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## The Business of Reflection

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## PART II



# The English Notebooks

**Thursday, August 4<sup>th</sup> [1853].** A month, lacking two days, since we left America;—a fortnight, and some odd days, since we arrived in England.<sup>1</sup> I began my services (such as they are) on Monday last, August 1st; and here I sit in my private room at the Consulate, while the Vice Consul and clerk are carrying on affairs in the outer office. Every morning, I find the entry thronged with the most rascally set of sailors that ever were seen—dirty, desperate, and altogether pirate-like in aspect. What the devil they want here, is beyond my present knowledge; but probably they have been shipwrecked, or otherwise thrown at large on the world, and wish for assistance in some shape. Daily, half a dozen or so of these rogues are distributed among the American vessels to be sent back to their native country;—or rather, to their adopted one; for not one in ten of them are really Americans, but outcasts of all the maritime nations on earth, in a uniform of dirty red-baize shirts.<sup>2</sup>

The pleasantest incident of the day, is when Mr. Pierce (the vice-consul or head-clerk) makes his appearance with the account books, containing the receipts and expenditures of the preceding day, and deposits on my desk a little rouleau of the Queen's coin, wrapt up in a piece of paper. This morning, there were eight sovereigns, four half-crowns, and a shilling—a pretty fair day's work, though not more than the average ought to be.

This forenoon, thus far, I have had two calls, not of business—one from an American captain, Foster, and his son, a boy—another from Mr. H. A. Bright, whom I met in America, and who has showed us great attention

here.<sup>3</sup> He has arranged for us to go to the Theatre with his family, this evening.

My office consists of two rooms in an edifice called Washington buildings, and so named from the circumstance of the consulate being located here. It is near the docks, and on the corner of Brunswick-street; and from my window, across the narrow street, I have a view of a tall, dismal, smoke-blackened, ugly brick warehouse,—uglier than any building I ever saw in America; and from one or another of the various stories, bags of salt are often being raised or lowered, swinging and vibrating in the air. There is a continual rumble of heavy wheels, which makes conversation rather difficult, although I am gradually getting accustomed to it. My apartment (about twelve feet by fifteen, and of a good height) is hung with a map of the United States, and another of Europe; there is a hideous colored lithograph of General Taylor,<sup>4</sup> life-size, and one or two smaller engraved portraits; also three representations of American naval victories; a lithograph of the Tennessee state-house, and another of the steamer Empire State. The mantelpiece is adorned with the American Eagle, painted on the wood; and on shelves there are a number of volumes, bound in sheepskin, of the laws of the United States and the Statutes at Large. Thus the consular office is a little patch of America, with English life encompassing it on all sides. One truly English object, however, is the Barometer hanging on the wall, and which, today, for a wonder, points to Fair. Since I have been in Liverpool, we have hardly had a day, until yesterday, without more or less of rain; and so cold and shivery that life was miserable. I am not warm enough, even now, but am gradually getting acclimated in that respect.

**August 8th [1853].** Day before yesterday, I escorted my family to Rockferry,<sup>5</sup> two miles either up or down the Mersey (and I really don't know which) by steamer, which runs every half-hour. There are other steamers going continually to Birkenhead and other landings, and almost always a great many passengers on the transit. On this occasion the boat was crowded so as to afford scanty standing room; it being Saturday, and therefore a kind of gala-day. I think I have never seen a populace before coming to England; but this crowd afforded a specimen of one, both male and female.<sup>6</sup> The women were the most remarkable; there is almost always something ladylike and delicate about an American woman; but in these, though they seemed not disreputable, there was a coarseness, a freedom, an—I don't know what—that was purely English. In fact, men and women do things that would at least make them ridiculous in America; they are not afraid to enjoy themselves in their own way, and have no pseudo gentility to support. Some girls danced upon the crowded deck, to the miserable

music of a little fragment of a band, which goes up and down the river on each trip of the boat. Just before the termination of the voyage, a man goes round with a bugle turned wide end upward, to receive the half elemosynary pence and half-pence of the passengers. I gave one of them, the other day, a silver four-pence; which fell into the vitals of the instrument, and compelled the man to take it to pieces.<sup>7</sup> At Rockferry, there was a great throng, forming a scene not unlike one of our muster-days or Fourth of July; and there were bands of music, and banners, with small processions after them; and there was a school of charity-children, I believe, enjoying a festival; and there was a club of respectable persons, playing at bowls on the bowling-green of the hotel; and there were children, infants riding on donkies, at a penny a ride, while their mothers walked alongside, to prevent a fall.

**August 15th [1853].** Many scenes which I should have liked to record have occurred; but the pressure of business has prevented me from recording them from day-to day. On Thursday, I went, on invitation from Mr. Bright, in the prodigious Steamer Great Britain down the harbor, and some miles into the sea, to see her off on her voyage to Australia. There is an immense enthusiasm amongst the English people, about this ship, on account of her being the largest in the world. The shores were lined with people to see her sail; and there were innumerable small steamers, crowded with people, all the way out into the ocean. Nothing seems to touch the English nearer than this question of nautical superiority; and if we wish to hit them on the *raw*, we must hit them there.

On Friday, at 7 P.M. I went to dine with the Mayor.<sup>8</sup> It was a dinner given to the Judges and the Grand Jury. The Judges of England, during the time of holding an Assize, are the persons first in rank in the Kingdom.<sup>9</sup> They take precedence of everybody else—of the highest military officers—of the Lord Lieutenants—of the Archbishops—of the Prince of Wales—of all except the Sovereign; whose authority and dignity they represent. In case of a royal dinner, the Judge would lead the Queen to the table.

The dinner was at the Town-Hall; and the rooms, and the whole affair, were all in the most splendid style. Nothing struck me more than the footmen in the city-livery; they really looked more magnificent, in their gold-lace, and breeches, and white silk stockings, than any officers of state whom I have ever seen. The rooms were beautiful; gorgeously painted and gilded, gorgeously lighted, gorgeously hung with paintings, gorgeously illuminated—the plate gorgeous, the dinner gorgeous, in the English fashion. As to the company, they had a kind of roughness, that seems to be the characteristic of all Englishmen so far as I have yet seen them;—elderly

John Bulls—and there is hardly a less beautiful object than the elderly John Bull, with his large body, protruding paunch, short legs, and mottled, double-chinned, irregular-featured aspect. They are men of the world, at home in society, easy in their manners, but without refinement; nor are they especially what one thinks of, under the appellation of gentleman.

After the removal of the cloth, the Mayor gave various toasts, prefacing each with some remarks—the first of course, the Sovereign, after which “God Save the Queen” was sung; and there was something rather ludicrous in seeing the company stand up and join in the chorus, their ample faces glowing with wine, enthusiasm, perspiration, and loyalty. There certainly is a vein of the ridiculous running through these people; nor does it take away from their respectability. Afterwards the Bar, and various other dignities and institutions were toasted; and by-and-by came a toast to the United States and me as their representative. Hereupon, either “Hail Columbia” or “Yankee Doodle,” or some other of our national tunes (but Heaven knows which) was played; and at the conclusion—being cornered, and with no alternative—I got upon my legs and made a response. They received me and listened to my nonsense with a good deal of rapping; and my speech seemed to give great satisfaction. My chief difficulty lay in not knowing how to pitch my voice to the size of the room; as for the matter, it is not of the slightest consequence. Any body may make an after-dinner speech, who will be content to talk onward without saying anything. My speech was not more than two or three inches long;—and considering that I did not know a soul there, except the Mayor himself, and that I am wholly unpractised in all sorts of oratory, and that I had nothing to say, it was quite successful.<sup>10</sup> I hardly thought it was in me; but being once on my legs, I felt no embarrassment, and went through it as coolly as if I were going to be hanged.

Yesterday, after dinner, I took a walk with my family. We went through by-ways and private roads, and saw more of rural England, with its hedges, its grassy fields, and its white-washed old stone cottages, than we have before seen since our arrival.

**August 20th [1853].** This being Saturday, there early commenced a throng of visitants to Rock Ferry. The boat, in which I came over, brought from the city a multitude of factory-people, male and female. They had bands of music, and banners inscribed with the Mills they belonged to, and other devices; pale-looking people, but not looking exactly as if they were underfed. They are brought on reduced terms by the railways and steamers, and come from considerable distances in the interior. These, I believe, were from Preston.<sup>11</sup> I have not yet had an opportunity of observing how they amuse themselves during these excursions.

Almost every day, I take walks about Liverpool; preferring the darker and dingier streets, inhabited by the poorer classes. The scenes there are very picturesque in their way; at every two or three steps, a gin-shop; also [*five lines excised*] [fil]thy in clothes and person, ragged, pale, often afflicted with humors; women, nursing their babies at dirty bosoms; men haggard, drunken, care-worn, hopeless, but with a kind of patience, as if all this were the rule of their life; groups stand or sit talking together, around the door-steps, or in the descent of a cellar; often a quarrel is going on in one group, for which the next group cares little or nothing. Sometimes, a decent woman may be seen sewing or knitting at the entrance of her poor dwelling, a glance at which shows dismal poverty. I never walk through these streets without feeling as if I should catch some disease; but yet there is a strong interest in such walks; and moreover there is a bustle, a sense of being in the midst of life, and of having got hold of something real, which I do not find in the better streets of the city. Doubtless, this noon-day and open life of theirs is entirely the best aspect of their existence; and if I were to see them within doors, at their meals, or in bed, it would be unspeakably worse. They appear to wash their clothes occasionally; for I have seen them hanging out to dry in the street.

At the dock, the other day, the steamer arrived from Rock Ferry with a countless multitude of female children in coarse blue-gowns, who, as they landed, formed in procession and walked up the dock. These girls had been taken from the work-houses, and educated at a charity-school, and would by-and-by be apprenticed as servants. I should not have conceived it possible that so many children could have been collected together, without a single trace of beauty, or scarcely of intelligence, in so much as one individual; such mean, coarse, vulgar features and figures, betraying unmistakably a low origin, and ignorant and brutal parents. They did not appear wicked, but only stupid, animal, and soulless. It must require many generations of better life to elicit a soul in them. All America could not show the like.<sup>12</sup>

**August 24th [1853].** From 1 °clock till 2, to-day, I have spent in rambling along the streets, Tythe Barn street, Scotland road, and that vicinity. I never saw, of course, nor imagined from any description, what squalor there is in the inhabitants of these streets, as seen along the sidewalks. All these avenues (the quotation occurs to me continually; and I suppose I have made it two or three times already) are “with dreadful faces thronged.”<sup>13</sup> Women with young figures, but old and wrinkled countenances; young girls, without any maiden neatness and trimness, barefooted, with dirty legs, compelling the imaginative eye to seek the delightful region. Women of all

ages, even elderly, go along with great, bare, ugly feet; many have baskets and other burdens on their heads. All along the street, with their wares at the edge of the sidewalk, and their own seats fairly in the carriage-way, you see women with fruit to sell, or combs and cheap jewelry, or chamber pots and other coarse crockery, or oysters, or the devil knows what; and sometimes the woman is sewing, meanwhile. This life and domestic occupation in the street is very striking, in all these meaner quarters of the city—nursing of babies, sewing and knitting, sometimes even reading. In a drama of low life, the street might fairly and truly be the one scene where everything should take place—courtship, quarrels, plot and counter-plot, and what not besides. My God, what dirty, dirty children! And the grown people are the flowers of these buds, physically and morally. At every ten steps, too, there are “Spirit Vaults,” and often “Beds” are advertized on a placard, in connection with the liquor-trade.

Little children are often seen taking care of littler children; and it seems to me that they take good and faithful care of them. To-day, I heard a dirty mother laughing and priding herself on the pretty ways of her dirty infant—just as a Christian mother might in a nursery or drawing-room. I must study this street-life more, and think of it more deeply.

**August 25th [1853].** Further items of street-rambles:—little gray donkies, dragging along disproportionately large carts;—the disagreeable vista of feeble, thin little babies, legs and arms bare, [*word obliterated*], or having hopes for;—the anomalous aspect of cleanly dressed and healthy looking young women, whom one sometimes sees talking together in the street, evidently residing in some contiguous house;—the apparition, now and then, of a bright, intelligent, merry, child’s face, with dark, knowing eyes, gleaming through the dirt like sunshine through a dusty window-pane; at provision-shops, the little bits of meat, ready for poor customers, and little heaps of selvages and corners, snipt off from joints and steaks;—the kindness with which a little boy leads and lugs along his little sister;—a pale, hollow-cheeked, large-eyed girl of 12, or less, paying a sad, cheerless attention to an infant;—a milkwoman, with a wooden yoke over her shoulder, and a large pail on each side;—in a more reputable street, respectably dressed women going into an ale and spirit-vault, evidently to drink there;—the police-men loitering along, with observant eye, holding converse with none and seldom having occasion to interfere with anybody;—the multitudinousness and continual motion of all this kind of life. The people are as numerous as maggots in cheese; you behold them, disgusting, and all moving about, as when you raise a plank or log that has long lain on the ground, and find many vivacious bugs and insects beneath it.

