointment in the matter of Dark Jack; he was producible. The Genii set us down in the little first-floor of a little publichouse, and there, in a stiflingly close atmosphere, were Dark Jack and Dark Jack's Delight, his white unlovely Nan, sitting against the wall all round the room. More than that: Dark Jack's Delight was the least unlovely Nan, both morally and physically, that I saw that night.

As a fiddle and tambourine band were sitting among the company, Quickear suggested why not strike up? "Ah la'ads!" said a negro sitting by the door, "gib the jebblem
20 a darnse. Tak'yah pardlers, jebblem, for 'um QUAD-rill.

This was the landlord, in a Greek cap, and a dress half Greek and half English. As master of the ceremonies, he called all the figures, and occasionally addressed himself parenthetically after this manner. When he was very loud, I use capitals.

"Now den! Hoy! ONE. Right and left. (Put a steam on, gib 'um powder). LA-dies' chail. BAL-loon say. Lemonade! Two. AD-warnse and go back (gib 'ell a breakdown, shake it out o' yerselbs, keep a movil). SWING-corners, BAL-loon say, and Lemonade! (Hoy!) THREE. GENT come for'ard with a lady and go back, hoppersite come for'ard with a lady and go back, ALL four come for'ard and do what yer can. (Aeiohoy!) BAL-loon say, and leetle lemonade (Dat hairnigger by um fireplace 'hind a' time, shake it out o'yerselbs,
30 gib 'ell a breakdown). Now den! Hoy! FOUR! Lemonade. BAL-loon say, and swing. FOUR ladies meets in 'um middle, FOUR gents goes round 'um ladies, FOUR gents passes out

under ‘um ladies’ arms, SWING and Lemonade till ‘a moosic can’t play no more! (Hoy, Hoy!)”

The male dancers were all blacks, and one was an unusually powerful man of six feet three or four. The sound of their flat feet on the floor was as unlike the sound of white feet as their faces were unlike white faces. They toed and heeled, shuffled, double-shuffled, doubledouble-shuffled, covered the buckle, and beat the time out, rarely, dancing with a great show of teeth, and with a childish, good-humoured enjoyment that was very prepossessing. They generally kept together, these poor fellows, said Mr. Superintendent,

10 But, if I were Light Jack, I should be very slow to interfere oppressively with Dark Jack, for, whenever I have had to do with him I have found him a simple and a gentle fellow. Bearing this in mind I asked his friendly permission to leave him restoration of beer, in wishing him good night, and thus it fell out that the last words I heard him say as I blundered down the worn stairs, we, “Jebblem’s elth! Ladies drinks fust!”

The night was now well on into the morning, but, for miles and hours we explored a strange world, where nobody ever goes to bed, but everybody is eternally sitting up, waiting for Jack. This exploration was among a labyrinth of dismal courts and blind alleys, called Entries, kept in wonderful order by the police, and in much better order than by the corporation: the want of gaslight in the most dangerous and infamous of these places being
20 quite unworthy of so spirited a town. I need describe but two or three of the houses in which Jack was waited for, as specimens of the rest. Many we attained by noisome passages so profoundly dark that we felt our way with our hands. Not one of the whole number we visited, was without its show of prints and ornamental crockery; the quantity of the latter set forth on little shelves and in little cases, in otherwise wretched rooms, indicating that Mercantile Jack must have an extraordinary fondness for crockery, to necessitate so much of that bait in his traps.

Among such garniture, in one front parlour in the dead of the night, four women were sitting by a fire. One of them had a male child in her arms. On a stool among them was a swarthy youth with a guitar, who had evidently stopped playing when our footsteps
30 were heard.

“Well! how do you do?” says Mr. Superintendent, looking about him.

“Pretty well, sir, and hope you gentlemen are going to treat us ladies, now you have come to see us.”

“Order there!” says Sharpeye. “None of that!” says Quickear.

Trampfoot, outside, is heard to confide to himself, “Meggisson’s lot this is. And a bad ‘un!”

“Well!” says Mr. Superintendent, laying his hand on the shoulder of the swarthy youth, “and who’s this?”

“Antonio, sir.”

“And what does he do here?”

10 “Come to give us a bit of music. No harm in that, I suppose?”

“A young foreign sailor?”

“Yes. He’s a Spaniard. You’re a Spaniard, aint you, Antonio?”

“Me Spanish.”

“And he don’t know a word you say, not he, not if you was to talk to him till doomsday.” (Triumphantly, as if it redounded to the credit of the house.)

“Will he play something?”

“Oh, yes, if you like. Play something, Antonio. You aint ashamed to play something; are you?”

20 The cracked guitar raises the feeblest ghost of a tune, and three of the women keep time to it with their heads, and the fourth with the child. If Antonio has brought any money in with him, I am afraid he will never take it out, and it even strikes me that his jacket and guitar may be in a bad way. But, the look of the young man and the tinkling of the instrument so change the place in a moment to a leaf out of Don Quixote, that I wonder where his mule is stabled, until he leaves off.

I am bound to acknowledge (as it tends rather to my uncommercial confusion), that I occasioned a difficulty in this establishment, by having taken the child in my arms. For, on my offering to restore it to a ferocious joker not unstimulated by rum, who claimed to be its mother, that unnatural parent put her hands behind her, and declined to accept it; backing into the fireplace, and very shrilly declaring, regardless of remonstrance from her
30 friends, that she knowed it to be Law, that whoever took a child from its mother of his own will, was bound to stick to it. The uncommercial sense of being in a rather ridiculous position with the poor little child beginning to be frightened, was relieved by my worthy friend and fellow constable, Trampfoot; who, laying hands on the article as if it were a Bottle, passed it on to the nearest woman, and bade her “take hold of that.” As we came

out, the Bottle was passed to the ferocious joker, and they all sat down as before, including Antonio and the guitar. It was clear that there was no such thing as a nightcap to this baby's head, and that even he never went to bed, but was always kept up-and would grow up, kept up waiting for Jack.

Later still in the night, we came (by the court "where the man was murdered," and by the other court across the street, into which his body was dragged) to another parlour in another Entry, where several people were sitting round a fire in just the same way. It was a dirty and offensive place, with some ragged clothes drying in it; but there was a high shelf over the entrance-door (to be out of the reach of marauding hands, possibly), with
 10 two large white loaves on it, and a great piece of Cheshire cheese.

"Well!" says Mr. Superintendent, with a comprehensive look all round. "How do you do?"

"Not much to boast of, sir." From the curtsying woman of the house. "This is my good man, sir."

"You are not registered as a common Lodging House?"

"No, sir."

Sharpeye (in the Move-on tone) puts in the pertinent inquiry, "Then why ain't you?"

"Ain't got no one here, Mr. Sharpeye," reins the woman and my good man together, "but our own family."

20 "How many are you in family?"

The woman takes time to count, under pretence of coughing, and adds, as one scant of breath, "Seven, sir."

But she has missed one, so Sharpeye, who knows all about it, says:

"Here's a young man here makes eight, who ain't of your family?"

"No, Mr. Sharpeye, he's a weekly lodger." "What does he do for a living?"

The young man here, takes the reply upon himself, and shortly answers, "Ain't got nothing to do."

The young man here, is modestly brooding behind a damp apron pendent from a clothesline. As I glance at him I become-but I don't know why-vaguely reminded of
 30 Woolwich, Chatham, Portsmouth, and Dover. When we get out, my respected fellow-constable Sharpeye addressing Mr. Superintendent, says:

"You noticed that young man, sir, in at Darby's?"

"Yes. What is he?" "Deserter, sir."

Mr. Sharpeye further intimates that when we have done with his services, he will step back and take that young man. Which in course of time he does: feeling at perfect ease about finding him, and knowing for a moral certainty that nobody in that region will be gone to bed.

Later still in the night, we came to another parlour up a step or two from the street, which was very cleanly, neatly, even tastefully, kept, and in which, set forth on a draped chest of drawers masking the staircase, was such a profusion of ornamental crockery, that it would have furnished forth a handsome sale-booth at a fair. It backed up a stout old lady-HOGARTH drew her exact likeness more than once-and a boy who was carefully
10 writing a copy in a copybook.

“Well, ma’am, how do you do?”

Sweetly, she can assure the dear gentlemen, sweetly. Charmingly, charmingly. And overjoyed to see us.

“Why, this is a strange time for this boy to be writing his copy. In the middle of the night!”

“So it is, dear gentlemen, Heaven bless your welcome faces and send ye prosperous, but he has been to the Play with a young friend for his diversion, and he combinates his improvement with entertainment by doing his school-writhing afterwards, God be good to ye!”

20 The copy admonished human nature, to subjugate the fire of every fierce desire. One might have thought it recommended stirring the fire, the old lady so approved it. There she sat, rosily beaming at the copy-book and the boy, and invoking showers of blessings on our heads, when we left her in the middle of the night, waiting for Jack.

Later still in the night, we came to a nauseous room with an earth floor, into which the refuse scum of an alley trickled. The stench of this habitation was abominable; the seeming poverty of it, diseased and dire. Yet, here again, was visitor or lodger-a man sitting before the fire, like the rest of them elsewhere, and apparently not distasteful to the mistress’s niece, who was also before the fire. The mistress herself had the misfortune of being in jail.

30 Three weird old women of transcendant ghastliness, were at needlework at a table in this room. Says Trampfoot to First Witch, “What are you making?” Says she, “Money-bags.”

“What are you making?” retorts Trampfoot, a little off his balance.

“Bags to hold your money,” says the witch shaking her head, and setting her teeth; “you as has got it.”

She holds up a common cash-bag, and on the table is a heap of such bags. Witch Two laughs at us. Witch Three scowls at us. Witch sisterhood all, stitch, stitch. First Witch has a red circle round each eye. I fancy it like the beginning of the development of a perverted diabolical halo, and that when it spreads all round her head, she will die in the odour of devilry.

Trampfoot wishes to be informed what First Witch has got behind the table, down by the side of her, there? Witches Two and Three croak angrily, “Show him the child!”

10 She drags out a skinny little arm from a brown dust-heap on the ground. Adjured not to disturb the child, she lets it drop again. Thus we find at last that there is one child in the world of Entries who goes to bed-if this be bed.

Mr. Superintendent asks how long are they going to work at those bags?

How long? First Witch repeats. Going to have supper presently. See the cups and saucers, and the plates.

Mr. Superintendent opines, it is rather late for supper, surely?

20 “Late? Ay! But we has to ‘arn our supper afore we eats it!” Both the other witches repeat this after First Witch, and take the Uncommercial measurement with their eyes, as for a charmed winding-sheet. Some grim discourse ensues, referring to the mistress of the cave, who will be released from jail to-morrow. Witches pronounce Trampfoot “right there,” when he deems it a trying distance for the old lady to walk; she shall be fetched by niece in a springcart.

As I took a parting look at First Witch in turning away, the red marks round her eyes seemed to have already grown larger, and she hungrily and thirstily looked out beyond me into the dark doorway, to see if Jack were there.

For, Jack came even here, and the mistress had got into jail through deluding Jack.

30 When I at last ended this night of travel and got to bed, I failed to keep my mind on comfortable thoughts of Seaman’s Homes (not overdone with strictness), and improved dock regulations giving Jack greater benefit of fire and candle aboard ship, through my mind’s wandering among the vermin I had seen. Afterwards the same vermin ran all over my sleep. Evermore, when on a breezy day I see Poor Mercantile Jack running into port with a fair wind under all sail, I shall think of the unsleeping host of devourers who never go to bed, and are always in their set traps waiting for him.

The Ruffian.

By The Uncommercial Traveller

Charles Dickens

All the Year Round, 10 October 1868

I ENTERTAIN so strong an objection to the euphonious softening of Ruffian into 'Rough', which has lately become popular, that I restore the right word to the heading of this paper; the rather, as my object is to dwell upon the fact that the Ruffian is tolerated among us to an extent that goes beyond all unruffianly endurance. I take the liberty to believe that if the Ruffian besets my life, a professional Ruffian at large in the open streets of a great city, notoriously having no other calling than that of Ruffian, and of disquieting and despoiling me as I go peacefully about my lawful business, interfering with no one, then the Government under which I have the great constitutional privilege, supreme honour and happiness, and all the rest of it, to exist, breaks down in the discharge of any

10 Government's most simple elementary duty. What did I read in the London daily papers, in the early days of this last September? That the Police had "AT LENGTH SUCCEEDED IN CAPTURING TWO OF THE NOTORIOUS GANG THAT HAVE SO LONG INFESTED THE WATERLOO-ROAD." Is it possible? What a wonderful Police! Here is a straight, broad, public thoroughfare of immense resort; half a mile long; gas-lighted by night; with a great gas-lighted railway station in it, extra the street lamps; full of shops; traversed by two popular cross thoroughfares of considerable traffic; itself the main road to the South of London; and the admirable Police have, after long infestment of this dark and lonely spot by a gang of Ruffians, actually got hold of two of them. Why,

20 with the powers of the Law, could have captured the whole confederacy in a week?

It is to the saving up of the Ruffian class by the Magistracy and Police—to the conventional preserving of them, as if they were Partridges—that their number and audacity must be in great part referred. Why is a notorious Thief and Ruffian ever left at large? He never turns his liberty to any account but violence and plunder, he never did a day's work out of jail, he never will do a day's work out of jail. As a proved notorious Thief

he is always consignable to prison for three months. When he comes out, he is surely as notorious a Thief as he was when he went in. Then send him back again. "Just Heaven!" cries the Society for the protection of remonstrant Ruffians, "This is equivalent to a sentence of perpetual imprisonment!" Precisely for that reason it has my advocacy. I demand to have the Ruffian kept out of my way, and out of the way of all decent people. I demand to have the Ruffian employed, perforce, in hewing wood and drawing water somewhere for the general service, instead of hewing at her Majesty's subjects and drawing their watches out of their pockets. If this be termed an unreasonable demand, then the tax-gatherer's demand on me must be far more unreasonable, and cannot be otherwise than

10 extortionate and unjust.

It will be seen that I treat of the Thief and Ruffian as one. I do so, because I know the two characters to be one, in the vast majority of cases, just as well as the Police know it. (As to the Magistracy, with a few exceptions, they know nothing about it but what the Police choose to tell them.) There are disorderly classes of men who are not thieves; as railway navigators, brickmakers, wood-sawyers, costermongers. These classes are often disorderly and troublesome; but it is mostly among themselves, and at any rate they have their industrious avocations, they work early and late, and work hard. The generic Ruffian-honourable member for what is tenderly called the Rough Element-is either a Thief, or the companion of Thieves. When he infamously molests women coming out of chapel on

20 Sunday evenings (for which I would have his back scarified often and deep) it is not only for the gratification of his pleasant instincts, but that there may be a confusion raised by which either he or his friends may profit, in the commission of highway robberies or in picking pockets. When he gets a police-constable down and kicks him helpless for life, it is because that constable once did his duty in bringing him to justice. When he rushes into the bar of a public-house and scoops an eye out of one of the company there, or bites his ear off, it is because the man he maims gave evidence against him. When he and a line of comrades extending across the footway -say of that solitary mountain-spur of the Abru'.?i, the Waterloo Road-advance towards me, "skylarking" among themselves, my purse or shirt pin is in predestined peril from his playfulness. Always a Ruffian, always a Thief. Always a

30 Thief, always a Ruffian.

Now, when I, who am not paid to know these things, know them daily on the evidence of my senses and experience; when I know that the Ruffian never jostles a lady

in the street, or knocks a hat off, but in order that the Thief may profit, is it surprising that I should require from those who are paid to know these things, prevention of them?

Look at this group at a street corner. Number one is a shirking fellow of five-and-twenty, in an ill-favoured and ill-savoured suit, his trousers of corduroy, his coat of some indiscernible groundwork for the deposition of grease, his neckerchief like an eel, his complexion like dirty dough, his mangy fur cap pulled low upon his beetle brows to hide the prison cut of his hair. His hands are in his pockets. He puts them there when they are idle, as naturally as in other people's pockets when they are busy, for he knows that they are not roughened by work, and that they tell a tale. Hence, whenever he takes one out to
10 draw a sleeve across his nose-which is often, for he has weak eyes and a constitutional cold in his head-he restores it to its pocket immediately afterwards. Number two is a burl brute of five-and-thirty, in a tall stiff hat; is a composite as to his clothes of betting man and fighting man; is whiskered; has a staring pin in his breast, along with his right hand; has insolent and cruel eyes; large shoulders; strong legs, booted and tipped for kicking. Number three is forty years of age; is short, thick-set, strong, and bow-legged; wears knee cords and white stockings, a very long-sleeved waistcoat, a very large neckerchief doubled or trebled round his throat, and a crumpled white hat crowns his ghastly parchment face. This fellow looks like an executed postboy of other days, cut down from the gallows too soon, and restored and preserved by express diabolical agency. Numbers five, six, and seven, are
20 hulking, idle, slouching young men, patched and shabby, too short in the sleeves and too tight in the legs, slimily clothed, foul-spoken, repulsive wretches inside and out. In all the party there obtains a certain twitching character of mouth and furtiveness of eye, that hints how the coward is lurking under the bully. The hint is quite correct, for they are a slinking sneaking set, far more prone to lie down on their backs and kick out, when in difficulty, than to make a stand for it. (This may account for the street mud on the backs of Numbers five, six, and seven, being much fresher than the stale splashes on their legs.)

These engaging gentry a Police-constable stands contemplating. His Station, with a Reserve of assistance, is very near at hand. They cannot pretend to any trade, not even to be porters or messengers. It would be idle if they did, for he knows them, and they know
30 that he knows them, to be nothing but professed Thieves and Ruffians. He knows where they resort, knows by what slang names they call one another, knows how often they have been in prison, and how long, and for what. All this is known at his Station, too, and is (or ought to be) known at Scotland Yard, too. But does he know, or does his Station know, or

does Scotland Yard know, or does anybody know, why these fellows should be here at liberty, when, as reputed Thieves to whom a whole Division of Police could swear, they might all be under lock and key at hard labour? Not he; truly he would be a wise man if he did! He only knows that these are members of the “notorious gang,” which, according to the newspaper Police-office reports of this last past September, “have so long infested” the awful solitudes of the Waterloo Road, and out of which almost impregnable fastnesses the Police have at length dragged Two, to the unspeakable admiration of all good civilians.

The consequences of this contemplative habit on the part of the Executive—a habit to be looked for in a hermit, but not in a Police System—are familiar to us all. The Ruffian becomes one of the established orders of the body politic. Under the playful name of Rough (as if he were merely a practical joker) his movements and successes are recorded on public occasions. Whether he mustered in large numbers, or small; whether he was in good spirits, or depressed; whether he turned his generous exertions to very prosperous account, or Fortune was against him; whether he was in a sanguinary mood, or robbed with amiable horse play and a gracious consideration for life and limb; all this is chronicled as if he were an Institution. Is there any city in Europe, out of England, in which these terms are held with the pests of Society? Or in which, at this day, such violent robberies from the person are constantly committed as in London?

The Preparatory Schools of Ruffianism are similarly borne with. The young Ruffians of London—not Thieves yet, but training for scholarships and fellowships in the Criminal Court Universities—molest quiet people and their property, to an extent that is hardly credible. The throwing of stones in the streets has become a dangerous and destructive offence, which surely could have got to no greater height though we had had no Police but our own riding-whips and walking-sticks—the Police to which I myself appeal on these occasions. The throwing of stones at the windows of railway carriages in motion an act of wanton wickedness with the very Arch-Fiend’s hand in it—had become a crying evil, when the railway companies forced it on Police notice. Constabular contemplation had until then been the order of the day.

Within these twelve months, there arose among the young gentlemen of London aspiring to Ruffianism, and cultivating that much encouraged social art, a facetious cry of “I’ll have this!” accompanied with a clutch at some article of a passing lady’s dress. I have known a lady’s veil to be thus humourously torn from her face and carried off in the open streets at noon; and I have had the honour of myself giving chase, on Westminster Bridge,

to another young Ruffian, who, in full daylight early on a summer evening, had nearly thrown a modest young woman into a swoon of indignation and confusion, by his shameful manner of attacking her with this cry as she harmlessly passed along before me. MR. CARLYLE, some time since, awakened a little pleasantry by writing of his own experience of the Ruffian of the streets. I have seen the Ruffian act, in exact accordance with Mr. Carlyle's description, innumerable times, and I never saw him checked.

10 The blaring use of the very worst language possible, in our public thoroughfares especially in those set apart for recreation-is another disgrace to us, and another result of constabular contemplation, the like of which I have never heard in any other country to which my uncommercial travels have extended. Years ago, when I had a near interest in certain children who were sent with their nurses, for air and exercise, into the Regent's Park, I found this evil to be so abhorrent and horrible there, that I called public attention to it, and also to its contemplative reception by the Police. Looking afterwards into the newest Police Act, and finding that the offence was punishable under it, I resolved, when striking occasion should arise, to try my hand as prosecutor. The occasion arose soon enough, and I ran the following gauntlet.

20 The utterer of the base coin in question, was a girl of seventeen or eighteen, who, with a suitable attendance of blackguards, youths and boys, was flaunting along the streets, returning from an Irish funeral, in a Progress interspersed with singing and dancing. She had turned round to me and expressed herself in the most audible manner, to the great delight of that select circle. I attended the party, on the opposite side of the way, for a mile further, and then encountered a Police constable. The party had made themselves merry at my expense until now, but seeing me speak to the constable, its male members instantly took to their heels, leaving the girl alone. I asked the constable did he know my name? Yes, he did. "Take that girl into custody, on my charge, for using bad language in the streets." He had never heard of such a charge. I had. Would he take my word that he should get into no trouble? Yes, sir, he would do that. So he took the girl, and I went home for my Police Act.

30 With this potent instrument in my pocket, I literally as well as figuratively, "returned to the charge," and presented myself at the Police Station of the district. There, I found on duty a very intelligent Inspector (they are all intelligent men), who, likewise, had never heard of such a charge. I showed him my clause, and we went over it together twice or

thrice. It was plain, and I engaged to wait upon the suburban Magistrate to-morrow morning at ten o'clock.

In the morning, I put my Police Act in my pocket again, and waited on the suburban Magistrate. I was not quite so courteously received by him as I should have been by The Lord Chancellor or The Lord Chief Justice, but that was a question of good breeding on the suburban Magistrate's part, and I had my clause ready with its leaf turned down. Which was enough for me.

10 Conference took place between the Magistrate and clerk, respecting the charge. During conference I was evidently regarded as a much more objectionable person than the prisoner; one giving trouble by coming there voluntarily, which the prisoner could not be accused of doing. The prisoner had been got up, since I last had the pleasure of seeing her, with a great effect of white apron and straw bonnet. She reminded me of an elder sister of Red Riding Hood, and I seemed to remind the sympathising Chimney Sweep by whom she was attended, of the Wolf.

The Magistrate was doubtful, Mr. Uncommercial Traveller, whether this charge could be entertained. It was not known. Mr. Uncommercial Traveller replied that he wished it were better known, and that, if he could afford the leisure, he would use his endeavours to make it so. There was no question about it, however, he contended. Here was the clause.

20 The clause was handed in, and more conference resulted. After which I was asked the extraordinary question: "Mr. Uncommercial, do you really wish this girl to be sent to prison?" To which I grimly answered, staring: "If I didn't, why should I take the trouble to come here?" finally, I was sworn, and gave my agreeable evidence in detail, and White Riding Hood was fined ten shillings, under the clause, or sent to prison for so many days. "Why, Lord bless you, Sir," said the Police-officer, who showed me out, with a great enjoyment of the jest of her having been got up so effectively, and caused so much hesitation: "If she goes to prison, that will be nothing new to her. She comes from Charles-street, Drurylane!"

30 The Police, all things considered, are an excellent force, and I have borne my small testimony to their merits. Constabular contemplation is the result of a bad system; a system which is administered, not invented, by the man in constable's uniform, employed at twenty shillings a week. He has his orders, and would be marked for discouragement if he overstepped them. That the system is bad, there needs no lengthened argument to prove,

because the fact is self-evident. If it were anything else, the results that have attended it, could not possibly have come to pass. Who will say that under a good system, our streets could have got into their present state?

The objection to the whole Police system, as concerning the Ruffian, may be stated, and its failure exemplified, as follows. It is well known that on all great occasions, when they come together in numbers, the mass of the English people are their own trustworthy Police. It is well known that wheresoever there is collected together any fair general representation of the people, a respect for law and order, and a determination to discountenance lawlessness and disorder, may be relied upon. As to one another, the
10 people are a very good Police, and yet are quite willing in their good nature that the stipendiary Police should have the credit of the people's moderation. But we are all of us powerless against the Ruffian, because we submit to the law, and it is his only trade, by superior force and by violence, to defy it. Moreover, we are constantly admonished from high places (like so many Sunday school children out for a holiday of buns and milk-and-water) that we are not to take the law into our own hands, but are to hand our defence over to it. It is clear that the common enemy to be punished and exterminated first of all, is the Ruffian. It is clear that he is, of all others, the offender for whose repressal we maintain a costly system of Police. Him, therefore, we expressly present to the Police to deal with, conscious that, on the whole, we can, and do, deal reasonably well with one
20 another. Him the Police deal with so inefficiently and absurdly that he flourishes, and multiplies, and, with all his evil deeds upon his head as notoriously as his hat is, pervades the streets with no more let or hindrance than ourselves.

New Uncommercial Samples. By Charles Dickens.

A Small Star In The East.

All the Year Round, 19 December 1868

I HAD been looking, yesternight, through the famous Dance of Death, and to-day the grim old woodcuts arose in my mind with the new significance of a ghastly monotony not to be found in the original. The weird skeleton rattled along the streets before me, and struck fiercely, but it was never at the pains of assuming a disguise. It played on no dulcimer here, was crowned with no flowers, waved no plume, minced in no flowing robe or train, lifted no winecup, sat at no feast, cast no dice, counted no gold. It was simply a bare, gaunt, famished skeleton, slaying its way along.

The borders of Ratcliffe and Stepney, Eastward of London, and giving on the impure river, were the scene of this uncompromising Dance of Death, upon a dripping November day. A squalid mass of streets, courts, and alleys of miserable houses let out in single rooms. A wilderness of dirt, rags, and hunger. A mud desert chiefly inhabited by a tribe from whom employment has departed, or to whom it comes but fitfully and rarely. They are not skilled mechanics in any wise. They are but labourers. Dock labourers, water-side labourers, coal porters, ballast heavers, such like hewers of wood and drawers of water. But they have come into existence, and they propagate their wretched race.

One grisly joke alone, methought, the skeleton seemed to play off here. It had stuck Election Bills on the walls, which the wind and rain had deteriorated into suitable rags. It had even summed up the state of the poll, in chalk, on the shutters of one ruined house. It adjured the free and independent starvers to vote for Thisman and vote for Thatman; not to plump, as they valued the state of parties and the national prosperity (both of great importance to them, I think!), but, by returning Thisman and Thatman, each nought without the other, to compound a glorious and immortal whole. Surely the skeleton is nowhere more cruelly ironical in the original monkish idea!

Pondering in my mind the far-seeing schemes of Thisman and Thatman, and of the public blessing called Party, for staying the degeneracy, physical and moral, of many thousands (who shall say how many?) of the English race; for devising employment useful to the community, for those who want but to work and live; for equalising rates, cultivating

waste lands, facilitating emigration, and above all things, saving and utilising the oncoming generations, and thereby changing ever-growing national weakness into strength; pondering in my mind, I say, these hopeful exertions, I turned down a narrow street to look into a house or two.

It was a dark street with a dead wall on one side. Nearly all the outer doors of the houses stood open. I took the first entry and knocked at a parlour door. Might I come in? I might, if I pleased, Sur.

The woman of the room (Irish) had picked up some long strips of wood, about some wharf or barge, and they had just now been thrust into the otherwise empty grate, to make
 10 two iron pots boil. There was some fish in one, and there were some potatoes in the other. The flare of the burning wood enabled me to see a table and a broken chair or so, and some old cheap crockery ornaments about the chimney-piece. It was not until I had spoken with the woman a few minutes that I saw a horrible brown heap on the floor in a corner, which, but for previous experience in this dismal wise, I might not have suspected to be “the bed.” There was something thrown upon it, and I asked what that was?

“‘Tis the poor craythur that stays here, Sur, and ‘tis very bad she is, and ‘tis very bad she’s been this long time, and ‘tis better she’ll never be, and ‘tis slape she doos all day, and ‘tis wake she doos all night, and ‘tis the lead, Sur.” “The what?”

“The lead, Sur. Sure ‘tis the lead-mills, where the women gets took on at
 20 eighteenpence a day, Sur, when they makes applicaytion early enough and is lucky and wanted, and ‘tis leadpisoned she is, Sur, and some of them gits lead-pisoned soon and some of them gets leadpisoned later, and some but not many niver, and ‘tis all according to the constitooshun, Sur, and some constitooshuns is strong and some is weak, and her constitooshun is lead-pisoned bad as can be, Sur, and her brain is coming out at her ear, and it hurts her dreadful, and that’s what it is and niver no more and niver no less, Sur.”

The sick young woman moaning here, the speaker bent over her, took a bandage from her head, and threw open a back door to let in the daylight upon it, from the smallest and most miserable backyard I ever saw.

“That’s what cooms from her, Sur, being lead-pisoned, and it cooms from her night
 30 and day the poor sick craythur, and the pain of it is dreadful, and God he knows that my husband has walked the sthreets these four days being a labourer and is walking them now and is ready to work and no work for him and no fire and no food but the bit in the pot, and no more than ten shillings in a fortnight, God be good to us, and it is poor we are and dark it is and could it is indeed!”

Knowing that I could compensate myself thereafter for my self-denial, if I saw fit, I had resolved that I would give nothing in the course of these visits. I did this to try the people. I may state at once that my closest observation could not detect any indication whatever of an expectation that I would give money; they were grateful to be talked to, about their miserable affairs, and sympathy was plainly a comfort to them; but they neither asked for money in any case, nor showed the least trace of surprise or disappointment or resentment at my giving none. The woman's married daughter had by this time come down from her room on the floor above, to join in the conversation. She herself had been to the lead-mills very early that morning to be "took on," but had not succeeded. She had four
 10 children, and her husband, also a waterside labourer and then out seeking work, seemed in no better case as to finding it, than her father. She was English, and by nature of a buxom figure and cheerful. Both in her poor dress, and in her mother's, there was an effort to keep up some appearance of neatness. She knew all about the sufferings of the unfortunate invalid, and all about the lead-poisoning, and how the symptoms came on, and how they grew: having often seen them. The very smell when you stood inside the door of the works was enough to knock you down, she said, yet she was going back again to get "took on." What could she do? Better be ulcerated and paralysed for eighteenpence a day, while it lasted, than see the children starve.

A dark and squalid cupboard in this room, touching the back door and all manner of
 20 offence, had been for some time the sleeping-place of the sick young woman. But the nights being now wintry, and the blankets and coverlets "gone to the leaving shop," she lay all night where she lay all day, and was lying then. The woman of the room, her husband, this most miserable patient, and two others, lay on the one brown heap together for warmth.

"God bless you, sir, and thank you!" were the parting words from these people—gratefully spoken too—with which I left this place.

Some streets away, I tapped at another parlour door on another ground floor. Looking in, I found a man, his wife, and four children, sitting at a washing stool by way of
 30 table, at their dinner of bread and infused tea-leaves. There was a very scanty cinderous fire in the grate by which they sat, and there was a tent bedstead in the room with a bed upon it and a coverlet. The man did not rise when I went in, nor during my stay, but civilly inclined his head on my pulling off my hat, and, in answer to my inquiry whether I might ask him a question or two, said, "Cerrtainly." There being a window at each end of this

room, back and front, it might have been ventilated; but it was shut up tight, to keep the cold out, and was very sickening.

The wife, an intelligent quick woman, rose and stood at her husband's elbow, and he glanced up at her as if for help. It soon appeared that he was rather deaf. He was a slow simple fellow of about thirty.

"What was he by trade?"

"Gentleman asks what are you by trade, John?"

"I am a boiler-maker;" looking about him with an exceedingly perplexed air, as if for a boiler that had unaccountably vanished.

10 "He ain't a mechanic you understand, sir," the wife put in, "he's only a labourer."

"Are you in work?"

He looked up at his wife again. "Gentleman says are you in work, John?"

"In work!" cried this forlorn boilermaker, staring aghast at his wife, and then working his vision's way very slowly round to me; "Lord, no!"

"Ah! He ain't indeed!" said the poor woman, shaking her head, as she looked at the four children in succession, and then at him.

"Work!" said the boiler-maker, still seeking that evaporated boiler, first in my countenance, then in the air, and then in the features of his second son at his knee: "I wish I was in work! I haven't had more than a day's work to do, this three weeks."

20 "How have you lived?"

A faint gleam of admiration lighted up the face of the would-be boiler-maker, as he stretched out the short sleeve of his threadbare canvas jacket, and replied, pointing her out: "on the work of the wife."

I forget where boiler-making had gone to, or where he supposed it had gone to; but he added some resigned information on that head, coupled with an expression of his belief that it was never coming back.

30 The cheery helpfulness of the wife was very remarkable. She did slop-work; made pea-jackets. She produced the pea-jacket then in hand, and spread it out upon the bed: the only piece of furniture in the room on which to spread it. She showed how much of it she made, and how much was afterwards finished off by the machine. According to her calculation at the moment, deducting what her trimming cost her, she got for making a pea-jacket tenpence halfpenny, and she could make one in something less than two days. But, you see, it come to her through two hands, and of course it didn't come through the second hand for nothing. Why did it come through the second hand at all? Why, this way.

The second hand took the risk of the given-out work, you see. If she had money enough to pay the security deposit -call it two pound-she could get the work from the first hand, and so the second would not have to be deducted for. But having no money at all, the second hand come in and took its profit, and so the whole worked down to tenpence halfpenny. Having explained all this with great intelligence, even with some little pride, and without a whine or murmur, she folded her work again, sat down by her husband's side at the washing stool, and resumed her dinner of dry bread. Mean as the meal was, on the bare board, with its old gallipots for cups, and what not other sordid makeshifts; shabby as the woman was in dress, and toning down towards the Bosjesman colour, with want of

10 nutriment and washing; there was positively a dignity in her, as the family anchor just holding the poor shipwrecked boilermaker's bark. When I left the room, the boilermaker's eyes were slowly turned towards her, as if his last hope of ever again seeing that vanished boiler lay in her direction.

These people had never applied for parish relief but once; and that was when the husband met with a disabling accident at his work.

Not many doors from here, I went into a room on the first floor. The woman apologised for its being in "an untidy mess." The day was Saturday, and she was boiling the children's clothes in a saucepan on the hearth. There was nothing else into which she could have put them. There was no crockery, or tinware, or tub, or bucket. There was an

20 old gallipot or two, and there was a broken bottle or so, and there were some broken boxes for seats. The last small scraping of coals left, was raked together in a corner of the floor. There were some rags in an open cupboard, also on the floor. In a corner of the room was a cra'y old French bedstead, with a man lying on his back upon it in a ragged pilot jacket, and rough oilskin fantail hat. The room was perfectly black. It was difficult to believe, at first, that it was not purposely coloured black: the walls were so begrimed.

As I stood opposite the woman boiling the children's clothes-she had not even a piece of soap to wash them with-and apologising for her occupation, I could take in all these things without appearing to notice them, and could even correct my inventory. I had missed, at the first glance, some half a pound of bread in the otherwise empty safe, an old

30 red ragged crinoline hanging on the handle of the door by which I had entered, and certain fragments of rusty iron scattered on the floor, which looked like broken tools and a piece of stove-pipe. A child stood looking on. On the box nearest to the fire sat two younger children; one, a delicate and pretty little creature whom the other sometimes kissed.

This woman, like the last, was woefully shabby, and was degenerating to the Bosjesman complexion. But her figure, and the ghost of a certain vivacity about her, and the spectre of a dimple in her cheek, carried my memory strangely back to the old days of the Adelphi Theatre, London, when Mrs. Fit'william was the friend of Wictorine.

"May I ask you what your husband is?" "He's a coal-porter, sir." With a glance and a sigh towards the bed. "Is he out of work?"

"Oh yes, sir, and work's at all times very very scanty with him, and now he's laid up."

"'Tis my legs," said the man upon the bed, "I'll unroll 'em." And immediately began.

"Have you any older children?"

10 "I have a daughter that does the needlework, and I have a son that does what he can. She's at her work now, and he's trying for work."

"Do they live here?"

"They sleep here. They can't afford to pay more rent, and so they come here at night. The rent is very hard upon us. 'tIs rose upon us too, now-sixpence a week-on account of these new changes in the law, about the rates. We are a week behind; the landlord's been shaking and rattling at that door, frightful; he says he'll turn us out. I don't know what's to come of it."