**Sept<sup>r</sup> 2<sup>d</sup> [1853].** We got into our new house in Rock Park, yesterday.<sup>14</sup> It is quite a good house, with three apartments, besides kitchen and pantry on the lower floor; and three stories high, with four good chambers in each story. It is a stone edifice, like almost all the modern English houses, and handsome in its design—much more so than most of the American houses. The rent, without furniture, would probably have been £100;—furnished, it is £160. Rock Park, as the locality is called, is private property, and is now nearly covered with residences for professional people, merchants, and others of the upper middling class, the houses being mostly built, I suppose, on speculation, and let to those who occupy them. It is the quietest place imaginable; there being a police station at the entrance; and the officer on duty admits no ragged or ill looking person to pass. There being a toll, it precludes all unnecessary passage of carriages; and never were there more noiseless streets than those that give access to these pretty residences. On either side, there is thick shrubbery, with glimpses through it at the ornamented portals, or into the trim gardens, with smooth shaven lawns, of no large extent, but still affording reasonable breathing space. They are really an improvement on anything save what the very rich can enjoy, in America. The former occupants (a Mrs. Campbell and family) of our house having been fond of flowers, there are many rare varieties in the garden; and we are told that there is scarcely a month of the year in which a flower will not be found there.

The house is respectably, though not elegantly furnished. It was a dismal rainy day, yesterday; and we had a coal fire in the sitting-room; beside which I sat, last evening, as twilight came on, and thought rather sadly how many times we have changed our home, since we were married. In the first place, our three years at the Old Manse; then a brief residence at Salem, then at Boston, then two or three years at Salem again; then at Lenox, then at West Newton, and then again at Concord, where we imagined that we were fixed for life, but spent only a year. Then this farther flight to England, where we expect to spend four years, and afterwards another year in Italy—during all which time we shall have no real home.<sup>15</sup> For, as I sat in this English house, with the chill, rainy English twilight brooding over the lawn, and a coal-fire to keep me comfortable on the first evening of September; and the picture of a stranger (the dead husband of Mrs Campbell) gazing down at me from above the mantel-piece, I felt that I never should be quite at home here. Nevertheless, the fire was very comfortable to look at; and the shape of the fire-place, an arch, with a deep cavity, was an improvement on the square, shallow opening of an American coal-grate.

**Sept<sup>r</sup> 22<sup>d</sup> [1853].** Nothing very important has happened lately. Some days ago, an American captain came to the office, and told how he

had shot one of his crew, shortly after sailing from New Orleans, and while the ship was still in the river. As he described the event, he was in peril of his life from this man, who was an Irishman; and he only fired his pistol, when the man was coming upon him with a knife in one hand, and some other weapon of offence in the other;—the captain, at the same time, struggling with one or two more of the crew. At the time, he was weak, having just recovered from the yellow fever. The shot struck him in the pit of the stomach, and he only lived about a quarter of an hour.

No magistrate in England has a right to arrest or examine the captain, unless by a warrant from the Secretary of State on the charge of murder. After his statement to me, the mother of the slain man went to the police officer, and accused him of killing her son. Two or three days since, moreover, two of the sailors came before me, and gave their account of the matter; and it looked very different from that of the captain. According to them, the man had no idea of attacking the captain, and was so drunk that he could not keep himself upright, without assistance. One of these two men was actually holding him up, when the captain fired two barrels of his pistol, one immediately after the other, and lodged two balls in the pit of his stomach. The man immediately sank down, saying, "Jack, I'm killed,"—and died very shortly. Meanwhile, the captain drove this man away, under threat of shooting him, likewise. Both the seamen described the captain's conduct, both then and during the whole voyage, as outrageous; and I do not much doubt that it was so. They gave their evidence (under oath) like men who wished to tell the truth, and were moved by no more than a natural indignation at the captain's wrong.

I did not much like the captain, from the first; a hard, rough man, with little education—nothing of the gentleman about him; a red face, a loud voice. He seemed a good deal excited, and talked fast and much about the event, but yet not as if it had sunk deeply into him. He observed that he would not have had it happen for a "thousand dollars"—that being the amount of detriment which he conceives himself to suffer by the ineffaceable blood-stain on his hand. In my opinion, it is little short of murder, if at all; but then what would be murder, on shore, is almost a natural occurrence, when done in such a hell on earth as one of these ships, in the first hours of her voyage. The men are then all drunk, some of them often in delirium tremens; and the captain feels no safety for his life, except in making himself as terrible as a fiend. It is the universal testimony, that there is a worse set of sailors in these short voyages between Liverpool and America, than in any other trade whatever.

There is no probability that the captain will ever be called to account for this deed. He gave, at the time, his own version of the affair in his log-

book; and this was signed by the entire crew, with the exception of one man, who had hidden himself in the hold in terror of the captain. His mates will sustain his side of the question; and none of the sailors would be within reach of the American courts, even should they be sought for.

**Sept 24 [1853].** The women of England are capable of being more atrociously ugly than any other human beings; and I have not as yet seen one whom we should distinguish as beautiful in America. They are very apt to be dowdy. Ladies often look like cooks and housemaids, both in figure and complexion;—at least, to a superficial observer, although a closer inspection shows a kind of dignity, resulting from their quiet good opinion of themselves and consciousness of their position in society. I do not find in them those characteristics of robust health, in which they are said so much to exceed our countrywomen. Some have that appearance, and thereby are well repaid for the coarseness which it gives their figures and faces; others, however, are yellow and haggard, and evidently ailing women. As a general rule, they are not very desirable objects in youth, and, in many instances, become perfectly grotesque after middle-age;—so massive, not seemingly with pure fat, but with solid beef, making an awful ponderosity of frame. You think of them as composed of sirloins, and with broad and thick steaks on their immense rears. They sit down on a great round space of God's footstool, and look as if nothing could ever move them; and indeed they must have a vast amount of physical strength to be able to move themselves.<sup>16</sup> Nothing of the gossamer about them; they are elephantine, and create awe and respect by the muchness of their personalities. Then as to their faces, they are stern, not always positively forbidding, yet calmly terrible, not merely by their breadth and weight of feature, but because they show so much self-reliance, such acquaintance with the world, its trials, troubles, dangers, and such internal means of defence;—such *à plombe*;—I can't get at my exact idea; but without anything salient and offensive, or unjustly terrible to their neighbors, they seem like seventy-four gun ships in time of peace;—you know that you are in no danger from them, but cannot help thinking how perilous would be their attack, if pugnaciously inclined,—and how hopeless the attempt to injure them. Really they are not women at all;—not that they are masculine, either, though more formidable than any man I ever saw. They are invariably, I think, clad in black. I have not happened to see any thin, lady-like old women, such as are so frequent among ourselves; but sometimes, even in these broadly developed old persons, you see a face that indicates cultivation, and even refinement, although, even in such cases, I am generally disturbed by the absence of sex. They certainly look much better able to take care of themselves than our women; but I see

no reason to suppose that they really have greater strength of character than they. They are only strong, I suspect, in society, and in the common route of things.

I have not succeeded in getting my idea of the English dowager into the above;—beefy, not pulpy.<sup>17</sup>

**October 19<sup>th</sup> [1853].** Coming to the ferry, this morning, a few minutes before the boat arrived from town, I went into the Ferry House (a small stone edifice) and found there an Irishman, his wife, and three children,—the oldest eight or nine years old, and all girls. There was a good fire burning in the room, and the family were clustered round it, apparently enjoying the warmth very much; but when I came in, both husband and wife very hospitably asked me to come to the fire, although there was not more than room at it for their own party. I declined, on the plea that I was warm enough; and then the woman said that they were very cold, having been long on the road. The man was gray haired and gray-bearded, clad in an old drab over-coat, and had a huge bag, which seemed to contain bed-clothing or something of the kind. The woman was pale, with a thin, anxious, wrinkled face, but a good and kind expression. The children were quite pretty, with delicate faces, and a look of patience and endurance in them, but yet as if they had suffered as little as they possibly could. The two elder were cuddled up close to the father; the youngest, about four years old, sat in its mother's lap, and she had taken off its little shoes and stockings, and was warming its feet at the fire. Their little voices had a sweet and kindly sound, as they talked in low tones to their parents and one another. They all looked very shabby, but yet had a decency about them; and it was touching to see how they made themselves at home at this casual fireside, and got all the comfort they could out of the circumstances. By and by, two or three market-women came in, and looked kindly at them, and said a word or two to the children.

They did not beg of me, as I partly expected they would; but after looking at them awhile, I pulled out a sixpence, and handed it to one of the little girls. She took it very readily, as if she partly expected it; and then the father and mother thanked me, and said they had been travelling a long distance, and had nothing to live upon, but what they picked up on the road. They found it impossible to live in England, and were now on their way to Liverpool, hoping to get a passage back to Ireland, where, I suppose, extreme poverty is rather better off than here. I heard the little girl say that she should buy a loaf with the money. There is not much that can be caught in the description of this scene; but it made me understand, better than before, how poor people feel, wandering about in such destitute circumstances, and how they suffer, and yet how they know a life not quite

miserable, after all; and how family love goes along with them. Soon, the boat arrived at the pier; and we all went on board; and as I sat in the cabin, looking up through a broken pane in the skylight, I saw the woman's thin face, with its anxious, motherly aspect, and the youngest child in her arms, shrinking from the chill wind, but yet not impatiently; and the eldest of the girls standing close by, with her expression of childish endurance—but yet so bright and intelligent, that it would evidently take but a few days to make a happy and playful child of her. Somehow or other, I got into the interior of this poor family, and understand, through sympathy, more of them than I can tell. They were much better, I think, and more delicate, than if they had been English.

I am getting to possess some of the English indifference as to beggars and poor people; but still, whenever I come face to face with them, and have any intercourse, it seems as if they ought to be the better for me. I wish, instead of sixpence, I had given this poor family ten shillings, and denied it to a begging subscriptionist, who has just fleeced me to that amount. How silly a man feels, in this latter predicament!

**Dec<sup>r</sup> 31st [1853].** Among the beggars of Liverpool, the hardest to encounter is a man without any legs, and, if I mistake not, likewise deficient in arms.<sup>18</sup> You see him before you all at once, as if he had sprouted half-way out of the earth, and would sink down and re-appear in some other place, the moment he has done with you. His countenance is large, fresh, and very intelligent; but his great power lies in his fixed gaze, which is inconceivably difficult to bear. He never once removes his eye from you, till you are quite past his range; and you feel it all the same, although you do not meet his glance. He is perfectly respectful; but the intentness and directness of his silent appeal is far worse than any impudence. In fact, it is the very flower of impudence. I would rather go a mile about than pass before his battery. I feel wronged by him, and yet unutterably ashamed. There must be great force in the man, to produce such an effect. There is nothing of the customary squalidness of beggary about him, but remarkable trimness and cleanliness. A girl of twenty, or thereabouts, who vagabondizes about the city on her hands and knees, possesses, to a considerable degree, the same characteristics. I think they hit their victims the more effectually, from being below the common level of vision.

**Jan<sup>y</sup> 6<sup>th</sup>, 1854.**

If mankind were all intellect, they would be continually changing, so that one age would be entirely unlike another. The great conservative is

the heart, which remains the same in all ages; so that common-places of a thousand years standing are as effective as ever.

**Feb 23<sup>d</sup> '54.** There came to see me the other day a young gentleman with a moustache and a blue cloak (of rather coarse texture) who announced himself as William Allingham, and handed me a copy of his poems, in a thin volume with paper-covers, published by Routledge.<sup>19</sup> I thought I remembered hearing his name, but had never seen any of his works. His face was intelligent, dark, rather pleasing, and not at all John Bullish. He said that he had been employed in the Customs in Ireland, and was now going to London to live by literature—to be connected with some newspaper, I imagine. He had been in London before, and was acquainted with some of the principal literary people—among others, Carlyle and Tennyson.<sup>20</sup> He seemed to have been on rather intimate terms with the latter; and I gathered from what he said that Tennyson is a moody man, though genial with his friends. He says Tennyson told him that if he were sure there were no hereafter, he would go and fling himself over London bridge;—a foolish thing to do or to say; but perhaps he might have said a wiser thing to a wiser man. Tennyson is a very shy man, and thinks everybody stares at him on account of his strange appearance, on railways and everywhere else, even in the seclusion of his own garden. This, I judge, has no reference to the notice drawn on him by his poetry, but is the natural morbidness of a man who shirks society. Tennyson's wife seems to be a good person, not handsome, but cheerful, capable of appreciating him and fit to make him comfortable. Her mode seems to be a gentle and good-humored raillery of his peculiarities. Allingham says that they have a fine boy and that it would have been better for Tennyson to have been married fifteen years ago, instead of three or four. We talked awhile in my dingy and dusky consulate, and he then took leave. His manners are good, and he appears to possess independence of mind. On looking over his poems, I find some good things among them.