The man upon the bed ruefully interposed: "Here's my legs. The skin's broke, besides the swelling. I have had a many kicks, working, one way and another."

20 He looked at his legs (which were much discoloured and misshapen) for a while, and then appearing to remember that they were not popular with his family, rolled them up again, as if they were something in the nature of maps or plans that were not wanted to be referred to, lay hopelessly down on his back once more with his fantail hat over his face, and stirred not.

"Do your eldest son and daughter sleep in that cupboard?"

"Yes," replied the woman. "With the children?"

"Yes. We have to get together for warmth. We have little to cover us."

"Have you nothing by you to eat but the piece of bread I see there?"

30 "Nothing. And we had the rest of the loaf for our breakfast, with water. I don't know what's to come of it."

"Have you no prospect of improvement?"

"If my eldest son earns anything to-day, he'll bring it home. Then we shall have something to eat to-night, and may be able to do something towards the rent. If not, I don't know what's to come of it."

“This is a sad state of things.”

“Yes, sir, it’s a hard, hard life. Take care of the stairs as you go sir—they’re broken—and good day, sir!”

These people had a mortal dread of entering the workhouse, and received no out-of-door relief.

In another room in still another tenement, I found a very decent woman with five children—the last, a baby, and she herself a patient of the parish doctor—to whom, her husband being in the Hospital, the Union allowed for the support of herself and family, four shillings a week and five loaves. I suppose when Thisman, M.P., and Thatman, M.P.,
 10 and the public blessing Party, lay their heads together in course of time, and come to an Equalisation of Rating, she may go down the Dance of Death to the tune of sixpence more.

I could enter no other houses for that one while, for I could not bear the contemplation of the children. Such heart as I had summoned to sustain me against the miseries of the adults, failed me when I looked at the children. I saw how young they were, how hungry, how serious and still. I thought of them, sick and dying in those lairs. I could think of them dead, without anguish; but to think of them, so suffering and so dying, quite unmanned me.

Down by the river’s bank in Ratcliffe, I was turning upward by a side street, therefore, to regain the railway, when my eyes rested on the inscription across the road,

20 “East London Children’s Hospital.” I could scarcely have seen an inscription better suited to my frame of mind, and I went across and went straight in.

I found the Children’s Hospital established in an old sail-loft or storehouse, of the roughest nature, and on the simplest means. There were trapdoors in the floors where goods had been hoisted up and down; heavy feet and heavy weights had started every knot in the well-trodden planking; inconvenient bulks and beams and awkward staircases perplexed my passage through the wards. But I found it airy, sweet, and clean. In its seven-and-thirty beds I saw but little beauty, for starvation in the second or third generation takes a pinched look; but I saw the sufferings both of infancy and childhood tenderly assuaged, I heard the little patients answering to pet playful names, the light touch of a delicate lady
 30 laid bare the wasted sticks of arms for me to pity; and the claw-like little hands, as she did so, twined themselves lovingly around her wedding-ring.

One baby mite there was, as pretty as any of Raphael’s angels. The tiny head was bandaged, for water on the brain, and it was suffering with acute bronchitis too, and made from time to time a plaintive, though not impatient or complaining little sound. The

smooth curve of the cheeks and of the chin was faultless in its condensation of infantine beauty, and the large bright eyes were most lovely. It happened, as I stopped at the foot of the bed, that these eyes rested upon mine, with that wistful expression of wondering thoughtfulness which we all know sometimes in very little children. They remained fixed on mine, and never turned from me while I stood there. When the utterance of that plaintive sound shook the little form, the gaze still remained unchanged. I felt as though the child implored me to tell the story of the little hospital in which it was sheltered, to any gentle heart I could address. Laying my world-worn hand upon the little unmarked clasped hand at the chin, I gave it a silent promise that I would do so.

10 A gentleman and lady, a young husband and wife, have bought and fitted up this building for its present noble use, and have quietly settled themselves in it as its medical officers and directors. Both have had considerable practical experience of medicine and surgery; he, as housesurgeon of a great London Hospital; she, as a very earnest student, tested by severe examination, and also as a nurse of the sick poor, during the prevalence of cholera. With every qualification to lure them away, with youth and accomplishments and tastes and habits that can have no response in any breast near them, close begirt by every repulsive circumstance inseparable from such a neighbourhood, there they dwell. They live in the Hospital itself, and their rooms are on its first floor. Sitting at their dinner table they could hear the cry of one of the children in pain. The lady's piano, drawing

20 materials, books, and other such evidences of refinement, are as much a part of the rough place as the iron bedsteads of the little patients. They are put to shifts for room, like passengers on board ship. The dispenser of medicines (attracted to them, not by self-interest, but by their own magnetism and that of their cause) sleeps in a recess in the dining-room, and has his washing apparatus in the sideboard.

30 Their contented manner of making the best of the things around them, I found so pleasantly inseparable from their usefulness! Their pride in this partition that we put up ourselves, or in that partition that we took down, or in that other partition that we moved, or in the stove that was given us for the waiting-room, or in our nightly conversion of the little consultingroom into a smoking-room. Their admiration of the situation, if we could only get rid of its one objectionable incident, the coal-yard at the back! "Our hospital carriage, presented by a friend, and very useful." That was my presentation to a perambulator, for which a coach-house had been discovered in a corner down-stairs, just large enough to hold it. Coloured prints in all stages of preparation for being added to those already decorating the wards, were plentiful; a charming wooden phenomenon of a

bird, with an impossible topknot, who ducked his head when you set a counter weight going, had been inaugurated as a public statue that very morning; and trotting about among the beds, on familiar terms with all the patients, was a comical mongrel dog, called Poodles. This comical dog (quite a tonic in himself) was found characteristically starving at the door of the Institution, and was taken in and fed, and has lived here ever since. An admirer of his mental endowments has presented him with a collar bearing the legend, "Judge not Poodles by external appearances."

He was merrily wagging his tail on a boy's pillow when he made this modest appeal to me.

10 When this Hospital was first opened in January of the present year, the people could not possibly conceive but that somebody paid for the services rendered there; and were disposed to claim them as a right, and to find fault if out of temper. They soon came to understand the case better, and have much increased in gratitude. The mothers of the patients avail themselves very freely of the visiting rules; the fathers, often on Sundays. There is an unreasonable (but still, I think, touching and intelligible), tendency in the parents to take a child away to its wretched home, if on the point of death. One boy who had been thus carried off on a rainy night, when in a violent state of inflammation, and who had been afterwards brought back, had been recovered with exceeding difficulty; but he was a jolly boy, with a specially strong interest in his dinner, when I saw him.

20 Insufficient food and unwholesome living are the main causes of disease among these small patients. So, nourishment, cleanliness, and ventilation, are the main remedies. Discharged patients are looked after, and invited to come and dine now and then; so are certain famishing creatures who never were patients. Both the lady and the gentleman are well acquainted, not only with the histories of the patients and their families, but with the characters and circumstances of great numbers of their neighbours: of these they keep a register. It is their common experience that people sinking down by inches into deeper and deeper poverty, will conceal it, even from them, if possible, unto the very last extremity.

30 The nurses of this Hospital are all young; ranging, say, from nineteen to four-and-twenty. They have, even within these narrow limits, what many well-endowed Hospitals would not give them: a comfortable room of their own in which to take their meals. It is a beautiful truth that interest in the children and sympathy with their sorrows, bind these young women to their places far more strongly than any other consideration could. The best skilled of the nurses came originally from a kindred neighbourhood, almost as poor, and she knew how much the work was needed. She is a fair dressmaker. The Hospital

cannot pay her as many pounds in the year as there are months in it, and one day the lady regarded it as a duty to speak to her about her improving her prospects and following her trade. No, she said; she could never be so useful, or so happy, elsewhere, any more; she must stay among the children. And she stays. One of the nurses, as I passed her, was washing a baby-boy. Liking her pleasant face, I stopped to speak to her charge: a common, bullet-headed, frowning charge enough, laying hold of his own nose with a slippery grasp, and staring very solemnly out of a blanket. The melting of the pleasant face into delighted smiles as this young gentleman gave an unexpected kick and laughed at me, was almost worth my previous pain.

10 An affecting play was acted in Paris years ago, called *The Children's Doctor*. As I parted from my Children's Doctor now in question, I saw in his easy black necktie, in his loose buttoned black frock coat, in his pensive face, in the flow of his dark hair, in his eyelashes, in the very turn of his moustache, the exact realisation of the Paris artist's ideal as it was presented on the stage. But no romancer that I know of, has had the boldness to prefigure the life and home of this young husband and young wife, in the Children's Hospital in the East of London.

I came away from Ratcliffe by the Stepney railway station to the Terminus at Fenchurch-street. Any one who will reverse that route, may retrace my steps.

Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital from the *Illustrated Times* of April 1858



New Uncommercial Samples. By Charles Dickens.

On An Amateur Beat.

All the Year Round, 27 February 1869

IT is one of my fancies that even my idlest walk must always have its appointed destination. I set myself a task before I leave my lodging in Covent Garden on a street expedition; and should no more think of altering my route by the way; or turning back and leaving a part of it unachieved; than I should think of fraudulently violating an agreement entered into with somebody else. The other day; finding myself under this kind of obligation to proceed to Limehouse; I started punctually at noon; in compliance with the terms of the contract with myself to which my good faith was pledged.

On such an occasion; it is my habit to regard my walk as my Beat; and myself as a higher sort of Police Constable doing duty on the same. There is many a Ruffian in the streets whom I mentally collar and clear out of them; who would see mighty little of London; I can tell him; if I could deal with him physically.

Issuing forth upon this very Beat; and following with my eyes three hulking garotters on their way home: which home I could confidently swear to be within so many yards of Drury Lane; in such a narrowed and restricted direction (though they live in their lodging quite as undisturbed as I in mine); I went on duty with a consideration which I respectfully offer to the new Chief Commissioner-in whom I thoroughly confide as a tried and efficient public servant. How often (thought I) have I been forced to swallow in Police reports; the intolerable stereotyped pill of nonsense how that the Police Constable informed the worthy magistrate how that the associates of the Prisoner did at that present speaking dwell in a Street or Court which no man dared go down; and how that the worthy magistrate had heard of the dark reputation of such Street or Court; and how that our readers would doubtless remember that it was always the same Street or Court which was thus edifyingly discoursed about; say once a fortnight. Now; suppose that a Chief Commissioner sent round a circular to every Division of Police employed in London; requiring instantly the names in all districts of all such much-puffed Streets or Courts which no man durst go down; and suppose that in such circular he gave plain warning:

“If those places really exist; they are a proof of Police inefficiency which I mean to punish; and if they do not exist; but are a conventional fiction; then they are a proof of lazy tacit Police connivance with professional crime; which I also mean to punish”

—What then? Fictions or realities; could they survive the touchstone of this atom of common sense? To tell us in open court; until it has become as trite a feature of news as the great gooseberry; that a costly Police system such as was never before heard of; has left in London; in the days of steam and gas and photographs of thieves and electric telegraphs; the sanctuaries and stews of the Stuarts! Why; a parity of practice; in all departments; would bring back the Plague in two summers; and the Druids in a century!

10 Walking faster under my share of this public injury; I overturned a wretched little creature who; clutching at the rags of a pair of trousers with one of its claws; and at its ragged hair with the other; pattered with bare feet over the muddy stones. I stopped to raise and succour this poor weeping wretch; and fifty like it; but of both sexes; were about me in a moment: begging; tumbling; fighting; clamouring; yelling; shivering in their nakedness and hunger. The piece of money I had put into the claw of the child I had overturned; was clawed out of it; and was again clawed out of that wolfish gripe; and again out of that; and soon I had no notion in what part of the obscene scuffle in the mud; of rags and legs and arms and dirt; the money might be. In raising the child; I had drawn it
20 aside out of the main thoroughfare; and this took place among some wooden hoardings and barriers and ruins of demolished buildings; hard by Temple Bar.

Unexpectedly from among them; emerged a genuine Police Constable; before whom the dreadful brood dispersed in various directions: he making feints and darts in this direction and in that; and catching nothing. When all were frightened away; he took off his hat; pulled out a handkerchief from it; wiped his heated brow; and restored the handkerchief and hat to their places; with the air of a man who had discharged a great moral duty-as indeed he had; in doing what was set down for him. I looked at him; and I looked about at the disorderly traces in the mud; and I thought of the drops of rain and the footprints of an extinct creature; hoary ages upon ages old; that geologists have identified on the face of a cliff; and this speculation came over me: If this mud could petrify
30 at this moment; and could lie concealed here for ten thousand years; I wonder whether the race of men then to be our successors on the earth could; from these or any marks; by the utmost force of the human intellect; unassisted by tradition; deduce such an astounding inference as the existence of a polished state of society that bore with the public savagery

of neglected children in the streets of its capital city; and was proud of its power by sea and land; and never used its power to seize and save them!

After this; when I came to the Old Bailey and glanced up it towards Newgate; I found that the prison had an inconsistent look. There seemed to be some unlucky inconsistency in the atmosphere; that day; for though the proportions of Saint Paul's Cathedral are very beautiful; it had an air of being somewhat out of drawing; in my eyes. I felt as though the cross were too high up; and perched upon the intervening golden ball too far away.

Facing eastward; I left behind me Smithfield and Old Bailey-fire and fagot; condemned Hold; public hanging; whipping through the city at the cart-tail; pillory;
 10 branding-iron; and other beautiful ancestral landmarks which rude hands have rooted up; without bringing the stars quite down upon us as yet--and went my way upon my Beat; noting how oddly characteristic neighbourhoods are divided from one another; hereabout; as though by an invisible line across the way. Here; shall cease the bankers and the money-changers; here; shall begin the shipping interest and the nautical instrument shops; here; shall follow a scarcely perceptible flavouring of groceries and drugs; here; shall come a strong infusion of butchers; now; small hosiers shall be in the ascendant; henceforth; everything exposed for sale shall have its ticketed price attached. All this; as if specially ordered and appointed. A single stride at Houndsditch Church; no wider than sufficed to
 20 cross the kennel at the bottom of the Canongate; which the Debtors in Holyrood Sanctuary were wont to relieve their minds by skipping over; as Scott relates; and standing in delightful daring of Catchpoles on the free side-a single stride; and everything is entirely changed in grain and character. West of the stride; a table; or a chest of drawers on sale shall be of mahogany and French-polished; East of the stride; it shall be of deal; smeared with a cheap counterfeit resembling lip-salve. West of the stride; a penny loaf or bun shall be compact and self-contained; East of the stride; it shall be of a sprawling and splay-footed character; as seeking to make more of itself for the money. My Beat lying round by Whitechapel Church; and the adjacent Sugar Refineries-great buildings; tier upon tier; that have the appearance of being nearly related to the Dock-Warehouses at Liverpool-I turned off to my right; and passing round the awkward corner on my left; came suddenly on an
 30 apparition familiar to London streets afar off.

What London peripatetic of these times has not seen the woman who has fallen forward; double; through some affection of the spine; and whose head has of late taken a turn to one side; so that it now droops over the back of one of her arms at about the wrist?

Who does not know her staff; and her shawl; and her basket; as she gropes her way along; capable of seeing nothing but the pavement; never begging; never stopping; for ever going somewhere on no business? How does she live; whence does she come; whither does she go; and why? I mind the time when her yellow arms were nought but bone and parchment. Slight changes steal over her; for there is a shadowy suggestion of human skin on them now. The Strand may be taken as the central point about which she revolves in a half mile orbit. How comes she so far East as this? And coming back too! Having been how much further? She is a rare spectacle in this neighbourhood. I receive intelligent information to this effect from a dog; a lop-sided mongrel with a foolish tail; plodding along with his tail up; and his ears pricked; and displaying an amiable interest in the ways of his fellowmen-if I may be allowed the expression.

After pausing at a porkshop; he is jogging Eastward like myself; with a benevolent countenance and a watery mouth; as though musing on the many excellencies of pork; when he beholds this doubled-up bundle approaching. He is not so much astonished at the bundle (though amazed by that); as at the circumstance that it has within itself the means of locomotion. He stops; pricks his ears higher; makes a slight point; stares; utters a short low growl; and glistens at the nose-as I conceive; with terror. The bundle continuing to approach; he barks; turns tail; and is about to fly; when; arguing. with himself that flight is not becoming in a dog; he turns and once more faces the advancing heap of clothes. After much hesitation it occurs to him that there may be a face in it somewhere. Desperately resolving to undertake the adventure and pursue the inquiry; he goes slowly up to the bundle; goes slowly round it; and coming at length upon the human countenance down there where never human countenance should be; gives a yelp of horror; and flies for the East India Docks.

Being now in the Commercial-road district of my Beat; and bethinking myself that Stepney Station is near; I quicken my pace that I may turn out of the road at that point; and see how my small Eastern Star is shining.

The Children's Hospital; to which I gave that name; is in full force. All its beds occupied. There is a new face on the bed where my pretty baby lay; and that sweet little child is now at rest for ever. Much kind sympathy has been here; since my former visit; and it is good to see the walls profusely garnished with dolls. I wonder what Poodles may think of them; as they stretch out their arms above the beds; and stare; and display their splendid dresses. Poodles has a greater interest in the patients. I find him making the round of the

beds; like a house-surgeon; attended by another dog-a friend-who appears to trot about with him in the character of his pupil dresser. Poodles is anxious to make me known to a pretty little girl; looking wonderfully healthy; who has had a leg taken off for cancer of the knee. A difficult operation; Poodles intimates; wagging his tail on the counterpane; but perfectly successful; as you see; dear Sir! The patient; patting Poodles; adds with a smile: "The leg was so much trouble to me; that I am glad it's gone." I never saw anything in doggery finer than the department of Poodles; when another little girl opens her mouth to show a peculiar enlargement of the tongue. Poodles (at that time on a table; to be on a level with the occasion) looks at the tongue (with his own sympathetically out); so very gravely and knowingly; that I feel inclined to put my hand in my waistcoat pocket; and give him a guinea; wrapped in paper.

On my Beat again; and close to Limehouse Church; its termination; I found myself near to certain "Lead Mills." Struck by the name; which was fresh in my memory; and finding on inquiry that these same Lead Mills were identical with those same Lead Mills of which I made mention when I first visited the East London Children's Hospital and its neighbourhood; as Uncommercial Traveller; I resolved to have a look at them. Received by two very intelligent gentlemen; brothers; and partners with their father in the concern; and who testified every desire to show their Works to me freely; I went over the Lead Mills. The purport of such works is the conversion of Pig-Lead into White Lead. This conversion is brought about by the slow and gradual effecting of certain successive chemical changes in the lead itself. The processes are picturesque and interesting; the most so; being the burying of the lead at a certain stage of preparation; in pots; each pot containing a certain quantity of acid besides; and all the pots being buried in vast numbers in layers; under tan; for some ten weeks.

Hopping up ladders and across planks and on elevated perches until I was uncertain whether to liken myself to a Bird; or a Bricklayer; I became conscious of standing on nothing particular; looking down into one of a series of large cocklofts; with the outer day peeping in through the chinks in the tiled roof above. A number of women were ascending to; and descending from; this cockloft; each carrying on the upward Journey a pot of prepared lead and acid; for deposition under the smoking tan. When one layer of pots was completely filled; it was carefully covered in with planks; and those were carefully covered with tan again; and then another layer of pots was begun above: sufficient means of ventilation being preserved through wooden tubes. Going down into the cockloft then

filling; I found the heat of the tan to be surprisingly great; and also the odour of the lead and acid to be not absolutely exquisite; though I believe not noxious at that stage. In other cocklofts where the pots were being exhumed; the heat of the steaming tan was much greater; and the smell was penetrating and peculiar. There were cocklofts in all stages; full and empty; half filled and half emptied; strong active women were clambering about them busily; and the whole thing had rather the air of the upper part of the house of some immensely rich old Turk; whose faithful Seraglio were hiding his money because the Sultan or the Pasha was coming.

As is the case with most pulps or pigments so in the instance of this White Lead; processes of stirring; separating; washing; grinding; rolling; and pressing; succeed. Some of these are unquestionably inimical to health; the danger arising from inhalation of particles of lead; or from contact between the lead and the touch; or both. Against these dangers; I found good respirators provided (simply made of flannel and muslin; so as to be inexpensively renewed; and in some instances washed with scented soap); and gauntlet gloves; and loose gowns. Everywhere; there was as much fresh air as windows; well placed and opened; could possibly admit. And it was explained; that the precaution of frequently changing the women employed in the worst parts of the work (a precaution originating in their own experience or apprehension of its ill effects) was found salutary. They had a mysterious and singular appearance with the mouth and nose covered; and the loose gown on; and yet bore out the simile of the old Turk and the Seraglio all the better for the disguise.

At last this vexed White Lead having buried and resuscitated; and heated; and cooled; and stirred; and separated; and washed; and ground; and rolled; and pressed; is subjected to the action of intense fiery heat. A row of women; dressed as above described; stood; let us say; in a large stone bake-house; passing on the baking dishes as they were given out by the cooks; from hand to hand; into the ovens. The oven or stove; cold as yet; looked as high as an ordinary house; and was full of men and women on temporary footholds; briskly passing up and stowing away the dishes. The door of another oven or stove; about to be cooled and emptied; was opened from above; for the Uncommercial countenance to peer down into. The Uncommercial countenance withdrew itself; with expedition and a sense of suffocation from the dull-glowing heat and the overpowering smell. On the whole; perhaps the going into these stoves to work; when they are freshly opened; may be the worst part of the occupation.

But I made it out to be indubitable that the owners of these lead mills honestly and sedulously try to reduce the dangers of the occupation to the lowest point. A washing-place is provided for the women (I thought there might have been more towels); and a room in which they hang their clothes; and take their meals; and where they have a good fire-range and fire; and a female attendant to help them; and to watch that they do not neglect the cleansing of their hands before touching their food. An experienced medical attendant is provided for them; and any premonitory symptoms of lead poisoning are carefully treated. Their tea-pots and such things were set out on tables ready for their afternoon meal; when I saw their room; and it had a homely look. It is found that they bear the work much better than men; some few of them have been at it for years; and the great majority of those I
10 observed were strong and active. On the other hand it should be remembered that most of them are very capricious and irregular in their attendance.

American inventiveness would seem to indicate that before very long White Lead may be made entirely by machinery. The sooner; the better. In the mean time; I parted from my two frank conductors over the mills; by telling them that they had nothing there to be concealed; and nothing to be blamed for. As to the rest; the philosophy of the matter of lead poisoning and workpeople; seems to me to have been pretty fairly summed up by the Irishwoman; whom I quoted in my former paper: "Some of them gits lead-pisoned soon; and some of them gets lead-pisoned later; and some but not many niver; and 'tis all
20 according to the constitooshun; Sur; and some constitooshuns is strong and some is weak."

Retracing my footsteps over my Beat; I went off duty.

Critical Reading

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A Hanging

George Orwell

New Adelphi, August 1931

It was in Burma, a sodden morning of the rains. A sickly light, like yellow tinfoil, was slanting over the high walls into the jail yard. We were waiting outside the condemned cells, a row of sheds fronted with double bars, like small animal cages. Each cell measured about ten feet by ten and was quite bare within except for a plank bed and a pot of drinking water. In some of them brown silent men were squatting at the inner bars, with their blankets draped round them. These were the condemned men, due to be hanged within the next week or two.

One prisoner had been brought out of his cell. He was a Hindu, a puny wisp of a man, with a shaven head and vague liquid eyes. He had a thick, sprouting moustache, absurdly too big for his body, rather like the moustache of a comic man on the films. Six tall Indian warders were guarding him and getting him ready for the gallows. Two of them stood by with rifles and fixed bayonets, while the others handcuffed him, passed a chain through his handcuffs and fixed it to their belts, and lashed his arms tight to his sides. They crowded very close about him, with their hands always on him in a careful, caressing grip, as though all the while feeling him to make sure he was there. It was like men handling a fish which is still alive and may jump back into the water. But he stood quite unresisting, yielding his arms limply to the ropes, as though he hardly noticed what was happening.

Eight o'clock struck and a bugle call, desolately thin in the wet air, floated from the distant barracks. The superintendent of the jail, who was standing apart from the rest of us, moodily prodding the gravel with his stick, raised his head at the sound. He was an army doctor, with a grey toothbrush moustache and a gruff voice. 'For God's sake hurry up, Francis,' he said irritably. 'The man ought to have been dead by this time. Aren't you ready yet?'

Francis, the head jailer, a fat Dravidian in a white drill suit and gold spectacles, waved his black hand. 'Yes sir, yes sir,' he bubbled. 'All iss satisfactorily prepared. The hangman iss waiting. We shall proceed.'

‘Well, quick march, then. The prisoners can’t get their breakfast till this job’s over.’

30 We set out for the gallows. Two warders marched on either side of the prisoner, with their rifles at the slope; two others marched close against him, gripping him by arm and shoulder, as though at once pushing and supporting him. The rest of us, magistrates and the like, followed behind. Suddenly, when we had gone ten yards, the procession stopped short without any order or warning. A dreadful thing had happened — a dog, come goodness knows whence, had appeared in the yard. It came bounding among us with a loud volley of barks, and leapt round us wagging its whole body, wild with glee at finding so many human beings together. It was a large woolly dog, half Airedale, half pariah. For a moment it pranced round us, and then, before anyone could stop it, it had made a dash for the prisoner, and jumping up tried to lick his face. Everyone stood aghast, too taken aback even to grab at the dog.

40 ‘Who let that bloody brute in here?’ said the superintendent angrily. ‘Catch it, someone!’

A warder, detached from the escort, charged clumsily after the dog, but it danced and gambolled just out of his reach, taking everything as part of the game. A young Eurasian jailer picked up a handful of gravel and tried to stone the dog away, but it dodged the stones and came after us again. Its yaps echoed from the jail walls. The prisoner, in the grasp of the two warders, looked on incuriously, as though this was another formality of the hanging. It was several minutes before someone managed to catch the dog. Then we put my handkerchief through its collar and moved off once more, with the dog still straining and whimpering.

50 It was about forty yards to the gallows. I watched the bare brown back of the prisoner marching in front of me. He walked clumsily with his bound arms, but quite steadily, with that bobbing gait of the Indian who never straightens his knees. At each step his muscles slid neatly into place, the lock of hair on his scalp danced up and down, his feet printed themselves on the wet gravel. And once, in spite of the men who gripped him by each shoulder, he stepped slightly aside to avoid a puddle on the path.

It is curious, but till that moment I had never realized what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man. When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle, I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide. This man was not dying, he was alive just as we were alive. All the organs of his body were working

— bowels digesting food, skin renewing itself, nails growing, tissues forming — all toiling
60 away in solemn foolery. His nails would still be growing when he stood on the drop, when
he was falling through the air with a tenth of a second to live. His eyes saw the yellow
gravel and the grey walls, and his brain still remembered, foresaw, reasoned — reasoned
even about puddles. He and we were a party of men walking together, seeing, hearing,
feeling, understanding the same world; and in two minutes, with a sudden snap, one of us
would be gone — one mind less, one world less.

The gallows stood in a small yard, separate from the main grounds of the prison, and
overgrown with tall prickly weeds. It was a brick erection like three sides of a shed, with
planking on top, and above that two beams and a crossbar with the rope dangling. The
hangman, a grey-haired convict in the white uniform of the prison, was waiting beside his
70 machine. He greeted us with a servile crouch as we entered. At a word from Francis the
two warders, gripping the prisoner more closely than ever, half led, half pushed him to the
gallows and helped him clumsily up the ladder. Then the hangman climbed up and fixed
the rope round the prisoner's neck.

We stood waiting, five yards away. The warders had formed in a rough circle round
the gallows. And then, when the noose was fixed, the prisoner began crying out on his god.
It was a high, reiterated cry of 'Ram! Ram! Ram! Ram!', not urgent and fearful like a prayer
or a cry for help, but steady, rhythmical, almost like the tolling of a bell. The dog answered
the sound with a whine. The hangman, still standing on the gallows, produced a small
cotton bag like a flour bag and drew it down over the prisoner's face. But the sound,
80 muffled by the cloth, still persisted, over and over again: 'Ram! Ram! Ram! Ram! Ram!'

The hangman climbed down and stood ready, holding the lever. Minutes seemed to
pass. The steady, muffled crying from the prisoner went on and on, 'Ram! Ram! Ram!'
never faltering for an instant. The superintendent, his head on his chest, was slowly poking
the ground with his stick; perhaps he was counting the cries, allowing the prisoner a fixed
number — fifty, perhaps, or a hundred. Everyone had changed colour. The Indians had
gone grey like bad coffee, and one or two of the bayonets were wavering. We looked at the
lashed, hooded man on the drop, and listened to his cries — each cry another second of
life; the same thought was in all our minds: oh, kill him quickly, get it over, stop that
abominable noise!

90 Suddenly the superintendent made up his mind. Throwing up his head he made a swift motion with his stick. 'Chalo!' he shouted almost fiercely.

There was a clanking noise, and then dead silence. The prisoner had vanished, and the rope was twisting on itself. I let go of the dog, and it galloped immediately to the back of the gallows; but when it got there it stopped short, barked, and then retreated into a corner of the yard, where it stood among the weeds, looking timorously out at us. We went round the gallows to inspect the prisoner's body. He was dangling with his toes pointed straight downwards, very slowly revolving, as dead as a stone.

The superintendent reached out with his stick and poked the bare body; it oscillated, slightly. 'He's all right,' said the superintendent. He backed out from under the gallows, and blew out a deep breath. The moody look had gone out of his face quite suddenly. He
100 glanced at his wrist-watch. 'Eight minutes past eight. Well, that's all for this morning, thank God.'

The warders unfixing bayonets and marched away. The dog, sobered and conscious of having misbehaved itself, slipped after them. We walked out of the gallows yard, past the condemned cells with their waiting prisoners, into the big central yard of the prison. The convicts, under the command of warders armed with lathis, were already receiving their breakfast. They squatted in long rows, each man holding a tin pannikin, while two warders with buckets marched round ladling out rice; it seemed quite a homely, jolly scene, after the hanging. An enormous relief had come upon us now that the job was done. One
110 felt an impulse to sing, to break into a run, to snigger. All at once everyone began chattering gaily.

The Eurasian boy walking beside me nodded towards the way we had come, with a knowing smile: 'Do you know, sir, our friend (he meant the dead man), when he heard his appeal had been dismissed, he pissed on the floor of his cell. From fright. — Kindly take one of my cigarettes, sir. Do you not admire my new silver case, sir? From the boxwallah, two rupees eight annas. Classy European style.'

Several people laughed — at what, nobody seemed certain.

Francis was walking by the superintendent, talking garrulously. 'Well, sir, all has passed off with the utmost satisfactoriness. It was all finished — flick! like that. It is not

120 always so — oah, no! I have known cases where the doctor was obliged to go beneath the gallows and pull the prisoner's legs to ensure decease. Most disagreeable!

'Wriggling about, eh? That's bad,' said the superintendent.

'Ach, sir, it iss worse when they become refractory! One man, I recall, clung to the bars of hiss cage when we went to take him out. You will scarcely credit, sir, that it took six warders to dislodge him, three pulling at each leg. We reasoned with him. "My dear fellow," we said, "think of all the pain and trouble you are causing to us!" But no, he would not listen! Ach, he was very troublesome!'

I found that I was laughing quite loudly. Everyone was laughing. Even the superintendent grinned in a tolerant way. 'You'd better all come out and have a drink,' he
130 said quite genially. 'I've got a bottle of whisky in the car. We could do with it.'

We went through the big double gates of the prison, into the road. 'Pulling at his legs!' exclaimed a Burmese magistrate suddenly, and burst into a loud chuckling. We all began laughing again. At that moment Francis's anecdote seemed extraordinarily funny. We all had a drink together, native and European alike, quite amicably. The dead man was a hundred yards away.

Shooting An Elephant

George Orwell

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In Moulmein, in Lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people — the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer

I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee (another Burman) looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happened more than once. In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance, got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans.

All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. Theoretically – and secretly, of course – I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos – all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was young and ill-educated and I had had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in *saecula saeculorum*, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal by-products of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.

One day something happened which in a roundabout way was enlightening. It was a tiny incident in itself, but it gave me a better glimpse than I had had before of the real nature of imperialism – the real motives for which despotic governments act. Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone and said that an elephant was ravaging the bazaar. Would I please come and do something about it? I did not know what I could do, but I wanted to see what was happening and I got on to a pony and started out. I took my rifle, an old 44 Winchester

and much too small to kill an elephant, but I thought the noise might be useful in terrorem.

40 Various Burmans stopped me on the way and told me about the elephant's doings. It was not, of course, a wild elephant, but a tame one which had gone "must." It had been chained up, as tame elephants always are when their attack of "must" is due, but on the previous night it had broken its chain and escaped. Its mahout, the only person who could manage it when it was in that state, had set out in pursuit, but had taken the wrong direction and was now twelve hours' journey away, and in the morning the elephant had suddenly reappeared in the town. The Burmese population had no weapons and were quite helpless against it. It had already destroyed somebody's bamboo hut, killed a cow and raided some fruit-stalls and devoured the stock; also it had met the municipal rubbish van and, when the driver jumped out and took to his heels, had turned the van over and inflicted violence

50 upon it.

The Burmese sub-inspector and some Indian constables were waiting for me in the quarter where the elephant had been seen. It was a very poor quarter, a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts, thatched with palmleaf, winding all over a steep hillside. I remember that it was a cloudy, stuffy morning at the beginning of the rains. We began questioning the people as to where the elephant had gone and, as usual, failed to get any definite information. That is invariably the case in the East; a story always sounds clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes. Some of the people said that the elephant had gone in one direction, some said that he had gone in another, some professed not even to have heard of any elephant. I had almost made up my mind that the

60 whole story was a pack of lies, when we heard yells a little distance away. There was a loud, scandalized cry of "Go away, child! Go away this instant!" and an old woman with a switch in her hand came round the corner of a hut, violently shooing away a crowd of naked children. Some more women followed, clicking their tongues and exclaiming; evidently there was something that the children ought not to have seen. I rounded the hut and saw a man's dead body sprawling in the mud. He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie, almost naked, and he could not have been dead many minutes. The people said that the elephant had come suddenly upon him round the corner of the hut, caught him with its trunk, put its foot on his back and ground him into the earth. This was the rainy season and the ground was soft, and his face had scored a trench a foot deep and a couple of yards

70 long. He was lying on his belly with arms crucified and head sharply twisted to one side. His face was coated with mud, the eyes wide open, the teeth bared and grinning with an

expression of unendurable agony. (Never tell me, by the way, that the dead look peaceful. Most of the corpses I have seen looked devilish.) The friction of the great beast's foot had stripped the skin from his back as neatly as one skins a rabbit. As soon as I saw the dead man I sent an orderly to a friend's house nearby to borrow an elephant rifle. I had already sent back the pony, not wanting it to go mad with fright and throw me if it smelt the elephant.

The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges, and meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the paddy fields
80 below, only a few hundred yards away. As I started forward practically the whole population of the quarter flocked out of the houses and followed me. They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the elephant. They had not shown much interest in the elephant when he was merely ravaging their homes, but it was different now that he was going to be shot. It was a bit of fun to them, as it would be to an English crowd; besides they wanted the meat. It made me vaguely uneasy. I had no intention of shooting the elephant – I had merely sent for the rifle to defend myself if necessary – and it is always unnerving to have a crowd following you. I marched down the hill, looking and feeling a fool, with the rifle over my shoulder and an ever-growing army of people jostling at my heels. At the bottom, when you got away from the huts, there was
90 a metalled road and beyond that a miry waste of paddy fields a thousand yards across, not yet ploughed but soggy from the first rains and dotted with coarse grass. The elephant was standing eight yards from the road, his left side towards us. He took not the slightest notice of the crowd's approach. He was tearing up bunches of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and stuffing them into his mouth.

I had halted on the road. As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with perfect certainty that I ought not to shoot him. It is a serious matter to shoot a working elephant – it is comparable to destroying a huge and costly piece of machinery – and obviously one ought not to do it if it can possibly be avoided. And at that distance, peacefully eating, the elephant looked no more dangerous than a cow. I thought then and I think now that his attack of
100 “must” was already passing off; in which case he would merely wander harmlessly about until the mahout came back and caught him. Moreover, I did not in the least want to shoot him. I decided that I would watch him for a little while to make sure that he did not turn savage again, and then go home.

But at that moment I glanced round at the crowd that had followed me. It was an immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing every minute. It blocked the road for a long distance on either side. I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes-faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all certain that the elephant was going to be shot. They were watching me as they would watch a conjurer about to perform a trick. They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly. And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd – seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the “natives,” and so in every crisis he has got to do what the “natives” expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing – no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.