### **March 16<sup>th</sup> [1854].**

A woman's chastity consists, like an onion, of a series of coats. You may strip off the outer ones without doing much mischief, perhaps none at all; but you keep taking off one after another, in expectation of coming to the inner nucleus, including the whole value of the matter. It proves, however, that there is no such nucleus, and that Chastity is diffused through the whole series of coats, is lessened with the removal of each, and vanishes

with the final one, which you supposed would introduce you to the hidden pearl.

**September 26<sup>th</sup> [1854].** On Saturday evening, my wife and I went to a soiree, given by the Mayor and Mrs. Lloyd at the Town Hall. It was quite brilliant; the public rooms being really magnificent; and adorned for the occasion with a large collection of pictures, belonging to Mr Naylor.<sup>21</sup> They were mostly (I believe entirely) of modern artists, comprising some of Turner, Wilkie, Landseer, and others of the best English painters.<sup>22</sup> Turner's seemed too airy to have been done by mortal hands.

The British scientific association being now in session here, many distinguished strangers were present. What chiefly struck me, however, was the lack of beauty in the women, and the horrible ugliness of not a few of them. I have heard a good deal of the tenacity with which English women retain their personal charms to a late period of life; but my experience is, that an English lady of forty or fifty is apt to become the most hideous animal that ever pretended to human shape. No caricature could do justice to some of their figures and features; so puffed out, so huge, so without limit, with such hanging dewlaps, and all manner of fleshly abomination—dressed, too, in a way to show all these points to the worst advantage, and walking about with entire self-satisfaction, unconscious of the wrong they are doing to one's idea of womanhood. They are gross, gross, gross. Who would not shrink from such a mother! Who would not abhor such a wife! I really pitied the respectable elderly gentlemen whom I saw walking about with such atrocities hanging on their arms—the grim, red-faced monsters! Surely, a man would be justified in murdering them—in taking a sharp knife and cutting away their mountainous flesh, until he had brought them into reasonable shape, as a sculptor seeks for the beautiful form of woman in a shapeless block of marble. The husband must feel that something alien has grown over and incrusting the slender creature whom he married, and that he is horribly wronged by having all this flabby flesh imposed upon him as his wife. “Flesh of his flesh,” indeed!<sup>23</sup> And this ugliness surely need not be, at least to such a dreadful extent; it must be, in great part, the penalty of a life of gross feeding—of much ale-guzzling and beef-eating. Nor is it possible to conceive of any delicacy and grace of soul existing within; or if there be such, the creature ought to be killed, in order to release the spirit so vilely imprisoned. Flee away then, fugitive of the past! I really and truly believe that the entire body of American washerwomen would present more grace than the entire body of English ladies, were both to be shown up together. American women, of all ranks, when past their prime, generally look thin, worn, care-begone, as if they may have led a life of much trouble and few

enjoyments; but English women look as if they had fed upon the fat of meat, and made themselves gross and earthy in all sorts of ways. As a point of taste, I prefer my own countrywomen; though it is a pity that we must choose between a greasy animal and an anxious skeleton.

**January 3<sup>d</sup> 1855.** The progress of the age is trampling over the aristocratic institutions of England, and they crumble beneath it. The war has given the country a vast impulse towards democracy.<sup>24</sup> The nobility will never hereafter, I think, assume, or be permitted, to rule the nation in peace, or command armies in war, on any ground except the individual ability which may appertain to one of their number, as well as to a commoner. And yet the nobles were never positively more noble than now—never, perhaps, so chivalrous, so honorable, so highly cultivated; but, relatively to the rest of the world, they do not maintain their old place. The pressure of the war has tested and proved this fact, at home and abroad. At this moment, it would be an absurdity in the nobles to pretend to the position which was quietly conceded to them a year ago. This one year has done the work of fifty ordinary ones;—or more accurately, perhaps, it has made apparent what has long been preparing itself.

**January 6<sup>th</sup> 1855.** Mr. Buchanan called on me today, and staid a good while—an hour or two.<sup>25</sup> He is now staying at Mr. W<sup>m</sup> Brown's at Richmond Hill, having come to this region to bring his niece, who is to be bridesmaid at a wedding of an American girl. I like Mr. Buchanan; he cannot exactly be called gentlemanly in his manners, there being a sort of rusticity about him;—moreover, a habit of squinting one eye, and an awkward carriage of his head; but, withal, a dignity in his large, white-headed person, and a consciousness of high position and importance, which gives him ease and freedom. Very simple and frank in his address; he may be as crafty as other diplomatists are said to be; but I see only good sense and plainness of speech—appreciative, too, and genial enough to make himself conversible. He talked very freely of himself and other public people, and American and English affairs. He returns to America, he says, next October, and then retires forever from public life, being sixty-four years of age, and having now no desire except to write memoirs of his times—and especially of the administration of Mr. Polk. I suggested a doubt whether the people would permit him to retire; and he immediately responded to my hint as regards his prospects for the Presidency. He said that his mind was fully made up, and that he would never be a candidate, and that he had expressed this intention to his friends in such a way as to put out of his own power to change it. He acknowledged that he should have been glad

of the nomination for Presidency in 1852, but that it was now too late, and that he was too old;—and, in short, he seemed to be quite sincere in his *nolo episcopari*; although, really, he is the only Democrat, at this moment, whom it would not be absurd to talk of for the office. As he talked, his face flushed, and he seemed to get inwardly excited. Doubtless, it was the high vision of half his lifetime which he here relinquished. I cannot question that he is sincere; but, of course, should the people insist upon having him for President, he is too good a patriot to disobey. I wonder whether he can have had any object in saying all this to me. He might see that it would be perfectly natural for me to tell it to General Pierce. But it is a very vulgar idea—this of seeing craft and subtlety, where there is a plain and honest aspect.

**April 12<sup>th</sup> [1855].** In my Romance [“The American Claimant,” never completed], the original emigrant to America may have carried away with him a family-secret, whereby it was in his power (had he so chosen) to have brought about the ruin of the family. This secret he transmits to his American progeny, by whom it is inherited throughout all the intervening generations. At last, the hero of the Romance comes to England, and finds that, by means of this secret, he still has it in his power to procure the downfall of the family. It would be something similar to the story of Meleager, whose fate depended on the firebrand that his mother had snatched out of the flames.<sup>26</sup>

**Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> 55.** On Saturday, I was present at a *dejeûner* on board the Donald Mackay (a new American ship, built for James Baines & Co) the principal guest being Mr. Layard, M.P.<sup>27</sup> There were several hundred people present, quite filling the between decks of the ship, which was converted into a saloon for the nonce. I sat next to Mr. Layard, at the head of the table—or rather, at the cross-table—and so had a good opportunity of seeing and getting acquainted with him. He is a man in early middle-age (with hair a very little frosted, I think) of a somewhat plebeian aspect, as Englishmen are so apt to be; of middle stature, with an open, frank, intelligent, kindly face, but no very intellectual or refined lines in it. His forehead is not expansive, but is prominent in the perceptive regions, and retreats a good deal; his mouth is fleshy. I liked him from the first, but, had I met him in America, should have set him down as an intelligent mechanic;—not that there is any lack of good-breeding, but only the usual English homeliness, and unpolished surface. Yet he has a French shrug; which I don’t like to see. He was very kind and complimentary to me, and made me promise to come and see him in London.

It would have been a very pleasant entertainment; only that my pleasure in it was much marred by having to acknowledge a toast in honor of the President;—however, such things don't trouble me nearly so much as they did, and I came through it tolerably enough. Mr. Layard's speech was the great affair of the day. He speaks (though he assured me that he had to put great force upon himself to speak publickly) with much fluency; and, as he warms up, seems to speak with his whole moral and physical man, and to be quite possessed with what he has to say. His evident earnestness and good-faith make him eloquent, and stand him in stead of oratorical graces—of which (as a matter of study and acquisition) he does not seem to have any. His view of the position of England and the prospects of the war were as dark as well could be; in fact, there never was a better specimen of English grumbling than his whole speech—and it was exceedingly to the purpose, full of common sense, and with not one word of clap-trap. Judging from its effect upon the audience, he spoke the voice of the whole English people—although an English baronet, who sat next below me, seemed to dissent, or at least to think that it was not exactly the thing for a stranger to hear it. The speech concluded amidst great cheering. Mr. Layard appears to me a true Englishman, not remarkably bright intellectually, but with a moral force, and strength of character, and earnestness of purpose, and fullness of common sense, such as have always served England's turn in her past successes; but rather fit for resistance than for progress. No doubt, he is a good and very able man; but I question whether he could get England out of the difficulties which he sees so clearly, or could do much better than Lord Palmerston, whom he so decries.<sup>28</sup> The truth is, there is a spirit lacking in England, which *we* do not lack, and for the want of which she will have to resign a foremost position among the nations, even if there were not enough other circumstances to compel her to do so. Her good qualities are getting out of date;—at all events, there should be something added to them, in the present stage of the world.

**May 24<sup>th</sup> [1855].** A week or two ago, there called on me a Doctor of Divinity from New Orleans, who had just arrived in a sailing vessel; he was a good-looking, gentlemanly, middle-aged man, and seemed all right, except perhaps a little excited, as most Americans are, on first setting foot in England.<sup>29</sup> He took a large bundle of letters, which had come to hand in anticipation of his arrival, and went away. A day or two after, Captain Emerson (in whose vessel he had arrived) came to me and said that the Doctor had disappeared—not having been seen by him since his visit to my office. From this Captain's communications, I learned that the Reverend Doctor was a man of rather sad experience, having been divorced from his

second wife, and having been in a lunatic asylum, and being also liable to fits of terrible intemperance. It was therefore obvious to suppose that he had allowed himself to lapse into one of these fits. I had some thoughts of setting the police on his track, but concluded that it might be as well to let matters take their course, as he would probably turn up when his money was spent. Accordingly, precisely a week after his disappearance, he was brought back to Captain Emerson's ship, in a state of delirium tremens, by a woman of the town! He was in a filthy and horrible condition, the Captain told me, and said that he had been robbed of five hundred dollars—which was more than he had ever had.

There is a Dr. Macauley, our Consul at Venice, now in Liverpool; and as he is likewise from New Orleans, I mentioned the Reverend Doctor's case in confidence to him.<sup>30</sup> It turned out that Dr. Macauley is an old acquaintance; and as he seems to be a most humane and good little, simple-hearted man, he immediately undertook to take charge of him, and get him back to America, if possible. Yesterday, while Dr. Macauley was sitting with me (having already visited Doctor R., and been joyfully received by him) there came into my office, a tall, middle-aged, mustachioed gentleman, of rather a military aspect, in a blue surtout, closely buttoned. He addressed me as if previously acquainted; and at his first word, and my first glance at his face, I could see that he was under the influence of liquor—a very rowdy-looking gentleman, indeed. I bowed coolly, and observed that I had not the pleasure of knowing him. "Am I then so changed!" he cried, with a vast depth of tragic intonation; and, after a little more blind talk, behold! I recognized him as the reverend gentleman himself. If I had meditated a scene, or a *coup de theatre*, I could not have contrived a more effectual one than by this simple non-recognition; for the poor man—his nerves being all in a devil's tremble—thought that he must have almost lost his personal identity in the space of one little week. To say the truth, he did look as if he had been dragged through hell, and changed from a decorous clergyman into a rowdy military man; but I should probably have known him, had I taken any particular note of his aspect, at our first interview. Seeing how good an effect had been produced, I maintained my austerity of manner, only granting him a cold recognition; and took occasion to represent to him the deplorable condition to which he had reduced himself, inasmuch as he could no longer be known for the same person whom I had seen a week ago; and exhorted him to refrain from such evil courses hereafter—a lecture which I never dreamed of having an opportunity to bestow on a Doctor of Divinity. It was really a very tragic scene; and an actor might have taken a lesson in his art from him; for all his emotions, and all the external movement and expression of them, by voice, face, and gesture, were exaggerated by the

tremendous vibration of nerves remaining from his delirium tremens. Poor, Reverend devil! Drunkard! Whoremaster! Doctor of Divinity! He is very powerfully eloquent, I am told, in sermon and prayer.