But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with that preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. At that age I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. (Somehow it always seems worse to kill a large animal.) Besides, there was the beast's owner to be considered. Alive, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds; dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks, five pounds, possibly. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced-looking Burmans who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant had been behaving. They all said the same thing: he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him.

It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behavior. If he charged, I could shoot; if he took no notice of me, it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back. But also
140 I knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I should have about as much chance as a toad under a steam-roller. But even then I was not thinking particularly of my own skin, only of the watchful yellow faces behind. For at that moment, with the crowd watching me, I was not afraid in the ordinary sense, as I would have been if I had been alone. A white man mustn't be frightened in front of "natives"; and so, in general, he isn't frightened. The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on and reduced to a grinning corpse like that Indian up the hill. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do.

150 There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim. The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sigh, as of people who see the theatre curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats. They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one would shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from ear-hole to ear-hole. I ought, therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed straight at his ear-hole, actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick – one never does when a shot goes home – but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd.
160 In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time – it might have been five seconds, I dare say – he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body

170 and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upward like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skyward like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His mouth was wide open – I could see far down into caverns of pale pink throat. I waited a long time for him to die, but his breathing did not weaken. Finally I fired my two
180 remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

In the end I could not stand it any longer and went away. I heard later that it took
190 him half an hour to die. Burmans were bringing das and baskets even before I left, and I was told they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon.

Afterwards, of course, there were endless discussions about the shooting of the elephant. The owner was furious, but he was only an Indian and could do nothing. Besides, legally I had done the right thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it. Among the Europeans opinion was divided. The older men said I was right, the younger men said it was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie, because an elephant was worth more than any damn Coringhee coolie. And afterwards I was very glad that the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. I often wondered whether any of
200 the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool.

Politics and the English Language

George Orwell

Horizon, April 1946.

Most people who bother with the matter at all would admit that the English language is in a bad way, but it is generally assumed that we cannot by conscious action do anything about it. Our civilization is decadent and our language — so the argument runs — must inevitably share in the general collapse. It follows that any struggle against the abuse of language is a sentimental archaism, like preferring candles to electric light or hansom cabs to aeroplanes. Underneath this lies the half-conscious belief that language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purposes.

Now, it is clear that the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes: it is not due simply to the bad influence of this or that individual writer. But an effect can become a cause, reinforcing the original cause and producing the same effect in an intensified form, and so on indefinitely. A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks. It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language. It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts. The point is that the process is reversible. Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step toward political regeneration: so that the fight against bad English is not frivolous and is not the exclusive concern of professional writers. I will come back to this presently, and I hope that by that time the meaning of what I have said here will have become clearer. Meanwhile, here are five specimens of the English language as it is now habitually written.

These five passages have not been picked out because they are especially bad — I could have quoted far worse if I had chosen — but because they illustrate various of the mental vices from which we now suffer. They are a little below the average, but are fairly representative examples. I number them so that I can refer back to them when necessary:

1. I am not, indeed, sure whether it is not true to say that the Milton who once seemed not unlike a seventeenth-century Shelley had not become, out of an experience ever more bitter in each year, more alien [sic] to the founder of that Jesuit sect which nothing could induce him to tolerate.

Professor Harold Laski (*Essay in Freedom of Expression*)

2. Above all, we cannot play ducks and drakes with a native battery of idioms which prescribes egregious collocations of vocables as the Basic put up with for tolerate, or put at a loss for bewilder.

Professor Lancelot Hogben (*Interglossia*)

10 3. On the one side we have the free personality: by definition it is not neurotic, for it has neither conflict nor dream. Its desires, such as they are, are transparent, for they are just what institutional approval keeps in the forefront of consciousness; another institutional pattern would alter their number and intensity; there is little in them that is natural, irreducible, or culturally dangerous. But on the other side, the social bond itself is nothing but the mutual reflection of these self-secure integrities. Recall the definition of love. Is not this the very picture of a small academic? Where is there a place in this hall of mirrors for either personality or fraternity?

Essay on psychology in *Politics* (New York)

20 4. All the 'best people' from the gentlemen's clubs, and all the frantic fascist captains, united in common hatred of Socialism and bestial horror at the rising tide of the mass revolutionary movement, have turned to acts of provocation, to foul incendiarism, to medieval legends of poisoned wells, to legalize their own destruction of proletarian organizations, and rouse the agitated petty-bourgeoisie to chauvinistic fervor on behalf of the fight against the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

Communist pamphlet

30 5. If a new spirit is to be infused into this old country, there is one thorny and contentious reform which must be tackled, and that is the humanization and galvanization of the B.B.C. Timidity here will bespeak canker and atrophy of the soul. The heart of Britain may be sound and of strong beat, for instance, but the British lion's roar at present is like that of Bottom in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* — as gentle as any sucking dove. A virile new Britain cannot continue indefinitely to be traduced in the eyes

or rather ears, of the world by the effete languors of Langham Place, brazenly masquerading as 'standard English'. When the Voice of Britain is heard at nine o'clock, better far and infinitely less ludicrous to hear aitches honestly dropped than the present priggish, inflated, inhibited, school-ma'amish arch braying of blameless bashful mewing maidens!

Letter in *Tribune*

Each of these passages has faults of its own, but, quite apart from avoidable ugliness, two qualities are common to all of them. The first is staleness of imagery; the other is lack of precision. The writer either has a meaning and cannot express it, or he inadvertently says something else, or he is almost indifferent as to whether his words mean anything or not. This mixture of vagueness and sheer incompetence is the most marked characteristic of modern English prose, and especially of any kind of political writing. As soon as certain topics are raised, the concrete melts into the abstract and no one seems able to think of turns of speech that are not hackneyed: prose consists less and less of words chosen for the sake of their meaning, and more and more of phrases tacked together like the sections of a prefabricated hen-house. I list below, with notes and examples, various of the tricks by means of which the work of prose-construction is habitually dodged.

DYING METAPHORS. A newly invented metaphor assists thought by evoking a visual image, while on the other hand a metaphor which is technically 'dead' (e. g. iron resolution) has in effect reverted to being an ordinary word and can generally be used without loss of vividness. But in between these two classes there is a huge dump of worn-out metaphors which have lost all evocative power and are merely used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves. Examples are: Ring the changes on, take up the cudgel for, toe the line, ride roughshod over, stand shoulder to shoulder with, play into the hands of, no axe to grind, grist to the mill, fishing in troubled waters, on the order of the day, Achilles' heel, swan song, hotbed. Many of these are used without knowledge of their meaning (what is a 'rift', for instance?), and incompatible metaphors are frequently mixed, a sure sign that the writer is not interested in what he is saying. Some metaphors now current have been twisted out of their original meaning without those who use them even being aware of the fact. For example, toe the line is sometimes written as tow the line. Another example is the hammer and the anvil, now always used with the implication that the anvil gets the worst of it. In real life it is always the anvil that breaks

the hammer, never the other way about: a writer who stopped to think what he was saying would avoid perverting the original phrase.

OPERATORS OR VERBAL FALSE LIMBS. These save the trouble of picking out appropriate verbs and nouns, and at the same time pad each sentence with extra syllables which give it an appearance of symmetry. Characteristic phrases are render inoperative, militate against, make contact with, be subjected to, give rise to, give grounds for, have the effect of, play a leading part (role) in, make itself felt, take effect, exhibit a tendency to, serve the purpose of, etc., etc. The keynote is the elimination of simple verbs. Instead of being a single word, such as break, stop, spoil, mend, kill, a verb becomes a phrase, made up of a noun or adjective tacked on to some general-purpose verb such as prove, serve, form, play, render. In addition, the passive voice is wherever possible used in preference to the active, and noun constructions are used instead of gerunds (by examination of instead of by examining). The range of verbs is further cut down by means of the -ize and de- formations, and the banal statements are given an appearance of profundity by means of the not un- formation. Simple conjunctions and prepositions are replaced by such phrases as with respect to, having regard to, the fact that, by dint of, in view of, in the interests of, on the hypothesis that; and the ends of sentences are saved by anticlimax by such resounding commonplaces as greatly to be desired, cannot be left out of account, a development to be expected in the near future, deserving of serious consideration, brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and so on and so forth.

PRETENTIOUS DICTION. Words like phenomenon, element, individual (as noun), objective, categorical, effective, virtual, basic, primary, promote, constitute, exhibit, exploit, utilize, eliminate, liquidate, are used to dress up a simple statement and give an air of scientific impartiality to biased judgements. Adjectives like epoch-making, epic, historic, unforgettable, triumphant, age-old, inevitable, inexorable, veritable, are used to dignify the sordid process of international politics, while writing that aims at glorifying war usually takes on an archaic colour, its characteristic words being: realm, throne, chariot, mailed fist, trident, sword, shield, buckler, banner, jackboot, clarion. Foreign words and expressions such as cul de sac, ancien regime, deus ex machina, mutatis mutandis, status quo, gleichschaltung, weltanschauung, are used to give an air of culture and elegance. Except for the useful abbreviations i. e., e. g. and etc., there is no real need for any of the hundreds of foreign phrases now current in the English language. Bad writers, and especially scientific, political, and sociological writers, are nearly always haunted by the notion that

Latin or Greek words are grander than Saxon ones, and unnecessary words like expedite, ameliorate, predict, extraneous, deracinated, clandestine, subaqueous, and hundreds of others constantly gain ground from their Anglo-Saxon numbers.³⁹ The jargon peculiar to Marxist writing (hyena, hangman, cannibal, petty bourgeois, these gentry, lackey, flunkey, mad dog, White Guard, etc.) consists largely of words translated from Russian, German, or French; but the normal way of coining a new word is to use Latin or Greek root with the appropriate affix and, where necessary, the size formation. It is often easier to make up words of this kind (deregionalize, impermissible, extramarital, non-fragmentary and so forth) than to think up the English words that will cover one's meaning. The result, in general, is an increase in slovenliness and vagueness.

MEANINGLESS WORDS. In certain kinds of writing, particularly in art criticism and literary criticism, it is normal to come across long passages which are almost completely lacking in meaning.⁴⁰ Words like romantic, plastic, values, human, dead, sentimental, natural, vitality, as used in art criticism, are strictly meaningless, in the sense that they not only do not point to any discoverable object, but are hardly ever expected to do so by the reader. When one critic writes, 'The outstanding feature of Mr. X's work is its living quality', while another writes, 'The immediately striking thing about Mr. X's work is its peculiar deadness', the reader accepts this as a simple difference opinion. If words like black and white were involved, instead of the jargon words dead and living, he would see at once that language was being used in an improper way. Many political words are similarly abused. The word Fascism has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies 'something not desirable'. The words democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice have each of them several different meanings which cannot be reconciled with one another. In the case of a word like democracy, not only is there no agreed definition, but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently the defenders of every kind of regime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using that word if it were tied

³⁹ An interesting illustration of this is the way in which the English flower names which were in use till very recently are being ousted by Greek ones, snapdragon becoming *antirrhinum*, forget-me-not becoming *myosotis*, etc. It is hard to see any practical reason for this change of fashion: it is probably due to an instinctive turning-away from the more homely word and a vague feeling that the Greek word is scientific. [Orwell's Note.]

⁴⁰ Example: 'Comfort's catholicity of perception and image, strangely Whitmanesque in range, almost the exact opposite in aesthetic compulsion, continues to evoke that trembling atmospheric accumulative hinting at a cruel, an inexorably serene timelessness... Wrey Gardiner scores by aiming at simple bull's-eyes with precision. Only they are not so simple, and through this contented sadness runs more than the surface bitter-sweet of resignation'. (*Poetry Quarterly*) [Orwell's Note.]

down to any one meaning. Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way. That is, the person who uses them has his own private definition, but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different. Statements like Marshal Petain was a true patriot, The Soviet press is the freest in the world, The Catholic Church is opposed to persecution, are almost always made with intent to deceive. Other words used in variable meanings, in most cases more or less dishonestly, are: class, totalitarian, science, progressive, reactionary, bourgeois, equality.

Now that I have made this catalogue of swindles and perversions, let me give another example of the kind of writing that they lead to. This time it must of its nature be an
 10 imaginary one. I am going to translate a passage of good English into modern English of the worst sort. Here is a well-known verse from Ecclesiastes:

I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Here it is in modern English:

Objective considerations of contemporary phenomena compel the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account.

20 This is a parody, but not a very gross one. Exhibit (3) above, for instance, contains several patches of the same kind of English. It will be seen that I have not made a full translation. The beginning and ending of the sentence follow the original meaning fairly closely, but in the middle the concrete illustrations — race, battle, bread — dissolve into the vague phrases ‘success or failure in competitive activities’. This had to be so, because no modern writer of the kind I am discussing — no one capable of using phrases like ‘objective considerations of contemporary phenomena’ — would ever tabulate his thoughts in that precise and detailed way. The whole tendency of modern prose is away from concreteness. Now analyze these two sentences a little more closely. The first
 30 contains forty-nine words but only sixty syllables, and all its words are those of everyday life. The second contains thirty-eight words of ninety syllables: eighteen of those words are from Latin roots, and one from Greek. The first sentence contains six vivid images, and only one phrase (‘time and chance’) that could be called vague. The second contains not a single fresh, arresting phrase, and in spite of its ninety syllables it gives only a shortened version of the meaning contained in the first. Yet without a doubt it is the second kind of

sentence that is gaining ground in modern English. I do not want to exaggerate. This kind of writing is not yet universal, and outcrops of simplicity will occur here and there in the worst-written page. Still, if you or I were told to write a few lines on the uncertainty of human fortunes, we should probably come much nearer to my imaginary sentence than to the one from Ecclesiastes.

As I have tried to show, modern writing at its worst does not consist in picking out words for the sake of their meaning and inventing images in order to make the meaning clearer. It consists in gumming together long strips of words which have already been set in order by someone else, and making the results presentable by sheer humbug. The attraction of this way of writing is that it is easy. It is easier — even quicker, once you have the habit — to say In my opinion it is not an unjustifiable assumption that than to say I think. If you use ready-made phrases, you not only don't have to hunt about for the words; you also don't have to bother with the rhythms of your sentences since these phrases are generally so arranged as to be more or less euphonious. When you are composing in a hurry — when you are dictating to a stenographer, for instance, or making a public speech — it is natural to fall into a pretentious, Latinized style. Tags like a consideration which we should do well to bear in mind or a conclusion to which all of us would readily assent will save many a sentence from coming down with a bump. By using stale metaphors, similes, and idioms, you save much mental effort, at the cost of leaving your meaning vague, not only for your reader but for yourself. This is the significance of mixed metaphors. The sole aim of a metaphor is to call up a visual image. When these images clash — as in The Fascist octopus has sung its swan song, the jackboot is thrown into the melting pot — it can be taken as certain that the writer is not seeing a mental image of the objects he is naming; in other words he is not really thinking. Look again at the examples I gave at the beginning of this essay. Professor Laski (1) uses five negatives in fifty three words. One of these is superfluous, making nonsense of the whole passage, and in addition there is the slip — alien for akin — making further nonsense, and several avoidable pieces of clumsiness which increase the general vagueness. Professor Hogben (2) plays ducks and drakes with a battery which is able to write prescriptions, and, while disapproving of the everyday phrase put up with, is unwilling to look egregious up in the dictionary and see what it means; (3), if one takes an uncharitable attitude towards it, is simply meaningless: probably one could work out its intended meaning by reading the whole of the article in which it occurs. In (4), the writer knows more or less what he wants to say, but an accumulation of stale

phrases chokes him like tea leaves blocking a sink. In (5), words and meaning have almost parted company. People who write in this manner usually have a general emotional meaning — they dislike one thing and want to express solidarity with another — but they are not interested in the detail of what they are saying. A scrupulous writer, in every sentence that he writes, will ask himself at least four questions, thus: What am I trying to say? What words will express it? What image or idiom will make it clearer? Is this image fresh enough to have an effect? And he will probably ask himself two more: Could I put it more shortly? Have I said anything that is avoidably ugly? But you are not obliged to go to all this trouble. You can shirk it by simply throwing your mind open and letting the ready-

10 made phrases come crowding in. The will construct your sentences for you — even think your thoughts for you, to a certain extent — and at need they will perform the important service of partially concealing your meaning even from yourself. It is at this point that the special connection between politics and the debasement of language becomes clear.

In our time it is broadly true that political writing is bad writing. Where it is not true, it will generally be found that the writer is some kind of rebel, expressing his private opinions and not a ‘party line’. Orthodoxy, of whatever colour, seems to demand a lifeless, imitative style. The political dialects to be found in pamphlets, leading articles, manifestos, White papers and the speeches of undersecretaries do, of course, vary from party to party, but they are all alike in that one almost never finds in them a fresh, vivid, homemade turn

20 of speech. When one watches some tired hack on the platform mechanically repeating the familiar phrases — bestial, atrocities, iron heel, bloodstained tyranny, free peoples of the world, stand shoulder to shoulder — one often has a curious feeling that one is not watching a live human being but some kind of dummy: a feeling which suddenly becomes stronger at moments when the light catches the speaker’s spectacles and turns them into blank discs which seem to have no eyes behind them. And this is not altogether fanciful. A speaker who uses that kind of phraseology has gone some distance toward turning himself into a machine. The appropriate noises are coming out of his larynx, but his brain is not involved, as it would be if he were choosing his words for himself. If the speech he is making is one that he is accustomed to make over and over again, he may be almost

30 unconscious of what he is saying, as one is when one utters the responses in church. And this reduced state of consciousness, if not indispensable, is at any rate favourable to political conformity.

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of the political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called transfer of population or rectification of frontiers. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called elimination of unreliable elements. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them. Consider for instance some comfortable English professor defending Russian totalitarianism. He cannot say outright, 'I believe in killing off your opponents when you can get good results by doing so'. Probably, therefore, he will say something like this:

'While freely conceding that the Soviet regime exhibits certain features which the humanitarian may be inclined to deplore, we must, I think, agree that a certain curtailment of the right to political opposition is an unavoidable concomitant of transitional periods, and that the rigors which the Russian people have been called upon to undergo have been amply justified in the sphere of concrete achievement.'

The inflated style itself is a kind of euphemism. A mass of Latin words falls upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outline and covering up all the details. The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish spurting out ink. In our age there is no such thing as 'keeping out of politics'. All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred, and schizophrenia. When the general atmosphere is bad, language must suffer. I should expect to find — this is a guess which I have not sufficient knowledge to verify — that the German, Russian and Italian languages have all deteriorated in the last ten or fifteen years, as a result of dictatorship.

But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation even among people who should and do know better. The

debased language that I have been discussing is in some ways very convenient. Phrases like a not unjustifiable assumption, leaves much to be desired, would serve no good purpose, a consideration which we should do well to bear in mind, are a continuous temptation, a packet of aspirins always at one's elbow. Look back through this essay, and for certain you will find that I have again and again committed the very faults I am protesting against. By this morning's post I have received a pamphlet dealing with conditions in Germany. The author tells me that he 'felt impelled' to write it. I open it at random, and here is almost the first sentence I see: '[The Allies] have an opportunity not only of achieving a radical transformation of Germany's social and political structure in such a way as to avoid a nationalistic reaction in Germany itself, but at the same time of laying the foundations of a co-operative and unified Europe.' You see, he 'feels impelled' to write — feels, presumably, that he has something new to say — and yet his words, like cavalry horses answering the bugle, group themselves automatically into the familiar dreary pattern. This invasion of one's mind by ready-made phrases (lay the foundations, achieve a radical transformation) can only be prevented if one is constantly on guard against them, and every such phrase anaesthetizes a portion of one's brain.

I said earlier that the decadence of our language is probably curable. Those who deny this would argue, if they produced an argument at all, that language merely reflects existing social conditions, and that we cannot influence its development by any direct tinkering with words and constructions. So far as the general tone or spirit of a language goes, this may be true, but it is not true in detail. Silly words and expressions have often disappeared, not through any evolutionary process but owing to the conscious action of a minority. Two recent examples were explore every avenue and leave no stone unturned, which were killed by the jeers of a few journalists. There is a long list of flyblown metaphors which could similarly be got rid of if enough people would interest themselves in the job; and it should also be possible to laugh the not un-formation out of existence,⁴¹ to reduce the amount of Latin and Greek in the average sentence, to drive out foreign phrases and strayed scientific words, and, in general, to make pretentiousness unfashionable. But all these are minor points. The defence of the English language implies more than this, and perhaps it is best to start by saying what it does not imply.

⁴¹ One can cure oneself of the not un-formation by memorizing this sentence: A not unblack dog was chasing a not unsmall rabbit across a not ungreen field. [Orwell's Note.]

To begin with it has nothing to do with archaism, with the salvaging of obsolete words and turns of speech, or with the setting up of a ‘standard English’ which must never be departed from. On the contrary, it is especially concerned with the scrapping of every word or idiom which has outworn its usefulness. It has nothing to do with correct grammar and syntax, which are of no importance so long as one makes one’s meaning clear, or with the avoidance of Americanisms, or with having what is called a ‘good prose style’. On the other hand, it is not concerned with fake simplicity and the attempt to make written English colloquial. Nor does it even imply in every case preferring the Saxon word to the Latin one, though it does imply using the fewest and shortest words that will cover one’s meaning. What is above all needed is to let the meaning choose the word, and not the other way around. In prose, the worst thing one can do with words is surrender to them. When you think of a concrete object, you think wordlessly, and then, if you want to describe the thing you have been visualising you probably hunt about until you find the exact words that seem to fit it. When you think of something abstract you are more inclined to use words from the start, and unless you make a conscious effort to prevent it, the existing dialect will come rushing in and do the job for you, at the expense of blurring or even changing your meaning. Probably it is better to put off using words as long as possible and get one’s meaning as clear as one can through pictures and sensations. Afterward one can choose — not simply accept — the phrases that will best cover the meaning, and then switch round and decide what impressions one’s words are likely to make on another person. This last effort of the mind cuts out all stale or mixed images, all prefabricated phrases, needless repetitions, and humbug and vagueness generally. But one can often be in doubt about the effect of a word or a phrase, and one needs rules that one can rely on when instinct fails. I think the following rules will cover most cases:

- i. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
- ii. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
- iii. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
- iv. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
- 30 iv. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
- v. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

These rules sound elementary, and so they are, but they demand a deep change of attitude in anyone who has grown used to writing in the style now fashionable. One could keep all of them and still write bad English, but one could not write the kind of stuff that I quoted in those five specimens at the beginning of this article.

I have not here been considering the literary use of language, but merely language as an instrument for expressing and not for concealing or preventing thought. Stuart Chase and others have come near to claiming that all abstract words are meaningless, and have used this as a pretext for advocating a kind of political quietism. Since you don't know what Fascism is, how can you struggle against Fascism? One need not swallow such
10 absurdities as this, but one ought to recognise that the present political chaos is connected with the decay of language, and that one can probably bring about some improvement by starting at the verbal end. If you simplify your English, you are freed from the worst follies of orthodoxy. You cannot speak any of the necessary dialects, and when you make a stupid remark its stupidity will be obvious, even to yourself. Political language — and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists — is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind. One cannot change this all in a moment, but one can at least change one's own habits, and from time to time one can even, if one jeers loudly enough, send some
20 worn-out and useless phrase — some jackboot, Achilles' heel, hotbed, melting pot, acid test, veritable inferno, or other lump of verbal refuse — into the dustbin where it belongs.

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Collier's Weekly cover from 1938.

The Third Winter

Martha Gellhorn

November 1938

In Barcelona, it was perfect bombing weather. The cafes along the Ramblas were crowded. There was nothing much to drink; a sweet fizzy poison called orangeade and a horrible liquid supposed to be sherry. There was, of course, nothing to eat. Everyone was out enjoying the cold afternoon sunlight. No bombers had come over for at least two hours.

The flower stalls looked bright and pretty along the promenade. ‘The flowers are all sold, *Señores*. For the funerals of those who were killed in the eleven o’clock bombing, poor souls.’

It had been clear and cold all day yesterday and probably would be fair from now on. ‘What beautiful weather,’ a woman said, and she stood, holding her shawl around her, 10 staring at the sky. ‘And the nights are as fine as the days. A catastrophe,’ she said, and walked with her husband toward a cafe.

It was cold but really too lovely and everyone listened for the sirens all the time, and when we saw the bombers they were like tiny silver bullets moving forever up, across the sky.

It gets dark suddenly and no street lights are allowed in Barcelona, and at night the old town is rough going. It would be a silly end, I thought, to fall into a bomb hole, like the one I saw yesterday, that opens right down to the sewers. Everything you do in war is odd, I thought; why should I be plowing around after dark, looking for a carpenter in order to call for a picture frame for a friend? I found Hernández’s house in a back street and I held 20 my cigarette lighter above my head to see my way down the hall and up the stairs and then I was knocking on the door and old Mrs Hernández opened the door and asked me to come in, to be welcome, her house was mine.

‘How are you?’ I said.

‘As you see,’ old Hernández said, and he pushed his cap back on his forehead and smiled, ‘alive.’

It wasn’t much of a home but they looked very handsome in it. A wick floating in a cup of oil lighted the place. There were four chairs and a big table and some shelves tacked on

the wall. The ten-year-old grandson was reading close to the burning wick. The daughter-in-law, the wife of their youngest son, played quietly with her baby in a corner. Old Mrs Hernández had been working over the stove, and the room was smoky. What they would have to eat would be greens, a mound of cabbage leaves the size of your fist, and some dry bread. The women start cooking greens long in advance because they want to get them soft at least. Boiled flavorless greens go down better if they are soft.

The picture frame was not ready, Hernández could not get the wood. Wood is for dugouts and trenches, bridges, railroad ties, to prop up bombed houses, to make artificial arms and legs, for coffins. He used to collect the fragments from destroyed houses, he said, not to work with, but for firewood, but now that is all saved for the hospitals. It was hard
10 to be a carpenter, there wasn't much wood or much work anymore.

'Not that it matters about me,' Hernández said, 'I am very old.'

The little boy had been listening. His grandmother kept looking at him, ready to silence him if he interrupted while his elders spoke.

'What do you do all day?' I said. 'I stand in the food line.'

'Miguel is a good boy,' Mrs Hernández said. 'He does what he can to help his old grandmother.'

'Do you like doing that?' I said.

'When they fight,' he said, laughing to himself, 'it is fun.' His grandmother looked
20 shocked. 'He does not understand,'

she said. 'He is only ten. The poor people—they are so hungry,

sometimes they quarrel among themselves, not knowing what they do.'

(They put up a sign on the shop door, and word flies through the neighborhood that you can get food today. Then the lines form. Sometimes they are five blocks long. Sometimes you wait all that time but just before your turn comes the shop closes. There is no more food. The women wait in line and talk or knit, the children invent games that they can play standing in one place. Everyone is very thin. They know perfectly, by the sound of the first
30 explosion, where the bombs are falling. If the first bomb sounds hollow and muffled, they do not move from their places, because they know there is no immediate danger. If they can hear the drone of the planes too clearly or the first explosion is jagged and harsh, they scatter for doorways or refuges. They do this professionally, like soldiers.

The pinched women file into the shop and hand their food cards over the high bare

counter. The girls behind the counter look healthy because they are wearing rouge. Then the food is doled out in little gray paper sacks. A sack the size of a cigarette package, full of rice: that will have to do two people for two weeks. A sack half that big, full of dried peas: for one person for two weeks. Wait, there's some codfish too. The girl behind the counter pulls out a slab of the gray-white flat fish and cuts off a little piece with a pair of scissors. She cuts it with scissors, not a knife, because scissors are more accurate. A piece as long as your finger and twice as thick is the ration for one person for two weeks. The woman with gray hair and a gray frozen face and exhausted eyes reaches out to get her piece of fish. She holds it a minute in her hand, looking at it. They all look at it, and say

10 nothing. Then she turns and pushes her way through the crowd and out the door.

Now she will wait every day to hear whether the store in her neighborhood is open again, whether you can trade anything, whether a farmer she knows is coming to town with a dozen eggs and four cabbages and some potatoes. Whether somewhere, somehow, she can get food for her family. Sometimes when the shop runs out of food before everyone is served, the women are wild with grief, afraid to go home with nothing. Then there's trouble. The little boys don't understand the trouble, all they know is that a quarrel brightens the long hours of waiting.)

20 'You don't go to school?' I said. 'Not now.'

'He did very well at school,' his grandmother said.

'I want to be a mechanic,' the child said, in a voice that was almost weeping. 'I want to be a mechanic.'

'We do not let him go to school,' Mrs Hernández said, stroking the child's black head. 'Because of the bombs. We cannot have him walking about alone.'

'The bombs,' I said, and smiled at the boy. 'What do you do about the bombs?'

'I hide,' he said, and he was shy about it, telling me a secret. 'I hide so they won't kill me.'

'Where do you hide?' 'Under the bed,' he said.

30 The daughter-in-law, who is very young, laughed at this, but the old people treated the child seriously. They know that you must have safety in something; if the child believes he is safe under the bed it is better for him.

'When will the war end?' the daughter-in-law asked suddenly.

'Now, now,' said the old man. 'It will end when we have won it. You know that, Lola.'

Have patience and do not be silly.’ ‘I have not seen my husband for five months,’ the girl explained, as if this were the very worst thing that could ever happen to anyone. Old Mrs Hernández nodded her head, which was like a fine worn wood carving, and made a little sympathetic noise.

‘You understand, Senora,’ Mr Hernández said to me, ‘I am so old that perhaps I shall not live to see the end of the war. Things do not make any difference to me any longer. But it will be better for the children afterward. That is what I tell Lola. Spain will be

better for her and Federico afterward. Besides,’ he said, ‘Federico is learning a great deal in the Army.’

10

(The Internationals had left the lines and were waiting to go home, or were already gone.⁴² There was a parade for them, down the Diagonal, and women threw flowers and wept, and all the Spanish people thanked them somehow, sometimes only by the way they watched the parade passing. The Internationals looked very dirty and weary and young, and many of them had no country to go back to. The German and Italian anti-fascists were already refugees; the Hungarians had no home either. Leaving Spain, for most of the European volunteers, was to go into exile. I wonder what happened to the German who was the best man for night patrols in the 11th International Brigade. He was a somber man, whose teeth were irregularly broken, whose fingertips were nailless pulp; the first graduate of Gestapo torture I had known.

20

The Spanish Republican Army, which had been growing and shaping itself through two winters, now dug in for the third winter of war. They were proud and self-confident soldiers. They had started out as militia companies, citizens carrying any sort of rifle, and had become an army and looked like an army and acted like one.

They were always a pleasure to see and often a surprise. On a clear night, coming back very tired from the Segre front, we stopped at divisional headquarters to look at maps and get some dinner too, if lucky. We were received by the Lieutenant Colonel, who commanded ten thousand men: He was twenty-six years old and had been an electrician at

⁴² In September 1938 the Republican government of Spain, no doubt hoping to shame Franco into a similar gesture, withdrew the International Brigade from the fronts. Four of Mussolini’s Italian divisions stayed and fought for Franco until the end of the war. Hitler’s artillerymen and pilots also remained. Italian planes were bombing Barcelona when this article was written.

Lerida. He was blond and looked American and he had grown up with the war. The chief of operations was twenty-three and a former medical student from Galicia. The chief of staff was twenty-seven, a lawyer, a Madrid aristocrat who spoke good French and English. Modesto, commanding the Army of the Ebro and a great soldier, was thirty-five. All the new corps commanders were in their late twenties and early thirties. Everybody you saw knew what he was doing and why; it was a cheerful army. The winter is the worst time of all in war and the third winter is long, cold and desperate; but you couldn't feel sorry for that army.)

10

'Both my boys are soldiers,' Mrs Hernández said. 'Miguel's father is the oldest, Tomas, he is at Tortosa; and Federico is up toward Lerida somewhere. Tomas was here only last week.'

'What did he say of the war?' I asked.

'We do not speak of the war,' she said. 'He says to me, "You are like all the other mothers in Spain. You must be brave like all the others." And sometimes he speaks of the dead.'

'Yes?'

'He said, "I have seen many dead." He says that so I will understand, but we do not speak of the war. My sons are always close to the bombs,' she said in her blurred old voice.

20

'If my children are in danger, it is not well that I should be safe.'

The girl Lola had started to sing to her child, to keep it quiet, and now she brought the baby over near the lighted wick, for me to see. She turned down a grayish blanket showing the child's head and sang, pretty little child, my pretty little girl.'

The face seemed shrunken and faded, and bluish eyelids rested lightly shut on the eyes. The child was too weak to cry. It fretted softly, with closed eyes, and we all watched it, and suddenly Lola pulled the cover back over the bundle in her arms and said, coldly and proudly, 'She does not have the right food to eat and therefore she is not well. But she is a fine child.'

30

(The hospital was huge and ornate, the way all modern buildings are in Catalonia. This one was built of orange bricks and was a real horror to look at. It was new and well equipped and had a garden. The buildings, called pavilions, were placed around this garden. The children's pavilion was off to the right and we followed a lanky, quiet boy who was showing

us the way. I did not want to come, really. I knew the statistics, the statistics were enough for me: In Catalonia alone, there were approximately 870,000 children up to school age. Of these, the statistics announced, more than a hundred thousand suffered from bad nutrition, more than two hundred thousand suffered from under-nourishment, more than a hundred thousand were in a state of pre-famine. I thought the statistics were no doubt mild, and I did not want to think at all about Madrid, about the swift dark laughing children in Madrid. I did not want to imagine how hunger had deformed them.

There were two great wards, the surgical ward and the medical ward, and it was almost supertime and the surgical ward was brightly lit. Small beds lined the walls. It was very
10 cold, between the stone floors and the plaster walls; there is no heat anywhere. The children looked like toys until you came closer- tiny white figures propped up with pillows, swathed in bandages, the little pale faces showing, the great black eyes staring at you, the small hands playing over the sheets. There was not one child in the hospital for any peacetime reason, tonsils or adenoids or mastoid or appendicitis. These children were all wounded.

A little boy named Paco sat up in his bed with great dignity. He was four and beautiful and had a bad head wound. He had been crossing a square to meet a little girl on the other side--he played with her in the afternoons. Then a bomb fell. Many people were killed and he was wounded in the head. He had gone through his pain quietly, the nurse said. The
20 wound was five months old. He had always been patient with it, and as the months wore on he grew solemn and more elderly every day. Sometimes he cried to himself, but without making a sound, and if anyone noticed he tried to stop. We stood by his bed and he watched us gravely but he did not want to talk.

I asked if they had anything to play with and the nurse said, 'Well, little things, not much. No, not really, she said. Just once in a while someone brings a present for one of them'. A jolly little girl, with pigtails and only one leg, was having a nice time making paper balls out of an old newspaper.

There were three little boys with shaved heads and various splints on them; one of them had his leg held up on a rope from the ceiling. They lived in a corner by themselves; they were not only wounded, but they had tuberculosis. The nurse said they had fever and that
30 made them gay, particularly at this hour. They would not live, she didn't think they would live even if there was food to give them, or a sanatorium to send them to. The sanatoriums were all full. Anyhow, they were too far gone. It works very fast on them, the nurse said. The little boys had a sort of Meccano toy, it was on the bed of the boy who had a broken arm. A bomb fragment broke his arm, the nurse said; he did not suffer as much as some

but he used to scream at night. The other two were now shouting instructions to their friend, how to play with the toy. They were building a bridge. When we stopped beside them, they grew shy and gave up their game. All the children were the color of their pillows except the little ones with TB, who looked quite rosy. They were unbelievably thin.

‘No,’ the nurse said, almost impatiently, as if it hurt and angered her to talk about it. ‘Of course we haven’t enough food to give them. What do you think? If only they didn’t bomb all the time,’ she said, ‘it would help. When the children hear the siren they go crazy, they try to get out of their beds and run. We are only four nurses in these two rooms and we have a hard time with them. At night it is worse. They all remember what happened to them and they go crazy.’

Three blue lights were burning and the ward was in shadow. We went into the second room. A little boy was crying noisily and the other children were listening to him, frightened by his grief. The nurse explained that he had been wounded today, in one of the morning raids, and of course he was in pain but mainly he was homesick. He wanted his mother. He was also hungry. We stood by his bed helplessly and promised to bring him some food tomorrow if only he would stop crying and we promised that his mother would come right away, only please stop crying. He twisted on the bed and sobbed for his mother. Then she came. She was a dark witch of a woman, outdone by life. Her hair straggled from a knot on top of her head, and her bedroom slippers were worn through and her coat was pinned together with two safety pins. She looked gaunt and a little mad and her voice was as harsh as stone scraping on stone. She sat on the bed [we had been careful not to touch the bed, not to move or shake the small aching wounded child] and talked to him in her shrill voice, telling him of the family’s catastrophes.

‘Their house had been destroyed by the bomb that wounded him, though he was the only one hurt.’ But now they had no home, no furniture, nothing to cook with, no blankets, no place to go. She told the round-eyed child the story of woe and he listened with interest and sympathy and wasn’t homesick anymore. Then she took a pot from some pocket, it materialized like a rabbit from a hat, and gave it to the child, and said, ‘Here, eat.’ He began to scoop up cold rice from the pot, just cold rice boiled in water. He ate it, his face close to the pot, spilling a little on the bedclothes and stopping only to collect the grayish rice grains with his fingers. He seemed happy then and at home. His mother was now talking with another woman, in her hard tormented voice, and presently the little boy went to sleep.

‘Would you like to see the medical ward?’ the tall lanky boy said.

'Well,' I said. Well, no, I thought. 'I like the children.'

So we went.

The children sat up in bed, silent and waiting. We stepped aside to let the dinner wagon pass. It made a metal clanking sound on the floor, and I watched their eyes follow the wagon down the ward. There was the seven-months-old baby with tuberculosis who did not notice and there was another child, like an old-faced doll against the pillows, who turned away her head. On the wagon were four lumps of something green and cooked, four shrunken lettuces, I think, and a great cauldron of soup. The nurse went over to the cauldron and lifted a ladleful and let it spill back into the pot. It was clear pale-beige water.

10 That was supper. 'The children cry for food most of the time,' she said, looking at the thin soup with hate.

'What is the matter with them?' I asked. She evidently thought I was not very sound in the head.

'There are only two things the matter with them. Tuberculosis and rickets.'

The old-faced doll reached out a tiny white hand. I walked over to her and her hand curled around my fingers and she smiled. She was, the nurse said, seventeen months old and her name was Manuela.

Manuela let go my fingers and began to cry. Had I done something bad? 'Only hungry,' the nurse said. She picked the child up, lightly and gently, and tossed it in her arms. The
20 child laughed aloud with pleasure at this lovely game. As the nurse held her you saw the rope-thin legs and the swollen stomach of rickets.

'Will she be all right?' I said.

'Certainly,' the nurse said and she was lying, you could see that in her face. 'Certainly she'll get well. She has to. Somehow.')

'Yes, she's a fine child,' I said to Lola Hernández, but I thought, Maybe we can stop looking at the child, when we all know she's sick with hunger and probably will not live until
30 summer. Let's talk about something else, now, just for a change.

'Have you been to the opera?' I said to Lola.

'I went once,' she said, 'but I do not like to go. All the time I was there, I kept thinking, What if this minute my husband is wounded, or what if he is coming home on leave? I almost thought he had come home and then I would have missed an hour with him. So

now I stay home.’

‘We all stay home,’ the old man said, ‘I like the house. We have been here for twenty-five years.’

‘Do you go often?’ Lola asked. ‘I’ve been,’ I said. ‘It’s wonderful.’

(The opera is not as funny as the movies, though the people of Barcelona don’t think the movies are funny. But you can’t help laughing when you go to see *Jane Eyre*, and it is all about a life that none of the audience ever knew or imagined, and then in the middle the
 10 film flickers off and you hear the bombs falling somewhere, while the audience groans with irritation, knowing it will take half an hour before the current comes on again, and they are dying to see what happens to Jane and her handsome gentleman friend, and they are fascinated by the madwoman and the burning house. I particularly liked the Westerns, and seeing the horse stopped in mid leap for an air alarm, knowing that the dangerous activities of the hero and his horse were much more thrilling to the audience than a mere covey of bombers flying at a great safe height and sending down indiscriminate, expensive steel-encased death and destruction.

It costs about two pesetas for the best seats at any show, and nobody earns less than ten pesetas a day. The only thing you want to spend money on is food, and there is no
 20 food, so you might as well go to the opera or to the movies. It would be very stupid to save up to buy furniture, the way the city gets bombed. Besides, it’s warm inside the big over decorated theaters, because there are so many people, and it’s friendly, and sitting there with something to look at on the stage you forget for a while that you aren’t really safe, you aren’t really safe at all. And also you might even forget how hungry you are.

But the opera was a wonder. Some afternoons there was opera and some afternoons there was the symphony orchestra. The people of Barcelona crowded to both. The opera house was far too near the port for comfort, and bombs had ruined much of the neighborhood. It was surprising that the singers had energy to sing, considering how little they eat. It was surprising to see such thin singers. The women were any age at all, wearing
 30 the pre-war costumes, a little mussed now but still brilliant and romantic. All the men were old. The young men were at the war. The opera house was full every day and everyone enjoyed the music immensely, and roared with laughter at the stale formal opera jokes, and sighed audibly at the amorous moments and shouted ‘Ole!’ at each curtain. We used to sit and scratch, because everyone had fleas this winter, there was no soap any more and

everyone was very dirty and malodorous indeed. But we loved the music and loved not thinking about the war.)

The Hernándezes' only daughter now came home from her job, and there was much loud gay talk as if they had not seen each other for weeks, with everyone reporting on the day's air raids. She wore her dark hair in braids around her head and was glowing with rouge, and quite well dressed. She earned plenty of money because she worked in a munitions factory.

10

(You never know exactly where the munitions factories are, and are not intended to know. We drove over many streets I had not seen before and stopped before a great grille gateway, some- where at the edge of town. The factory looked like a series of cement barns, not connected particularly, and shining and clean and cheerful in the winter sun. We walked across the courtyard and into the first open door. The woman in charge of this room came forward; she had a nice smile and was timid and behaved as if I had come to tea unexpectedly.

The women were working at long tables, heaped with shining black squares and oblongs, they looked like trays full of sequins. There were other trays full of shining little leads, like short fillers for an automatic pencil. The woman picked up a handful of the sequins and let them slip through her hands. 'They're pretty, aren't they?' she said.

'Very pretty,' I said, mystified. 'What are they?'

'Powder,' she said, 'explosive. What makes the shells go off.'

At the other end of the room women worked at sewing machines, the old-fashioned kind that you pump with your feet. There was cloth for summer dresses, a lovely pink linen, a nice gray-and-white stripe that would have made handsome shirts, a

. thick white silk for a bridal gown. They were sewing little bags, and bigger bags, like sacks for sachet. A girl came around and collected them and took them to the front of the room where they were filled with the explosives that looked like sequins. Then the little pink sachet bag of sequins was dropped into a shell base.

30

Other women carefully and daintily glued together tiny cellophane horseshoes; in these horseshoes was black powder, and this skilled elegant work served to make a mortar the thing it is.

Two barns farther down were the great guns, home for repair. The place looked like a museum full of prehistoric animals, huge gray strangely shaped animals come to rest in this smoky room. Men worked beside each gun, with a little fire to heat the tools and for keeping warm. The room twinkled with light from the charcoal burners. The guns all wore their small name tags: Vickers Armstrong, Schneider, Skoda. We had seen them and watched them being fired day after day and month after month at the front. The grooved rifling inside the barrels had been worn smooth from the many thousand rounds they had fired, and the barrels were being rebored. There were few guns in Republican Spain now that had the same caliber they started with, and with each reboring the size of the shells had to be changed.

‘Would you like to see the shells?’ the foreman asked. He was obviously proud of them.

He led me out in the sun and around two buildings and then into a vast storeroom. Used shell cases the color of old gold were stacked neatly against one wall; they would be hammered into shape and used again. In the center of the building and against the right wall the new shells were piled in squares and oblongs and pyramids; they were painted black and yellow. There were 75s looking neat and not really harmful at all. And there were the tall shells, the 155s, that frighten one more when they are coming in.

We admired the shells and at this moment, like a dream or a nightmare or a joke, the siren whined out over Barcelona. I think that one of the worst features of an air raid is the siren.

The howling whining whistle rises and screams and wails over the city, and almost at once you hear somewhere, the deep hud-boom of the bombs. I looked at my companion and he looked at me and smiled (I thinking, foolishly, never forget your manners, walk do not run) and we sauntered out of doors. I could not see the planes but I heard them; on a clear day they fly high for safety, so you rarely see them. I thought, anyhow, in case bomb falls around here we won’t even know it.

‘What do the workers do?’ I said. ‘Nothing,’ he said. ‘They wait.’

The planes now showed themselves clear and silver just a little way down the sky, the sky dotted with a few small white smoke bubbles from anti-aircraft shells. The men came out of the factory and walked across the courtyard and leaned against a wall where they could get a better view, and smoked. Some played an innocent game, pitching a coin. The women dragged out empty packing cases, in which bullets_ would be shipped later, and sat down in the sunshine and started knitting. They did not bother to look up. Everyone knew that the electricity was turned off for half an hour, so tl1ere would be no more work for a

time. They knitted and gossiped, and watching the sky I saw the silver planes wheel and circle and fly back out to sea.

They all like working in a munitions factory because they get two rolls of bread each day as a bonus.)

'I must leave,' I said. 'Please forgive me for staying so long. Good- bye, Miguel, after the war you'll be a mechanic.'

'After we have won the war,' old Mrs Hernández corrected me. 'We will invite you to come here and eat a big supper with us.'

10 They were all delighted, delighted with winning the war and delighted with eating a big supper.

'You will see Federico too,' Lola said.

'Yes,' I said, 'that will be a great pleasure. Goodbye, good- bye,' I said, shaking hands all around, 'and many thanks.'

We were standing up now, and looking at them I suddenly said, 'The third winter is the hardest.'

Then I felt ashamed. They were strong brave people and didn't need me to say cheering words for them.

'We are all right, Señora,' Mrs Hernández said, making it clear at once, saying the last word in her home about her family. 'We are Spaniards and we have faith in our Republic.'

The Gothic Line

Martha Gellhorn

September 1944

The Gothic Line, from where stood, was a smashed village, an asphalt road and a pinkish-brown hill. On a dusty mined lane leading up to the village, the road and the hill, the Canadian infantry was waiting to attack. They stood single file, spaced well apart, and did not speak and their faces said nothing either. The noise of our artillery firing from the hills behind us never stopped.

No one listened to it. Everyone listened to sudden woodpecker beats of German machine-gun fire ahead, and everyone looked to the sky on the left, where German airbursts made dark loose small clouds.

10 In front of us a bulldozer was working as bulldozers do, according to their own laws and in a world of their own. This machine was trying to fill in a portion of the deep antitank ditch which the Germans had dug along the entire face of the Gothic Line. The bulldozer now scraped up two mines in its wide steel shovel; the mines exploded, the bulldozer shook a little, and the driver removed his tropical helmet and cursed the situation. An infantry officer shouted something to him and he swerved his big machine, leaving two feet cleared between the side of his shovel and the mined side of the lane. Through this gap the infantry now passed. Each man seemed very alone, walking slowly and steadily toward the hills he could not see, and to whatever peril those hills would offer.

20 The great Gothic Line, which the Germans have used as a threat ever since the Hitler Line was broken, would under normal circumstances be a lovely range of the Apennines. In this clear and dreaming weather that is the end of summer, the hills curve up into a water-blue sky; in the hot windless night you see the hills only as a soft rounded darkness under the moon. Along the Via Emilia, the road that borders the base of these hills, the Germans dynamited every village into shapeless brick rubble so that they could have a clear line of fire. In front of the flattened villages they dug their long canal to trap tanks. In front of the tank trap they cut all the trees. Among the felled trees and in the gravel bed and low water of the Foglia River, they laid down barbed wire and they sowed their never-ending mines: the crude little wooden boxes, the small rusty tin cans, the flat metal pancakes which are the simplest and deadliest

weapo11S in Italy.

30 On the range of hills that is the actual Gothic Line the Germans built concealed concrete machine-gun pillboxes which encircle the hills and dominate all approaches. They sank the turrets of tanks, with their long thin snout-ended 88mm guns, in camouflaged pits, so that nothing on wheels or tracks could pass their way. They mined some more. Using as a basis the handiwork of nature, they turned the beautiful hills into a mountain trap four miles deep, where every foot of our advance could be met with concentrated fire.

And it is awful to die at the end of summer when you are young and have fought a long time and when you remember with all your heart your home and whom you love, and when YQ...U know that the war is won anyhow. It is awful and one would have to be a liar or a fool not to see this and not to feel it like a misery, so that these days every man dead is a greater sorrow because the end of all this tragic dying seems so near.

40 The Canadians broke the Gothic Line by finding a soft place and going through. It makes me ashamed to write that sentence because there is no soft space where there are mines and no soft space where there are Spandaus and no soft space where there are long 88mm guns, and if you have seen one tank burn with its crew shut inside it you will never believe that anything is soft again. But relatively speaking, this spot was soft or at any rate the Canadians made it soft, and they got across the mined river and past the dynamited villages and over the asphalt road and up into the hills, and from then on they poured men and tanks into the gap and they gouged the German positions with artillery fire and they called in the Desert Air Force to bomb, and in two days they had come out on the other side of the Gothic Line at the coast of the Adriatic. Before that, many things had happened.

50 First of all, the main body of the Eighth Army moved from the center of Italy to the Adriatic coast in three days' time, and the Germans did not know it. That sounds easy too, when written in one sentence. What it meant was that for three days and three nights the weaving lateral roads across the Apennines, and the great highways that make a deep V, south from Florence and back up to Ancona, were crowded with such traffic as most of us have never seen before. Trucks and armored cars and tanks and weapons carriers and guns and jeeps and motorcycles and ambulances packed the roads, and it was not at all unusual to spend four hours going twenty miles. The roads were ground to powder by this traffic and the dust lay in drifts a foot thick, and whenever you could get up a little speed the dust boiled like water under the wheels. Everyone's face was greenish white with dust, and it rose in a blinding fog around the moving
60 army and lay high over the land in a brown solid haze.

The road signs were fantastic too because more than one hundred thousand men, who could not speak Italian, were moving through complicated unknown country trying to find places which would never have been simple to find, even with roads and complete control of the language. The routes themselves, renamed for this operation, were marked with symbols of their names: a painted animal or a painted object. There were the code numbers of every outfit, road warnings (bridge blown, crater, mines, bad bends) indications of first-aid posts, gasoline dumps, repair stations, prisoner-of-war cages and a marvelous Polish sign urging the troops to notice that this was a malarial area; this sign was a large green death's-head with a mosquito sitting on it. Along the coast, road signs were in Polish and English and at one
70 crossroads a mine warning was printed in Polish; English and Hindu. And everywhere you saw the dirty white tapes that limit the safe ground from the treacherous ground where mines are still buried. On the main highways, there were signs saying 'Verges cleared; which means the sides of this road have been de-mined, or 'Verges checked,' which means the sides of this road have been rapidly swept, and you can suit yourself if you want to take a chance.

So, this enormous army ground its way across Italy and took up positions on a front thirteen miles long. The Eighth Army, which was now ready to attack the last German fortified line outside the Siegfried Line, had fought its way to these mountains from the Egyptian border. In two years, since Alamein, the Eighth Army had advanced across Africa through Sicily and up the peninsula of Italy. All these men, of how many races and nationalities, felt that this was
80 the last push and after this they would go home. They will one day go home to Poland and Canada and South Africa and India and New Zealand and England and Scotland and Ireland, for there are all these nationalities in this army and you would have to speak several Indian dialects and French Canadian and Polish and whatever is spoken by the Negroes of Basutoland, as well as every available accent English, to be perfectly understood in the Eighth Army. What IS so comic and amazing and wonderful is how this huge hodgepodge of humanity gets on. The long trek they have done together and the sandstorms of the desert and the mud of the Italian winter and the danger and the dying and the lonely years have made them very neighborly men.

We watched the battle for the Gothic line from a hill opposite, sitting in a patch of thistles
90 and staring through binoculars. Our tanks looked like brown beetles; they scurried up a hill, streamed across the horizon and dipped out of sight. Suddenly a tank flamed four times in great flames, and other tanks rolled down from the skyline, seeking cover in the folds of the hill. The Desert Air Force cab rank, the six planes which cavort around the sky, like a school

of minnows, was signaled to bomb a loaf-shaped hill, called Monte Lura. Monte Lura went up in towering waves of brownish smoke and dirt. Our artillery dug into the Gothic Line, so that everywhere cotton balls of smoke flowered on the slopes. Our own airbursts now rained steel fragments over the German positions on Monte Lura. The young British major who was directing this artillery through a radiophone said, 'I must say, I do think our airbursts are doing very nicely.' The battle, looking absolutely unreal, tiny, crystal-clear, spread out before us. But there were men in the tanks, and men under those trees where the shells landed, and men under those bombs. The noise was so exaggerated that nothing like it had been heard since the movies.

All that day and the next the noise of our own guns was physically painful. The Canadian brigadier commanding the brigade which was attacking this sector of the line amused us by outlining a postwar garden party he hoped to give. Supper would be served on a long wooden table covered with a soiled white cloth; the guests would sit on benches which had a tendency to tip over backward. In one corner of the garden a flat voice would start saying, 'I am now giving you a short tuning call, roger over, victory, victory, victory,' and would go on saying this uninterruptedly for the rest of the evening. In another corner of the garden, tractors would be organized to act like tanks and they would first race their motors, which is a sound like the end of the world, and then they would roll back and forth on screaming treads. In another corner of the garden, some sort of radio apparatus would imitate the sound effect of six-inch guns firing, and it is almost impossible to believe how appalling they sound. In another corner of the garden a dust machine, imported from Hollywood, would spray dust imported from the roads of Italy on to the guests. A waiter would then walk in and release a thousand flies at a time. The dinner would consist of a slab of cold bully beef as appetizer, followed by not very heated-up meat and beans, the staple canned ration of the British forces, and hardtack. For dessert there would be hardtack with jam. The tea would have been brewed that morning and would be coal-black and lukewarm, with drowned flies in it. If the guests behaved nicely and did not complain too much, they would be given, as a prize, a finger of issue rum, a drink guaranteed to burn out anyone's palate. This was a perfect picture of our own meal except that issue rum was lacking, and we laughed contentedly at the brigadier's mythical guests.

Later, but I don't remember when, because time became more and more confused, we crossed the Foglia River and drove up the road our tanks had taken, and there we saw the remnants of a tank battle. An American Sherman, once manned by an English crew, lay near a farmhouse; across the road a German Tiger tank was burned and its entire rear end had been

blown off. The Sherman had received an 88 shell through its turret. Inside the turret were plastered pieces of flesh and much blood. Outside the Tiger the body of a German lay, with straw covering every- thing except the two black clawlike hands, the swollen blood-caked head
130 and the twisted feet. He did not smell too much yet. Some Canadian soldiers, who were sightseeing stood around the dead German. It is remarkable how quickly soldiers start sight-seeing where they have fought, perhaps trying now to discover what really happened. 'Not much fresh meat on that guy,' one of them said.

You cannot note everything that happens during a battle, you cannot even see what happens, and often you cannot understand it. Suddenly you will see antlike figures of infantry outlined against the sky; probably they are going in to attack that cluster of farmhouses. Then they disappear, and you do not know what became of them. Tanks roll serenely across the crest of a hill, then the formation breaks, you lose most of them from sight, and then in what was a quiet valley you unexpectedly see other tanks firing from behind trees; on a road that
140 was quite empty and therefore dangerous, because nothing is more suspect at the front than the silent places, you see a jeep racing in the direction of a town which may or may not be in our hands. And when you imagine you have found a nice restful place to camp in for a few minutes, German mortar shells start landing.

A battle is a jigsaw puzzle of fighting men, bewildered-terrified civilians, noise, smells, jokes, pain, fear, unfinished conversations and high explosives. A medical captain in a ruined first-aid farmhouse speaks with regret of a Canadian padre who volunteered as a stretcher-bearer .to carry wounded men out of the mine fields in the riverbed. The padre lost both his legs, and though they rushed him out, he died at the first hospital. Bloody stretchers are stacked all around, and now a jeep arrives with fresh wounded. 'Come back and see us anytime,' the
150 medical captain says. 'Get some more wire splints, Joe.' A group of English tankists, drinking tea outside a smashed house on Monte Lura invite you into their mansion, which is mainly fallen beams and the rubble of masonry. The place stinks because of two dead oxen at the side of the road. One of the soldiers, who had his tank shot from under him that morning, is waiting for another job. He hopes the war will be over in time for him to celebrate his twenty-first birthday in England. A Canadian soldier lies dead on another roadside, with a coat spread lovingly over him. There are two captured 88mm guns with a welter of German paper around them, for apparently the Germans also are the slaves of paper. Amongst this paper is a postcard with a baby's picture on it, addressed presumably to one of the gunners from his wife. And no one feels the slightest pity. A young Italian woman, wrapped in a blanket, sits on the doorstep

160 of a poor little hovel that one of our shells had hit during the night; this was in a town the Germans held until a few hours ago. She wakes up and starts to laugh, charming, gay and absolutely mad.

Twelve parachutist prisoners, the crack troops of the Germans, stand in a courtyard guarded by the Canadians who captured them. They are all young and they wear the campaign medals of the Crimea, as well as the medal of Italy. These were the men who held Cassino all winter. You talk to them without any special feeling, and suddenly like a shock it occurs to you that they really look evil; the sadism which their General Kesselring ordered them to practice in Italy as they retreated shows now in their mouths and their eyes.

170 A fat old Italian in Cattolica, who had worked for twelve years on the Pennsylvania Railroad, was trundling his pitiful possessions home in a handcart. The Germans had occupied Cattolica for three months and had evacuated the citizens one month ago, and during this month they looted with horrid thoroughness, like woodworms eating down a house. What they did not wish to steal, they destroyed; the pathetic homes of the poor with smashed sewing machines and broken crockery and the coarse linen sheets and towels torn to shreds bear witness to their pointless cruelty. This old man was going home to a gutted house but he was a healthy happy old man, and he was overjoyed to see us and he invited me to visit him and his wife the next day. The next day his wife was dead, as the Germans came over that night and plastered the little town with anti-personnel bombs.

180 The Canadian troops which I had seen two days ago, going in to attack the Gothic Line, were now swimming in the Adriatic. The beaches were laced with barbed wire but holes had been cut through it and engineers appeared with the curious vacuum-cleaner-like mine detectors, to sweep the beach. The infantry, sunburned the color of expensive leather, beautifully strong, beautifully alive-, were bouncing around the flat warm sea and racing over the sand, as if there were nothing terrible behind them and nothing terrible to come. Meantime you could sit on the sand with a book and a drink of sweet Italian rum and watch two British destroyers shelling Rimini, just up the coast; see German shells landing on the front three kilometers away; follow a pilot in a slowly sinking parachute, after his plane had been shot down; hear a few German shells whistle overhead to land two hundred yards farther down; and you were getting a fine sunburn and life seemed an excellent invention.

190 Historians will think about this campaign far better than we can who have seen it. Historians will note that in the first year of the Italian campaign, in 365 days of steady fighting, the Allied armies advanced 315 miles. It is the first time in history that any armies have invaded Italy

from the south and fought up the endless mountain ranges toward the Alps. The historians will be able to explain with authority what it meant to break three fortified lines, attacking up mountains, and the historians will also describe how Italy became a giant mine field and that no weapon is uglier, for it waits in silence, small and secret, and it can kill any day, not only on the day of battle.

200 But all we know, we who are here, is that the Gothic Line is broken and that it is the last line. Soon our armored divisions will move on to the Lombardy plain and then at last the end of this long Italian campaign will become a fact, not a dream. The weather is lovely and no one wants to think of those who must still die and those who must still be wounded in the fighting before peace comes.

The Russians

Martha Gellhorn

April 1945

One Russian guard stood at the pontoon bridge on our side of the Elbe. He was small and shaggy and bright-eyed. He waved to us to stop and came over to the jeep and spoke Russian very fast, smiling all the time. Then he shook hands and said, 'Amerikanski?' He shook hands again and we saluted each other. A silence followed, during which we all smiled. I tried German, French, Spanish and English, in that order. We wanted to cross the Elbe to the Russian side and pay a visit to our allies. None of these languages worked. The Russians speak Russian. The GI driver then made a few remarks in Russian, which I found dazzling. 'You got to talk a little bit of everything to get around these days,' he said. The Russian guard had
10 listened and digested our request and he now answered. The operative word in his answer was: nyet. It is the only word in Russian I know, but you hear it a lot, and afterwards there is no use arguing.

So we drove back to the CP of a Russian officer, who perhaps controlled that bridge. Here we had another brilliant and enjoyable conversation, filled with handshakes, laughter and good will; the operative word again was nyet. It was suggested that I go to a building in Torgau, a little way farther back from the river, where I would find more of my compatriots who were

waiting for one thing or another. This was a square gray German house, outside of which were parked various jeeps and staff cars belonging to various American and English officers who were waiting to cross the Elbe on business. The situation seemed to be permanently *snafu*. The atmosphere was one of baffled but cordial resignation. Officers stood in the street and speculated on Russian time, which was either one or two hours earlier or later than ours. They asked themselves whether the Russian General who was due today (they thought), but who had actually arrived and departed yesterday, would possibly come tomorrow and if so at whose hour, ours or theirs. They said that it was pointless to try to telephone across the river because the telephone, which was located in the first Russian office I had visited, was in a purely experimental stage and anyhow you never got an answer to anything by telephone, if in the first place the telephone worked and you happened to reach anyone at the other end. They said, this is the way it is, chum, and you may as well get used to waiting because wait is what you do. You could cross the Elbe to the Russian side only if accompanied by a Russian officer who had come to get you to take you to a specific place for a specific purpose. There was no nonsense about walking across a few hundred yards of pontoon bridge and fraternizing with our allies. It was quite agreeable in the sun, and the street was interesting. Two Russian girl soldiers passed, and a Russian nurse wearing a pistol competently on her hip. A Russian soldier in a blue overall, with blue eyes to match, wandered up and said ‘Amerikanski?’ and shook everyone’s hand and was treated to a flood of GI jokes, to all of which he responded with smiles and the word ‘Russki.’ Then he said, ‘Na,’ with a little sigh, and shook hands all around again and went about his business. The morning wore on and obviously nothing was going to happen, so we drove through the Russian part of Torgau and across a bridge guarded by MPs, and went to the American Battalion Headquarters for lunch. There we found a very large jolly soiled Russian colonel and his interpreter, doing their best to cope with a plate of K rations. They were no more enthusiastic about K rations than we are, which proves them to be men of taste, but they did like the coffee. No one was looking very spick-and-span in Battalion Headquarters, since combat troops are too hurried and occupied to look spick-and-span and also there is usually no water in newly liberated towns. However, the Russians all looked as if they hadn’t had time for a bath since Stalingrad.

The colonel was delightful and had a handshake like the death squeeze of a grizzly bear, and through his interpreter he said he would take me across the Elbe tonight, as he was going back to his Division Headquarters, and he would call for me at five-thirty. After a certain amount of discussion we agreed on whose five-thirty that would be, his or ours, and everyone

50 was happy. At five-thirty he had not come and runners went out to search for him. At six-thirty I went back to the Russian part of Torgau and tracked him down.

He insisted that I come and eat with them; they were having a little snack. The little snack was a dream, consisting of hard-boiled eggs and three kinds of sausage and pickles and butter and honey and various wines, and I decided that the Russians had a more sensible approach to rationing than we have. It is old-fashioned but effective and saves a lot of trouble; you live off the land and any land can beat K rations. We began to talk about crossing the Elbe. It appeared that the Colonel had not understood my request; no, it would be impossible to go unless the General gave his permission. Then could he telephone to the General? What, now? Yes, now.

60 'Time is money,' said the interpreter.

'You are in such a hurry,' said the Colonel. 'We will talk this all over later.'

'You do not understand,' I said, 'I am a wage slave. I work for a bunch of capitalist ogres in New York who drive me night and day and give me no rest. I will be severely punished if I hang around here eating with you citizens, when it is my duty to my country to cross the Elbe and salute our gallant allies.'

They thought this was fine, but still nothing happened.

'Go on and call the General,' I said, trying the wheedle angle. 'What difference will it make to the General if one insignificant female correspondent pays him a visit?'

70 'Hokay,' said the Colonel, that being the one American word he knew. He went out to telephone the General, and more time passed.

There was another colonel and the interpreter, and between mouthfuls of hard-boiled eggs we had a splendid talk. We discussed the Germans and were in perfect agreement all along the line. We discussed the American Army and were in perfect agreement all along the line. I was told of the wonders of Russia, which I have never seen, and I was urged to visit the Crimea in the summer, since it is of surpassing beauty. I said I would. I was asked what I thought about the Russian Army. I said I would give anything to see it but in the meantime I thought it was wonderful, the whole world though it was wonderful. We had a few toasts. We toasted 'Treemann' for quite a while before I realized we were toasting the President; the way they said it, I imagined it was some crisp Russian term meaning bottoms up. Then the Colonel came
80 back. The operative word again was nyet. I do not think he had telephoned the General, but it was nyet anyhow.

The conversation had been purely gay and they are very gay, but all of a sudden it got

serious. We were talking about their medals. They do not wear ribbons, they wear the entire medal, officers and men alike, and the medals are worn on both sides of the chest and look terrific. There are handsome enamel decorations for killing Germans—I believe each decoration equals fifty dead Germans but I am not sure of this—and there are medals for individual heroism and for battles.

90 Out of the blue, the interpreter said, 'I am a Polish Jew. My father was shot by the Germans. Three months later my mother was put to death in a gas chamber. They came for my wife and she was still bandaged from an operation, she could not even stand up straight. They took her away to work and there was the child, four months old, left behind. They killed the child by striking it across the head with a pistol, but my wife did not know this. She got a little letter to me, that was more than four years ago, and said, "Do not wait for me, I will never come back, take the child and find him a mother and make a new life." She did not know the child was dead.' He brought from his pocket a Russian newspaper with pictures in it, such as you have all seen by now. These were taken at Lemberg and showed the horribly familiar but never endurable piles of dead and the mass hangings and the mutilated bodies of those who had been tortured. 'Lemberg was my home,' said the interpreter. 'When the Germans come crying to me, asking for this or asking for that, I show them these pictures and I say to them, "Look
100 first and then cry!"'

'Let us go out and walk,' said the Colonel. We must not be sad. We hate war and we would like to go home, for it is many years since we have been home, but we will kill Germans as long as they ask for it. Meanwhile it is a nice night, so we will go walking.'

Torgau in the evening was a picturesque place. From one building came the lovely sad sound of Russian singing, low and slow and mourning; from another building, a young man leaned out of a window and played a very fast bright tune on a harmonica. Rare-looking types wandered around the street; there is the greatest possible variety in the faces and uniforms of the Russian soldiery. There were blonds and Mongols and fierce-looking characters with nineteenth-century mustaches and children of about sixteen, and it felt like a vast encampment
110 of a nomad people, where everyone is eating around campfires, singing, playing cards and getting ready to roll into blankets and sleep. We heard a few stray shots and met a few stray drunks and no one paid the slightest attention. We passed a couple of burning houses which looked very pretty and a yard where a wealth of Torgau bicycles had been collected and stacked-and tomorrow no doubt more of the Russian Army would be mobile.

I said it was all charming, but how about getting across the Elbe? In two weeks, the Colonel

said, I am sure it will be arranged.

120 If there was anything I was sure of, it was that I wouldn't be waiting around Torgau for two weeks. It is a political question, said the interpreter, you are capitalists and we are Communists. I told them heatedly that I did not consider it any of my business whether they were Mormons, cannibals or balletomanes, the point being that we were allies and naturally we were interested in each other and each other's armies. No one, said I crossly, minded where they went; their correspondents moved freely with our Army and everyone was delighted to see them. If, on the other hand, they behaved in this suspicious and unfriendly manner, it would make everyone angry and it would be their own fault. We were eager to understand them and none of us in these parts was interested in politics. It would be nice if they acted more open-hearted for a change. They agreed to this but said that in their Army nothing was done without permission; the permission had not been granted as yet. All right, I said, but unless we can all circulate freely amongst each other there will be no trust and no confidence, and that will be terrible.

130 'It will be arranged in time, you will see,' said the Colonel. 'Time is money,' the interpreter remarked, knowingly.

In the morning the pontoon bridge was the center of interest. The day before, to the amazement of the GIs, some Russian soldiers had appeared and washed the boats which supported the wooden treadway. Today more Russians appeared, with pots of green paint, and painted the boats. Small fir trees were stuck up along the treadway and it was the prettiest bridge you could hope to see. Now in the early sun-light, a procession of thin, quiet displaced persons appeared; these were the Russians who had been taken into slavery by the Germans, and they were crossing the Elbe to go home. The Elbe is not very wide and the banks are soft green grass, but as soon as anyone crossed that bridge and disappeared up the opposite bank he might as well have gone to Tibet, because it was forbidden, unimaginable territory.

140 For a little while there was relative calm and we sat on a stone wall and watched the river and smoked and talked about nothing. Gradually the Russian Army began to cross the bridge to our side of the river. The Army came in like a tide; it had no special shape, there were no orders given. It came and flowed over the stone quay and up on the roads behind us like water rising, like ants, like locusts. It was not so much an army as a whole world on the move. Knowing nothing of the formation of the Russian Army (and never being told by the Russians), one does not know whether this was a regiment or a division or six regiments or six divisions for that matter, but it came on and on and on, inchoate, formless and astonishing, and it was very noisy and slightly mad and it knew exactly what it was doing.

150 First came men, hordes of them, wearing tunics, greatcoats, baggy khaki-ish clothing, and carrying a light sort of tommy gun, pistols, grenades and generally assorted munitions. They did not seem to march and they did not seem to be numerically divided into groups; they were simply a mass. They looked tired and rather indifferent and definitely experienced. Then some trucks bumped over the bridge God knows what sort of trucks, or where manufactured. Quantities of men rode on these, also women. These women were uniformed like the men, and equally armed, and were young, absolutely square in build, and tough as prize-fighters. We were told that the women were wonderful snipers and that they served as MPs. At this point a woman soldier arrived at the near end of the bridge, carrying two flags like semaphore flags, and took up her position. She was an MP, and with her flags and an air of authority she proceeded to handle this startling traffic.

160 A pack train now rumbled across the bridge. It consisted of beat-up carts and wagons and strong but shabby horses, and the drivers handled the horses with a competence that was inspiring and rather like the chariot races in Ben Hur. The pack train carried everything, bedding and clothing and pots and pans and ammunition and also women, because Russian women can go to war with their men, and it seems a reasonable idea. These were no glamour girls; they were peasants and they looked as if no hardship would be too much for them, no roads too long, no winter too cruel, no danger too great.

170 After the pack train, something like the first locomotive appeared. It was short and had a huge smokestack and it towed two huge wooden cars. The GIs on the wall above the river broke into applause, saying, 'Here comes the motorized stuff.' Men on bicycles pedaled across the bridge and more men on foot and then some trucks carrying pontoons. The noise was a splendid Slavic roar mixed with the clang of iron wheels on cobbles and occasional shouts which may have been orders or curses. There was no visible plan to this exodus and you felt you were watching a marvelously realistic movie about the Russian armies during the war against Napoleon. It was entirely unlike anything we had ever seen before and it would be impossible to describe the feeling of power that came from this chaos of men and material. We sat on our wall and thought how bitterly the Germans must have regretted attacking the Russians. We thought anyone would be extremely silly to bother these people; for in these great shapeless numbers they were as overwhelming and terrible as a flow of lava.

180 By a miracle this welter of humanity vanished from Torgau, no one knows how, and proceeded to infiltrate inland to take up the Russian line along the Mulde River, some fifty miles west. I have no idea how this was done; it happened. It is to be noted that many of the

men wore the medal of the Battle of Stalingrad, and the whole lot had certainly fought their way west for some three thousand miles, and probably pretty largely on their own feet.

It was lunchtime and the exodus stopped temporarily. ‘The show’s over,’ said a GI sitting next to me. Then, summing up the whole matter, he said with awe, ‘My God.’ We walked back to the bridge which leads to the American side of Torgau. Two GIs were guarding the bridge, and a Russian soldier, aged about eighteen, stood across the street apparently guarding it also. Three Russian soldiers were leaning over the stone railing in the middle of the bridge and suddenly there was a loud explosion and a fountain of water coming up from the stream below.

190 ‘That’s nothing,’ one of the American guards said. ‘They’re just throwing hand grenades in the water. They’re crazy about that. I don’t know what it does to them, but if you see one anywhere near a bridge he’s pretty sure to throw a hand grenade in the water.’

The Russian guard now crossed the street and said in a voice of wonder, ‘Amerikanski?’ to which the GIs replied in a tone of equal wonder, ‘Russki?’ We all shook hands.