**June 22<sup>d</sup> Thursday [1855].** In the forenoon of yesterday, wife, Una and I took a walk through what looked like a park, but seemed to be a sort of semi-public tract on the outskirts of the town—hill and glade, with a fair gravel path through it, and most stately and beautiful trees overshadowing it. Here and there benches were set beneath the trees. These old, vigorous, well-nurtured trees, are fine beyond description; and in this leafy month of June,<sup>31</sup> they certainly surpass my recollections of American trees—so tall, with such an aspect of age-long life. But I suppose what we know of English trees, of the care bestowed on them, the value at which they are estimated, their being traditional, and connected with the fortunes of old families—these moral considerations inevitably enter into physical admiration of them. They are individuals—which few American trees have the happiness to be. The English elm is more beautiful in shape and growth than I had imagined; but I think our own elm is still more so. Julian compared an English oak, which we saw on our journey, to a cauliflower; and its shape, its regular, compact rotundity, makes it very like one;—there is a certain John-Bullism about it. Its leaf, too, is much smaller than our own oak; and with similar advantages of age and cultivation, the latter would be far the noblest and most majestic form of a tree. But in verdure, in the rich aspect of the country, nothing surely can equal England; and I never enjoyed weather anywhere so delightful as such a day as yesterday; so warm and genial, and yet not oppressive—the sun a very little too warm, while walking beneath it, but only enough too warm to assure us that it was warm enough. And, after all, there was an unconquered freshness in the atmosphere, which each little motion of the air made evident to us. I suppose there is still latent in us Americans (even of two centuries date, and more, like myself) an adaptation to the English climate, which makes it like native soil and air to us.<sup>32</sup>



*Hawthorne and his family visit Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon.*



**June 27<sup>th</sup>, Thursday [1855].** This day promising to be a very fair one, we devoted it to our pilgrimage to Stratford on Avon; and Mamma,

Una, Julian, and I, set out in a phaeton, at about ½ past 9. It was really a bright morning, warm, genial and delightful; so that we saw English scenery under almost an American sun, and the combination made something very like perfection. Our road lay through Warwick; and I observed, on the wall of an old chapel in the High-street, some fox-glove flowers growing, as also grass and little shrubs, all at the height of perhaps twenty feet above the ground. Adjacent to this chapel (which stands almost across the street, with an archway for foot passengers beneath it, and causing the carriage track to swerve aside in passing it) there is an ancient edifice, in excellent repair, and with coats of arms and the cognizance of the Bear and Ragged Staff painted on its front. This turns out to be Leicester's Hospital,<sup>33</sup> an institution for the support of twelve poor brethren; and I think we saw the better part of a dozen old faces, idly contemplating us from the windows or about the doors of the old house. I must try to get a better knowledge of this institution.

The road from Warwick to Stratford is most beautiful; not that it owes any remarkable features to Nature; for the country thereabouts is a succession of the gentlest swells and subsidences, here and there affording wide and far glimpses of champagne scenery; and near Stratford it becomes quite level. Altogether, throwing in a few higher hills, and opening the eye of the scene, here and there, by a sheet of water, like Walden-pond, it would look a good deal like the country near Concord—so far as its natural features are concerned. But the charm of the English scene is its old and high cultivation, its richness of verdure, its stately trees, with their trunks clustered about by creeping shrubs;—a great deal of which man has done, and in which he could be partly rivalled in America; but much, too, is due to the moisture of the climate, and the gentle sunshine. At any rate, the effect is beyond all description, and seen, as I have just said, under an American sun (that is to say, once or twice a year) nothing more could be asked by mortals, in the way of rural beauty. All along the way, there were cottages of old date, many so old that Shakespeare might have passed them in his walks, or entered their low doors; a few modern-villas, too; and perhaps mansions of gentility or nobility hidden among the trees—for such houses seldom show themselves from the road.

There is nothing remarkable in the approach to Stratford. The spire of Shakespeare's church shows itself among the trees, at a little distance from the town. Then comes shabby old houses, intermixed with more modern ones, mostly mean-looking; and the streets being quite level, the effect on the whole is tame and quite unpicturesque. I think I might ride into such a town, even in America, and not be much struck by many peculiarities. Here and there, however, there are very queer dwellings, that seem to have

been growing queerer and odder during the three or four centuries of their existence; and there appear to be more old people, tottering about and leaning on sticks—old people in breeches, and retaining all the traditional costume of the last century—than could be found anywhere on our side of the water. Old places seem to produce old people; or perhaps the secret is, that old age has a natural tendency to hide itself, when it is brought into contact with new edifices, and new things, but comes freely out, and feels itself in sympathy, and is not ashamed to face the eye of man, in a decaying town. There is a sense of propriety in this.

We stopt at the Red Lion, a hotel of no great pretensions, and immediately set out on our rambles about town. After wandering through two or three streets, we found Shakespeare's birth-place, which is almost a worse house than anybody could dream it to be; but it did not surprise me, because I had seen a full-sized fac-simile of it in the Zoological-gardens at Liverpool.<sup>34</sup> It is exceedingly small—at least, the portion of it which had anything to do with Shakespeare. The old, worn, butcher's counter, on which the meat used to be laid, is still at the window. The upper half of the door was open; and on my rapping at it, a girl dressed in black soon made her appearance and opened it. She was a lady like girl, not a menial, but I suppose the daughter of the old lady who shows the house. This first room has a pavement of gray slabs of stone, which, no doubt, were rudely squared when the house was new, but they are all cracked and broken, now, in a curious way. One does not see how any ordinary usage, for whatever length of time, should have cracked them thus; it is as if the devil had been stamping on them, long ago, with an iron hoof, and the tread of other persons had ever since been reducing them to an even surface again. The room is white-washed, and very clean, but woefully shabby and dingy, coarsely built, and such as it is not very easy to idealize. In the rear of this room is the kitchen, a still smaller room, of the same dingy character; it has a great, rough fire-place, with an immense passage way for the smoke, and room for a large family under the blackened opening of the chimney. I stood under it, without stooping; and doubtless Shakespeare may have stood on the same spot, both as child and man. A great fire might of course make the kitchen cheerful; but it gives a depressing idea of the humble, mean, sombre character of the life that could have been led in such a dwelling as this—with no conveniences, all higgledy-piggledy, no retirement, the whole family, old and young, brought into too close contact to be comfortable together. To be sure, they say the house used to be much larger than now, in Shakespeare's time; but what we see of it is consistent in itself, and does not look as if it ever could have been a portion of a large and respectable house.

Thence we proceeded upstairs to the room in which Shakespeare is supposed to have been born, and which is over the front lower room, or butcher's shop. It has one broad window, with old irregular panes of glass; the floor is of very rudely hewn planks; the naked beams and rafters at the sides and over head bear all the marks of the builder's axe; and the room, besides, is very small—a circumstance more difficult to reconcile one's self to, as regards places that we have heard and thought much about, than any other part of a mistaken ideal. I could easily touch the ceiling, and could have done so had it been a good deal higher; indeed, the ceiling was entirely written over with names in pencil, by persons, I suppose, of all varieties of stature; so was every inch of the wall, into the obscurest nooks and corners; so was every pane of glass—and Walter Scott's name was said to be on one of the panes; but so many people had sought to immortalize themselves in close vicinity to him, that I really could not trace out his signature. I did not write my own name.

This room, and the whole house, so far as I saw it, was white-washed and very clean; and it had not the aged, musty smell, with which Chester makes one familiar, and which I suspect is natural to old houses, and must render them unwholesome. The woman who showed us up stairs had the manners and aspect of a gentlewoman, and talked intelligently about Shakespeare. Arranged on a table and in chairs, there were various prints, views of houses and scenes connected with Shakespeare's memory, editions of his works, and local publications relative to him—all for sale, and from which, no doubt, this old gentlewoman realizes a good deal of profit. We bought several shillings' worth, partly as thinking it the civillest method of requiting her for the trouble of showing the house. On taking our leave, I most ungenerously imposed on Sophia the duty of offering an additional fee to the lady like girl who first admitted us; but there seemed to be no scruple, on her part, as to accepting it. I felt no emotion whatever in Shakespeare's house—not the slightest—nor any quickening of the imagination. It is agreeable enough to reflect that I have seen it; and I think I can form, now, a more sensible and vivid idea of him as a flesh-and-blood man; but I am not quite sure that this latter effect is altogether desirable.

From Shakespeare's house (after doing a little shopping and buying some toys for Rosebud) we inquired out the church—the Church of the Holy Trinity—where he lies buried. . . .<sup>35</sup> We were admitted into the church by a respectable-looking man in black, who was already exhibiting the Shakespeare monuments to two or three visitors; and other parties came in while we were there. The poet and his family seem to have the best burial-places that the church affords—or, at least, as good as any. They lie in a row, right across the breadth of the chancel, the foot of each gravestone being

close to the elevated floor about the altar. Nearest to the side wall, beneath Shakespeare's bust, is the slab of stone bearing an inscription to his wife; then his own, with the old anathematizing stanza upon it; then, I think, the stone of Thomas Nash, who married his granddaughter; then that of Dr. Hall, the husband of his daughter Susannah; then Susannah's own.<sup>36</sup> Shakespeare's grave stone is the commonest looking slab of all, just such a flagstone as a sidewalk of the street might be paved with. Unlike the other monuments of the family, it has no name whatever upon it; and I do not see on what authority it is absolutely determined to be his. To be sure, being in a range with his wife and children, it might naturally be guessed that it was his; but then he had another daughter, and a son, who would need a grave somewhere. Perhaps, however, as his name was on the bust, above, and as his wife, when he was buried, had not yet taken her place between him and the church-wall, his name was thought unnecessary. . . .

Now, as for the bust of Shakespeare, it is affixed to the northern wall of the church, the base of it being about a man's height (or more) above the floor of the chancel.<sup>37</sup> The bust is quite unlike any portrait, or any other bust of Shakespeare, that I have ever seen, and compels one to root up all old ideas of his aspect, and adopt an entirely different one. For my part, I am loth to give up the beautiful, lofty-browed, noble picture of him which I have hitherto had in my mind; for this bust does not represent a beautiful face or a noble head. And yet it clutches hold of one's sense of reality, and you feel that this was the man. I don't know what the phrenologists say to this bust; its forehead is but moderately developed, and retreats somewhat; the upper part of the skull seems rather contracted; the eyes are rather prominent. The upper lip is so long that it must have been almost a deformity; the showman of the church said that Sir Walter Scott's upper lip was longer, but I doubt it. On the whole, Shakespeare must have had a singular, rather than a striking face; and it is wonderful how, with this bust before its eyes, the world has insisted on forming an erroneous idea of his appearance, permitting painters and sculptors to foist their idealized nonsense upon mankind, instead of the genuine Shakespeare. But as for myself, I am henceforth to see in my mind's eye a red-faced personage, with a moderately capacious brow, an intelligent eye, a nose curved very slightly outward, a long, queer upper lip, with the mouth a little unclosed beneath it, and cheeks very much developed in the lower part of the face.<sup>38</sup>



*Hawthorne makes another pilgrimage, this one to Lichfield, Staffordshire, the town of Samuel Johnson.*



### Wednesday, July 4<sup>th</sup> 1855.

My ride to Rugby, and thence to Lichfield, presented nothing to be noted;—the same rich, verdant country, and old trees, which I had grown accustomed to, in a fortnight past. . . .

The streets of Lichfield are very crooked, and the town stands on an ascending surface. There are not so many old gabled houses as in Coventry, but still a great many of them;—and very few of the edifices, I suspect, are really and fundamentally new. They hide their age behind spruce fronts, but are old at heart. The people have an old-fashioned way with them, and stare at a stranger, as if the railway had not yet quite accustomed them to visitors and novelty. The old women, in one or two instances, dropt me a curtsey, as I passed them;—perhaps it was a mere obeisance to one whom, in their antique way, they acknowledged as their better;—perhaps they looked for sixpence at my hands. I gave them the benefit of the doubt, and kept my money.

The Swan Hotel stands, I believe, in Bird-street. At my first sally forth, I turned a corner at a venture, and soon saw a church before me. At this point, the street widens so much (though not very much either) as to be called Saint Mary's square; and adjacent to it stands the market-house. In this square, not quite in the middle of it, is a statue of Dr. Johnson, on a stone pedestal, some ten or twelve feet high; the statue is colossal (though perhaps not much bigger than the mountainous Doctor) and sits in a chair, with big books underneath it, looking down on the spectator with a broad, heavy, benignant countenance, very like those of Johnson's portraits. The figure is immensely broad and massive—a ponderosity of stone, not fully humanized, nor finely spiritualized, but yet I liked it well enough, though it looked more like a great boulder than a man. On the pedestal were three bas-reliefs;<sup>39</sup>—the first, Johnson sitting on an old man's shoulders, a mere baby, and resting his chin on the bald head which he embraces with his arms, and listening to Dr. Sacheverell preaching; the second, Johnson carried on the shoulders of two boys to school, another boy supporting him behind; the third, Johnson doing penance at Uttoxeter, the wind and rain beating hard against him, very sad and woe-begone, while some market-people and children gaze in his face, and behind are two old people with clasped hands, praying for him. I think these last must be the spirits of his father and mother; though, in queer proximity, there are dead and living ducks. I never heard of this statue before; it seems to have no reputation as a work of art, and probably may deserve none;—nevertheless, I found

it somewhat touching and effective. The statue faces towards the house in which Johnson was born, which stands not more than twenty to forty yards off, on the corner of a street which divides it from the church. It is a tall, three-story house, with a square front, and a roof rising steep and high; on a side view, the house appears to have been cut in two in the midst, there being no slope of the roof on that side. The house is plaistered, and there was a high ladder against it, and painters at work on the front. In the basement corner apartment, what we should call a dry-good store (and the English, I believe, a haberdasher's shop) is kept. There is a side, private entrance, on the cross-street between the house and the church, with much-worn stone steps, and an iron balustrade. I set my foot on the worn steps, and laid my hand on the wall of the house, because Johnson's hand and foot might have been in those same places. . . .

The Cathedral of Lichfield seemed to me very beautiful indeed. I have heretofore seen no cathedral save that of Chester, and one or two little ones, unworthy of the name, in Wales. No doubt, there may be much more magnificent cathedrals, in England and elsewhere, than this of Litchfield; but if there were no other, I should be pretty well satisfied with this; such beautiful shapes it takes, from all points of view, with its peaks and pinnacles, and its three towers and their lofty spires, one loftier than its fellows; so rich it is with external ornament, of carved stone-work, and statues in a great many niches, though many more are vacant, which I suppose were once filled. I had no idea before (nor, possibly, have I now) what intricate and multitudinous adornment was bestowed on the front of a Gothic church. Above the chief entrance, there is a row of statues of saints, angels, martyrs, or kings, running along that whole front, to the number, no doubt, of more than a score, sculptured in red stone. Then there are such strange, delightful recesses in the great figure of the Cathedral; it is so difficult to melt it all into one idea, and comprehend it in that way; and yet it is all so consonant in its intricacy—it seems to me a Gothic Cathedral may be the greatest work man has yet achieved—a great stone poem. I hated to leave gazing at it, because I felt that I did not a hundredth part take it in and comprehend it; and yet I wanted to leave off, because I knew I never should adequately comprehend its beauty and grandeur. Perhaps you must live with the Cathedral in order to know it; but yet the clerical people connected with it do not seem oppressed with reverence for the edifice. . . .

At about 11, I left Lichfield for Uttoxeter, on a purely sentimental pilgrimage, to see the spot where Johnson performed his penance. . . .

On arriving at the rail-way station, the first thing I saw, in a convenient vicinity, was the tower and tall gray spire of a church. It is but a very short walk from the station up into the town. It was my impression that the

market-place of Uttoxeter lay round the church; and if I remember the incident aright, Johnson mentions that his father's bookstall had stood in the market-place, close by the church. But this is not the case. The church has a street, of ordinary width, passing around it; while the market-place, though near at hand, is not really contiguous to the church, nor would there probably be much of the bustle of the market about this edifice, now-a-days. Still a minute's walk would bring a person from the centre of the market-place to the door of the church; and Michael Johnson may very well have had his stall in the angle of the tower and body of it;—not now, indeed, because there is an iron railing round it. The tower and spire of the church look old; but the walls have evidently been renewed since Johnson's time. The market-place is rather spacious, and is surrounded by houses and shops, some old, with red-tiled roofs, others with a pretence of newness, but probably as old as the rest. Unless it were by the church, I could not fix on any one spot more than another, likely to have been the spot where Johnson stood to do his penance. How strange and stupid, that there should be no local memorial of this incident—as beautiful and touching an incident as can be cited out of any human life—no inscription of it on the wall of the church, no statue of the venerable and illustrious penitent in the market-place, to throw a wholesome awe over its earthly business. Such a statue ought almost to have grown up out of the pavement, (and thus have shown me the spot) of its own accord, in the place that was watered by his remorseful tears, and by the rain that dripped from him.

... I spent I know not how many hours in Uttoxeter, and, to say the truth, was heartily tired of it; my penance being a great deal longer than Dr. Johnson's. It is a pity I did not take the opportunity to repent of my own sins; but I forgot all about them till it was too late. No train passed the town by which I could get away, till five o'clock. As I sat waiting for its appearance, I asked a boy who sat near me—(a school-boy, of some twelve or thirteen years, he seemed to me; and I should take him for a clergy-man's son)—I asked him whether he had ever heard the story of Dr. Johnson's standing an hour by that church, whose spire rose before us. He said "no." I asked if no such story was known or talked about in Uttoxeter. He answered, "No, not that he ever heard of!" Just think of the absurd little town, knowing nothing about the incident which sanctifies it to the heart of a stranger from three thousand miles over the sea!—just think of the fathers and mothers of the town, never telling the children this sad and lovely story, which might have such a blessed influence on their young days, and spare them so many a pang hereafter!

**July 8<sup>th</sup>, Sunday [1855].** At the Consulate, yesterday, a queer,

stupid, good-natured, fat-faced individual came in, dressed in a sky blue, coarse, cut-away coat, and mixed pantaloons, which (both coat and trowsers,) seemed rather too small for his goodly size.<sup>40</sup> He turned out to be the Yankee who came to England, a few weeks ago, to see the Queen, on the strength of having sent her his own and his wife's daguerreotype, and having received a note of thanks from her secretary. Having been swindled by a fellow-passenger, he has loafed about here ever since his arrival, unable to get home—and, indeed, unwilling, until he shall have gone to London to see the Queen; and, to support himself, he has parted with all the clothes he brought with him, and thrusts himself into the narrow limits of this sky-blue coat and mixed pantaloons. It is certainly a very odd-looking dress; and he hinted, with a melancholy, stupid smile, that he did not look quite fit to see the Queen now. Of course, he wanted my assistance; but it is marvellous, the pertinacity with which he clings to his idea of going to court, and, though starving, will not think of endeavoring to get home, till that has been effected. I laid his absurdity before him, in the plainest terms. "My dear man!" quoth he, with good-natured, simple stubbornness, "if you could but enter into my feelings, and see the business from beginning to end, as I see it!" And this he repeated over and over again. He wished me, if I would not help him myself, to give me the names of some American merchants, to whom he might apply for means to get to London; but I refused to interfere with his affairs in any way, unless he promised to go back immediately to the United States, in case I could get him a passage. Besides his desire to see the Queen, he has likewise (like so many of his countrymen) a fantasy that he is one of the legal heirs of a great English inheritance. No doubt, this dream about the Queen and his English estate has haunted his poor, foolish mind for years and years; and he deems it the strangest and mournfullest perversity of fate, and awfullest cruelty in me, that now—when he has reached England, and has wealth and royal honors almost within his grasp—he must turn back, a poor, penniless, be-fooled simpleton, merely because I will not lend him thirty shillings to get to London. I had never such a perception of a complete booby before, in my life; it made me feel kindly towards him, and yet impatient that such a fool should exist. Finally (as he had not a penny in his pocket, and no means of getting anything to eat) I gave him a couple of shillings, and told him not to let me see him again, till he had made up his mind to get back to America—when I would beg a passage for him if I could. He thanked me, and went away, half-crying, and yet with some thing like a dull, good-natured smile on his face; still fixed in his inveterate purpose of getting to London to see the Queen!

**August 12<sup>th</sup>, Sunday [1855].**

For the last week or two, I have passed my time between the Hotel and the Consulate; and a weary life it is, and one that leaves little of profit behind it. I am sick to death of my office;—brutal captains and brutish sailors;—continual complaints of mutual wrong, which I have no power to set right, and which, indeed, seem to have no right on either side;—calls of idleness or ceremony from my travelling countrymen, who seldom know what they are in search of, at the commencement of their tour, and never have attained any desirable end, at the close of it;—beggars, cheats, simpletons, unfortunates, so mixed up that it is impossible to distinguish one from another, and so, in self-defense, the consul distrusts them all. I see many specimens of mankind, but come to the conclusion that there is but little variety among them, after all.

**August 17<sup>th</sup> Friday [1855].** Yesterday afternoon, Julian and I went to Birkenhead Park. It is a large enclosure, open to the public, and is pretty well beautified with shrubbery, and a pond, and pretty bridges, and here and there a statue, such as Mazeppa,<sup>41</sup> and others of no particular merit, among the trees. There are broad open spaces, where people may play cricket and otherwise disport themselves; also, a camera obscura; and, of course, a refreshment room—where, however, there is nothing better, of a drinkable order, than ginger-beer and British wines. And here the respectable middle-classes—the lower-middling—come to spend a summer afternoon, wandering up and down the winding gravel-paths, feeding the swans off the bridges, nibbling buns and gingerbread and polka-ing (girls with girls) to the music of a hand-organ. It so happened that yesterday there was a large school spending its holiday there; a school of girls of the lower classes, to the number of some hundred & fifty, who disported themselves on the green, under the direction of their schoolmistresses, and of an old gentleman. It struck me, as it always has, to observe how the lower orders of this country indicate their birth and station by their aspect and features. In America, there would be a good deal of grace and beauty among one hundred and fifty children and budding girls, belonging to whatever rank of life; but here they had universally a most plebian look—stubbed, sturdy figures, round, coarse faces, snubnoses—the most evident specimens of the brown bread of human nature. They looked wholesome, and good enough, and fit to sustain their rough share of life; but it would have been impossible to make a lady out of any one of them. Climate, no doubt, has most to do with diffusing a slender elegance over American young-womanhood;

but something, perhaps, is also due to the circumstance that classes are not kept apart there, as they are here; they cross-breed together, amid the continual ups-and-downs of our social life; and so, in the lowest stratum of life, you may see the refining influence of gentler blood. At all events, it is only necessary to look at such an assemblage of children as I saw yesterday, to be convinced that birth and blood do produce certain characteristics. To be sure, I have seen no similar evidence, in England or elsewhere, that old gentility refines and elevates the race.

**August 25<sup>th</sup> Saturday [1855].** On Thursday, I went by invitation to Smithills Hall, at Bolton le Moors, to dine and spend the night. The hall is two or three miles from the town of Bolton where I arrived by railway from Liverpool, and which seems to be a pretty large town, though the houses are generally modern, or with modernized fronts of brick or stucco. It is a manufacturing town; and the tall brick chimnies rise numerously in the neighborhood, and are so near Smithills Hall that, I suspect, the atmosphere is sometimes impregnated with their breath. Mr Ainsworth comforts himself, however, with the rent which he receives from the factories erected on his own grounds; and I suppose the value of his estate has greatly increased by the growth of manufactures; although, unless he wishes to sell it, I do not see what good this can do him.<sup>42</sup>

Smithills Hall is one of the oldest residences in England, and still retains very much the aspect that it must have had, several centuries ago. . . .

The peculiarity of this house is what is called "The Bloody Footstep."<sup>43</sup> In the time of Bloody Mary, a protestant clergyman (George Marsh by name) was examined before the then proprietor of the Hall (Sir Roger Barton, I think it was) and committed to prison for his heretical opinions, and ultimately burned at the stake. As his guards were conducting him from the justice-room, through the stone-paved passage that leads from front to rear of Smithills Hall, he stamped his foot upon one of the flag-stones, in earnest protestation against the wrong which he was undergoing. The foot, as some say, left a bloody mark in the stone; others have it, that the stone yielded like wax under his foot, and that there has been a shallow cavity ever since. This miraculous footprint is still extant; and Mrs. Ainsworth showed it to me, before her husband took me round the estate. It is almost at the threshold of the door opening from the rear of the house, a stone two or three feet square, set among similar ones, that seem to have been worn by the tread of many generations. The footprint is a dark-brown stain in the smooth gray surface of the flag-stone; and looking sidelong at it, there is a shallow cavity perceptible, which Mrs. Ainsworth accounted for as having been worn by people setting their feet just at this place, so as to

tread at the very spot where the martyr wrought the miracle. The mark is longer than any mortal foot, as if caused by sliding along the stone, rather than sinking into it; and it might be supposed to have been made by a pointed shoe, being blunt at the heel, and decreasing towards the toe. The blood-stain version of the story is more consistent with the appearance of the mark, than the imprint would be; for if the martyr's blood oozed out through his shoe and stocking, it might have made his foot slide along the stone, and thus have lengthened the shape.

Of course, it is all a humbug—a darker vein cropping up through the gray flag-stone; but it is probably fact (and, for aught I know, may be found in Fox)<sup>44</sup> that George Marsh underwent an examination in this house; and the tradition may have connected itself with the stone within a short time after the martyrdom. Or perhaps, when the old persecuting knight departed this life and Bloody Mary was also dead, people who had stood a little distance from the hall door, and had seen George Marsh lift his hands and stamp his foot, just at this spot—perhaps they remembered this action and gesture, and really believed that Providence had thus made an indelible record of it on the stone; although the very stone and the very mark might have lain there at the threshold, hundreds of years before. But, even if it had been always there, the footprint might, after the fact, be looked upon as a prophecy, from the time when the foundation of this old house was laid, that a holy and persecuted man should one day set his foot here, on the way that was to lead him to the stake. At any rate, the legend is a good one.

**Sept<sup>r</sup> 12<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday [1855].** Yesterday forenoon, my wife and I (taking Julian with us) went to Westminster Abbey. Approaching it down Whitehall and Parliament street, you pass the Abbey, and see “Poets' Corner” on the corner-house of a little lane, leading up in the rear of the edifice. The entrance-door is at the south-eastern end of the South Transept—not a spacious arch, but a small, lowly door—and as soon as you are within it, you see the busts of poets looking down upon you from the wall.<sup>45</sup> Great poets, too; for Ben Jonson is right behind the door; and Spenser's tablet is next; and Butler on the same wall of the transept; and Milton's (which you know at once by its resemblance to one of his portraits, though it looks older, more wrinkled, and sadder than the portrait) is close by it, with a profile medallion of Gray beneath it. It is a very delightful feeling, to find yourself at once among them;—the consciousness (mingled with a pleasant awe) of kind and friendly presences, who are anything but strangers to you, though heretofore you have never personally encountered them. I never felt this kind of interest in any other tomb-stones, or in the presence of any other dead people, and one is pleased, too, at finding them all there

together, however separated by distant generations, or by personal hostility or other circumstances, while they lived.