‘You can’t turn around for Russians shaking hands,’ the short GI said. ‘Now this joe, for instance, he’s been on this bridge all morning and this is the fourth time he comes over and says Amerikanski and gives us the handshaking treatment.’

‘It’s to show we’re allies,’ the tall GI explained.

200 ‘Sure,’ said the short one, ‘that’s okay by me. I only ask myself how many more times today this joe is going through this routine.’

‘Look at the ambulance, will you?’ said the tall one. We turned and saw something like a furniture van, painted green and with small red crosses on its side. It had stopped farther down the street and a band of wounded crawled, limped or hopped out. They had been packed in on a nest of quilts and mattresses and they disappeared into a house which may have been an aid station.

‘That’s the first ambulance I seen,’ the tall one said. ‘Seems like if you can walk you go right along in their Army. You see more guys with bandages on their heads. Don’t seem to bother them none.’

210 ‘I used to think we were rugged,’ the other GI said, ‘until I saw these Russkis. Boy, they’re really rugged, I mean.’

‘They’re crazy,’ the tall one said flatly.

‘What’s the matter?’ I asked. ‘Don’t you like them?’

‘Sure, I like them. They seem like pretty good guys. They’re crazy, that’s all.’

‘I guess they’ll push us back to the Rhine pretty soon,’ the short one said. ‘They certainly

shoved a lot of men over this morning.’ . . .

‘Suits me,’ his colleague answered. ‘I hope they push us back quick. I hope they take all of Germany. They’ll know how to handle it, brother. They really know. Suits me. What I want is to go home.’

Dachau

May 1945

220

A New Kind of War⁴³

Martha Gellhorn

September 1966

US troops, upon arrival in South Vietnam, are read an indoctrination lecture of thirty mimeographed pages which is earnest, clear and laudably humane. The following paragraphs seem best to sum up the whole:

10

You and I know that we are here to help the people and the Government of South Vietnam. We know what our mission is: we are here to help save this valiant little country, and with it all of South-East Asia, from Communist aggression and oppression. In doing so, we will strengthen the security of the United States itself. And you and I know that we can’t accomplish this mission without the support of the Vietnamese people. Everything we do to help win their support will help to shorten and win this war; and anything we do to alienate them will only weaken our effort at its most vital point. From everything I’ve said, it should be plain to see that we’re in a new kind of war. And the name of this new game is much, much more than just “Kill VC” (Vietcong). We’ve got to kill VC all right; but there’s a lot more to it than that. To really and truly and finally win this war, we must help the Government of South Vietnam win the hearts and minds of the people of South Vietnam.

20

In its simplest terms, this is the American doctrine in Vietnam; and though my contact with any US officials, civilian or military, were brief and glancing, I had the impression that all sincerely believed it, especially the central tenet: Americans are in Vietnam to help the people and they are helping the people. (The lecture defines ‘the people’ as the peasants, eighty per cent of the population of the country).

The new port and old provincial capital of Qui Nhon was once a pretty seaside resort for the French rulers and a native fishing village with a population of twenty thousand. The

⁴³ These six reports were written in London in September 1966 after returning from Vietnam.

population now is said to be two hundred thousand. Statistics on the Vietnamese are honest guesses at best; too often they are propaganda nonsense. Qui Nhon is a huge US military supply dump, shrouded in red dust from the grinding wheels of army transport, and suffocated in heat like glue. There are the usual tent cities of the soldiery, the claptrap bars and laundries and shops that spring up wherever Americans go, the resort hotels and villas turned into headquarters, messes and billets, and everywhere the shacks of refugees built of anything from paper to sheets of rolled beer tins. It is estimated that seventy-two thousand refugees are huddled in the town limits but no one can keep count of the increasing hordes of uprooted peasants.

10 Each of the provincial capitals in South Vietnam has a free hospital for civilians. The Qui Nhon provincial hospital is crowded to bursting with wounded peasants, men, women and children of all ages, none of whom would be alive were it not for the New Zealand surgical teams which have served in this hospital since 1963. Those doctors and nurses are beyond praise. A New Zealand doctor, who had more important work to do, led me on a fast tour of the premises. Four big two-story buildings are connected by covered walks; each floor is a single ward. But the wounded peasants pour in day after day and week after week and the narrow cots, packed close together, are filled two to a bed, sometimes three to a bed; it is luxury to have a cot to yourself. In some wards the wounded also lie in stretchers on the floor, and outside the operating room and in the recovery room the floor is covered with them.

20 Everything smells of dirt, the mattresses and pillows are old and stained; there are no sheets, of course, no hospital pajamas or gowns, no towels, no soap, nothing to eat on or drink from. The Vietnamese Government allows a free food ration for one meal per day for 287 patients; there are five hundred patients. Far from home, often homeless by now, the relatives of the wounded must somehow provide what is needed, cook for and feed and wash and nurse their own. So the jammed wards are further jammed by grand-parents caring for tiny children, teenagers caring for parents, a vast conglomeration of the semi-starved looking after the desperately hurt. Everyone, healthy and wounded alike, is thin; fragile bones and tight skin, and the controlled faces, the tormented eyes.

30 As the doctor walked quickly through the wards, the people spoke to him in Vietnamese which he does not understand. He smiled the warm, loving smile he reserves for his patients, patted an arm, soothed and encouraged them in a language they do not understand. 'We're very proud of him,' said the doctor, stopping by the cot of an old man, aged in fact sixty-one. 'Took bomb bits out of his brain, chest and abdomen. He'll live; I even think he'll be quite

normal.' Farther down the ward, he waved amiably at a young man with a shock of stiff black hair, a narrow naked torso and a leg in plaster. 'Yes, that's a handcuff,' the doctor said. It looked like a leather bracelet chaining the wounded man to his cot. 'Vietcong. We have quite a few. Fine people, rather better educated than the rest, cheerful, make the people laugh, good influence in the ward.'

'Like to show you something,' said the doctor, and we raced along the covered walk to the end of the hospital where a small smoke-blackened cavern was the hospital kitchen, flanked by six latrines. Four were boarded up, totally blocked by excrement; two open doors showed overflowing mounds of filth. 'Facilities for the families,' the doctor said.

10 Across the way there was a handsome building, rather like a roomy seaside villa, and I thought perhaps the doctors lived in it. 'Put up by US AID for the relatives of the patients,' the doctor said; 'Marvelous dining room, screened, never used; they take food to their wounded and eat whatever's left over, squatting on the floor the way they always have. Bedroom—maybe thirty could sleep in it cheek by jowl, but there are about six hundred relatives here, and they sleep on the floor beside their own people, have to, who else is to look after the patients at night? There's a fine bathroom over there, too, with two toilets, now locked. Solid feces. That big building is the storeroom for medicines. AID spent two million dollars on fixing up this hospital.'

20 I got an interpreter and went round the wards asking plain factual questions. The old are pitiful in their bewilderment, the adults seem locked in an aloof resignation, the children's ward is unbearable. No one protests or complains. We big overfed white people will never know what they feel.

A boy of fifteen sat on his cot with both legs in plaster casts. He and his little brother had gone to the beach to mend nets; a Vietnamese patrol boat saw them and opened up with machine-gun fire; his little brother was killed. The boat then pulled in to shore to see what it had bagged and found two children. The American adviser got the living boy to the nearest town, where a helicopter picked him up. His mother and older brother made their way here by motorboat to nurse him. He is lucky; he has only been in this appalling place for two and a half months and will some day walk again. He said he did not know the beach was forbidden;

30 that was his only comment.

The tiny children do not cry out in pain; if they make any noise it is a soft moaning; they twist their wounded bodies in silence. In the cot by the door is a child burned by napalm. He is seven years old, the size of a four-year-old of ours. His face and back and bottom and one

hand were burned. A piece of some- thing like cheesecloth covers his body; it seems that any weight would be intolerable but so is air. His hand is burned, stretched out like a starfish; the napalmed skin on the little body looks like bloody hardened meat in a butcher's shop. (We always get the napalm cases in batches,' the doctor had said. And there's white phosphorus too and it's worse because it goes on gnawing at flesh like rat's teeth, gnawing to the bone.) An old man, nearly blind with cataract, was tending this burned child, his grandson. The napalm bombs fell a week ago on their hamlet, he carried the child to the nearest town, and they were flown here by helicopter. The child cried with pain all that week, but today he is better, he is not crying, only shifting his body to try to find some way to lie that does not hurt
10 him.

In theory, the peasants are warned of an air attack on their hamlet, by loud-speaker or leaflets forty-eight hours in advance, but the military say, this is not always possible. Obviously I did not canvass the country, but I found no case in the hospitals I visited where this timetable was kept. In the areas called-Free Air Strike Zones, or some such jargon, there is no warning and the people can be bombed at will day or night because the area is considered entirely held by Vietcong, and too bad for the peasants who cling to their land which is all they have ever known for generations. In this child's hamlet, the people were warned to leave by loud-speaker from the air in the night; but no one in Vietnam moves readily by night and besides, in the dark and the haste and the fear, how could they take with them their possessions which they
20 value fiercely just because they have so few.

That night, the boy and his grandfather, his mother and older brother got away from the hamlet with two of their four buffaloes. The buffaloes were their only capital, their fortune, without the buffaloes they could not cultivate their fields. At first light, many of the peasants crept back to the hamlet to rescue more of their livestock and household goods. The old man, too blind to go-alone, took the child with him to try to find their remaining two buffaloes. But the jet fighter-bombers came at once. The two buffaloes were killed by napalm, the old man said, and so were many of the people, and many were burned.

No damages for lost property, death or wounds will be paid to these people, though the whole business of damages to civilians looks like another of the many dreams on
30 mimeographed paper which characterize this war. But damages, if ever paid, are only paid for accidents; these people were warned, their hamlet was destroyed as an act of war.

The old man was penniless, of course; he was given three hundred piastres, before coming here with the child, in part a contribution from the local authority, partly a gift from neighbors.

Three hundred piastres is less than fourteen shillings, less than two dollars. He had now one hundred piastres left to feed himself and the child. One cannot know what will happen when that runs out; it is no one's duty to worry about him. In principle, a refugee gets seven piastres a day from the Government for about a month; seven piastres is a sum too small to describe in our terms, and will not buy a kilo of rice. The little boy's father had already been killed in the Vietnamese army; his mother and older brother are somewhere in a refugee camp.

Another child, also seven years old, had been burned in the same hamlet. His mother stood over his cot helplessly. The child was in acute pain; she had covered him with a light cloth and kept fanning the small body as if she could cool that wet, blood- red skin. She too had gone
10 back to save more things from her house, cooking pots, rice, clothing. She said the Vietcong overran their hamlet-which means that, in some force, guerrilla fighters moved into the area- in April, but were long gone; why destroy their house and their possessions and their children now in August?

The Vietnamese are beautiful people, especially the children. The most beautiful child in this ward was a little boy who looked about five years old, with plaster on both his legs to the hips. He and two little girls sat on the tile floor which is cooler, resting their heads against the side of a cot. They simply sat, motionless and silent; the girls were also in plaster, a leg, an arm. The boy's eyes were enormous, dark, and hopelessly sad; no child should have such eyes. The
20 mother of the little girls, who had been wounded by our artillery, told the boy's story: he and his mother were going back to their hamlet from the town market in a minibus, the midget-sized tin trucks pulled by a Lambretta scooter which are the transport of the poor in this country. The bus ran over a Vietcong mine. The child's mother was killed, and many of the others in the bus. His father had brought the child here, given this woman money to buy food and care for his son, and returned to his hamlet because he had to; there were other children at home.

If this hospital were unique it would be dreadful enough but there is every reason to assume that all the provincial hospitals are the same, crowded with non-combatants, under conditions suitable to the Crimean war. No Ministry keeps a record of civilian wounded, at least those who are able to reach a hospital. No official tries to discover from the survivors the number
30 of civilian dead. But if any neutral harmless-looking observers went through the provincial hospitals and asked the people how they were wounded and who else in their family was killed, I believe they would learn that we, unintentionally, are killing and wounding three or four times more people than the Vietcong do, so we are told, on purpose.

We are not maniacs and monsters; but our planes range the sky all day and all night and our artillery is lavish and we have much more deadly stuff to kill with. The people are there on the ground, sometimes destroyed by accident; sometimes destroyed because Vietcong are reported to be among them. This is indeed a new kind of war, as the indoctrination lecture stated, and we had better find a new way to fight it. Hearts and minds, after all, live in bodies.

Real War and the War of Words

Martha Gellhorn

On the first of August, 399 representatives of the news media of the world were accredited to the US military command in Saigon. That's everybody: the entire staffs in Vietnam of newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, news photos, newsreels. There are also large governmental information services, Vietnamese and American, as well as the Vietnamese press, including three English-language newspapers. It might be termed saturation coverage for a small country and a small war. Unfortunately the one man who could report this war with shining intelligence is dead: George Orwell. He understood propaganda as if he'd invented the technique; how it is made and used and why. For there are two wars in South Vietnam: the real war and the propaganda war. We don't have to worry about Communist propaganda; we agree that's
10 nothing but a pack of lies.

The principal manufacturers and consumers of propaganda on our side are American; George Orwell would understand the reason. I can merely attempt to classify it, from my brief experience, in two groups: the fear syndrome, which magnifies the Vietcong's lethal threat to everyone in Vietnam, civilian and military; and the cheer syndrome, which optimistically falsifies the conditions of Vietnamese civil life.

The fear syndrome, by exaggerating Vietcong power for destruction, misplaces the real pain of the real war, and is immensely dangerous. It leads to hysteria, to hawk-demands for a bigger war; it pushes us nearer and nearer to World War Three. The fear syndrome in no way serves the American cause; it can only jeopardize more American lives, with the ultimate risk of
20 jeopardizing all life.

Before going to Vietnam, I had many unanswered questions, but was obliged to make my

picture of this war, like everybody else, from a composite of news reports and the pronouncements of American leaders:

Vietcong assassinations and atrocities. Grenades thrown continuously on the helpless populace. The countryside and the roads strewn with mines. Vietcong raids on the towns at any moment. All the young American soldiers open to massacre in the jungles, or to incessant surprise attacks wherever they were quartered. Snipers following every move. Terror by day and night. Saigon a city of awful hazard.

10 If this picture of the war was my private invention, I would now think myself certifiable; but it is not. It is average American, perhaps average British, too; the result of fear-syndrome propaganda.

This is not a war of ‘unparalleled brutality’, as we have been told. One day of Auschwitz was far more brutal than everything the Vietcong have done to date or anything they could possibly do in the future. Atrocities are vile and horrifying wherever committed, and nothing condones them; not ever. But unless we crave the propaganda of fear, we have to keep a grip on reality. The Vietnam Ministry of Information gave me their material on Vietcong atrocities, a sheaf of photographs and two illustrated booklets; in all sixty-one pictures of mutilated dead, too dreadful, too inhuman to look at. For us, aimed and savage murder is more appalling than the impersonal death dealt out by the machines of war. A knife in a man’s hand is more evil than a bomb fragment, possibly even more fearful than napalm or white phosphorus.

20 Vietnamese speak of Vietcong ‘executions’ and mean a bullet.

The official Ministry of Information figure for all civilians murdered by the Vietcong, from 1962 until June 1, 1965, is 5,942. American soldiers, briefed on arrival in Vietnam, are informed that, since 1957, the Vietcong have killed thirteen thousand local officials. There is no way, of course, to check these divergent figures (as there is no way to check civilian casualties inflicted by our side, in acts of war or by accident). Whatever the number of the dead, it is a crime and a tragedy to kill a single Vietnamese non-combatant. But the important point is that this is a nation of fifteen million people and it would long since have fallen apart if the fear-syndrome propaganda was true: the country would have been paralyzed by terror.

30 Refugees are proof of fear and there may well be three million displaced people in Vietnam by now; but how many fled from the Vietcong and how many more have fled from our bombs and artillery, or from battles on their doorsteps, is anybody’s guess. The refugees, crowded in and around the big towns which we hold, are surviving unjustifiable hardship but at least they feel physically safe. Town residents go about their work with no panic dread of Vietcong

terrorism or raids.

Millions of peasants remain on the land despite the Vietcong. The roads are unsafe for all civilians at night; in daylight, limited stretches are secure. The Vietcong, unpredictably, mine roads, bridges, and territory they wish to interdict. They also dig 'spy traps', bamboo spikes planted in pits. Peasants, like soldiers, know these scattered perils, and are rightly afraid of travel. But they do travel; and continue to cultivate their land and bring their produce to market. Since peasants are no more inclined to suicide than anyone else, the real risks must be recognized as present and potentially lethal, but not fear-syndrome overwhelming. When and wherever a grenade is thrown or a mine explodes, the people bury their dead, take their wounded to hospital if they can, and get on bravely with their lives.

Saigon is by no means a city of awful hazard. Grenades are the exception not the rule, just as a murder is the exception not the rule in our cities. Central Saigon looks messy, busy, booming, with shops, restaurants and bars everywhere, and phalanxes of street vendors, but it still has charm: a street with flower booths like the Madeleine in Paris, trees, a view of ships on the river.

The streets are blocked by traffic jams, hardly possible if grenades were usual. The intrepid poor ride bicycles, the GIs favor bicycle rickshaws when not roaring around on Japanese motor bikes, the medium Vietnamese bourgeoisie have motor scooters, the rich have cars, the little blue taxis are filthy inside and scarred outside, there are Lambretta buses, jeeps, army trucks and the limousines of officialdom, Vietnamese and American. By day, the city is so noisy that you rarely hear our jet fighter- bombers thundering overhead, though at night they sound like a steady passage of freight trains across the sky.

Well-to-do Vietnamese and foreigners live in comfortable flats, villas or hotels; food and drink are copious; and money will buy every luxury from a Jaguar ('delivered stateside', the sign says) to diamond jewelry and portable TV sets. The heat is ghastly; the privileged have air conditioning. And the ravishing, reedlike Vietnamese girls float through this city in their beautiful national dress, the *audai*, and by their presence and bearing make all terror-talk seem absurd.

What haunts and hurts the people of Saigon, the vast majority, is not Vietcong terrorism but poverty. Perhaps a million and a half newcomers, displaced people, have poured into Saigon because it offers safety and the hope of earning more money. A tidal wave of inflation has swept the country, and a weird economic miracle is in progress. Any Vietnamese private citizen will tell you that, since the American invasion, the rich are getting richer and the poor

poorer. The poor could scarcely look more ragged or more emaciated. They live in pitiful, sweltering shanty towns on the outskirts of the city, Vietcong-infested and ominous areas according to the fear-syndrome. Evidently they are less troubled by the Vietcong than by hunger.

In Saigon, during the period of August 17 to September 4 which I can vouch for, the Vietcong mortared a US motor pool near the airport; a grenade was thrown at a jeep, wounding four Americans and a nearby market woman; and a grenade was thrown at a police post but that story is not clear. Saigon is the capital of a country at war; to Londoners who remember the blitz and the V-1s and V-2s, it would seem a fortunate city.

10 Luckily, Vietnamese do not believe propaganda; they believe what they know from their own experience, and that is terrible enough. But Vietcong-fear-syndrome propaganda is an insult to the incredible courage and endurance of the Vietnamese people.

And it deforms our understanding of all their varied anguish. Misunderstanding alienates; it does not 'win the hearts and minds of the people.'

On August 16, at a press conference on his ranch, President Johnson said: 'The United States has never had a more efficient and courageous fighting force in the field than the men who are serving us at this hour in Vietnam.' The fighting force in the field more than deserves the President's fullest praise, and it is heart-breaking that the killed-in-action figures have risen
20 from one in 1961, to 3,036 from January 1 to August 27 of this year, climbing slowly for four years, then fast for one year and almost eight months to reach a total of 4,470.

But it might be comforting to correct the impression, which I know I shared with many, that all the three hundred thousand US servicemen in Vietnam are constantly endangered by Vietcong and North Vietnamese guerrilla fighters. Old Vietnam hands estimated that between sixty-five and seventy-five thousand men, of all branches of the service, are the US fighting force in the field and they say that this is a higher percentage of combat personnel than was achieved in World War Two.

Since this is not a war of position, with two opposing armies trying to conquer territory, the entire fighting force in Vietnam is not in steady contact with the enemy. On the ground it is a
30 war of patrols, hunting out the enemy, ambushes, pitched battles whenever units of Vietcong or North Vietnamese are found. Like a deadly game of hide and seek, in real danger every minute.

Jungle fighting must be the worst 'Thorns as big as a pencil,' a soldier said. 'I never saw

anything like it before.’ The French used to call it, with horror, a ‘dirty little war’ when they were fighting it. In the air over North Vietnam, where there are flak, missiles and enemy fighter planes, it becomes the sort of war we know too well in this disastrous century.

The majority of the two hundred thousand plus servicemen, who are not the fighting force, are dotted around the country, sensibly aware that the country is not guaranteed Vietcong-proof; but good soldiers never inflate alarm. They are suffering heat in the lowlands, malaria in a coastal zone, the nagging discomfort of tent camps, doing their jobs—endless dismal army jobs—building, hauling, guarding, pushing papers, and surviving the boredom which commanders never talk about though it is one of the heaviest hardships of war. A grim, dull
10 life in an alien land.

There’s something very nice and normal in the fact that every American I saw, under the rank of colonel, announced to a day when his Vietnam year would end. On the milk run army plane, which flies from Saigon to the big towns in central and northern Vietnam, the boy next to me was reading a Western but looked up from his paperback to say, ‘This is a C-130, it’s a little bit more safer.’ (An aviation buff, a connoisseur of planes.) ‘I got seventy-two more days here, then home. Work in a depot, this town we’re coming to. Easy job.’ Lovable young soldier, propaganda-free.

Fear-syndrome propaganda does a grave disservice to the men in uniform. If they believe any of it, they are forced to overcome not only the strain of real war but the debilitating strain
20 of induced fear. Moreover, it is an insult to the men in uniform (as it is to the Vietnamese people). By implying that the Vietcong constantly menace life everywhere, this propaganda debases the valor of the actual fighting forces who are constantly menaced. And by misrepresenting true hardships, such propaganda down-grades the wearing, daily, stoical endurance of the mass of support troops. There are many different kinds of heroism in this country, and honor is due them all. But honor based on the real war, not the propaganda war. Being neither George Orwell, nor an authority on power politics, I fail to understand why sober accuracy would not be better for everyone, inside and outside of Vietnam, if we earnestly desire to limit and end this war.

30

The cheer syndrome, or the optimistic falsifying of the conditions of Vietnamese civil life, does not affect the safety of the world. It really doesn’t affect the life of the people in Vietnam

either, it merely conceals that life. The serious aspect of this ballyhoo is that it discredits both the American and Vietnam Governments in the eyes of the Vietnamese people. Trust and loyalty are not won by propaganda but by promises kept and help given. If tough, honest criticism replaces the cheer syndrome, Vietnamese life might improve and one could argue that real improvement of the life of the people would be more helpful in ending the war than bombs.

The way it works appears to be a sort of tennis match between Vietnamese and American authorities; they bat cheer syndrome between them. This must be a performance for export as you cannot, for instance, convince 1,027 refugees, living in a little camp without latrines and with a nearly dry well, that ‘the camps are being improved, recreational facilities are being added, and attention is being paid to the educational needs of the young.’ If refugees read Government handouts they would be astounded. I specially enjoy the one about a mythical refugee who received a plot of land and the cheer-syndrome sum of 3,500 piastres (seven pounds, less than twenty dollars) and built a five-room house; he must be the best-housed peasant in all South Vietnam.

‘Social revolution’ is a favorite cheer-syndrome phrase but it can only impress the outside world, since even so tiny an indication of social revolution as food rationing does not exist in South Vietnam. University students, who get no assistance from their Government are ‘suffering’ (‘hunger’ is a shameful word for the middle class), and are not applauding cheer-syndrome reforms.

‘US AID is a long pipe,’ a fine Vietnamese said to me, ‘with many holes in it. Only a few drops reach the peasants.’ Or the millions in need, in spite of the millions of dollars and the good intentions. But cheer-syndrome propaganda is a net, and the American Government is caught in it; to maintain the export idea that we are guests, practically servants of the Vietnamese Government, US AID direct relief funds are channeled through various Vietnamese Ministries. If the Americans want the people to get rice,’ said a Catholic priest, ‘they must give it out themselves.’

It is not all words, there are American-inspired deeds but they are modest compared to the amount of cheer-syndrome propaganda and money and bureaucracy involved. However, the superb cheer-syndrome effort of the late elections seems to have gone over with a bang, outside Vietnam. The foreign public does not notice oddities: in advance, the Vietnam press stated that a seventy per cent turnout of voters would be a triumph. Four hours after nearly five million people allegedly went, with no compulsion, to over five thousand polling booths,

the wondrous figure was announced—a seventy per cent turnout; later upped to eighty per cent. Nor does the foreign public understand the gimmicks built into the plan for this new Vietnamese Constitution. Pity the poor Vietnamese who cannot eat or wear or shelter under cheer-syndrome propaganda, and have never had a freely elected Government in two thousand years. ‘The Government ignores the people,’ said a Vietnamese journalist. ‘And the people ignore the Government.’ The perfect epitaph for cheer- syndrome propaganda?

10 I date from an older America and I remember with longing the day when a President said to the American people, ‘We have nothing to fear but fear itself.’ That wasn’t any form of propaganda, it was truth, and is just as valid now if only we knew it. I wish I could ask George Orwell’s opinion, but it seems to me that propaganda is a sign of fear. We ought to give the Communists a world-wide monopoly of propaganda and let them founder in it; not us.

Critical Reading

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Written under duress by Hunter S. Thompson

Sketched with eyebrow pencil and lipstick by Ralph Steadman

Welcome to Derbistan

I got off the plane around midnight and no one spoke as I crossed the dark runway to the terminal. The air was thick and hot, like wandering into a steam bath. Inside, people hugged each other and shook hands... big grins and a whoops here and there: "By God! You old bastard! Good to see you, boy! Damn good... and I mean it!"

In the air-conditioned lounge I met a man from Houston who said his name was something or other—but just call me Jimbo—and he was here to get it on. "I'm ready for anything, by God! Anything at all. Yeah, what are you drinking?" I ordered a Margarita with ice, but he wouldn't hear of it: "Naw, naw... what the hell kind of drink is that for Kentucky Derby time? What's wrong with you, boy?" He grinned and winked at the bartender: "Goddam, we gotta educate this boy. Get him some good whiskey..."

I shrugged: "Okay, a double Old Fitz on ice." Jimbo nodded his approval. "Look." He tapped me on the arm to make sure I was listening. "I know this Derby crowd, I come here every year, and let me tell you one thing I've learned—this is no town to be giving people the impression you're some kind of faggot. Not in public, anyway. Shit, they'll roll you in a minute, knock you in the head and take every goddam cent you have."

I thanked him and fitted a Marlboro into my cigarette holder. "Say," he said, "you look like you might be in the horse business... am I right?" "No," I said. "I'm a photographer."

"Oh yeah?" He eyed my ragged leather bag with new interest. "Is that what you got there—cameras? Who you work for?" "Playboy," I said.

He laughed: "Well goddam! What are you gonna take pictures of—nekkid horses? Haw! I guess you'll be workin' pretty hard when they run the Kentucky Oaks. That's a race just for fillies." He was laughing wildly. "Hell yes! And they'll all be nekkid too!"

I shook my head and said nothing; just stared at him for a moment, trying to look grim. "There's good to be trouble," I said. "My assignment is to take pictures of the riot."

"What riot?" I hesitated, twirling the ice in my drink. "At the track. On Derby Day. The Black Panthers." I stared at him again. "Don't you read the newspapers?" The grin on his face had collapsed. "What the hell are you talkin' about?"

"Well... maybe I shouldn't be telling you..." I shrugged. "But hell, everybody else seems to know. The cops and the National Guard have been getting ready for six weeks. They have 20,000 troops on alert at Fort Knox. They've warned us—all the press and photographers—to wear helmets and special vests like flak jackets. We were told to expect shooting..."

"No!" he shouted; his hands flew up and hovered momentarily between us, as if to ward off the words he was hearing. Then he whacked his fist on the bar. "Those sons of bitches! God Almighty! The Kentucky Derby!" He kept shaking his head. "No! Jesus! That's almost too bad to believe!" Now he

seemed to be juggling on the stool, and when he looked up his eyes were misty. "Why? Why here? Don't they respect anything?"

I shrugged again. "It's not just the Panthers. The FBI says hundreds of white crazies are coming in from all over the country—to mix with the crowd and attack all at once, from every direction. They'll be dressed like everybody else. You know—coats and ties and all that. But when the trouble starts... well, that's why the cops are so worried."

He sat for a moment, looking hurt and confused and not quite able to digest all this terrible news. Then he cried out: "Oh... Jesus! What in the name of God is happening in this country? Where can you get away from it?"

"Not here," I said, picking up my bag. "Thanks for the drink... and good luck." He grabbed my arm, urging me to have another, but I said I was overdue at the Press Club and hustled off to get my act together for the awful spectacle. At the airport newsstand I picked up a Courier-Journal and scanned the front page headlines: "Nixon Sends G14 into Cambodia to Hit Reds"... "B-52's Raid, then 2,000 G1's Advance 20 Miles"... "4,000 U.S. Troops Deployed Near Yale as Tension Grows Over Panther Protest." At the bottom of the page was a photo of Diane Crump, soon to become the first woman jockey ever to ride in the Kentucky Derby. The photographer had snapped her "stopping in the barn area to fondle her mount, Falhorn." The rest of the paper was spotted with ugly war news and stories of "student unrest." There was no mention of any protest action at a small Ohio school called Kent State.

I went to the Hertz desk to pick up my car, but the moon-faced young swinger in charge said they didn't have any. "You can't rent one anywhere," he assured me. "Our Derby reservations have been booked for six weeks." I explained that my agent had confirmed a white Chrysler convertible for me that very afternoon but he shook his head. "Maybe we'll have a cancellation. Where are you staying?"

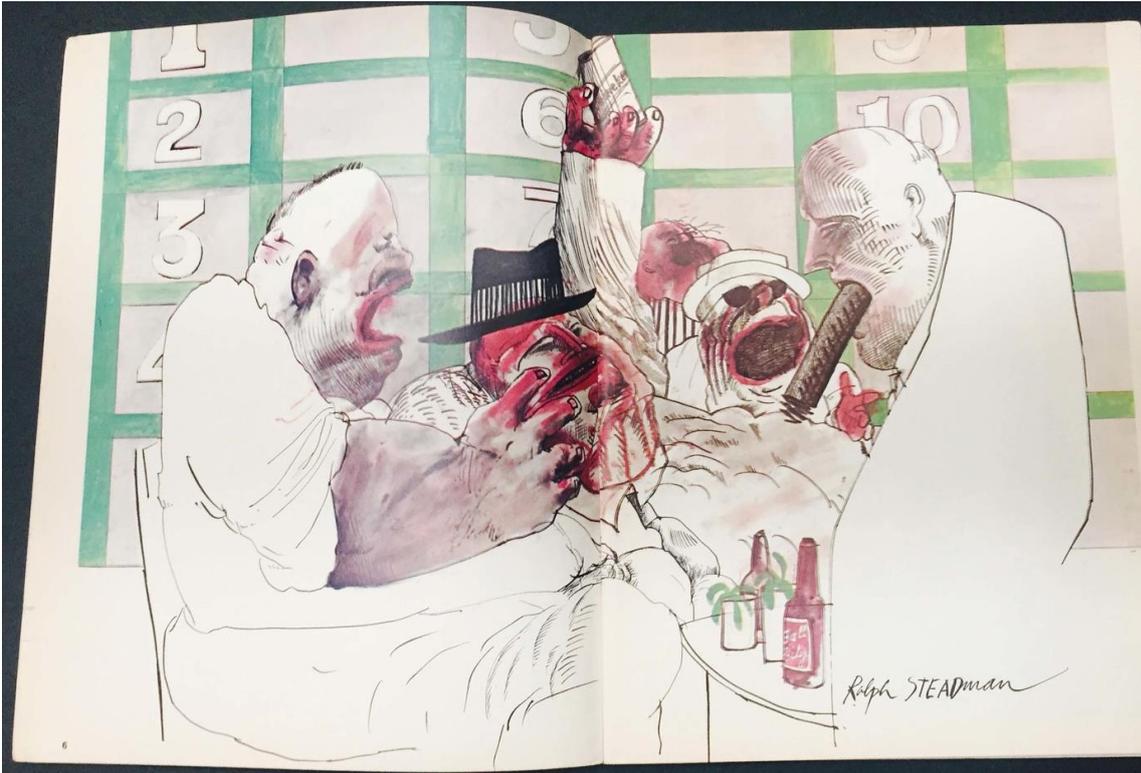
I shrugged. "Where's the Texas crowd staying? I want to be with my people."

He sighed. "My friend, you're in trouble. This town is flat fall. Always is, for the Derby."

I leaned closer to him, half-whispering: "Look, I'm from Playboy. How would you like a job?" He backed off quickly. "What? Come on, now. What kind of a job?"

"Never mind," I said. "You just blew it." I swept my bag off the counter and went to find a cab. The bag is a valuable prop in this kind of work; mine has a lot of baggage tags on it—SF, LA, NY, Lima, Rome, Bangkok, that sort of thing—and the most prominent tag of all is a very official, plastic-coated thing that says "Photog. Playboy Mag." I bought it from a pimp in Vail, Colorado, and he told me how to use it: "Never mention Playboy until you're sure they've seen this thing first," he said. "Then, when you see them notice it, that's the time to strike. They'll go belly up every time. This thing is magic, I tell you. Pure magic."

Well... maybe so. I'd used it on the poor greek in the bar, and now, humming along in a Yellow Cab



The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved

Scanlan's Monthly, 1970

Written under duress by Hunter S. Thompson Sketched with eyebrow pencil and lipstick by Ralph Steadman

WELCOME TO DERBYTOWN

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30 page was a photo of Diane Crump, soon to become the first woman jockey ever to ride in the Kentucky Derby. The photographer had snapped her “stopping in the barn area to fondle her mount, Fathom.” The rest of the paper was spotted with ugly war news and stories of “student

unrest.” There was no mention of any trouble brewing at a university in Ohio called Kent State.

I went to the Hertz desk to pick up my car, but the moon-faced young swinger in charge said they didn’t have any. “You can’t rent one anywhere,” he assured me. “Our Derby reservations have been booked for six weeks.” I explained that my agent had confirmed a white Chrysler convertible for me that very afternoon but he shook his head. “Maybe we’ll have a cancellation. Where are you staying?”

I shrugged. “Where’s the Texas crowd staying? I want to be with my people.”

He sighed. “My friend, you’re in trouble. This town is flat full. Always is, for the Derby.”

10 I leaned closer to him, half-whispering: “Look, I’m from Playboy. How would you like a job?”

He backed off quickly. “What? Come on, now. What kind of a job?” “Never mind,” I said. “You just blew it.” I swept my bag off the counter and went to find a cab. The bag is a valuable prop in this kind of work; mine has a lot of baggage tags on it--SF, LA, NY, Lima, Rome, Bangkok, that sort of thing--and the most prominent tag of all is a very official, plastic-coated thing that says “Photog. Playboy Mag.” I bought it from a pimp in Vail, Colorado, and he told me how to use it. “Never mention Playboy until you’re sure they’ve seen this thing first,” he said. “Then, when you see them notice it, that’s the time to strike. They’ll go belly up every time. This thing is magic, I tell you. Pure magic.”

20 Well...maybe so. I’d used it on the poor geek in the bar, and now humming along in a Yellow Cab toward town, I felt a little guilty about jangling the poor bugger’s brains with that evil fantasy. But what the hell? Anybody who wanders around the world saying, “Hell yes, I’m from Texas,” deserves whatever happens to him. And he had, after all, come here once again to make a nineteenth-century ass of himself in the midst of some jaded, atavistic freakout with nothing to recommend it except a very saleable “tradition.” Early in our chat, Jimbo had told me that he hadn’t missed a Derby since 1954. “The little lady won’t come anymore,” he said. “She grits her teeth and turns me loose for this one. And when I say ‘loose’ I do mean loose! I toss ten-dollar bills around like they were goin’ out of style! Horses, whiskey, women...shit, there’s women in this town that’ll do anything for money.”

30 Why not? Money is a good thing to have in these twisted times. Even Richard Nixon is hungry for it. Only a few days before the Derby he said, “If I had any money I’d invest it in the stock market.” And the market, meanwhile, continued its grim slide.