The South Transept is divided lengthwise by a screen (as I think they call these partition-walls in a church,) and there are monuments against the wall of the screen, on both sides, as well as against those of the church. All are in excellent preservation—indeed, just as good as if put up yesterday—except that the older marbles are somewhat yellow. There seems to be scarcely an inch of space to put up any more; although room has been found, recently, for a bust of Southy, and a full length statue of Campbell.<sup>46</sup> It is but a little portion of the Abbey, after all, that is dedicated to poets, literary men, musical composers, and others of that gentle breed; and even in Poets' Corner, and in the portion of it properest to poets, men of other kinds of eminence have intruded themselves; generals, statesmen, noblemen, at whom one looks askance, and would willingly turn them out, even if deserving of honorable graves elsewhere. Yet it shows aptly and truly enough what portion of the world's regard and honor has hitherto been awarded to literature, in comparison with other modes of greatness—this little nook in the vast Minster (nor even that more than half to themselves) the walls of which are sheathed and hidden behind the marble that has been sculptured for men once prominent enough, but now forgotten. Nevertheless, it would hardly be worth while to quarrel with the world on account of the scanty space and little honor it awards to poets; for even their own special Corner contains some whom one does not care to meet; and, I suppose, all the literary people who really make a part of one's inner life—reckoning since English literature first existed—might lie together, along one side of the Transept, and be separately and splendidly emblazoned against that one wall. But we must not look at the matter in just this way; and I should be willing that small poets, as well as great ones, all who are anywise known by tale or song, or who have even striven to be so, should meet here.

**Sept'r 13<sup>th</sup>, Thursday [1855].** Mr Buchanan (American Minister) called on me on Tuesday, and left his card; an intimation that I ought to have paid my respects sooner; so, yesterday forenoon, I set out to find his residence, 56, Harley-street. It is a street out of Cavendish Square, in a fashionable quarter, although fashion is said to be ebbing away from it. The ambassador seems to intend some little state in his arrangements; but, no doubt, the establishment compares shabbily enough with the legations of other great countries, and with the houses of the English aristocracy. A servant—not in livery (or in a very unrecognizable one) opened the door for me, and gave my card to a sort of upper servant, who took it into Mr. Buchanan. He had three gentlemen with him; so desired that I should be

shown into the office of the legation, until he should be able to receive me. Here I found Mr. Moran, a clerk or attaché, who has been two or three years on this side of the water; an intelligent person, who seems to be in correspondence (I know not whether more than occasionally) with the New York "Courier and Enquirer." By and by, came in another American to get a passport for the Continent; and soon the three previous gentlemen took leave of the Ambassador, and I was invited to his presence.

The tall, large figure of Mr. Buchanan has a certain air of state and dignity; he carries his head in a very awkward way, (in consequence, as the old scandal says, of having once attempted to cut his throat,) but still looks like a man of long and high authority, and, with his white hair, is now quite venerable.<sup>47</sup> There is certainly a lack of polish, a kind of rusticity; notwithstanding which, you feel him to be a man of the world. I should think he might succeed very tolerably in English society, being heavy and sensible, cool, kindly and good-humored, and with a great deal of experience of life. We talked about various matters, politics among the rest; and he observed that if the President had taken the advice which he gave him in two long letters, before his inauguration, he would have had a perfectly quiet and successful term of office. The advice was, to form a perfectly homogeneous cabinet of Union men, and to satisfy the extremes of the party by a fair distribution of minor offices; whereas Pierce formed his cabinet of extreme men, on both sides, and gave the minor offices to moderate ones. But the anti-slavery people, surely, had no representative in the cabinet. Mr. Buchanan further observed, that he thought Pierce has a fair chance of re-nomination, for that the South could not in honor desert him;—to which I replied, that the South had been guilty of such things, heretofore.<sup>48</sup> He (Buchanan) thinks that the next Presidential term will be more important and critical, both as to our foreign relations and internal affairs, than any preceding one;—which I should judge likely enough to be the case, although I heard the same prophecy often made respecting the present term.

Mr. Buchanan was very kind in his inquiries about my wife, with whom he is acquainted, from having dined at our house, a year or two ago. I always feel as if he were a man of heart, feeling, and simplicity, and certainly it would be unjust to conclude otherwise, merely from the fact (very suspicious, it is true) of his having been a life-long politician. After we had got through a little matter of business (respecting a young American who has enlisted, at Liverpool) the minister rang his bell, and ordered another visitor to be admitted; and so I took my leave.

**March 27<sup>th</sup> [1856], Thursday.** Yesterday, I went out at about twelve, and visited the British Museum; an exceedingly tiresome affair. It

quite crushes a person to see so much at once; and I wandered from hall to hall, with a weary and heavy heart, wishing (Heaven forgive me!) that the Elgin marbles and the frieze of the Parthenon were all burnt into lime, and that the granite Egyptian statues were hewn and squared into building-stones, and that the mummies had all turned to dust, two thousand years ago; and, in fine, that all the material relics of so many successive ages had disappeared with the generations that produced them. The present is burthened too much with the past. We have not time, in our earthly existence, to appreciate what is warm with life, and immediately around us; yet we heap up all these old shells, out of which human life has long emerged, casting them off forever. I do not see how future ages are to stagger onward under all this dead weight, with the additions that will be continually made to it.

**April 13<sup>th</sup>, Sunday [1856].** I remember nothing particular that happened the day after our visit to Firfield, until about five o'clock, when I went to Bennoch's;<sup>49</sup> for he was to accompany me to dine at the Mansion-House, in compliance with the Lord Mayor's invitation. We went thither at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past six, and were received in a great entrance-hall by some of the most gorgeously dressed footmen I ever saw. Their livery is blue and buff, and they look something like American revolutionary generals, only far more splendid. Two officers of his Lordship's household were busy in assigning to the guests the seats that they were to occupy in the dining-room; a list of all the guests and their places lying on the table before them. These two officers were dressed in scarlet coats, with epaulets, and looked precisely like military men. In fact there is a great deal of state and ceremony in this palace of the city-king; and the Mansion House itself (which I believe was built in Queen Anne's time) is worthy of its inhabitant, were he really the greatest man of this great city. After finding out where our places were to be, we passed into the reception-room; and our names being announced, the Lord Mayor met me and shook hands with me, close by the door; introducing me also to the Lady Mayoress, whom (as she will never hear what I think of her) I shall be bold to call a short and ugly old Jewess. As for his lordship, he is a tall, hard-looking, white-headed old Jew, of plain deportment, but rather hearty than otherwise in his address. He said little to me, except that I must hold myself in readiness to respond to a toast which he meant to give; and though I hinted that I would much rather be spared, he showed no signs of mercy.

There are two reception-rooms, or one large one, connected by folding-doors; and, though in an old style, they are very handsome apartments, with carved cielings and walls, and at each end a magnificent fire-place of marble,

ornamented with wreaths of flowers and foliage, and other sculpture. Both rooms were crowded with guests, principally, I suppose, city-magnates with their wives or daughters; and, however it may have happened, I must own that I saw here more comeliness of womankind than I have before seen in England. I soon met with Mr. S. C. Hall, who introduced me to all the noted people he knew. The only one I had heard of before was the Rev. Mr. Gleig, Chaplain General of the army; a tall, rather stern-looking, military man of God, in clerical attire. Mrs. Hall was likewise present, and it was arranged that we were to sit together. The company consisted of about three hundred; and at a given signal, we all found our way into an immense hall (called, I know not why, the Egyptian Hall, though its architecture is classic) brilliantly lighted, and presenting quite a splendid spectacle, when all the tables were full. A band (but Mrs Hall said the music was very bad) played inspiringly; and truly there were all the circumstances and accompaniments of a stately feast. There was a cross-table, and two others (at one of which I sat) extending along the length of the hall.<sup>50</sup>

The first thing produced, after a blessing had been asked, was, of course, turtle-soup, of which everybody was allowed to help themselves twice, or, no doubt, as many times as they chose, and could get it. Being not very fond of turtle-soup, I took it only once, although it must be supposed to be better (such a civic dainty as this) at the Lord Mayor's table than anywhere else. With the soup was taken a small sip of rum-punch, in a very little tumbler. The rest of the dinner was catalogued upon a bill of fare, printed within a border of gold and green on delicate white paper, and was very good, and of variety enough, though not better than those given by the Mayors of Liverpool, or perhaps, than those given by the landlords of American Hotels. I do not remember eating anything but some red mullets, some potted ptarmigan, and some stewed mushrooms; and I have often enjoyed a mutton-chop (or, in my vegetable days, some roasted potatoes and salt) as much as I did these delicacies. The dishes were all put upon the table, and helped by guests at the table; an inconvenient arrangement in so great a party. There were decanters of sherry, from which the guests helped themselves, on the table; and the servants came round pretty frequently with champagne and hock. The band kept playing, at intervals, all the time; and, when not talking with Mrs Hall, or my neighbor on the other side (some city dignitary) my eyes were mostly drawn to a young lady who sat nearly opposite me, across the table.<sup>51</sup> She was, I suppose, dark, and yet not dark, but rather seemed to be of pure white marble, yet not white; but the purest and finest complexion (without a shade of color in it, yet anything but sallow or sickly) that I ever beheld. Her hair was a wonderful deep, raven black, black as night, black as death; not raven black, for that has

a shiny gloss, and her's had not; but it was hair never to be painted, nor described—wonderful hair, Jewish hair. Her nose had a beautiful outline, though I could see that it was Jewish too; and that, and all her features, were so fine that sculpture seemed a despicable art beside her; and certainly my pen is good for nothing. If any likeness of her could be given, it must be by sculpture, not painting. She was slender, and youthful, but yet had a stately and cold, though soft and womanly grace; and, looking at her, I saw what were the wives of the old patriarchs, in their maiden or early married days—what Rachel was, when Jacob wooed her seven years, and seven more—what Judith was; for, womanly as she looked, I doubt not she could have slain a man, in a good cause—what Bathsheba was; only she seemed to have no sin in her—perhaps what Eve was, though one could hardly think her weak enough to eat the apple. I never should have thought of touching her, nor desired to touch her; for, whether owing to distinctness of race, my sense that she was a Jewess, or whatever else, I felt a sort of repugnance, simultaneously with my perception that she was an admirable creature. But, at the right hand of this miraculous Jewess, there sat the very Jew of Jews; the distilled essence of all the Jews that have been born since Jacob's time; he was Judas Iscariot; he was the Wandering Jew; he was the worst, and at the same time, the truest type of his race, and contained within himself, I have no doubt, every old prophet and every old clothesman, that ever the tribes produced; and he must have been circumcised as much as ten times over.<sup>52</sup> I never beheld anything so ugly and disagreeable, and preposterous, and laughable, as the outline of his profile; it was so hideously Jewish, and so cruel, and so keen; and he had such an immense beard that you could see no trace of a mouth, until he opened it to speak, or to eat his dinner,—and then, indeed, you were aware of a cave, in this density of beard. And yet his manners and aspect, in spite of all, were those of a man of the world, and a gentleman. Well; it is as hard to give an idea of this ugly Jew, as of the beautiful Jewess. He was the Lord Mayor's brother, and an elderly man, though he looked in his prime, with his wig and dyed beard; and Rachel, or Judith, or whatever her name be, was his wife! I rejoiced exceedingly in this Shylock, this Iscariot; for the sight of him justified me in the repugnance I have always felt towards his race.

The dishes being removed, grace was said; and then an official personage, behind the Lord Mayor's chair, made a proclamation. I ought to have mentioned that there stood a man in a helmet, in accordance with an ancient custom of the city, behind his lordship's chair, but it was not he who now made the proclamation. In the first place, he enumerated the names of the principal guests, comprising two or three noblemen, some baronets, members of parliament, aldermen, and other of the illustrious, (among

whom was enrolled a certain gentleman of consular rank) and ended in some such way as this—"and all others, gentlemen and ladies, here present, the Lord Mayor drinks to you all in a Loving Cup, and sends it round among you." And forthwith the Loving Cup (or rather two of them, on either side of the table) came slowly down, with all the antique ceremony. The fashion of it is thus;—the Lord Mayor presents the covered cup to the guest at his elbow, standing up, in order that the guest should remove the cover; his lordship then drinks, the guest replaces the cover, takes the cup into his own hands, and presents it to his next neighbor, for the cover to be again removed, so that he may take his own draught. His next neighbor goes through the same form with the person below him; and thus the whole company are finally interlinked in one long chain of love. When the cup came to me, I found it to be an old and richly ornamented goblet of silver, capable of containing about a quart of wine; and, indeed, there was nearly that quantity in it, for I doubt whether the guests do much more than make a pretense of drinking; so that the goblets never need replenishing. I drank a sip, however, being curious to know what the liquor was, and found it to be claret, spiced and sweetened, and hardly preferable to sweetened water.

After this, the toasts began, and there were several very poor speeches; one from the young Earl of Grannard, his maiden speech, and promising nothing very wonderful in future; and I forget who else spoke, but all as dull as could well be.<sup>53</sup> Before each toast, the man behind the Lord Mayor made proclamation that his Lordship was going to give a toast; after the toast, and his lordship's accompanying remarks, the band played an appropriate tune; then the herald, or whatever he was, proclaimed that such or such a person was about to respond to the Lord Mayor's toast and speech; then another air, I think, from the band; and then the doomed person got up and proceeded to make a fool of himself. Now I had by no means forgotten his lordship's threat of calling me up, and conscious that, if toasted at all, it would be discourteous not to do it early in the evening, I bethought me, in some trepidation, what could be said in reply; and this was rather difficult, because I did not know what the drift of the Lord Mayor's remarks might be. However, I communicated my dilemma to Mr. S. C. Hall, who sat next his wife; and if I had sought the whole world over, I could not have found a better artist in whip-syllabub and flummery; and, without an instant's hesitation, he suggested a whole rivulet of lukewarm stuff, which I saw would be sufficiently to the purpose, if I could but remember it. Really, he is one of the kindest and best men in the world, and I felt grateful to him in my heart.

Well; in due time, the Lord Mayor began some remarks which I quickly perceived to be drifting in my direction; and after paying me some high

compliments in reference to my works (I don't believe he ever read a word of them) he drank prosperity to my country, and my own health, which was received with great applause. Then, I suppose, the band played 'Hail Columbia!' (but it might have been 'God Save the Queen,' without my being the wiser) the herald proclaimed that I was going to respond, and I rose amid much cheering, so screwed up to the point that I did not care what happened next. The Lord Mayor might have fired a pistol, instead of a speech, at me, and I should not have flinched. As a starting point, I took some of Mr. Hall's flummery, and clothing it in my own words, it really did very well indeed; and this I joined and interwove with two or three points of my own, and thus tinkered up and amalgamated a very tolerable little speech, which was much helped along by the cheers that broke in between the sentences. Certainly, there was a very kind feeling in the audience; and it is wonderful how conscious the speaker is of sympathy, and how it warms and animates him. When I sat down, Bennoch, and Mr. and Mrs. Hall were loud in their praises, and so were many other persons, in the course of the evening; and I was glad to have got out of the scrape so well. But one quickly cools down after these efforts; and I soon felt—indeed, I had never ceased to feel—that I, like the other orators of the evening, had made a fool of myself, and that it is altogether a ridiculous custom to talk in one's cups. Nor has this feeling been lessened, since I have read various reports of what I said, none of them correct, all obliterating the best points, and all exaggerating the sentiment of international kindness, which I myself had too strongly expressed. This speech was sent down to Liverpool by electric telegraph, posted in the Exchange, and has since been printed all over the kingdom; and, in the shape in which it appears before the public, it is nothing short of ridiculous. But it is an absurd world; so let this absurdity pass with the rest. I should not care for England; but America will read it too.

Shortly after this great event of the evening, the ladies retired from table. There were a good many more toasts and speechifyings among the gentlemen; but I think we all went to get our coffee by eleven o'clock, or thereabouts. Losing Bennoch and my other acquaintances, in the crowd, I took my departure; and not being able to find a cab, rode homeward as far as Charing Cross in an omnibus.<sup>54</sup>



*Hawthorne visits the home of Sir Walter Scott, a favorite author of his youth.*



**Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, '56.**

We were not long in reaching Abbotsford.<sup>55</sup> The house (which is more compact, and of considerably less extent than I anticipated) stands in full view from the road, and at only a short distance from it, lower down towards the river. Its aspect disappointed me; but so does everything. It is but a villa, after all; no castle, nor even a large manor-house, and very unsatisfactory when you consider it in that light. Indeed, it impressed me not as a real house, intended for the home of human beings—a house to die in, or to be born in—but as a plaything, something in the same category as Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill.<sup>56</sup> The present owner seems to have found it insufficient for the actual purposes of life; for he is adding a wing which promises to be as extensive as the original structure.

We rang at the front-door (the family being now absent) and were speedily admitted by a middle-aged or somewhat elderly man—the butler, I suppose, or some upper servant—who at once acceded to our request to be permitted to see the house. We stepped from the porch immediately into the entrance hall; and having the great hall of Battle Abbey, I believe, in my memory, and the ideal of a baronial hall in my mind, I was quite taken aback at the smallness, and narrowness, and lowness of this—which, however, is a very fine one on its own little scale.<sup>57</sup> In truth, it is not much more than a vestibule. The ceiling is carved; and every inch of the walls is covered with claymores, targets, and other weapons and armor, or old-time curiosities, tastefully arranged, many of which, no doubt, have a history attached to them—or had, in Sir Walter's own mind. Our attendant was a very intelligent person, and pointed out much that was interesting; but, in such a multitudinous variety, it was almost impossible to fix the eye upon any one thing. Probably the apartment looked smaller than it really was, on account of being so wainscoated and festooned with curiosities. I remember nothing particularly, unless it be the coal-grate in the fireplace, which was one formerly used by Archbishop Sharpe, the prelate whom Balfour of Burley murdered. Either in this room or the next one, however, there was a glass-case, containing the suit of clothes last worn by Scott—a short green coat, somewhat worn, with silvered buttons, a pair of gray tartan trowsers, and a white hat. It *was* in the hall that we saw these things; for there, too, I recollect, were a good many walking sticks that had been used by Scott, and the hatchet with which he was in the habit of lopping branches from his trees, as he walked among them.

From the hall we passed into the study, a small room lined with the books which Sir Walter, no doubt, was most frequently accustomed to

refer to; and our guide pointed out some volumes of the *Moniteur*, which he used while writing the *History of Napoleon*.<sup>58</sup> Probably these were the driest and dullest volumes in his whole library. About mid-height of the walls of the study, there is a gallery with a short flight of steps, for the convenience of getting at the upper books. A study-table occupies the centre of the room, and at one end of the table stands an easy chair, covered with morocco, and with ample space to fling one's self back. The servant told me that I might sit down in this chair, for that Sir Walter sat there while writing his romances; "and perhaps," quoth the man, smiling, "you may catch some inspiration!" What a bitter word this would have been, if he had known me to be a romance-writer! "No, I never shall be inspired to write romances," I answered, as if such an idea had never occurred to me. I sat down, however. This study quite satisfies me, being planned on principles of common sense, and made to work in, and without any fantastic adaptation of old forms to modern uses.

Next to the study is the library, an apartment of respectable size, and containing as many books as it can hold, all protected by wirework. I did not observe what or whose works were here; but the attendant showed us one whole compartment, full of volumes having reference to ghosts, witchcraft, and the supernatural generally. It is remarkable that Scott should have felt interested in such subjects, being such a worldly and earthly man as he was; but, then, indeed, almost all forms of popular superstition do clothe the ethereal with earthly attributes, and so make it grossly perceptible. The library, like the study, suited me well—merely the fashion of the apartment, I mean—and I doubt not it contains as many curious volumes as are anywhere to be met with, within a similar space. The drawing-room adjoins it; and here we saw a beautiful ebony cabinet, which was presented to Sir Walter by George IV.; and some pictures of much interest—one of Scott himself, at thirty five, rather portly, with a heavy face, but shrewd eyes, which seem to observe you closely. There is a full length of his eldest son, an officer of dragoons, leaning on his charger; and a portrait of Lady Scott, a brunette, with black hair and eyes, very pretty, warm, vivacious, and un-English in her aspect.<sup>59</sup> I am not quite sure whether I saw all these pictures in the drawing-room, or some of them in the dining-room; but the one that struck me most—and very much indeed—was the head of Mary Queen of Scots, literally, the head, cut off, and lying in a dish. It is said to have been painted by an Italian or French artist, two days after her death. The black hair curls or flows all about it; the face is of a deathlike hue, but has an expression of quiet after much pain and trouble, very beautiful, very sweet and sad; and it affected me strongly with the horror and strangeness of such a head being severed from its body. Methinks I should not like

to have it always in the room with me. I thought of the lovely picture of Mary that I had seen at Edinburgh Castle, and thought what a symbol it would be—how expressive of a human being having her destiny in her own hands—if that beautiful young Queen were painted as carrying this vessel, containing her own woeful head, and perhaps casting a curious and pitiful glance down upon it, as if it were not her own.

Also, in the drawing-room, (if I mistake not,) there was a plaster-cast of Sir Walter's face, taken after death; the only one in existence, as our guide assured us. It is not often that one sees a homelier set of features than this; no elevation, no dignity, whether bestowed by nature, or thrown over them by age or death; sunken cheeks, the bridge of the nose depressed, and the end turned up; the mouth puckered up, and no chin whatever, or hardly any. The expression was not calm and happy, but rather as if he were in a perturbed slumber, perhaps nothing short of nightmare. I wonder that the family allow this cast to be shown; the last record that there is of Scott's personal reality, and conveying such a wretched & unworthy idea of it.

Adjoining the drawing-room is the dining-room, in one corner of which, between two windows, Scott died. It is now a quarter of a century since his death; but it seemed to me that we spoke with a sort of hush in our voices, as if he were still dying here, or but just departed. I remember nothing else in this room. The next one is the armory, which is the smallest of all that we had passed through; but its walls gleam with the steel blades of swords, and the barrels of pistols, matchlocks, firelocks, and all manner of deadly weapons, whether European or oriental; for there are many trophies here of East Indian warfare. I saw Rob Roy's gun, rifled, and of very large bore; and a beautiful pistol, formerly Claverhouse's; and the sword of Montrose, given him by King Charles, the silver hilt of which I grasped.<sup>60</sup> There was also a superb claymore, in an elaborately wrought silver sheath, made for Sir Walter Scott, and presented to him by the Highland Society, for his services in marshalling the clans, when George IV. came to Scotland.<sup>61</sup> There were a thousand other things, which I knew must be most curious, yet did not ask nor care about them; because so many curiosities drive one crazy, and fret one's heart to death. On the whole, there is no simple and great impression left by Abbotsford; and I felt angry and dissatisfied with myself for not feeling something which I did not and could not feel. But it is just like going to a museum, if you look into particulars; and one learns from it, too, that Scott could not have been really a wise man, nor an earnest one, nor one that grasped the truth of life—he did but play, and the play grew very sad towards its close. In a certain way, however, I understand his romances the better for having seen his house; and his house the better, for having read his romances. They throw light on one another.

We had now gone through all the show-rooms; and the next door admitted us again into the entrance-hall, where we recorded our names in the visitor's book. It contains more names of Americans, (I should judge, from casting my eyes back over last year's record) than of all other people in the world, including Great Britain. Bidding farewell to Abbotsford, I cannot but confess a sentiment of remorse for having visited the dwelling-place—as, just before, I visited the grave—of the mighty minstrel and romancer, with so cold a heart, and in so critical a mood;—*his* dwelling-place and *his* grave, whom I had so admired and loved, and who had done so much for my happiness, when I was young. But I, and the world generally, now look at him from a different point of view; and, besides, these visits to the actual haunts of famous people, though long dead, have the effect of making us sensible, in some degree, to their human imperfections, as if we actually saw them alive. I felt this effect, to a certain extent, even with respect to Shakespeare, when I visited Stratford-on-Avon. As for Scott, I still cherish him in a warm place, and I do not know that I have any pleasanter anticipation (as regards books) than that of reading all his novels over again, after we get back to the Wayside.

**July 13<sup>th</sup>, Sunday [1856].** On Friday morning at 9 o'clock, (having first fortified myself with some coffee and cold beef) I took the rail into town, to breakfast with R. M. Milnes. . . .<sup>62</sup>

. . . Mrs. Milnes greeted me very kindly; and Mr. Milnes came towards me with an old gentleman in a blue coat and gray pantaloons—with a long, rather thin, homely visage, exceedingly shaggy eyebrows, though no great weight of brow, and thin gray hair—and introduced me to the Marquess of Lansdowne.<sup>63</sup> The Marquess had his right hand wrapt up in a black silk handkerchief; so he gave me his left, and, from some awkwardness in meeting it, when I expected the right, I gave him only three of my fingers;—a thing I never did before to any person, and it is queer that I should have done it to a Marquess. He addressed me with great simplicity and natural kindness, complimenting me on my works, and speaking, if I remember aright, about the society of Liverpool in former days. Lord Lansdowne was the friend of Moore, and has about him the fragrance communicated by the memories of many illustrious people, with whom he has associated.<sup>64</sup>

Mr. Ticknor, the Historian of Spanish Literature, now greeted me.<sup>65</sup> He looks greyer than when I saw him in Boston, but in good preservation. Mr. Milnes introduced me to Mrs. Browning, and assigned her to me to conduct into the breakfast-room; she is a small, delicate woman, with ringlets of black hair, (I think they were ringlets, and am sure they were black) a pleasant, intelligent, sensitive face, and a low, agreeable voice.<sup>66</sup> She is more

youthful and comely than I supposed, and very gentle and ladylike. And so we proceeded to the breakfast-room, which is hung round with pictures; and in the middle of it stood an immense round table, worthy to have been King Arthur's, and here we seated ourselves without any question of precedence or ceremony. On one side of me was an elderly lady with a very fine countenance, and altogether more agreeable to look at than most English dames of her age; and, in the course of breakfast, I discovered her to be the mother of Florence Nightingale. One of her daughters (not *the* daughter) was likewise present.<sup>67</sup> Mrs. Milnes, Mrs. Browning, Mrs. Nightingale, and her daughter, were the only ladies at table; and I think there were as many as eight or ten gentlemen, whose names—as I came so late—I was to find out for myself, or to leave unknown.