WAITING FOR STEADMAN

The next day was heavy. With only thirty hours until post time I had no press credentials and--according to the sports editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal--no hope at all of getting any. Worse, I needed two sets: one for myself and another for Ralph Steadman, the English illustrator who was coming from London to do some Derby drawings. All I knew about him was that this was his first visit to the United States. And the more I pondered the fact, the more it gave me fear. How would he bear up under the heinous culture shock of being lifted out of London and plunged into the drunken mob scene at the Kentucky Derby? There was no way of knowing. Hopefully, he would arrive at least a day or so ahead, and give himself
10 time to get acclimated. Maybe a few hours of peaceful sightseeing in the Bluegrass country around Lexington. My plan was to pick him up at the airport in the huge Pontiac Ballbuster I'd rented from a used-car salesman named Colonel Quick, then whisk him off to some peaceful setting that might remind him of England.

Colonel Quick had solved the car problem, and money (four times the normal rate) had bought two rooms in a scumbox on the outskirts of town. The only other kink was the task of convincing the moguls at Churchill Downs that Scanlan's was such a prestigious sporting journal that common sense compelled them to give us two sets of the best press tickets. This was not easily done. My first call to the publicity office resulted in total failure. The press handler was shocked at the idea that anyone would be stupid enough to apply for press
20 credentials two days before the Derby. "Hell, you can't be serious," he said. "The deadline was two months ago. The press box is full; there's no more room...and what the hell is Scanlan's Monthly anyway?" I uttered a painful groan. "Didn't the London office call you? They're flying an artist over to do the paintings. Steadman. He's Irish. I think. Very famous over there. Yes. I just got in from the Coast. The San Francisco office told me we were all set."

He seemed interested, and even sympathetic, but there was nothing he could do. I flattered him with more gibberish, and finally he offered a compromise: he could get us two passes to the clubhouse grounds but the clubhouse itself and especially the press box were out of the question.

"That sounds a little weird," I said. "It's unacceptable. We must have access to
30 everything. All of it. The spectacle, the people, the pageantry and certainly the race. You don't think we came all this way to watch the damn thing on television, do you? One way or another we'll get inside. Maybe we'll have to bribe a guard--or even Mace somebody." (I had picked up a spray can of Mace in a downtown drugstore for \$5.98 and suddenly, in the midst of that

phone talk, I was struck by the hideous possibilities of using it out at the track. Macing ushers at the narrow gates to the clubhouse inner sanctum, then slipping quickly inside, firing a huge load of Mace into the governor's box, just as the race starts. Or Macing helpless drunks in the clubhouse restroom, for their own good...)

By noon on Friday I was still without press credentials and still unable to locate Steadman. For all I knew he'd changed his mind and gone back to London. Finally, after giving up on Steadman and trying unsuccessfully to reach my man in the press office, I decided my only hope for credentials was to go out to the track and confront the man in person, with no warning--demanding only one pass now, instead of two, and talking very fast with a strange lilt in my voice, like a man trying hard to control some inner frenzy. On the way out, I stopped at the motel desk to cash a check. Then, as a useless afterthought, I asked if by any wild chance a Mr. Steadman had checked in. The lady on the desk was about fifty years old and very peculiar-looking; when I mentioned Steadman's name she nodded, without looking up from whatever she was writing, and said in a low voice, "You bet he did." Then she favored me with a big smile. "Yes, indeed. Mr. Steadman just left for the racetrack. Is he a friend of yours?"

I shook my head. "I'm supposed to be working with him, but I don't even know what he looks like. Now, goddammit, I'll have to find him in the mob at the track."

She chuckled. "You won't have any trouble finding him. You could pick that man out of any crowd."

"Why?" I asked. "What's wrong with him? What does he look like?" "Well..." she said, still grinning, "he's the funniest looking thing I've seen in a long time. He has this...ah...this growth all over his face. As a matter of fact it's all over his head." She nodded. "You'll know him when you see him; don't worry about that."

Creeping Jesus, I thought. That screws the press credentials. I had a vision of some nerve-rattling geek all covered with matted hair and string-warts showing up in the press office and demanding Scanlan's press packet. Well...what the hell? We could always load up on acid and spend the day roaming around the clubhouse grounds with bit sketch pads, laughing hysterically at the natives and swilling mint juleps so the cops wouldn't think we're abnormal. Perhaps even make the act pay; set up an easel with a big sign saying, "Let a Foreign Artist Paint Your Portrait, \$10 Each. Do It NOW!"

A HUGE OUTDOOR LOONY BIN

I took the expressway out to the track, driving very fast and jumping the monster car back and forth between lanes, driving with a beer in one hand and my mind so muddled that I almost crushed a Volkswagen full of nuns when I swerved to catch the right exit. There was a slim chance, I thought, that I might be able to catch the ugly Britisher before he checked in.

But Steadman was already in the press box when I got there, a bearded young Englishman wearing a tweed coat and RAF sunglasses. There was nothing particularly odd about him. No facial veins or clumps of bristly warts. I told him about the motel woman's description and he seemed puzzled. "Don't let it bother you," I said. "Just keep in mind for the next few days that we're in Louisville, Kentucky. Not London. Not even New York. This is a weird place. You're lucky that mental defective at the motel didn't jerk a pistol out of the cash register and blow a big hole in you." I laughed, but he looked worried. "Just pretend you're visiting a huge outdoor loony bin," I said. "If the inmates get out of control we'll soak them down with Mace." I showed him the can of "Chemical Billy," resisting the urge to fire it across the room at a rat-faced man typing diligently in the Associated Press section. We were standing at the bar, sipping the management's Scotch and congratulating each other on our sudden, unexplained luck in picking up two sets of fine press credentials. The lady at the desk had been very friendly to him, he said. "I just told her my name and she gave me the whole works."

By midafternoon we had everything under control. We had seats looking down on the finish line, color TV and a free bar in the press room, and a selection of passes that would take us anywhere from the clubhouse roof to the jockey room. The only thing we lacked was unlimited access to the clubhouse inner sanctum in sections "F&G"...and I felt we needed that, to see the whiskey gentry in action. The governor, a swinish neo-Nazi hack named Louis Nunn, would be in "G," along with Barry Goldwater and Colonel Sanders. I felt we'd be legal in a box in "G" where we could rest and sip juleps, soak up a bit of atmosphere and the Derby's special vibrations. The bars and dining rooms are also in "F&G," and the clubhouse bars on Derby Day are a very special kind of scene. Along with the politicians, society belles and local captains of commerce, every half-mad dingbat who ever had any pretensions to anything at within five hundred miles of Louisville will show up there to get strutting drunk and slap a lot of backs and generally make himself obvious. The Paddock bar is probably the best place in the track to sit and watch faces. Nobody minds being stared at; that's what they're in there for.

Some people spend most of their time in the Paddock; they can hunker down at one of the many wooden tables, lean back in a comfortable chair and watch the ever-changing odds flash up and down on the big tote board outside the window. Black waiters in white serving jackets move through the crowd with trays of drinks, while the experts ponder their racing forms and the hunch bettors pick lucky numbers or scan the lineup for right-sounding names. There is a constant flow of traffic to and from the pari-mutuel windows outside in the wooden corridors. Then, as post time nears, the crowd thins out as people go back to their boxes.

Clearly, we were going to have to figure out some way to spend more time in the clubhouse tomorrow. But the “walkaround” press passes to F&G were only good for thirty
10 minutes at a time, presumably to allow the newspaper types to rush in and out for photos or quick interviews, but to prevent drifters like Steadman and me from spending all day in the clubhouse, harassing the gentry and rifling the odd handbag or two while cruising around the boxes. Or Macing the governor. The time limit was no problem on Friday, but on Derby Day the walkaround passes would be in heavy demand. And since it took about ten minutes to get from the press box to the Paddock, and ten more minutes to get back, that didn’t leave much time for serious people-watching. And unlike most of the others in the press box, we didn’t give a hoot in hell what was happening on the track. We had come there to watch the *real* beasts perform.

20 VIEW FROM THOMPSON’S HEAD

Later Friday afternoon, we went out on the balcony of the press box and I tried to describe the difference between what we were seeing today and what would be happening tomorrow. This was the first time I’d been to a Derby in ten years, but before that, when I lived in Louisville, I used to go every year. Now, looking down from the press box, I pointed to the huge grassy meadow enclosed by the track. “That whole thing,” I said, “will be jammed with people; fifty thousand or so, and most of them staggering drunk. It’s a fantastic scene-- thousands of people fainting, crying, copulating, trampling each other and fighting with broken whiskey bottles. We’ll have to spend some time out there, but it’s hard to move around, too many bodies.” “Is it safe out there?” Will we ever come back?”

30 “Sure,” I said. “We’ll just have to be careful not to step on anybody’s stomach and start a fight.” I shrugged. “Hell, this clubhouse scene right below us will be almost as bad as the infield. Thousands of raving, stumbling drunks, getting angrier and angrier as they lose more

and more money. By midafternoon they'll be guzzling mint juleps with both hands and vomiting on each other between races. The whole place will be jammed with bodies, shoulder to shoulder. It's hard to move around. The aisles will be slick with vomit; people falling down and grabbing at your legs to keep from being stomped. Drunks pissing on themselves in the betting lines. Dropping handfuls of money and fighting to stoop over and pick it up."

He looked so nervous that I laughed. "I'm just kidding," I said. "Don't worry. At the first hint of trouble I'll start pumping this 'Chemical Billy' into the crowd."

10 He had done a few good sketches, but so far we hadn't seen that special kind of face that I felt we would need for a lead drawing. It was a face I'd seen a thousand times at every Derby I'd ever been to. I saw it, in my head, as the mask of the whiskey gentry--a pretentious mix of
booze, failed dreams and a terminal identity crisis; the inevitable result of too much inbreeding
in a closed and ignorant culture. One of the key genetic rules in breeding dogs, horses or any
other kind of thoroughbred is that close inbreeding tends to magnify the weak points in a
bloodline as well as the strong points. In horse breeding, for instance, there is a definite risk in
breeding two fast horses who are both a little crazy. The offspring will likely be very fast and
also very crazy. So the trick in breeding thoroughbreds is to retain the good traits and filter out
the bad. But the breeding of humans is not so wisely supervised, particularly in a narrow
Southern society where the closest kind of inbreeding is not only stylish and acceptable, but
far more convenient--to the parents--than setting their offspring free to find their own mates,
20 for their own reasons and in their own ways. ("Goddam, did you hear about Smitty's daughter?
She went crazy in Boston last week and married a nigger!") So the face I was trying to find in
Churchill Downs that weekend was a symbol, in my own mind, of the whole doomed atavistic
culture that makes the Kentucky Derby what it is.

On our way back to the motel after Friday's races I warned Steadman about some of the
other problems we'd have to cope with. Neither of us had brought any strange illegal drugs,
so we would have to get by on booze. "You should keep in mind," I said, "that almost
everybody you talk to from now on will be drunk. People who seem very pleasant at first might
suddenly swing at you for no reason at all." He nodded, staring straight ahead. He seemed to
be getting a little numb and I tried to cheer him up by inviting to dinner that night, with my
30 brother.

‘WHAT MACE?’

Back at the motel we talked for awhile about America, the South, England--just relaxing a bit before dinner. There was no way either of us could have known, at the time, that it would be the last normal conversation we would have. From that point on, the weekend became a vicious, drunken nightmare. We both went completely to pieces. The main problem was my prior attachment to Louisville, which naturally led to meetings with old friends, relatives, etc., many of whom were in the process of falling apart, going mad, plotting divorces, cracking up under the strain of terrible debts or recovering from bad accidents. Right in the middle of the whole frenzied Derby action, a member of my own family had to be institutionalized. This
10 added a certain amount of strain to the situation, and since poor Steadman had no choice but to take whatever came his way, he was subjected to shock after shock.

Another problem was his habit of sketching people he met in the various social situations I dragged him into--then giving them the sketches. The results were always unfortunate. I warned him several times about letting the subjects see his foul renderings, but for some perverse reason he kept doing it. Consequently, he was regarded with fear and loathing by nearly everyone who'd seen or even heard about his work. He couldn't understand it. "It's sort of a joke," he kept saying. "Why, in England it's quite normal. People don't take offense. They understand that I'm just putting them on a bit."

"Fuck England," I said. "This is Middle America. These people regard what you're doing
20 to them as a brutal, bilious insult. Look what happened last night. I thought my brother was going to tear your head off."

Steadman shook his head sadly. "But I liked him. He struck me as a very decent, straightforward sort."

"Look, Ralph," I said. "Let's not kid ourselves. That was a very horrible drawing you gave him. It was the face of a monster. It got on his nerves very badly." I shrugged. "Why in hell do you think we left the restaurant so fast?"

"I thought it was because of the Mace," he said.

"What Mace?" He grinned. "When you shot it at the headwaiter, don't you remember?"

"Hell, that was nothing," I said. "I missed him...and we were leaving, anyway."

“But it got all over us,” he said. “The room was full of that damn gas. Your brother was sneezing and his wife was crying. My eyes hurt for two hours. I couldn’t see to draw when we got back to the motel.”

“That’s right,” I said. “The stuff got on her leg, didn’t it?”

“She was angry,” he said.

“Yeah...well, okay...Let’s just figure we fucked up about equally on that one,” I said. “But from now on let’s try to be careful when we’re around people I know. You won’t sketch them and I won’t Mace them. We’ll just try to relax and get drunk.” “Right,” he said. “We’ll go native.”

10

DERBY MORNING

It was Saturday morning, the day of the Big Race, and we were having breakfast in a plastic hamburger palace called the Fish-Meat Village. Our rooms were just across the road in the Brown Suburban Hotel. They had a dining room, but the food was so bad that we couldn’t handle it anymore. The waitresses seemed to be suffering from shin splints; they moved around very slowly, moaning and cursing the “darkies” in the kitchen.

Steadman liked the Fish-Meat place because it had fish and chips. I preferred the “French toast,” which was really pancake batter, fried to the proper thickness and then chopped out with a sort of cookie cutter to resemble pieces of toast.

20

Beyond drink and lack of sleep, our only real problem at that point was the question of access to the clubhouse. Finally, we decided to go ahead and steal two passes, if necessary, rather than miss that part of the action. This was the last coherent decision we were able to make for the next forty-eight hours. From that point on--almost from the very moment we started out to the track--we lost all control of events and spent the rest of the weekend churning around in a sea of drunken horrors. My notes and recollections from Derby Day are somewhat scrambled.

30

But now, looking at the big red notebook I carried all through that scene, I see more or less what happened. The book itself is somewhat mangled and bent; some of the pages are torn, others are shriveled and stained by what appears to be whiskey, but taken as a whole, with sporadic memory flashes, the notes seem to tell the story. To wit:

UNSCRAMBLING DERBY DAY – I.***STEADMAN IS WORRIED ABOUT FIRE***

Rain all nite until dawn. No sleep. Christ, here we go, a nightmare of mud and madness...But no. By noon the sun burns through--perfect day, not even humid.

Steadman is now worried about fire. Somebody told him about the clubhouse catching on fire two years ago. Could it happen again? Horrible. Trapped in the press box. Holocaust. A hundred thousand people fighting to get out. Drunks screaming in the flames and the mud, crazed horses running wild. Blind in the smoke. Grandstand collapsing into the flames with us on the roof. Poor Ralph is about to crack. Drinking heavily, into the Haig & Haig.

10 Out to the track in a cab, avoid that terrible parking in people's front yards, \$25 each, toothless old men on the street with big signs: PARK HERE, flagging cars in the yard. "That's fine, boy, never mind the tulips." Wild hair on his head, straight up like a clump of reeds. Sidewalks full of people all moving in the same direction, towards Churchill Downs. Kids hauling coolers and blankets, teenyboppers in tight pink shorts, many blacks...black dudes in white felt hats with leopard-skin bands, cops waving traffic along.

The mob was thick for many blocks around the track; very slow going in the crowd, very hot. On the way to the press box elevator, just inside the clubhouse, we came on a row of soldiers all carrying long white riot sticks. About two platoons, with helmets. A man walking next to us said they were waiting for the governor and his party. Steadman eyed them
20 nervously. "Why do they have those clubs?"

"Black Panthers," I said. Then I remembered good old "Jimbo" at the airport and I wondered what he was thinking right now. Probably very nervous; the place was teeming with cops and soldiers. We pressed on through the crowd, through many gates, past the paddock where the jockeys bring the horses out and parade around for a while before each race so the bettors can get a good look. Five million dollars will be bet today. Many winners, more losers. What the hell. The press gate was jammed up with people trying to get in, shouting at the guards, waving strange press badges: Chicago Sporting Times, Pittsburgh Police Athletic League...they were all turned away. "Move on, fella, make way for the working press." We
30 shoved through the crowd and into the elevator, then quickly up to the free bar. Why not? Get it on. Very hot today, not feeling well, must be this rotten climate. The press box was cool and airy, plenty of room to walk around and balcony seats for watching the race or looking down at the crowd. We got a betting sheet and went outside.

UNSCRAMBLING DERBY DAY – II.***CLUBHOUSE/PADDOCK BAR***

Pink faces with a stylish Southern sag, old Ivy styles, seersucker coats and buttondown collars. “Mayblossom Senility” (Steadman’s phrase)...burnt out early or maybe just not much to burn in the first place. Not much energy in the faces, not much curiosity. Suffering in silence, nowhere to go after thirty in this life, just hang on and humor the children. Let the young enjoy themselves while they can. Why not?

The grim reaper comes early in this league...banshees on the lawn at night, screaming out there beside that little iron nigger in jockey clothes. Maybe he’s the one who’s screaming. Bad
10 DT’s and too many snarls at the bridge club. Going down with the stock market. Oh Jesus, the kid has wrecked the new car, wrapped it around the big stone pillar at the bottom of the driveway. Broken leg? Twisted eye? Send him off to Yale, they can cure anything up there. Yale? Did you see today’s paper? New Haven is under siege. Yale is swarming with Black Panthers...I tell you, Colonel, the world has gone mad, stone mad. Why, they tell me a goddam woman jockey might ride in the Derby today.

I left Steadman sketching in the Paddock bar and went off to place our bets on the fourth race. When I came back he was staring intently at a group of young men around a table not far away. “Jesus, look at the corruption in that face!” he whispered. “Look at the madness, the fear, the greed!” I looked, then quickly turned my back on the table he was sketching. The face
20 he’d picked out to draw was the face of an old friend of mine, a prep school football star in the good old days with a sleek red Chevy convertible and a very quick hand, it was said, with the snaps of a 32 B brassiere. They called him “Cat Man.” But now, a dozen years later, I wouldn’t have recognized him anywhere but here, where I should have expected to find him, in the Paddock bar on Derby Day...fat slanted eyes and a pimp’s smile, blue silk suit and his friends looking like crooked bank tellers on a binge... Steadman wanted to see some Kentucky Colonels, but he wasn’t sure what they looked like. I told him to go back to the clubhouse men’s rooms and look for men in white linen suits vomitting in the urinals. “They’ll usually have large brown whiskey stains on the front of their suits,” I said. “But watch the shoes, that’s
30 their shoes.”

In a box not far from ours was Colonel Anna Friedman Goldman, Chairman and Keeper of the Great Seal of the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels. Not all the 76 million or so

Kentucky Colonels could make it to the Derby this year, but many had kept the faith, and several days prior to the Derby they gathered for their annual dinner at the Seelbach Hotel.

The Derby, the actual race, was scheduled for late afternoon, and as the magic hour approached I suggested to Steadman that we should probably spend some time in the infield, that boiling sea of people across the track from the clubhouse. He seemed a little nervous about it, but since none of the awful things I'd warned him about had happened so far--no race riots, firestorms or savage drunken attacks-- he shrugged and said, "Right, let's do it."

To get there we had to pass through many gates, each one a step down in status, then through a tunnel under the track. Emerging from the tunnel was such a culture shock that it took us a while to adjust. "God almighty!" Steadman muttered. "This is a...Jesus!" He plunged ahead with his tiny camera, stepping over bodies, and I followed, trying to take notes.

UNSCRAMBLING DERBY DAY – III.

THE INFIELD.

Total chaos, no way to see the race, not even the track...nobody cares. Big lines at the outdoor betting windows, then stand back to watch winning numbers flash on the big board, like a giant bingo game. Old blacks arguing about bets; "Hold on there, I'll handle this" (waving pint of whiskey, fistful of dollar bills); girl riding piggyback, T-shirt says, "Stolen from Fort Lauderdale Jail." Thousands of teen-agers, group singing "Let the Sun Shine In," ten soldiers guarding the American flag and a huge fat drunk wearing a blue football jersey (No. 80) reeling around with quart of beer in hand. No booze sold out here, too dangerous...no bathrooms either. Muscle Beach...Woodstock...many cops with riot sticks, but no sign of a riot. Far across the track the clubhouse looks like a postcard from the Kentucky Derby.

UNSCRAMBLING DERBY DAY – IV. *'MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME'*

We went back to the clubhouse to watch the big race. When the crowd stood to face the flag and sing "My Old Kentucky Home," Steadman faced the crowd and sketched frantically. Somewhere up in the boxes a voice screeched, "Turn around, you hairy freak!" The race itself was only two minutes long, and even from our super-status seats and using 12- power glasses, there was no way to see what really happened to our horses. Holy Land, Ralph's choice, stumbled and lost his jockey in the final turn. Mine, Silent Screen, had the lead coming into the stretch but faded to fifth at the finish. The winner was a 16-1 shot named Dust Commander.

Moments after the race was over, the crowd surged wildly for the exits, rushing for cabs and busses. The next day's Courier told of violence in the parking lot; people were punched and trampled, pockets were picked, children lost, bottles hurled. But we missed all this, having retired to the press box for a bit of post-race drinking. By this time we were both half-crazy from too much whiskey, sun fatigue, culture shock, lack of sleep and general dissolution. We hung around the press box long enough to watch a mass interview with the winning owner, a dapper little man named Lehmann who said he had just flown into Louisville that morning from Nepal, where he'd "bagged a record tiger." The sportswriters murmured their admiration and a waiter filled Lehmann's glass with Chivas Regal. He had just won \$127,000 with a horse that cost him \$6,500 two years ago. His occupation, he said, was "retired contractor." And then he added, with a big grin, "I just retired."

The rest of the day blurs into madness. The rest of that night too. And all the next day and night. Such horrible things occurred that I can't bring myself even to think about them now, much less put them down in print. I was lucky to get out at all. One of my clearest memories of that vicious time is Ralph being attacked by one of my old friends in the billiard room of the Pendennis Club in downtown Louisville on Saturday night. The man had ripped his own shirt open to the waist before deciding that Ralph was after his wife. No blows were struck, but the emotional effects were massive. Then, as a sort of final horror, Steadman put his fiendish pen to work and tried to patch things up by doing a little sketch of the girl he'd been accused of hustling. That finished us in the Pendennis.

GETTING OUT OF TOWN

Sometime around ten-thirty Monday morning I was awakened by a scratching sound at my door. I leaned out of bed and pulled the curtain back just far enough to see Steadman outside. "What the fuck do you want?" I shouted.

"What about having breakfast?" he said.

I lunged out of bed and tried to open the door, but it caught on the night-chain and banged shut again. I couldn't cope with the chain! The thing wouldn't come out of the track--so I ripped it out of the wall with a vicious jerk on the door. Ralph didn't blink. "Bad luck," he muttered.

I could barely see him. My eyes were swollen almost shut and the sudden burst of sunlight through the door left me stunned and helpless like a sick mole. Steadman was mumbling about sickness and terrible heat; I fell back on the bed and tried to focus on him as

he moved around the room in a very distracted way for a few moments, then suddenly darted over to the beer bucket and seized a Colt .45.

“Christ,” I said. “You’re getting out of control.”

He nodded and ripped the cap off, taking a long drink. “You know, this is really awful,” he said finally. “I must get out of this place...” he shook his head nervously. “The plane leaves at three-thirty, but I don’t know if I’ll make it.”

I barely heard him. My eyes had finally opened enough for me to focus on the mirror across the room and I was stunned at the shock of recognition. For a confused instant I thought that Ralph had brought somebody with him--a model for that one special face we’d been looking for. There he was, by God--a puffy, drink-ravaged, disease-ridden caricature...like
10 an awful cartoon version of an old snapshot in some once-proud mother’s family photo album. It was the face we’d been looking for--and it was, of course, my own. Horrible, horrible... “Maybe I should sleep a while longer,” I said. “Why don’t you go on over to the Fish-Meat place and eat some of those rotten fish and chips? Then come back and get me around noon. I feel too near death to hit the streets at this hour.”

He shook his head. “No...no...I think I’ll go back upstairs and work on those drawings for a while.” He leaned down to fetch two more cans out of the beer bucket. “I tried to work earlier,” he said, “but my hands kept trembling...It’s teddible, teddible.”

“You’ve got to stop this drinking,” I said.

20 He nodded. “I know. This is no good, no good at all. But for some reason it makes me feel better...”

“Not for long,” I said. “You’ll probably collapse into some kind of hysterical DT’s tonight--probably just about the time you get off the plane at Kennedy. They’ll zip you up in a straightjacket and drag you down to The Tombs, then beat you on the kidneys with big sticks until you straighten out.”

He shrugged and wandered out, pulling the door shut behind him. I went back to bed for another hour or so, and later--after the daily grapefruit juice run to the Nite Owl Food Mart--we had our last meal at Fish-Meat Village: a fine lunch of dough and butcher’s offal, fried in heavy grease.

30 By this time Ralph wouldn’t order coffee; he kept asking for more water. “It’s the only thing they have that’s fit for human consumption,” he explained. Then, with an hour or so to kill before he had to catch the plane, we spread his drawings out on the table and pondered them for a while, wondering if he’d caught the proper spirit of the thing...but we couldn’t make

up our minds. His hands were shaking so badly that he had trouble holding the paper, and my vision was so blurred that I could barely see what he'd drawn. "Shit," I said. "We both look worse than anything you've drawn here." He smiled. "You know--I've been thinking about that," he said. "We came down here to see this teddible scene: people all pissed out of their minds and vomitting on themselves and all that...and now, you know what? It's us..."

10 Huge Pontiac Ballbuster blowing through traffic on the expressway. A radio news bulletin says the National Guard is massacring students at Kent State and Nixon is still bombing Cambodia. The journalist is driving, ignoring his passenger who is now nearly naked after taking off most of his clothing, which he holds out the window, trying to wind-wash the Mace out of it. His eyes are bright red and his face and chest are soaked with beer he's been using to rinse the awful chemical off his flesh. The front of his woolen trousers is soaked with vomit; his body is racked with fits of coughing and wild chocking sobs. The journalist rams the big car through traffic and into a spot in front of the terminal, then he reaches over to open the door on the passenger's side and shoves the Englishman out, snarling: "Bug off, you worthless faggot! You twisted pigfucker! [Crazed laughter.] If I weren't sick I'd kick your ass all the way to Bowling Green--you scumsucking foreign geek. Mace is too good for you...We can do without your
20 kind in Kentucky."

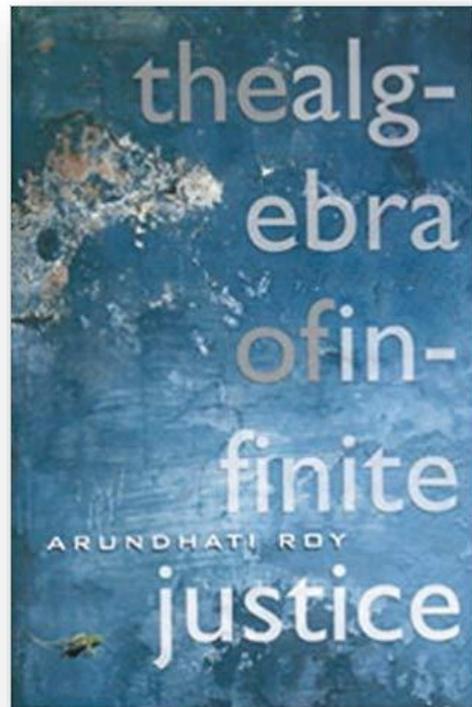
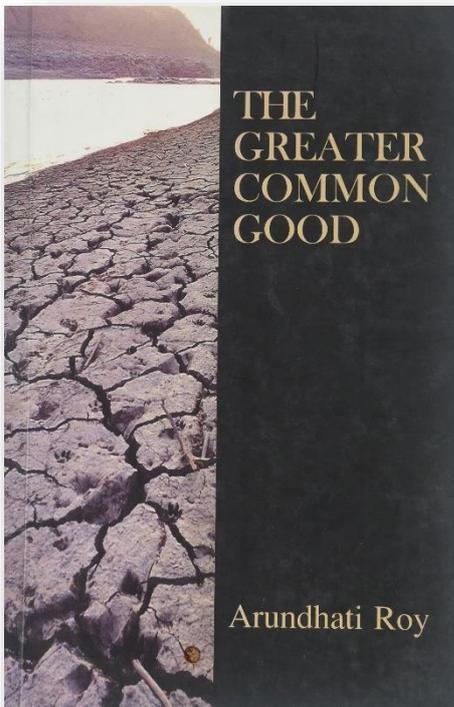
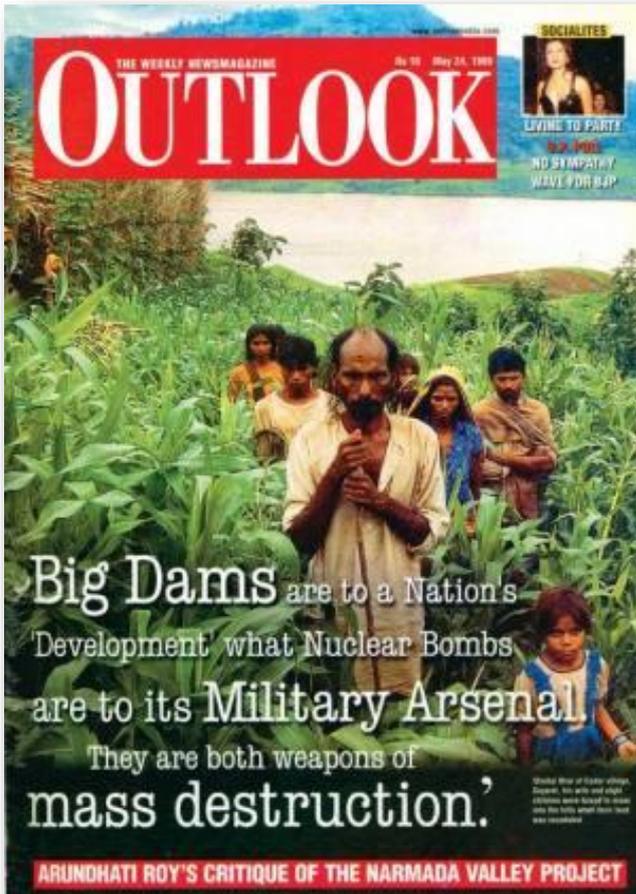
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The Greater Common Good

Arundhati Roy

Outlook India, 24 May 1999

“If you are to suffer, you should suffer in the interest of the country.”

--Jawaharlal Nehru,
speaking to villagers who were to be displaced
by the Hirakud dam, 1948

I stood on a hill and laughed out loud.

I had crossed the Narmada by boat from Jalsindhi and climbed the headland on the opposite bank from where I could see, ranged across the crowns of low, bald hills, the tribal hamlets of Sikka, Surung, Neemgavan and Domkhedi. I could see their airy, fragile, homes. I could see their fields and the forests behind them. I could see little children with littler goats scuttling across the landscape like motorised peanuts. I knew I was looking at a civilisation older than Hinduism, slated—sanctioned (by the highest court in the land)—to be drowned this monsoon when the waters of the Sardar Sarovar reservoir will rise to submerge it.

Why did I laugh?

10 Because I suddenly remembered the tender concern with which the Supreme Court judges in Delhi (before vacating the legal stay on further construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam) had enquired whether tribal children in the resettlement colonies would have children’s parks to play in. The lawyers representing the government had hastened to assure them that indeed they would, and, what’s more, that there were seesaws and slides and swings in every park. I looked up at the endless sky and down at the river rushing past and for a brief, brief moment the absurdity of it all reversed my rage and I laughed. I meant no disrespect.

20 Let me say at the outset that I’m not a city-basher. I’ve done my time in a village. I’ve had first-hand experience of the isolation, the inequity and the potential savagery of it. I’m not an anti-development junkie, nor a proselytiser for the eternal upholding of custom and tradition. What I am, however, is curious. Curiosity took me to the Narmada valley. Instinct told me that this was the big one. The one in which the battle-lines were clearly drawn, the

warring armies massed along them. The one in which it would be possible to wade through the congealed morass of hope, anger, information, disinformation, political artifice, engineering ambition, disingenuous socialism, radical activism, bureaucratic subterfuge, misinformed emotionalism and of course the pervasive, invariably dubious, politics of International Aid.

Instinct led me to set aside Joyce and Nabokov, to postpone reading Don DeLillo's big book and substitute it with reports on drainage and irrigation, with journals and books and documentary films about dams and why they're built and what they do.

10 My first tentative questions revealed that few people know what is really going on in the Narmada valley. Those who know, know a lot. Most know nothing at all. And yet, almost everyone has a passionate opinion. Nobody's neutral. I realised very quickly that I was straying into mined territory.

In India over the last 10 years the fight against the Sardar Sarovar Dam has come to represent far more than the fight for one river. This has been its strength as well as its weakness. Some years ago, it became a debate that captured the popular imagination. That's what raised the stakes and changed the complexion of the battle. From being a fight over the fate of a river valley it began to raise doubts about an entire political system. What is at issue now is the very nature of our democracy. Who owns this land? Who owns its rivers? Its forests? Its fish? These are huge questions. They are being taken hugely seriously by the State. They are
20 being answered in one voice by every institution at its command—the army, the police, the bureaucracy, the courts. And not just answered, but answered unambiguously, in bitter, brutal ways.

For the people of the valley, the fact that the stakes were raised to this degree has meant that their most effective weapon—specific facts about specific issues in this specific valley—has been blunted by the debate on the big issues. The basic premise of the argument has been inflated until it has burst into bits that have, over time, bobbed away. Occasionally a disconnected piece of the puzzle floats by—an emotionally charged account of the government's callous treatment of displaced people; an outburst at how the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), 'a handful of activists', is holding the nation to ransom; a legal correspondent
30 reporting on the progress of the NBA's writ petition in the Supreme Court.

Though there's been a fair amount of writing on the subject, most of it is for a 'special interest' readership. News reports tend to be about isolated aspects of the project. Government

documents are classified as ‘Secret’. I think it’s fair to say that public perception of the issue is pretty crude and is divided, crudely, into two categories:

On the one hand, it is seen as a war between modern, rational, progressive forces of ‘Development’ versus a sort of neo-Luddite impulse—an irrational, emotional ‘Anti-Development’ resistance, fuelled by an arcadian, pre-industrial dream. On the other, as a Nehru vs Gandhi contest. This lifts the whole sorry business out of the bog of deceit, lies, false promises and increasingly successful propaganda (which is what it’s really about) and confers on it a false legitimacy. It makes out that both sides have the Greater Good of the Nation in mind—but merely disagree about the means to achieve it.

10 Both interpretations put a tired spin on the dispute. Both stir up emotions that cloud the particular facts of this particular story. Both are indications of how urgently we need new heroes, new kinds of heroes, and how we’ve overused our old ones (like we overbowl our bowlers).

The Nehru vs Gandhi argument pushes this very contemporary issue back into an old bottle. Nehru and Gandhi were generous men. Their paradigms for development are based on assumptions of inherent morality. Nehru’s on the paternal, protective morality of the Soviet-style Centralised State. Gandhi’s on the nurturing, maternal morality of romanticised Village Republics. Both would work perfectly, if only we were better human beings. If only we all wore khadi and suppressed our base urges—sex, shopping, dodging spinning lessons and being
20 unkind to the less fortunate. Fifty years down the line, it’s safe to say that we haven’t made the grade. We haven’t even come close. We need an updated insurance plan against our own basic natures.

It’s possible that as a nation we’ve exhausted our quota of heroes for this century, but while we wait for shiny new ones to come along, we have to limit the damage. We have to support our small heroes. (Of these we have many. Many.) We have to fight specific wars in specific ways. Who knows, perhaps that’s what the 21st century has in store for us. The dismantling of the Big. Big bombs, big dams, big ideologies, big contradictions, big countries, big wars, big heroes, big mistakes. Perhaps it will be the Century of the Small. Perhaps right now, this very minute, there’s a small god up in heaven readying herself for us. Could it be?
30 Could it possibly be? It sounds finger-licking good to me.

I was drawn to the valley because I sensed that the fight for the Narmada had entered a newer, sadder phase. I went because writers are drawn to stories the way vultures are drawn to kills. My motive was not compassion. It was sheer greed. I was right. I found a story there.

And what a story it is.

“People say that the Sardar Sarovar Dam is an expensive project. But it’s bringing drinking water to millions. This is our life-line. Can you put a price on this? Does the air we breathe have a price? We will live. We will drink. We will bring glory to the state of Gujarat.”—Urmilaben Patel, wife of the Chief Minister of Gujarat, speaking at a public rally in Delhi in 1993.

“We will request you to move from your houses after the dam comes up. If you move it will be good. Otherwise we shall release the waters and drown you all.”—Morarji Desai, speaking at a public meeting in the submergence zone of the Pong dam in 1961.

10 “Why didn’t they just poison us? Then we wouldn’t have to live in this shit-hole and the government could have survived alone with its precious dam all to itself.”—Ram Bai, whose village was submerged when the Bargi dam was built on the Narmada. She now lives in a slum in Jabalpur.

In the 50 years since Independence, after Nehru’s famous “Dams are the Temples of Modern India” speech (one he grew to regret in his own lifetime), his footsoldiers threw themselves into the business of building dams with unnatural fervour. Dam-building grew to be equated with Nation-building. Their enthusiasm alone should have been reason enough to make one suspicious. Not only did they build new dams and new irrigation systems, they took control of small, traditional systems that village communities had managed for thousands of
20 years, and allowed them to atrophy. To compensate the loss, the government built more and more dams. Big ones, little ones, tall ones, short ones. The result of its exertions is that India now boasts of being the world’s third largest dam-builder. According to the Central Water Commission, we have 3,600 dams that qualify as Big Dams, 3,300 of them built after Independence. Some 1,000 more are under construction. Yet one-fifth of our population—200 million people—doesn’t have safe drinking water and two-thirds—600 million—lack basic sanitation.

Big Dams started well, but have ended badly. There was a time when everybody loved them, everybody had them—the Communists, Capitalists, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists. There was a time when Big Dams moved men to poetry. Not any longer. All over
30 the world there is a movement growing against Big Dams. In the First World they’re being decommissioned, blown up. The fact that they do more harm than good is no longer just conjecture. Big Dams are obsolete. They’re uncool. They’re undemocratic. They’re a government’s way of accumulating authority (deciding who will get how much water and who

will grow what where). They're a guaranteed way of taking a farmer's wisdom away from him. They're a brazen means of taking water, land and irrigation away from the poor and gifting it to the rich. Their reservoirs displace huge populations of people leaving them homeless and destitute. Ecologically, they're in the doghouse. They lay the earth to waste. They cause floods, water-logging, salinity, they spread disease. There is mounting evidence that links Big Dams to earthquakes.

Big Dams haven't really lived up to their role as the monuments of Modern Civilisation, emblems of Man's ascendancy over Nature. Monuments are supposed to be timeless, but dams have an all too finite lifetime. They last only as long as it takes Nature to fill them with silt. It's
 10 common knowledge now that Big Dams do the opposite of what their Publicity People say they do—the Local Pain for National Gain myth has been blown wide open.

For all these reasons, the dam-building industry in the First World is in trouble and out of work. So it's exported to the Third World in the name of Development Aid, along with their other waste like old weapons, superannuated aircraft carriers and banned pesticides.

On the one hand the Indian Government, every Indian Government, rails self-righteously against the First World, and on the other, actually pays to receive their gift-wrapped garbage. Aid is just another praetorian business enterprise. Like Colonialism was. It has destroyed most of Africa. Bangladesh is reeling from its ministrations. We know all this, in numbing detail. Yet in India our leaders welcome it with slavish smiles (and make nuclear
 20 bombs to shore up their flagging self-esteem).

Over the last 50 years India has spent Rs 80,000 crore on the irrigation sector alone. Yet there are more drought-prone areas and more flood-prone areas today than there were in 1947. Despite the disturbing evidence of irrigation disasters, dam-induced floods and rapid disenchantment with the Green Revolution (declining yields, degraded land), the government has not commissioned a post-project evaluation of a single one of its 3,600 dams to gauge whether or not it has achieved what it set out to achieve, whether or not the (always phenomenal) costs were justified, or even what the costs actually were.

The Government of India has detailed figures for how many million tonnes of foodgrain or edible oils the country produces and how much more we produce now than we
 30 did in 1947. It can tell you how much bauxite is mined in a year or what the total surface area of the National Highways adds up to. It's possible to access minute-to-minute information about the stock exchange or the value of the rupee in the world market. We know how many cricket matches we've lost on a Friday in Sharjah. It's not hard to find out how many graduates

India produced, or how many men had vasectomies in any given year. But the Government of India does not have a figure for the number of people that have been displaced by dams or sacrificed in other ways at the altars of ‘National Progress.’ Isn’t this astounding? How can you measure Progress if you don’t know what it costs and who paid for it? How can the ‘market’ put a price on things—food, clothes, electricity, running water—when it doesn’t take into account the real cost of production?

According to a detailed study of 54 Large Dams done by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, the average number of people displaced by a Large Dam is 44,182. Admittedly, 54 dams out of 3,300 is not a big enough sample. But since it’s all we have, let’s try and do some rough arithmetic. A first draft. To err on the side of caution, let’s halve the number of people. Or, let’s err on the side of abundant caution and take an average of just 10,000 people per Large Dam. It’s an improbably low figure, I know, but... never mind. Whip out your calculators. $3,300 \times 10,000 = 33$ million. That’s what it works out to. 33 million people. Displaced by big dams alone in the last 50 years. What about those that have been displaced by the thousands of other Development Projects? At a private lecture, N.C. Saxena, Secretary to the Planning Commission, said he thought the number was in the region of 50 million (of which 40 million were displaced by dams). We daren’t say so, because it isn’t official. It isn’t official because we daren’t say so. You have to murmur it for fear of being accused of hyperbole. You have to whisper it to yourself, because it really does sound unbelievable. It can’t be, I’ve been telling myself. I must have got the zeroes muddled. It can’t be true. I barely have the courage to say it aloud. To run the risk of sounding like a ‘60s hippie dropping acid (“It’s the System, man!”), or a paranoid schizophrenic with a persecution complex. But it is the System, man. What else can it be?

50 million people.

Go on, Government, quibble. Bargain. Beat it down. Say something.

I feel like someone who’s just stumbled on a mass grave.

Fifty million is more than the population of Gujarat. Almost three times the population of Australia. More than three times the number of refugees that Partition created in India. Ten times the number of Palestinian refugees. The Western world today is convulsed over the future of one million people who have fled from Kosovo.

A huge percentage of the displaced are tribal people (57.6 per cent in the case of the Sardar Sarovar Dam). Include Dalits and the figure becomes obscene. According to the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes it’s about 60 per cent. If you consider that

tribal people account for only eight per cent, and Dalits 15 per cent, of India's population, it opens up a whole other dimension to the story. The ethnic 'otherness' of their victims takes some of the pressure off the Nation Builders. It's like having an expense account. Someone else pays the bills. People from another country. Another world. India's poorest people are subsidising the life-styles of her richest.

Did I hear someone say something about the world's biggest democracy?

10 What has happened to all these millions of people? Where are they now? How do they earn a living? Nobody really knows. (Last month's papers had an account of how tribal people displaced from the Nagarjunasagar Dam Project are selling their babies to foreign adoption agencies. The government intervened and put the babies in two public hospitals where six babies died of neglect.) When it comes to Rehabilitation, the government's priorities are clear. India does not have a National Rehabilitation Policy. According to the Land Acquisition Act of 1894 (amended in 1984), the government is not legally bound to provide a displaced person anything but a cash compensation. Imagine that. A cash compensation, to be paid by an Indian government official to an illiterate tribal man (the women get nothing) in a land where even the postman demands a tip for a delivery! Most tribal people have no formal title to their land and therefore cannot claim compensation anyway. Most tribal people, or let's say most small farmers, have as much use for money as a Supreme Court judge has for a bag of fertiliser.

20 The millions of displaced people don't exist anymore. When history is written they won't be in it. Not even as statistics. Some of them have subsequently been displaced three and four times—a dam, an artillery proof range, another dam, a uranium mine, a power project. Once they start rolling there's no resting place. The great majority is eventually absorbed into slums on the periphery of our great cities, where it coalesces into an immense pool of cheap construction labour (that builds more projects that displace more people). True, they're not being annihilated or taken to gas chambers, but I can warrant that the quality of their accommodation is worse than in any concentration camp of the Third Reich. They're not captive, but they redefine the meaning of liberty.

30 And still the nightmare doesn't end. They continue to be uprooted even from their hellish hovels by government bulldozers that fan out on clean-up missions whenever elections are comfortably far away and the urban rich get twitchy about hygiene. In cities like Delhi, they run the risk of being shot by the police for shitting in public places—like three slum-dwellers were, not more than two years ago.

In the French Canadian wars of the 1770s, Lord Amherst exterminated most of Canada's Native Indians by offering them blankets infested with the small-pox virus. Two centuries on, we of the Real India have found less obvious ways of achieving similar ends.

The millions of displaced people in India are nothing but refugees of an unacknowledged war. And we, like the citizens of White America and French Canada and Hitler's Germany, are condoning it by looking away. Why? Because we're told that it's being done for the sake of the Greater Common Good. That it's being done in the name of Progress, in the name of National Interest (which, of course, is paramount). Therefore gladly, unquestioningly, almost gratefully, we believe what we're told. We believe that it benefits us to believe.

Allow me to shake your faith. Put your hand in mine and let me lead you through the maze. Do this, because it's important that you understand. If you find reason to disagree, by all means take the other side. But please don't ignore it, don't look away.

It isn't an easy tale to tell. It's full of numbers and explanations. Numbers used to make my eyes glaze over. Not any more. Not since I began to follow the direction in which they point.

Trust me. There's a story here.

It's true that India has progressed. It's true that in 1947, when Colonialism formally ended, India was food deficit. In 1950 we produced 51 million tonnes of food grain. Today we produce close to 200 million tonnes.

It's true that in 1995 the state granaries were overflowing with 30 million tonnes of unsold grain. It's also true that at the same time, 40 per cent of India's population—more than 350 million people—were living below the poverty line. That's more than the country's population in 1947.

Indians are too poor to buy the food their country produces. Indians are being forced to grow the kinds of food they can't afford to eat themselves. Look at what happened in Kalahandi district in western Orissa, best known for its starvation deaths. In the drought of 1996, people died of starvation (16 according to the state, over a 100 according to the press). Yet that same year rice production in Kalahandi was higher than the national average! Rice was exported from Kalahandi to the Centre.

Certainly India has progressed but most of its people haven't.

Our leaders say that we must have nuclear missiles to protect us from the threat of China and Pakistan. But who will protect us from ourselves?

What kind of country is this? Who owns it? Who runs it? What's going on?

It's time to spill a few State Secrets. To puncture the myth about the inefficient, bumbling, corrupt, but ultimately genial, essentially democratic, Indian State. Carelessness cannot account for 50 million disappeared people. Nor can Karma. Let's not delude ourselves. There is method here, precise, relentless and one hundred per cent man-made.

The Indian State is not a State that has failed. It is a State that has succeeded impressively in what it set out to do. It has been ruthlessly efficient in the way it has appropriated India's resources—its land, its water, its forests, its fish, its meat, its eggs, its air—and redistributed it to a favoured few (in return, no doubt, for a few favours). It is superbly accomplished in the art of protecting its cadres of paid-up elite. Consummate in its methods of pulverising those who inconvenience its intentions. But its finest feat of all is the way it achieves all this and emerges smelling nice. The way it manages to keep its secrets, to contain information that vitally concerns the daily lives of one billion people, in government files, accessible only to the keepers of the flame—ministers, bureaucrats, state engineers, defence strategists. Of course we make it easy for them, we, its beneficiaries. We take care not to dig too deep. We don't really want to know the grisly details.

Thanks to us, Independence came (and went), elections come and go, but there has been no shuffling of the deck. On the contrary, the old order has been consecrated, the rift fortified. We, the Rulers, won't pause to look up from our heaving table. We don't seem to know that the resources we're feasting on are finite and rapidly depleting. There's cash in the bank, but soon there'll be nothing left to buy with it. The food's running out in the kitchen. And the servants haven't eaten yet. Actually, the servants stopped eating a long time ago.

India lives in her villages, we're told, in every other sanctimonious public speech. That's bullshit. It's just another fig leaf from the government's bulging wardrobe. India doesn't live in her villages. India dies in her villages. India gets kicked around in her villages. India lives in her cities. India's villages live only to serve her cities. Her villagers are her citizens' vassals and for that reason must be controlled and kept alive, but only just.

This impression we have of an overstretched State, struggling to cope with the sheer weight and scale of its problems, is a dangerous one. The fact is that it's creating the problem. It's a giant poverty-producing machine, masterful in its methods of pitting the poor against the very poor, of flinging crumbs to the wretched, so that they dissipate their energies fighting each other, while peace (and advertising) reigns in the Master's Lodgings.

Until this process is recognised for what it is, until it is addressed and attacked, elections—however fiercely they’re contested—will continue to be mock battles that serve only to further entrench unspeakable inequity. Democracy (our version of it) will continue to be the benevolent mask behind which a pestilence flourishes unchallenged. On a scale that will make old wars and past misfortunes look like controlled laboratory experiments. Already 50 million people have been fed into the Development Mill and have emerged as air-conditioners and popcorn and rayon suits—subsidised airconditioners and popcorn and rayon suits (if we must have these nice things, and they are nice, at least we should be made to pay for them).

There’s a hole in the flag that needs mending.

10 It’s a sad thing to have to say, but as long as we have faith—we have no hope. To hope, we have to break the faith. We have to fight specific wars in specific ways and we have to fight to win.

Listen then, to the story of the Narmada Valley. Understand it. And, if you wish, enlist. Who knows, it may lead to magic.

The Narmada wells up on the plateau of Amarkantak in the Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh, then winds its way through 1,300 kilometres of beautiful broad-leaved forest and perhaps the most fertile agricultural land in India. Twenty five million people live in the river valley, linked to the ecosystem and to each other by an ancient, intricate web of interdependence (and, no doubt, exploitation). Though the Narmada has been targeted for
20 “water resource development” for more than 50 years now, the reason it has, until recently, evaded being captured and dismembered is because it flows through three states—Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. (Ninety per cent of the river flows through Madhya Pradesh; it merely skirts the northern border of Maharashtra, then flows through Gujarat for about 180 km before emptying into the Arabian sea at Bharuch).

As early as 1946, plans had been afoot to dam the river at Gora in Gujarat. In 1961, Nehru laid the foundation stone for a 49.8 metre high dam—the midget progenitor of the Sardar Sarovar. Around the same time, the Survey of India drew up new, modernised topographical maps of the river basin. The dam planners in Gujarat studied the new maps and decided that it would be more profitable to build a much bigger dam. But this meant
30 hammering out an agreement first with neighbouring states.

The three states bickered and balked but failed to agree on a water-sharing formula. Eventually, in 1969, the Central Government set up the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal. It

took the Tribunal 10 years to announce its Award. The people whose lives were going to be devastated were neither informed nor consulted nor heard.

To apportion shares in the waters, the first, most basic thing the Tribunal had to do, was to find out how much water there was in the river. Usually this can only be estimated accurately if there is at least 40 years of recorded data on the volume of actual flow in the river. Since this was not available, they decided to extrapolate from rainfall data. They arrived at a figure of 27.22 maf (million acre feet). This figure is the statistical bedrock of the Narmada Valley Projects. We are still living with its legacy. It more or less determines the overall design of the Projects—the height, location and number of dams. By inference, it determines the cost
 10 of the Projects, how much area will be submerged, how many people will be displaced and what the benefits will be. In 1992 actual observed flow data for the Narmada which was now available for 44 years (1948-1992) showed that the yield from the river was only 22.69 maf—18 per cent less! The Central Water Commission admits that there is less water in the Narmada than had previously been assumed. The Government of India says: It may be noted that clause II (of the Decision of the Tribunal) relating to determination of dependable flow as 28 maf is non-reviewable.(!)

In other words, the Narmada is legally bound by human decree to produce as much water as the Government of India commands it to produce.

It's proponents boast that the Narmada Valley Project is the most ambitious river valley
 20 project ever conceived in human history. They plan to build 3,200 dams that will reconstitute the Narmada and her 41 tributaries into a series of step reservoirs—an immense staircase of amenable water. Of these, 30 will be major dams, 135 medium and the rest small. Two of the major dams will be multi-purpose mega dams. The Sardar Sarovar in Gujarat and the Narmada Sagar in Madhya Pradesh will, between them, hold more water than any other reservoir on the Indian subcontinent.

Whichever way you look at it, the Narmada Valley Development Project is Big. It will alter the ecology of the entire river basin of one of India's biggest rivers. For better or for worse, it will affect the lives of 25 million people who live in the valley. Yet, even before the Ministry of Environment cleared the project, the World Bank offered to finance the lynchpin
 30 of the project—the Sardar Sarovar dam (whose reservoir displaces people in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, but whose benefits go to Gujarat). The Bank was ready with its cheque-book before any costs were computed, before any studies had been done, before anybody had any idea of what the human cost or the environmental impact of the dam would be!

The \$450-million loan for the Sardar Sarovar Projects was sanctioned and in place in 1985. The Ministry of Environment clearance for the project came only in 1987! Talk about enthusiasm. It fairly borders on evangelism. Can anybody care so much?

Why were they so keen?

Between 1947 and 1994 the Bank received 6,000 applications for loans from around the world. They didn't turn down a single one. Not a single one. Terms like 'Moving money' and 'Meeting loan targets' suddenly begin to make sense.

10 Today, India is in a situation where it pays back more money to the Bank in interest and repayment instalments than it receives from it. We are forced to incur new debts in order to be able to repay our old ones. According to the World Bank Annual Report, last year (1998), after the arithmetic, India paid the Bank \$478 million more than it received. Over the last five years ('93 to '98) India paid the Bank \$1.475 billion more than it received. The relationship between us is exactly like the relationship between a landless labourer steeped in debt and the local Bania—it is an affectionate relationship, the poor man loves his Bania because he's always there when he's needed. It's not for nothing that we call the world a Global Village. The only difference between the landless labourer and the Government of India is that one uses the money to survive. The other just funnels it into the private coffers of its officers and agents, pushing the country into an economic bondage that it may never overcome.

20 The International Dam Industry is worth \$20 billion a year. If you follow the trails of big dams the world over, wherever you go—China, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, Brazil, Guatemala—you'll rub up against the same story, encounter the same actors: the Iron Triangle (dam-jargon for the nexus between politicians, bureaucrats and dam construction companies), the racketeers who call themselves International Environmental Consultants (who are usually directly employed by or subsidiaries of dam-builders), and, more often than not, the friendly, neighbourhood World Bank. You'll grow to recognise the same inflated rhetoric, the same noble 'Peoples' Dam' slogans, the same swift, brutal repression that follows the first sign of civil insubordination. (Of late, especially after its experience in the Narmada Valley, the Bank is more cautious about choosing the countries in which it finances projects that involve mass displacement. At present, China is their Most Favoured client. It's the great irony of our times—American citizens protest the massacre in Tiananmen square, but the Bank will use their money to fund the Three Gorges Dam in China which is going to displace 1.3 million people.)

30

It's a skilful circus and the acrobats know each other well. Occasionally they'll swap parts—a bureaucrat will join the Bank, a Banker will surface as a Project Consultant. At the end of play, a huge percentage of what's called 'Development Aid' is re-channelled back to the countries it came from, masquerading as equipment cost or consultants' fees or salaries to the agencies' own staff. Often 'Aid' is openly 'tied'. (As in the case of the Japanese loan for the Sardar Sarovar Dam, tied to a contract for purchasing turbines from Sumitomo Corporation.) Sometimes the connections are more sleazy. In 1993 Britain financed the Pergau Dam in Malaysia with a subsidised loan of £234 million, despite an Overseas Development Administration report that said that the dam would be a 'bad buy' for Malaysia. It later emerged
 10 that the loan was offered to 'encourage' Malaysia to sign a £1.3 billion contract to buy British Arms.

In 1994, UK consultants earned \$2.5 billion on overseas contracts. The second biggest sector of the market after Project Management was writing what are called eias (Environmental Impact Assessments). In the Development racket, the rules are pretty simple. If you get invited by a government to write an eia for a big dam project and you point out a problem (say, for instance, you quibble about the amount of water available in a river, or, God forbid, you suggest that perhaps the human costs are too high) then you're history. You're an oowc. An Out Of Work Consultant. And Oops! There goes your Range Rover. There goes your holiday in Tuscany. There goes your children's private boarding school. There's good money in
 20 poverty. Plus Perks.

In keeping with Big Dam tradition, concurrent with the construction of the 138.68 metre high Sardar Sarovar dam, began the elaborate government pantomime of conducting studies to estimate the actual project costs and the impact it would have on people and the environment. The World Bank participated whole-heartedly in the charade—occasionally they knitted their brows and raised feeble requests for more information on issues like the resettlement and rehabilitation of what they call paps—Project Affected Persons. (They help, these acronyms, they manage to mutate muscle and blood into cold statistics. paps soon cease to be people.)

The merest crumbs of information satisfied The Bank and they proceeded with the
 30 project.

The implicit, unwritten but fairly obvious understanding between the concerned agencies was that whatever the costs—economic, environmental or human—the project would go ahead. They would justify it as they went along. They knew full well that eventually,

in a courtroom or to a committee, no argument works as well as a *Fait Accompli*. (Mi' lord, the country is losing two crores a day due to the delay). The government refers to the Sardar Sarovar Projects as the 'Most Studied Project in India', yet the game goes something like this:

When the Tribunal first announced its award, and the Gujarat government announced its plan of how it was going to use its share of water, there was no mention of drinking water for villages in Kutch and Saurashtra, the arid areas of Gujarat. When the project ran into political trouble, the government suddenly discovered the emotive power of Thirst. Suddenly, quenching the thirst of parched throats in Kutch and Saurashtra became the whole point of the Sardar Sarovar Projects. (Never mind that water from two rivers—the Sabarmati and the Mahi, both of which are miles closer to Kutch and Saurashtra than the Narmada, have been dammed and diverted to Ahmedabad, Mehsana and Kheda. Neither Kutch nor Saurashtra have seen a drop of it.) Officially the number of people who will be provided drinking water by the Sardar Sarovar Canal fluctuates from 28 million (1983) to 32.5 million (1989)—nice touch, the decimal point!—to 40 million (1992) and down to 25 million (1993).

The number of villages that would receive drinking water was zero in 1979, 4,719 in the early '80s, 7,234 in 1990 and 8,215 in '91. When challenged, the government admitted that the figures for 1991 included 236 uninhabited villages!

Every aspect of the project is approached in this almost cavalier manner, as if it's a family board game. Even when it concerns the lives and futures of vast numbers of people.

In 1979 the number of families that would be displaced by the Sardar Sarovar reservoir was estimated to be a little over 6,000. In 1987 it grew to 12,000. In 1991 it surged to 27,000. In 1992 the government declared that 40,000 families would be affected. Today, it hovers between 40,000 and 41,500. (Of course even this is an absurd figure, because the reservoir isn't the only thing that displaces people. According to the NBA the actual figure is 85,000 families—about half a million people.)

The estimated cost of the project bounced up from Rs 6,000 crore to Rs 20,000 crore (officially). The NBA says it will cost Rs 40,000 crore. (Half the entire irrigation budget of the whole country over the last fifty years.)

The government claims the Sardar Sarovar Projects will produce 1,450 Mega Watts of power. The thing about multi-purpose dams like the Sardar Sarovar is that their 'purposes' (irrigation, power production and flood-control) conflict with each other. Irrigation uses up the water you need to produce power. Flood control requires you to keep the reservoir empty during the monsoon months to deal with an anticipated surfeit of water. And if there's no

surfeit, you're left with an empty dam. And this defeats the purpose of irrigation, which is to store the monsoon water. It's like the riddle of trying to ford a river with a fox, a chicken and a bag of grain. The result of these mutually conflicting aims, studies say, is that when the Sardar Sarovar Projects are completed, and the scheme is fully functional, it will end up producing only 3 per cent of the power that its planners say it will. 50 Mega Watts.

In an old war, everybody has an axe to grind. So how do you pick your way through these claims and counter-claims? How do you decide whose estimate is more reliable? One way is to take a look at the track record of Indian dams.

The Bargi Dam near Jabalpur was the first dam on the Narmada to be completed (1990). It cost 10 times more than was budgeted and submerged three times more land than the engineers said it would. About 70,000 people from 101 villages were supposed to be displaced, but when they filled the reservoir (without warning anybody), 162 villages were submerged. Some of the resettlement sites built by the government were submerged as well. People were flushed out like rats from the land they had lived on for centuries. They salvaged what they could, and watched their houses being washed away. 114,000 people were displaced. There was no rehabilitation policy. Some were given meagre cash compensations. Many got absolutely nothing. A few were moved to government rehabilitation sites. The site at Gorakhpur is, according to government publicity, an 'ideal village'. Between 1990 and 1992, five people died of starvation there. The rest either returned to live illegally in the forests near the reservoir, or moved to slums in Jabalpur. The Bargi Dam irrigates only as much land as it submerged in the first place—and only 5 per cent of the area that its planners claimed it would irrigate. Even that is water-logged.

Time and again, it's the same story—the Andhra Pradesh Irrigation II scheme claimed it would displace 63,000 people. When completed, it displaced 150,000 people. The Gujarat Medium Irrigation II scheme displaced 140,000 people instead of 63,600. The revised estimate of the number of people to be displaced by the Upper Krishna irrigation project in Karnataka is 240,000 against its initial claims of displacing only 20,000.

These are World Bank figures. Not the NBA's. Imagine what this does to our conservative estimate of 33 million.

Construction work on the Sardar Sarovar dam site, which had continued sporadically since 1961, began in earnest in 1988. At the time, nobody, not the government, nor the World Bank were aware that a woman called Medha Patkar had been wandering through the villages slated to be submerged, asking people whether they had any idea of the plans the government

had in store for them. When she arrived in the valley all those years ago, opposing the construction of the dam was the furthest thing from her mind. Her chief concern was that displaced villagers should be resettled in an equitable, humane way. It gradually became clear to her that the government's intentions towards them were far from honourable. By 1986 word had spread and each state had a peoples' organisation that questioned the promises about resettlement and rehabilitation that were being bandied about by government officials. It was only some years later that the full extent of the horror—the impact that the dams would have, both on the people who were to be displaced and the people who were supposed to benefit—began to surface. The Narmada Valley Development Project came to be known as India's

10 Greatest Planned Environmental Disaster. The various peoples' organisations massed into a single organisation and the Narmada Bachao Andolan—the extraordinary NBA—was born.

In 1988 the NBA formally called for all work on the Narmada Valley Development Projects to be stopped. People declared that they would drown if they had to, but would not move from their homes. Within two years, the struggle had burgeoned and had support from other resistance movements. In September 1989, some 50,000 people gathered in the Valley at Harsud from all over India to pledge to fight Destructive Development. The Dam site and its adjacent areas, already under the Indian Official Secrets Act, was clamped under Section 144 which prohibits the gathering of groups of more than five people. The whole area was turned into a police camp. Despite the barricades, one year later, on September 28, 1990,

20 thousands of villagers made their way on foot and by boat to a little town called Badwani, in Madhya Pradesh, to reiterate their pledge to drown rather than agree to move from their homes. News of the peoples' opposition to the Projects spread to other countries. The Japanese arm of Friends of the Earth mounted a campaign in Japan that succeeded in getting the Government of Japan to withdraw its 27 billion yen loan to finance the Sardar Sarovar Projects. (The contract for the turbines still holds.) Once the Japanese withdrew, international pressure from various Environmental Activist groups who supported the struggle began to mount on the World Bank.

This of course led to an escalation of repression in the valley. Government policy, described by a particularly articulate minister, was to 'flood the valley with khaki'.

30 On Christmas Day in 1990, about 6,000 men and women walked over a hundred kilometres, carrying their provisions and their bedding, accompanying a seven-member sacrificial squad who had resolved to lay down their lives for the river. They were stopped at Ferkuwa on the Gujarat border by battalions of armed police and crowds of people from the

city of Baroda, many of whom were hired, some of whom perhaps genuinely believed that the Sardar Sarovar was ‘Gujarat’s life-line’. It was an interesting confrontation. Middle Class Urban India versus a Rural, predominantly Tribal Army. The marching people demanded they be allowed to cross the border and walk to the dam-site. The police refused them passage. To stress their commitment to non-violence, each villager had his or her hands bound together. One by one, they defied the battalions of police. They were beaten, arrested and dragged into waiting trucks in which they were driven off and dumped some miles away, in the wilderness. They just walked back and began all over again.

10 The confrontation continued for almost two weeks. Finally, on January 7, 1991, the seven members of the sacrificial squad announced they were going on an indefinite hunger strike. Tension rose to dangerous levels. The Indian and International Press, TV camera crews and documentary film-makers were present in force. Reports appeared in the papers almost every day. Environmental Activists stepped up the pressure in Washington. Eventually, acutely embarrassed by the glare of unfavourable media coverage, the World Bank announced that it would institute an Independent Review of the Sardar Sarovar Projects—unprecedented in the history of Bank Behaviour.

20 When the news reached the valley, it was received with distrust and uncertainty. The people had no reason to trust the World Bank. But still, it was a victory of sorts. The villagers, understandably upset by the frightening deterioration in the condition of their comrades who had not eaten for 22 days, pleaded with them to call off the fast. On January 28, the fast at Ferkuwa was called off, and the brave, ragged army returned to their homes shouting “Hamare Gaon Mein Hamara Raj!” (Our Rule in Our Villages).

There has been no army quite like this one, anywhere else in the world. In other countries—China (Chairman Mao got a Big Dam for his 77th birthday), Brazil, Malaysia, Guatemala, Paraguay—every sign of revolt has been snuffed out almost before it began. Here in India, it goes on and on. Of course, the State would like to take credit for this too. It would like us to be grateful to it for not crushing the movement completely, for allowing it to exist. After all what is all this, if not a sign of a healthy functioning democracy in which the State has to intervene when its people have differences of opinion?

30 I suppose that’s one way of looking at it. (Is this my cue to cringe and say ‘Thankyou, thankyou, for allowing me to write the things I write?’)

We don't need to be grateful to the State for permitting us to protest. We can thank ourselves for that. It is we who have insisted on these rights. It is we who have refused to surrender them. If we have anything to be truly proud of as a people, it is this.

The struggle in the Narmada valley lives, despite the State.

The Indian State makes war in devious ways. Apart from its apparent benevolence, its other big weapon is its ability to wait. To roll with the punches. To wear out the opposition. The State never tires, never ages, never needs a rest. It runs an endless relay.

10 But fighting people tire. They fall ill, they grow old. Even the young age prematurely. For 20 years now, since the Tribunal's award, the ragged army in the valley has lived with the fear of eviction. For 20 years, in most areas there has been no sign of 'development'—no roads, no schools, no wells, no medical help. For 20 years, it has borne the stigma 'slated for submergence'—so it's isolated from the rest of society (no marriage proposals, no land transactions). They're a bit like the Hibakushas in Japan (the victims of the bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their descendants). The 'fruits of modern development', when they finally came, brought only horror. Roads brought surveyors. Surveyors brought trucks. Trucks brought policemen. Policemen brought bullets and beatings and rape and arrest and, in one case, murder. The only genuine 'fruit' of modern development that reached them, reached them inadvertently—the right to raise their voices, the right to be heard. But they have fought for 20 years now. How much longer will they last?

20 The struggle in the valley is tiring. It's no longer as fashionable as it used to be. The international camera crews and the radical reporters have moved (like the World Bank) to newer pastures. The documentary films have been screened and appreciated. Everybody's sympathy is all used up. But the dam goes on. It's getting higher and higher...

Now, more than ever before, the ragged army needs reinforcements. If we let it die, if we allow the struggle to be crushed, if we allow the people to be punished, we will lose the most precious thing we have: Our spirit, or what's left of it.

"India will go on," they'll tell you, the sage philosophers who don't want to be troubled by piddling Current Affairs. As though 'India' is somehow more valuable than her people.

30 Old Nazis probably soothe themselves in similar ways.

The war for the Narmada valley is not just some exotic tribal war, or a remote rural war or even an exclusively Indian war. It's a war for the rivers and the mountains and the forests of the world. All sorts of warriors from all over the world, anyone who wishes to enlist,

will be honoured and welcomed. Every kind of warrior will be needed. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, judges, journalists, students, sportsmen, painters, actors, singers, lovers.... The borders are open, folks! Come on in.

Anyway, back to the story.

In June 1991, The World Bank appointed Bradford Morse, a former head of the United Nations Development Program, as Chairman of the Independent Review. His brief was to make a thorough assessment of Sardar Sarovar Projects. He was guaranteed free access to all secret Bank documents relating to the Projects.

10 In September 1991, Bradford Morse and his team arrived in India. The NBA, convinced that this was yet another set-up, at first refused to meet them. The Gujarat government welcomed the team with a red carpet (and a nod and a wink) as covert allies.

A year later, in June 1992, the historic Independent Review (known also as the Morse Report) was published.

20 It unpeels the project delicately, layer by layer, like an onion. Nothing was too big, and nothing too small for them to enquire into. They met ministers and bureaucrats, they met ngos working in the area, went from village to village, from resettlement site to resettlement site. They visited the good ones. The bad ones. The temporary ones, the permanent ones. They spoke to hundreds of people. They travelled extensively in the submergence area and the command area. They went to Kutch and other drought-hit areas in Gujarat. They commissioned their own studies. They examined every aspect of the project: hydrology and water management, the upstream environment, sedimentation, catchment area treatment, the downstream environment, the anticipation of likely problems in the command area—water-logging, salinity, drainage, health, the impact on wildlife.

What the Morse Report reveals, in temperate, measured tones (which I admire, but cannot achieve) is scandalous. It is the most balanced, unbiased, yet damning indictment of the relationship between the Indian State and the World Bank. Without appearing to, perhaps even without intending to, the report cuts through to the cosy core, to the space where they live together and love each other (somewhere between what they say and what they do).

30 The core recommendation of the 357-page Independent Review was unequivocal and wholly unexpected:

“We think the Sardar Sarovar Projects as they stand are flawed, that resettlement and rehabilitation of all those displaced by the Projects is not possible under prevailing circumstances, and that environmental impacts of the Projects have not been properly

considered or adequately addressed. Moreover we believe that the Bank shares responsibility with the borrower for the situation that has developed.... It seems clear that engineering and economic imperatives have driven the Projects to the exclusion of human and environmental concerns.... India and the states involved...have spent a great deal of money. No one wants to see this money wasted. But we caution that it may be more wasteful to proceed without full knowledge of the human and environmental costs. We have decided that it would be irresponsible for us to patch together a series of recommendations on implementation when the flaws in the Projects are as obvious as they seem to us. As a result, we think that the wisest course would be for the Bank to step back from the Projects and consider them afresh. The failure of the Bank's incremental strategy should be acknowledged.”

Four committed, knowledgeable, truly independent men—they do a lot to make up for faith eroded by hundreds of other venal ones who are paid to do similar jobs.

The Bank, however, was still not prepared to give up. It continued to fund the project. Two months after the Independent Review, it sent out the Pamela Cox Committee which did exactly what the Morse Review had cautioned the Bank against. It suggested a sort of patchwork remedy to try and salvage the operation. In October 1992, on the recommendation of the Pamela Cox Committee, the Bank asked the Indian Government to meet some minimum, primary conditions within a period of six months. Even that much, the government couldn't do. Finally, on March 30, 1993, the World Bank pulled out of the Sardar Sarovar Projects. (Actually, technically, on March 29, one day before the deadline they'd been given, the Indian Government asked the World Bank to withdraw). Details. Details.

No one has ever managed to make the World Bank step back from a project before. Least of all a rag-tag army of the poorest people in one of the world's poorest countries. A group of people whom Lewis Preston, then President of the Bank, never managed to fit into his busy schedule when he visited India. Sacking The Bank was and is a huge moral victory for the people in the valley.

The euphoria didn't last. The government of Gujarat announced that it was going to raise the \$200 million shortfall on its own and continue with the project. During the period of the Review, and after it was published, confrontation between people and the Authorities continued unabated in the valley—humiliation, arrests, lathicharges. Indefinite fasts terminated by temporary promises and permanent betrayals. People who had agreed to leave the valley and be resettled had begun returning to their villages from their resettlement sites. In Manibeli, a village in Maharashtra and one of the nerve-centres of the resistance, hundreds of villagers

participated in a Monsoon Satyagraha. In 1993, families in Manibeli remained in their homes as the waters rose. They clung to wooden posts with their children in their arms and refused to move. Eventually policemen prised them loose and dragged them away. The NBA declared that if the government did not agree to review the project, on August 6, 1993, a band of activists would drown themselves in the rising waters of the reservoir. On August 5, the Union Government constituted yet another committee called the Five Member Group (fmg) to review the Sardar Sarovar Projects.

The government of Gujarat refused them entry into Gujarat. The fmg report (a “desk report”) was submitted the following year. It tacitly endorsed the grave concerns of the
 10 Independent Review. But it made no difference. Nothing changed. This is another of the State’s tested strategies. It kills you with committees.

In February 1994, the government of Gujarat ordered the permanent closure of the sluice-gates of the dam.

In May 1994, the NBA filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court questioning the whole basis of the Sardar Sarovar Dam and seeking a stay on the construction.

That monsoon, when the water level in the reservoir rose and smashed down on the other side of the dam, 65,000 cubic metres of concrete and 35,000 cubic metres of rock were torn out of a stilling basin, leaving a 65-metre crater. The riverbed powerhouse was flooded. The damage was kept secret for months. Reports started appearing about it in the press only
 20 in January 1995.

In early 1995, on the grounds that the rehabilitation of displaced people had not been adequate, the Supreme Court ordered work on the dam to be suspended until further notice. The height of the dam was 80 metres above Mean Sea Level.

Meanwhile, work had begun on two more dams in Madhya Pradesh: the Narmada Sagar (without which the Sardar Sarovar loses 17 to 30 per cent of its efficiency) and the Maheshwar Dam. The Maheshwar Dam is next in line, upstream from the Sardar Sarovar. The government of Madhya Pradesh has signed a Power Purchase contract with a private company—S. Kumars, one of India’s leading textile magnates.

Tension in the Sardar Sarovar area abated temporarily and the battle moved upstream
 30 to Maheshwar, in the fertile plains of Nimad.

The case pending in the Supreme Court led to a palpable easing of repression in the valley. Construction work had stopped on the dam, but the rehabilitation charade continued.

Forests (slated for submergence) continued to be cut and carted away in trucks, forcing people who depended on them for a livelihood to move out.

Even though the dam is nowhere near its eventual, projected height, its impact on the environment and the people living along the river is already severe.

Around the dam site and the nearby villages, the number of cases of malaria has increased six-fold.

Several kilometres upstream from the Sardar Sarovar dam, huge deposits of silt, hip-deep and over two hundred metres wide, has cut off access to the river. Women carrying water pots, now have to walk miles, literally miles, to find a negotiable entry point. Cows and goats
 10 get stranded in it and die. The little single-log boats that tribal people use have become unsafe on the irrational circular currents caused by the barricade downstream.

Further upstream, where the silt deposits have not yet become a problem, there's another problem. Landless people, (predominantly tribals and Dalits) have traditionally cultivated rice, fruit and vegetables on the rich, shallow silt banks the river leaves when it recedes in the dry months. Every now and then, the engineers manning the Bargi Dam (way upstream, near Jabalpur) release water from the reservoir without warning. Downstream, the water level in the river suddenly rises. Hundreds of families have had their crops washed away several times, leaving them with no livelihood.

Suddenly they can't trust their river anymore. It's like a loved one who has developed
 20 symptoms of psychosis. Anyone who has loved a river can tell you that the loss of a river is a terrible, aching thing. But I'll be rapped on the knuckles if I continue in this vein. When we're discussing the Greater Common Good there's no place for sentiment. One must stick to facts. Forgive me for letting my heart wander.

The governments of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra continue to be completely cavalier in their dealings with displaced people. The government of Gujarat has a rehabilitation policy (on paper) that makes the other two states look medieval. It boasts of being the best rehabilitation package in the world. It offers land for land to displaced people from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and recognises the claims of 'encroachers' (usually tribal people with no papers). The deception, however, lies in its definition of who qualifies as
 30 'Project Affected'.

In point of fact, the government of Gujarat hasn't even managed to rehabilitate people from its own 19 villages slated for submergence, let alone the rest of the 226 in the other two

states. The inhabitants of these 19 villages have been scattered to 175 separate rehabilitation sites. Social links have been smashed, communities broken up.

In practice, the resettlement story (with a few ‘ideal village’ exceptions) continues to be one of callousness and broken promises. Some people have been given land, others haven’t. Some have land that is stony and uncultivable. Some have land that is irredeemably waterlogged. Some have been driven out by landowners who sold land to the government but haven’t been paid yet.

10 Some who were resettled on the peripheries of other villages have been robbed, beaten and chased away by their host villagers. There have been occasions when displaced people from two different dam projects have been allotted contiguous lands. In one case, displaced people from three dams—the Ukai Dam, the Sardar Sarovar Dam and the Karjan Dam—were resettled in the same area. In addition to fighting amongst themselves for resources—water, grazing land, jobs—they had to fight a group of landless labourers who had been sharecropping the land for absentee landlords who had subsequently sold it to the government.

20 There’s another category of displaced people—people whose lands have been acquired by the government for Resettlement Sites. There’s a pecking order even amongst the wretched—Sardar Sarovar ‘oustees’ are more glamorous than other ‘oustees’ because they’re occasionally in the news and have an ongoing case in court. (In other development projects, where there’s no press, no NBA, no court case, there are no records. The displaced leave no trail at all.)

In several resettlement sites, people have been dumped in rows of corrugated tin sheds which are furnaces in summer and fridges in winter. Some of them are located in dry river beds which, during the monsoon, turn into fast-flowing drifts. I’ve been to some of these ‘sites’. I’ve seen film footage of others: shivering children, perched like birds on the edges of charpais, while swirling waters enter their tin homes. Frightened, fevered eyes watch pots and pans carried through the doorway by the current, floating out into the flooded fields, thin fathers swimming after them to retrieve what they can.

30 When the waters recede they leave ruin. Malaria, diarrhoea, sick cattle stranded in the slush. The ancient teak beams dismantled from their previous homes, carefully stacked away like postponed dreams, now spongy, rotten and unusable.

Forty households were moved from Manibeli to a resettlement site in Maharashtra. In the first year, 38 children died.

In today's papers (Indian Express, April 26, '99) there's a report about nine deaths in a single rehabilitation site in Gujarat. In the course of a week. That's 1.2875 paps a day, if you're counting.

Many of those who have been resettled are people who have lived all their lives deep in the forest with virtually no contact with money and the modern world. Suddenly they find themselves left with the option of starving to death or walking several kilometres to the nearest town, sitting in the marketplace (both men and women), offering themselves as wage labour, like goods on sale.

10 Instead of a forest from which they gathered everything they needed—food, fuel, fodder, rope, gum, tobacco, tooth powder, medicinal herbs, housing material—they earn between 10 and 20 rupees a day with which to feed and keep their families. Instead of a river, they have a hand-pump. In their old villages, they had no money, but they were insured. If the rains failed, they had the forests to turn to. The river to fish in. Their livestock was their fixed deposit. Without all this, they're a heartbeat away from destitution.

In Vadaj, a resettlement site I visited near Baroda, the man who was talking to me rocked his sick baby in his arms, clumps of flies gathered on its sleeping eyelids. Children collected around us, taking care not to burn their bare skin on the scorching tin walls of the shed they call a home. The man's mind was far away from the troubles of his sick baby. He was making me a list of the fruit he used to pick in the forest. He counted 48 kinds. He told
20 me that he didn't think he or his children would ever be able to afford to eat any fruit again. Not unless he stole it. I asked him what was wrong with his baby. He said it would be better for the baby to die than to have to live like this. I asked what the baby's mother thought about that. She didn't reply. She just stared.

For the people who've been resettled, everything has to be re-learned. Every little thing, every big thing: from shitting and pissing (where d'you do it when there's no jungle to hide you?) to buying a bus ticket, to learning a new language, to understanding money. And worst of all, learning to be supplicants. Learning to take orders. Learning to have Masters. Learning to answer only when you're addressed.

30 In addition to all this, they have to learn how to make written representations (in triplicate) to the Grievance Redressal Committee or the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam for any particular problems they might have. Recently, 3,000 people came to Delhi to protest their situation—travelling overnight by train, living on the blazing streets. The President wouldn't meet them because he had an eye infection. Maneka Gandhi, the Minister for Social Justice

and Empowerment, wouldn't meet them but asked for a written representation (Dear Maneka, Please don't build the dam, Love, The People). When the representation was handed to her she scolded the little delegation for not having written it in English.

From being self-sufficient and free, to being impoverished and yoked to the whims of a world you know nothing, nothing about—what d'you suppose it must feel like? Would you like to trade your beach house in Goa for a hovel in Paharganj? No? Not even for the sake of the Nation?

Truly, it is just not possible for a State Administration, any State Administration, to carry out the rehabilitation of a people as fragile as this, on such an immense scale. It's like using a pair of hedge-shears to trim an infant's fingernails. You can't do it without shearing its fingers off. Land for land sounds like a reasonable swap, but how do you implement it? How do you uproot 200,000 people (the official blinkered estimate) of which 117,000 are tribal people, and relocate them in a humane fashion? How do you keep their communities intact, in a country where every inch of land is fought over, where almost all litigation pending in courts has to do with land disputes?

Where is all this fine, unoccupied but arable land that is waiting to receive these intact communities?

The simple answer is that there isn't any. Not even for the 'officially' displaced of this one dam.

20 What about the rest of the 3,299 dams?

What about the remaining thousands of paps earmarked for annihilation? Shall we just put the Star of David on their doors and get it over with?

Jalud, in the Nimad plains of Madhya Pradesh, is the first of 60 villages that will be submerged by the reservoir of the Maheshwar dam. Jalud is not a tribal village, and is therefore riven with the shameful caste divisions that are the scourge of every ordinary Hindu village. A majority of the land-owning farmers (the ones who qualify as paps) are Rajputs. They farm some of the most fertile soil in India. Their houses are piled with sacks of wheat and daal and rice. They boast so much about the things they grow on their land that if it weren't so tragic, it could get on your nerves. Their houses have already begun to crack with the impact of the dynamiting on the dam site.

30 The 12 predominantly Dalit families who had small holdings in the vicinity of the dam site had their land acquired. They told me how when they objected, cement was poured into

their water pipes, their standing crops were bulldozed and the police occupied the land by force. All 12 families are now landless and work as wage labour.

The area that the people of Jalud are going to be moved to is a few kilometres inland, away from the river, adjoining a predominantly Dalit and tribal village called Samraj. I saw the huge tract of land that had been marked off for them. It was a hard, stony hillock with stubbly grass and scrub, on which truckloads of silt was being unloaded and spread out in a thin layer to make it look like rich, black cotton soil. The story goes like this: on behalf of the S. Kumars (Textile Tycoons turned Nation Builders) the District Magistrate acquired the hillock, which was actually village common grazing land that belonged to the people of Samraj. In addition
10 to this, the land of 10 Dalit villagers was acquired. No compensation was paid.

The villagers, whose main source of income was their livestock, had to sell their goats and buffalos because they no longer had anywhere to graze them. Their only remaining source of income lies (lay) on the banks of a small lake on the edge of the village. In summer, when the water level recedes, it leaves a shallow ring of rich silt on which the villagers grow (grew) rice, melons and cucumber.

The S. Kumars have excavated this silt, to cosmetically cover the stony grazing ground (that the Rajputs of Jalud don't want). The banks of the lake are now steep and uncultivable.

The already impoverished people of Samraj have been left to starve, while this photo-opportunity is being readied for German funders and Indian courts and anybody else who
20 cares to pass that way.

This is how India works. This is the genesis of the Maheshwar dam. The story of the first village. What will happen to the other 59? May bad luck pursue this dam. May bulldozers turn upon the Textile Tycoons.

Nothing can justify this kind of behaviour.

In circumstances like these, to even entertain a debate about Rehabilitation is to take the first step towards setting aside the Principles of Justice. Resettling 200,000 people in order to take (or pretend to take) drinking water to 40 million—there's something very wrong with the scale of operations here. This is Fascist Maths. It strangles stories. Bludgeons detail. And manages to blind perfectly reasonable people with its spurious, shining vision.

30 When I arrived on the banks of the Narmada in late March (1999), it was a month after the Supreme Court suddenly vacated the stay on construction work of the Sardar Sarovar Dam. I had read pretty much everything I could lay my hands on (all those 'secret' Government documents). I had a clear idea of the lay of the land—of what had happened where and when

and to whom. The story played itself out before my eyes like a tragic film whose actors I'd already met. Had I not known its history, nothing would have made sense. Because in the valley there are stories within stories and it's easy to lose the clarity of rage in the sludge of other peoples' sorrow.

I ended my journey in Kevadia Colony, where it all began. Thirty-eight years ago, this is where the government of Gujarat decided to locate the infrastructure it would need for starting work on the dam: guest houses, office blocks, accommodation for engineers and their staff, roads leading to the dam site, warehouses for construction material.

10 It is located on the cusp of what is now the Sardar Sarovar reservoir and the Wonder Canal, Gujarat's 'life-line' , which is going to quench the thirst of millions.

Nobody knows this, but Kevadia Colony is the key to the World. Go there, and secrets will be revealed to you.

In the winter of 1961, a government officer arrived in a village called Kothie and informed the villagers that some of their land would be needed to construct a helipad. In a few days a bulldozer arrived and flattened standing crops. The villagers were made to sign papers and were paid a sum of money, which they assumed was payment for their destroyed crops. When the helipad was ready, a helicopter landed on it, and out came Prime Minister Nehru. Most of the villagers couldn't see him because he was surrounded by policemen. Nehru made a speech. Then he pressed a button and there was an explosion on the other side of the river.
20 After the explosion he flew away. That was the inauguration of the earliest avatar of the Sardar Sarovar Dam.

Could Nehru have known when he pressed that button that he had unleashed an incubus?

After Nehru left, the government of Gujarat arrived in strength. It acquired 1,600 acres of land from 950 families from six villages. The people were Tadvi tribals, but because of their proximity to the city of Baroda, not entirely unversed in the ways of a market economy. They were sent notices and told that they would be paid cash compensations and given jobs on the dam site. Then the nightmare began. Trucks and bulldozers rolled in. Forests were felled, standing crops destroyed. Everything turned into a whirl of jeeps and engineers and cement
30 and steel. Mohan Bhai Tadvi watched eight acres of his land with standing crops of jowar, toovar and cotton being levelled. Overnight he became a landless labourer. Three years later he received his cash compensation of Rs 250 an acre in three instalments.

Dersukh Bhai Vesa Bhai's father was given Rs 3,500 for his house and five acres of land with its standing crops and all the trees on it. He remembers walking all the way to Rajpipla (the district headquarters) as a little boy, holding his father's hand. He remembers how terrified they were when they were called into the Tehsildar's office. They were made to surrender their compensation notices and sign a receipt. They were illiterate, so they didn't know how much the receipt was made out for.

Everybody had to go to Rajpipla but they were always summoned on different days, one by one. So they couldn't exchange information or compare amounts.

10 Gradually, out of the dust and bulldozers, an offensive, diffuse configuration emerged. Kevadia Colony. Row upon row of ugly cement flats, offices, guest houses, roads. All the graceless infrastructure of Big Dam construction. The villagers' houses were dismantled and moved to the periphery of the colony, where they remain today, squatters on their own land. Those that created trouble were intimidated by the police and the Construction Company. The villagers told me that in the Contractor's headquarters they have a 'lock-up' like a police lock-up, where recalcitrant villagers are incarcerated and beaten.

The people who were evicted to build Kevadia Colony do not qualify as 'Project-Affected' in Gujarat's Rehabilitation package.

Some of them work as servants in the officers' bungalows and waiters in the guest house built on the land where their own houses once stood. Can anything be more poignant?

20 Those who had some land left, tried to cultivate it, but the Kevadia municipality introduced a scheme in which they brought in pigs to eat uncollected refuse on the streets. The pigs stray into the villagers' fields and destroy their crops.

In 1992, after 30 years, each family has been offered a sum of Rs 12,000 per hectare, upto a maximum of Rs 36,000, provided they agree to leave their homes and go away! Yet 40 per cent of the land that was acquired is lying unused. The government refuses to return it. The 11 acres acquired from Deviben, who is a widow now, have been given over to the Swami Narayan Trust (a big religious sect). On a small portion of it, the Trust runs a little school. The rest it cultivates, while Deviben watches through the barbed wire fence. On the 200 acres acquired in the village of Gora, villagers were evicted and blocks of flats were built. They lay
30 empty for years. Eventually the government hired it for a nominal fee to Jai Prakash Associates, the dam contractors, who, the villagers say, sub-let it privately for Rs 32,000 a month. (Jai Prakash Associates, the biggest dam contractors in the country, the real nation-builders, own the Siddharth Continental and the Vasant Continental in Delhi.)

On an area of about 30 acres there is an absurd cement pwd ‘replica’ of the ancient Shoolpaneshwar temple that was submerged in the reservoir. The same political formation that plunged a whole nation into a bloody, medieval nightmare because it insisted on destroying an old mosque to dig up a non-existent temple, thinks nothing of submerging a hallowed pilgrimage route and hundreds of temples that have been worshipped in for centuries.

It thinks nothing of destroying the sacred hills and groves, the places of worship, the ancient homes of the gods and demons of tribal people.

10 It thinks nothing of submerging a valley that has yielded fossils, microliths and rock paintings, the only valley in India, according to archaeologists, that contains an uninterrupted record of human occupation from the Old Stone Age.

What can one say?

In Kevadia Colony, the most barbaric joke of all is the wildlife museum. The Shoolpaneshwar Sanctuary Interpretation Centre gives you a quick, comprehensive picture of the government’s commitment to Conservation.

20 The Sardar Sarovar reservoir, when the dam is at its full height, is going to submerge about 13,000 hectares of prime forest land. (In anticipation of submergence, the forest began to be felled many greedy years ago). Environmentalists and conservationists were quite rightly alarmed at the extent of loss of biodiversity and wildlife habitat that the submergence would cause. To mitigate this loss, the government decided to expand the Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary that straddles the dam on the south side of the river. There is a hare-brained scheme that envisages drowning animals from the submerged forests swimming their way to ‘wildlife corridors’ that will be created for them, and setting up home in the New! Improved! Shoolpaneshwar Sanctuary. Presumably wildlife and biodiversity can be protected and maintained only if human activity is restricted and traditional rights to use forest resources curtailed. About 40,000 tribal people from 101 villages within the boundaries of the Shoolpaneshwar Sanctuary depend on the forest for a livelihood. They will be ‘persuaded’ to leave. They are not included in the definition of Project Affected.

Where will they go? I imagine you know by now.

30 Whatever their troubles in the real world, in the Shoolpaneshwar Sanctuary Interpretation Centre (where an old stuffed leopard and a mouldy sloth bear have to make do with a shared corner) the tribal people have a whole room to themselves. On the walls there are clumsy wooden carvings—government approved tribal art, with signs that say ‘Tribal Art’. In the centre, there is a life-sized thatched hut with the door open. The pot’s on the fire,

the dog is asleep on the floor and all's well with the world. Outside, to welcome you, are Mr and Mrs Tribal. A lumpy, papier mache couple, smiling.

Smiling. They're not even permitted the grace of rage. That's what I can't get over.

Oh, but have I got it wrong? What if they're smiling voluntarily, bursting with National Pride? Brimming with the joy of having sacrificed their lives to bring drinking water to thirsty millions in Gujarat?

For 20 years now, the people of Gujarat have waited for the water they believe the Wonder Canal will bring them. For years the government of Gujarat has invested 85 per cent of the state's irrigation budget into the Sardar Sarovar Projects. Every smaller, quicker, local, more feasible scheme has been set aside for the sake of this. Election after election has been contested and won on the 'water ticket'. Everyone's hopes are pinned to the Wonder Canal. Will she fulfil Gujarat's dreams?

From the Sardar Sarovar Dam, the Narmada flows through 180 km of rich lowland, into the Arabian sea in Bharuch. What the Wonder Canal does, more or less, is to re-route most of the river, turning it almost 90 degrees northward. It's a pretty drastic thing to do to a river. The Narmada estuary in Bharuch is one of the last known breeding place of the Hilsa, probably the hottest contender for India's favourite fish. The Stanley Dam wiped out Hilsa from the Cauvery River in South India, and Pakistan's Ghulam Mohammed dam destroyed its spawning area on the Indus. Hilsa, like the salmon, is an anadromous fish—born in freshwater, migrating to the ocean as a smolt and returning to the river to spawn. The drastic reduction in water flow, the change in the chemistry of the water because of all the sediment trapped behind the dam, will radically alter the ecology of the estuary and modify the delicate balance of fresh water and sea water which is bound to affect the spawning. At present, the Narmada estuary produces 13,000 tonnes of Hilsa and freshwater prawn (which also breed in brackish water). About 10,000 fisher families depend on it for a living.

The Morse Committee was appalled to discover that no studies had been done of the downstream environment—no documentation of the riverine ecosystem, its seasonal changes, biological species or the pattern of how its resources are used. The dam builders had no idea what the impact of the dam would be on the people and the environment downstream, let alone any ideas on what steps to take to mitigate it.

The government simply says that it will alleviate the loss of Hilsa fisheries by stocking the reservoir with hatchery-bred fish. (Who'll control the reservoir? Who'll grant the commercial fishing to its favourite paying customers?) The only hitch is that so far, scientists

have not managed to breed Hilsa artificially. The rearing of Hilsa depends on getting spawn from wild adults, which will, in all likelihood, be eliminated by the dam. Dams have either eliminated or endangered one-fifth of the world's freshwater fish.

So! Quiz question—where will the 40,000 fisherfolk go?

E-mail your answers to the Government that Cares dot com.

At the risk of losing readers, (I've been warned several times—'How can you write about irrigation? Who the hell is interested?') let me tell you what the Wonder Canal is—and what she's meant to achieve. Be interested, if you want to snatch your future back from the sweaty palms of the Iron Triangle.

10 Most rivers in India are monsoon-fed. 80-85 per cent of the flow takes place during the rainy months—usually between June and September. The purpose of a dam, an irrigation dam, is to store monsoon water in its reservoir and then use it judiciously for the rest of the year, distributing it across dry land through a system of canals. The area of land irrigated by the canal network is called the command area. How will the command area, accustomed only to seasonal irrigation, its entire ecology designed for that single pulse of monsoon rain, react to being irrigated the whole year round? Perennial canal irrigation does to soil roughly what anabolic steroids do to the human body. Steroids can turn an ordinary athlete into an Olympic medal-winner, perennial irrigation can convert soil which produced only a single crop a year into soil that yields several crops a year. Lands on which farmers traditionally grew crops that
20 don't need a great deal of water (maize, millet, barley, a whole range of pulses) suddenly yield water-guzzling cash crops—cotton, rice, soya bean, and the biggest guzzler of all (like those finned '50s cars), sugarcane. This completely alters traditional crop-patterns in the command area. People stop growing things they can afford to eat; start growing things they can only afford to sell. By linking themselves to the 'market' they lose control over their lives.

Unfortunately, ecologically, this is a poisonous payoff. Even if the markets hold out, the soil doesn't. Over time it becomes too poor to support the extra demands made on it. Gradually, in the way the steroid-using athlete becomes an invalid, the soil becomes depleted and degraded, the agricultural yields begin to wind down. In India, land irrigated by well water is now almost twice as productive as land irrigated by canals. Certain kinds of soil are less
30 suitable for perennial irrigation than others. Perennial canal irrigation raises the level of the water-table. As the water moves up through the soil, it absorbs salts. Saline water is drawn to the surface by capillary action, and the land becomes water-logged. The 'logged' water (to coin a phrase) is then breathed into the atmosphere by plants, causing an even greater concentration

of salts in the soil. When the concentration of salts in the soil reaches one per cent, that soil becomes toxic to plant life. This is what's called salinisation.

A study by the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at the Australian National University says that one-fifth of the world's irrigated land is salt-affected.

By the mid-'80s, 25 million of the 37 million hectares under irrigation in Pakistan was estimated to be either salinised or water-logged or both. In India the estimates vary between 6 and 10 million hectares. According to 'secret' government studies, more than 52 per cent of the Sardar Sarovar command area is prone to water-logging and salinisation.

And that's not the end of the bad news.

10 The 460-km long, concrete-lined Sardar Sarovar Wonder Canal and its 75,000 km network of branch canals and sub-branch canals is designed to irrigate a total of two million hectares of land spread over 12 districts. The districts of Kutch and Saurashtra (the billboards of Gujarat's Thirst campaign) are at the very tail end of this network.

The system of canals superimposes an arbitrary concrete grid on the existing pattern of natural drainage in the command area. It's a little like reorganising the pattern of reticulate veins on the surface of a leaf. When a canal cuts across the path of a natural drain, it blocks the natural flow of the seasonal water and leads to water-logging. The engineering solution to this is to map the pattern of natural drainage in the area and replace it with an alternate, artificial drainage system that is built in conjunction with the canals. The problem, as you can imagine,
20 is that doing this is enormously expensive. The cost of drainage is not included as part of the Sardar Sarovar Projects. It usually isn't, in most irrigation projects. Here's why.

David Hopper, the World Bank vice-president for South Asia, has admitted that the Bank does not usually include the cost of drainage in its irrigation projects in South Asia because irrigation projects with adequate drainage are not economically viable. It costs five times as much to provide adequate drainage as it does to irrigate the same amount of land. The Bank's solution to the problem is to put in the irrigation system and wait for salinity and water-logging to set in. When all the money's spent, and the land is devastated, and the people are in despair, who should pop by? Why, the friendly neighbourhood Banker! And what's that bulge in his pocket? Could it be a loan for a Drainage Project?

30 In Pakistan the World Bank financed the Tarbela (1977) and Mangla Dam (1967) Projects on the Indus. The command areas are water-logged. Now The Bank has given Pakistan a \$785 million loan for a drainage project. In India, in Punjab and Haryana it's doing the same.

Irrigation without drainage is like having a system of arteries and no veins. Pretty damn pointless.

Since the World Bank stepped back from the Sardar Sarovar Projects, it's a little unclear where the money for the drainage is going to come from. This hasn't deterred the government from going ahead with the Canal work. The result is that even before the dam is ready, before the Wonder Canal has been commissioned, before a single drop of irrigation water has been delivered, water-logging has set in. Among the worst affected areas are the resettlement colonies.

10 There is a difference between the planners of the Sardar Sarovar irrigation scheme and the planners of previous projects. At least they acknowledge that water-logging and salinisation are real problems, and need to be addressed.

Their solutions, however, are corny enough to send a Hoollock Gibbon to a hooting hospital.

They plan to have a series of electronic groundwater sensors placed in every 100 sq km of the command area. (That works out to about 1,800 ground sensors). These will be linked to a central computer which will analyse the data and send out commands to the canal heads to stop water flowing into areas that show signs of water-logging. A network of 'Only-irrigation', 'Only-drainage' and 'Irrigation-cum-drainage' tubewells will be sunk, and electronically synchronised by the central computer. The saline water will be pumped out, mixed with mathematically computed quantities of freshwater and recirculated into a network of surface and sub-surface drains (for which more land will be acquired). To achieve the irrigation efficiency that they claim they'll achieve, according to a study done by Dr Rahul Ram for Kalpavriksh, 82 per cent of the water that goes into the Wonder Canal network will have to be pumped out again!

20

They've never implemented an electronic irrigation scheme before, not even as a pilot project. It hasn't occurred to them to experiment with some already degraded land, just to see if it works. No, they'll use our money to install it over the whole of the 2 million hectares and then see if it works. What if it doesn't? If it doesn't, it won't matter to the planners. They'll still draw the same salaries. They'll still get their pension and their gratuity and whatever else you get when you retire from a career of inflicting mayhem on a people.

30

How can it possibly work? It's like sending in a rocket scientist to milk a troublesome cow. How can they manage a gigantic electronic irrigation system when they can't even line

the walls of the canals without having them collapse and cause untold damage to crops and people?

When they can't even prevent the Big Dam itself from breaking off in bits when it rains?

To quote from one of their own studies: "The design, the implementation and management of the integration of groundwater and surface water in the above circumstance is complex."

10 Agreed. To say the least. Their recommendation of how to deal with the complexity: "It will only be possible to implement such a system if all groundwater and surface water supplies are managed by a single authority."

Aha!

It's beginning to make sense now. Who'll own the water? The Single Authority. Who'll sell the water? The Single Authority. Who'll profit from the sales? The Single Authority. The Single Authority has a scheme whereby it will sell water by the litre, not to individuals but to farmers' cooperatives (which don't exist just yet, but no doubt the Single Authority can create Cooperatives and force farmers to cooperate?). Computer water, unlike ordinary river water, is expensive. Only those who can afford it will get it.

Gradually, small farmers will get edged out by big farmers, and the whole cycle of uprootment will begin all over again.

20 The Single Authority, because it owns the computer water, will also decide who will grow what. It says that farmers getting computer water will not be allowed to grow sugarcane because they'll use up the share of the thirsty millions at the tail end of the canal. But the Single Authority has already given licences to 10 large sugar mills right near the head of the canal. On an earlier occasion, the Single Authority said only 30 per cent of the command area of the Ukai Dam would be used for sugarcane. But sugarcane grows on 75 per cent of it (and 30 per cent is water-logged). In Maharashtra, thanks to a different branch of the Single Authority, the politically powerful sugar lobby that occupies one-tenth of the state's irrigated land uses half the state's irrigation water.

30 In addition to the sugar growers, the Single Authority has recently announced a scheme that envisages a series of five-star hotels, golf-courses and water parks that will come up along the Wonder Canal. What earthly reason could possibly justify this?

The Single Authority says it's the only way to raise money to complete the project!

I really worry about those millions of good people in Kutch and Saurashtra.

Will the water ever reach them?

First of all, we know that there's a lot less water in the river than the Single Authority claims there is.

Second of all, in the absence of the Narmada Sagar Dam, the irrigation benefits of the Sardar Sarovar drop by a further 17-30 per cent.

10 Third of all, the irrigation efficiency of the Wonder Canal (the actual amount of water delivered by the system) has been arbitrarily fixed at 60 per cent. The highest irrigation efficiency in India, taking into account system leaks and surface evaporation, is 35 per cent. This means it's likely that only half of the command area will be irrigated. Which half? The first half.

Fourth, to get to Kutch and Saurashtra, the Wonder Canal has to negotiate its way past the 10 sugar mills, the golf-courses, the five-star hotels, the water parks and the cash-crop growing, politically powerful, Patel-rich districts of Baroda, Ahmedabad, Kheda, Gandhinagar and Mehsana. (Already, in complete contravention of its own directives, the Single Authority has allotted the city of Baroda a sizeable quantity of water. When Baroda gets, can Ahmedabad be left behind? The political clout of powerful urban centres in Gujarat will ensure they get their share.)

Fifth, even in the (one hundred per cent) unlikely event that water gets there, it has to be piped and distributed to those 8,000 waiting villages.

20 It's worth knowing that of the one billion people in the world who have no access to safe drinking water, 855 million live in rural areas. This is because the cost of installing an energy-intensive network of thousands of kilometres of pipelines, aqueducts, pumps and treatment plants that are needed to provide drinking water to scattered rural populations is prohibitive. Nobody builds Big Dams to provide drinking water to rural people. Nobody can afford to.

When the Morse Committee first arrived in Gujarat they were impressed by the Gujarat government's commitment to taking drinking water to such distant, rural outposts. They asked to see the detailed drinking water plans.

There weren't any. (There still aren't any.)

30 They asked if any costs had been worked out. "A few thousand crores," was the breezy answer. A billion dollars is an expert's calculated guess. It's not included as part of the project cost. So where is the money going to come from?

Never mind. Jus' askin'.

It's interesting that the Farakka Barrage that diverts water from the Ganga to Calcutta Port has reduced the drinking water availability for 40 million people who live downstream in Bangladesh.

At times there's something so precise and mathematically chilling about nationalism.

Build a dam to take water away from 40 million people. Build a dam to pretend to bring water to 40 million people.

Who are these gods that govern us? Is there no limit to their powers?

The last person I met in the valley was Bhaiji Bhai. He is a Tadvi tribal from Undava, one of the first villages where the government began to acquire land for the Wonder Canal and its 75,000 km network. Bhaiji Bhai lost 17 of his 19 acres to the Wonder Canal. It crashes through his land, 700 feet wide including its walkways and steep, sloping embankments, like a velodrome for giant bicyclists.

The Canal network affects more than 200,000 families. People have lost wells and trees, people have had their houses separated from their farms by the canal, forcing them to walk two or three kms to the nearest bridge and then two or three kms back along the other side. About 23,000 families, let's say 100,000 people, will be, like Bhaiji Bhai, seriously affected. They don't count as 'Project-affected' and are not entitled to rehabilitation.

Like his neighbours in Kevadia Colony, Bhaiji Bhai became a pauper overnight.

Bhaiji Bhai and his people, forced to smile for photographs on government calendars. Bhaiji Bhai and his people, denied the grace of rage. Bhaiji Bhai and his people, squashed like bugs by this country they're supposed to call their own.

It was late evening when I arrived at his house. We sat down on the floor and drank over-sweet tea in the dying light. As he spoke, a memory stirred in me, a sense of déjà vu. I couldn't imagine why. I knew I hadn't met him before. Then I realised what it was. I didn't recognise him, but I remembered his story. I'd seen him in an old documentary film, shot more than 10 years ago, in the valley. He was frailer now, his beard softened with age. But his story hadn't aged. It was still young and full of passion. It broke my heart, the patience with which he told it. I could tell he had told it over and over and over again, hoping, praying, that one day, one of the strangers passing through Undava would turn out to be Good Luck. Or God.

Bhaiji Bhai, Bhaiji Bhai, when will you get angry? When will you stop waiting? When will you say 'That's enough!' and reach for your weapons, whatever they may be? When will you show us the whole of your resonant, terrifying, invincible strength? When will you break the faith? Will you break the faith? Or will you let it break you?

To slow a beast, you break its limbs. To slow a nation, you break its people. You rob them of volition. You demonstrate your absolute command over their destiny. You make it clear that ultimately it falls to you to decide who lives, who dies, who prospers, who doesn't. To exhibit your capability you show off all that you can do, and how easily you can do it. How easily you could press a button and annihilate the earth. How you can start a war, or sue for peace. How you can snatch a river away from one and gift it to another. How you can green a desert, or fell a forest and plant one somewhere else. You use caprice to fracture a peoples' faith in ancient things—earth, forest, water, air. Once that's done, what do they have left? Only you. They'll turn to you, because you're all they have. They'll love you even while they despise you. They'll trust you even though they know you well. They'll vote for you even as you squeeze the very breath from their bodies. They'll drink what you give them to drink. They'll breathe what you give them to breathe. They'll live where you dump their belongings. They have to. What else can they do? There's no higher court of redress. You're their mother and their father. You're the judge and the jury. You're the World. You're God.

Power is fortified not just by what it destroys, but also by what it creates. Not just by what it takes, but also by what it gives. And Powerlessness reaffirmed not just by the helplessness of those who have lost, but also by the gratitude of those who have (or think they have) gained.

This cold, contemporary cast of power is couched between the lines of noble-sounding clauses in democratic-sounding constitutions. It's wielded by the elected representatives of an ostensibly free people. Yet no monarch, no despot, no dictator in any other century in the history of human civilisation has had access to weapons like these.

Day by day, river by river, forest by forest, mountain by mountain, missile by missile, bomb by bomb—almost without our knowing it, we are being broken.

Big Dams are to a Nation's 'Development' what Nuclear Bombs are to its Military Arsenal. They're both weapons of mass destruction. They're both weapons governments use to control their own people. Both Twentieth Century emblems that mark a point in time when human intelligence has outstripped its own instinct for survival. They're both malignant indications of civilisation turning upon itself. They represent the severing of the link, not just the link—the understanding—between human beings and the planet they live on. They scramble the intelligence that connects eggs to hens, milk to cows, food to forests, water to rivers, air to life and the earth to human existence.

Can we unscramble it?

Maybe. Inch by inch. Bomb by bomb. Dam by dam. Maybe by fighting specific wars in specific ways. We could begin in the Narmada valley.

This July will bring the last monsoon of the Twentieth Century. The ragged army in the Narmada valley has declared that it will not move when the waters of the Sardar Sarovar reservoir rise to claim its lands and homes. Whether you love the dam or hate it, whether you want it or you don't, it is in the fitness of things that you understand the price that's being paid for it. That you have the courage to watch while the dues are cleared and the books are squared.

Our dues. Our books. Not theirs.

Be there.

Critical Reading

Writings by Arundhati Roy for particular study: ‘the greater common good’, ‘power politics’, ‘the ladies have feelings, so...’, all in *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (London: Flamingo Books, 2002). 4 copies; shelfmark 826ROY. See also *Broken Republic. Three Essays* (London, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2011). Shelfmark 826ROY. 4 copies; **SLN**.

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