It was a pleasant and sociable meal; and, thanks to my cold beef and coffee at home, I had no occasion to trouble myself much about the fare; so I just ate some delicate chicken, and a very small cutlet, and a slice of dry toast, and thereupon surceased from my labors. Mrs. Browning seems to be a vegetarian; at least, she ate nothing but an egg. We talked a good deal during breakfast; for she is of that quickly appreciative and responsive order of women, with whom I can talk more freely than with any men; and she has, besides, her own originality wherewith to help on conversation; though, I should say, not of a loquacious tendency. She introduced the subject of spiritualism, which, she says, interests her very much; indeed, she seems to be a believer.<sup>68</sup> Her husband, she told me, utterly rejects the subject, and will not believe even in the outward manifestations, of which there is such overwhelming evidence. We also talked of Miss Bacon; and I developed something of that lady's theory respecting Shakspeare,<sup>69</sup> greatly to the horror of Mrs. Browning and that of her next neighbor—some nobleman, whose name I did not know. On the whole, I like her the better for loving the man Shakspeare with a personal love. We talked, too, of Margaret Fuller, who spent her last night in Italy with the Brownings; and of William Story,<sup>70</sup> with whom they have been intimate, and who, Mrs. Browning says, is much stirred up about Spiritualism. Really, I cannot help wondering that so fine a spirit as hers should not reject the matter, till, at least, it is forced upon her. But I like her very much—a great deal better than her poetry, which I could hardly suppose to have been written by such a quiet little person as she.

Mrs. Nightingale had been talking at first with Lord Lansdowne, who sat next her; but by and by she turned to me, and began to speak of London smoke. She is a nice old lady, very intelligent—that is, very sensible—but with no saliency of ideas; a lady born and bred, evidently, for—unless with that advantage—all English women have a certain nonsense about them,

even more inevitably than the men. Then (there being a discussion about Lord Byron, on the other side of the table) she spoke to me about Lady Byron, whom she knows intimately, characterizing her as a most excellent and exemplary person, high-principled, unselfish, and now devoting herself to the care of her two grandchildren; their mother (Byron's daughter) being dead.<sup>71</sup> Lady Byron, she says, writes beautiful verses. Somehow or other, all this praise, and more of the same kind, gave me the idea of an intolerably irreproachable person; and I asked Mrs. Nightingale if Lady Byron was warm-hearted. With some hesitation, or mental reservation—at all events, not quite out-spokenly—she answered that she was.

I was too much engaged with these personal talks to attend much to what was going on elsewhere; but all through breakfast, I had been more and more impressed by the aspect of one of the guests, sitting next to Milnes. He was a man of large presence—a portly personage—gray haired, but scarcely as yet aged; and his face had a remarkable intelligence, not vivid nor sparkling, but conjoined with great quietude; and if it gleamed or brightened, at one time more than another, it was like the sheen over a broad surface of sea. There was a somewhat careless self-possession, large and broad enough to be called dignity; and the more I looked at him, the more I knew that he was somebody, and wondered who. He might have been a minister of state; only there is not one of them who has any right to such a face and presence. At last—I do not know how the conviction came—but I became aware that it was Macauley, and began to see some slight resemblance to his portraits.<sup>72</sup> But I have never seen any that is not wretchedly unworthy of the original. As soon as I knew him, I began to listen to his conversation; but he did not talk a great deal—contrary to his usual custom, for I am told he is apt to engross all the talk to himself. Probably he may have been restrained by the presence of Ticknor and Mr. Palfrey,<sup>73</sup> who were among his auditors and interlocutors; and as the conversation seemed to turn much on American subjects, he could not well have assumed to talk them down. Well, I am glad to have seen him—a face fit for a scholar, a man of the world, a cultivated intelligence.

After we got up from table, and went into the library, Mr. Browning introduced himself to me; a younger man than I expected to see, handsome, with brown hair, a very little frosted. He is very simple and agreeable in manner, gently impulsive, talking as if his heart were uppermost. He spoke of his pleasure in meeting me, and his appreciation of my books; and (which has not often happened to me) mentioned that the *Blithedale Romance* was the one he admired most. I wonder why. I hope I showed as much pleasure at his praise as he did at mine; for I was glad to see how pleasantly it moved him. After this I talked with Ticknor and Milnes, and with Mr. Palfrey, to whom I had been introduced, very long ago, by George

Hillard, and had never seen him since.<sup>74</sup> We looked at some autographs, of which Mr. Milnes has two or three large volumes. I recollect a leaf from Swift's Journal to Stella; a letter from Addison; one from Chatterton, in a most neat and legible hand;<sup>75</sup> and a characteristic sentence or two and signature of Oliver Cromwell written in a religious book. There seemed to be many curious volumes in the library; but I had not time to look at them.

I liked greatly the manners of almost all—yes, all, as far as I observed—all the people at this breakfast; and it was doubtless owing to their being all people either of high rank, or remarkable intellect, or both. An Englishman can hardly be a gentleman, unless he enjoys one or the other of these advantages; and perhaps the surest way to give him good manners is, to make a lord of him—or rather, of his grandfather, or great-grandfather. In the third generation—scarcely sooner—he will be polished into simplicity and elegance, and his deportment will be all the better for the homely material out of which it is wrought and refined. The Marquess of Lansdowne, for instance, would have been a very common-place man in the common ranks of life, but it has done him good to be a nobleman. Not that I consider his tact quite perfect. In going up to breakfast, he made me precede him; in returning to the library, he did the same, although I drew back, till he impelled me up the first stair, with gentle persistence. By insisting upon it, he showed his sense of condescension, much more than if—when he saw me unwilling to take precedence—he had passed forward, as if the point were not worth either asserting or yielding. Heaven knows, it was in no humility that I would have trod behind him. But he is a kind old man, and I am willing to believe of the English aristocracy generally that they are kind, and of beautiful deportment; for certainly there never can have been mortals in a position more advantageous for becoming so. If any, they must be Americans; and, really, I hope there may come a time when we shall be so, and I already know Americans whose noble and delicate manners may compare well with any I have seen.



*Hawthorne calls upon Delia Bacon, proponent of a theory about the authorship of Shakespeare's plays.*



### **July 29<sup>th</sup> Tuesday [1856].**

Yesterday, at about ten, I walked across the heath, and through Greenwich Park, to the Thames' side, and took the Steamer to town. The trip

up the river to London Bridge, occupies about half an hour, or perhaps less. . . . I took a cab to Miss Bacon's lodgings, 12, Spring-street, Sussex Gardens. It is a pleasant part of London enough, at no great distance from the Park, and seems to be modern. The basement of the house, where Miss B. lodges, is occupied by a grocer, who is likewise her landlord—a portly, middle-aged, civil and kindly man, who seemed to feel a personal kindness towards his lodger. At least, this was the impression made on me by the few words I heard from him, when I stepped into the shop to inquire if she lived there.

The girl of the house took up my card, and then ushered me up two (and, I rather believe, three) pair of stairs, into a parlor—plain, but neat enough—and told me that Miss Bacon would come soon. There were a number of books on the table; and, looking into them, I found that every one had some reference to her Shakspearian theory;—there was a volume of Raleigh's History of the World, a volume of Montaigne, a volume of Bacon's letters, a volume of Shakspeare's plays;—and, on another table, there was the manuscript of part of her work. To be sure, there was a pocket-Bible; but everything else referred to this one idea of hers; and, no doubt, as it has engrossed her whole soul, the Bible has reference to it likewise. I took up Montaigne (it was Hazlitt's translation) and read his Journey to Italy for a good while, until I heard a chamber on the same floor open, and Miss Bacon appeared. I expected to see a very homely, uncouth, elderly personage, and was rather pleasantly disappointed by her aspect. She is rather uncommonly tall, and has a striking and expressive face—dark hair, dark eyes, which shone as she spoke; and, by and by, a color came into her cheeks. She must be over forty years old—perhaps, towards fifty—and, making allowance for years and ill health, she may be supposed to have been handsome once. There was little or no embarrassment in her manner; and we immediately took a friendly and familiar tone together, and began to talk as if we had known one another a long while. Our previous correspondence had smoothed the way; and we had a definite topic, in my proposal to offer her book to Routledge. She thought well of this, and at once acceded.

She was very communicative about her theory, and would have been more so, had I desired it; but I thought it best to repress, rather than to draw her out. Unquestionably, she is a monomaniac; this great idea has completely thrown her off her balance; but, at the same time, it has wonderfully developed her intellect, and made her what she could not otherwise have been. I had heard, long ago, that she believed that the confirmation of her theory was to be found buried in Shakspeare's grave. Recently, as I understood her, this idea has been modified and fully developed in her

mind; she now believes that she has found, in Lord Bacon's letters, the key and clue to the whole mystery—definite and minute instructions how to find a will and other documents, relating to this new philosophy, which are concealed in a hollow space in the under surface of Shakspeare's gravestone. These instructions, she intimates, go completely and precisely to the point, and obviate all difficulties in the way of coming at the treasure, and even, I believe, secure her from any troublesome consequence likely to result from disturbing the grave. All that she now stays in England for—indeed, the object for which she came here, and which has kept her here these three years past—is, to discover these material and unquestionable proofs of the truth of her theory.

She communicated all this strange matter in a low, quiet tone, and, for my part, I listened as quietly, and without any expression of dissent. It would have shut her up at once, and without in the least weakening her faith in the existence of these things; and, if it were possible to convince her of their non-existence, I apprehend that she would collapse and die at once. She says herself that she cannot now bear the society of those who do not sympathize with her; and, finding little sympathy or none, she entirely secludes herself from the world. In all these years, she has seen Mrs. Farrar a few times, but has long ago given her up; Carlyle, once or twice, but not of late; Mr. Buchanan, while minister, once called on her; and General Campbell two or three times, on business;—with these exceptions, she has lived in complete solitude.<sup>76</sup> She never walks out; she suffers much from neuralgia; she is in difficult circumstances, pecuniarily; and yet, she tells me, she is perfectly happy. I can well conceive of this; for she feels sure that she has a great object to accomplish, and that Providence is specially busy, not only in what promotes her progress, but in what seems to impede it. For instance, she thinks that she was providentially led to this lodging-house, and put in relation with this landlord and his family; and, to say the truth, considering what London lodging-house keepers usually are—and in view of her pecuniary embarrassments—the kindness of this man and his household is little less than miraculous. Evidently, too, she thinks that Providence has brought me forward at this critical juncture, when she could not have done without me.

For my part, I would rather that Providence would have employed some other instrument; but still I have little or no scruple or doubt about what I ought to do. Her book is a most remarkable one, and well deserves publication; and towards that end, she shall have every assistance that I can render. Her relatives are endeavoring to force her home, by withholding from her all means of support in England; but, in my opinion, if taken from England now, she would go home as a raving maniac, and I shall write to them

and suggest this view of the case. Meanwhile, as she must be kept alive, it devolves on me to supply her with some small means for that purpose. As to her designs on Shakespeare's grave, I see no way but to ignore them entirely, and leave Providence to manage that matter in its own way. If I had it in my power to draw her out of her delusions, on that point, I should not venture to do so;—it is the condition on which she lives, in comfort and joy, and exercises great intellectual power; and it would be no business of mine to annihilate her, for this world, by showing her a miserable fact. I am not quite sure, that she will not be practically wiser, in this particular matter, than her theory seems to indicate;—there is a ladylike feeling of propriety, and a New England orderliness, and probably a sturdy common sense at bottom, which may begin to act at the right time. And, at all events, it is still the safest course to allow her her own way, till she brings up against an impossibility.

My interview with her may have lasted about an hour, and she flowed out freely, as to the first friend whom she had met in a long while. She is a very good talker, considering how long she has held her tongue for want of a listener—pleasant, sunny and shadowy, often piquant, suggesting all a woman's various moods and humours; and beneath all there is a deep undercurrent of earnestness, which does not fail to produce, on the listener's part, something like a temporary faith in what she believes so strongly.

From her own account, it appears she did at one time lose her reason; it was on finding that the philosophy, which she found under the surface of the plays, was running counter to the religious doctrines in which she had been educated. I think there is no other instance of anything like this; a system growing up in a person's mind without the volition—contrary to the volition—and substituting itself in place of everything that originally grew there. It is really more wonderful that she should have fancied this philosophy, than if she had really found it.



*Melville visits Hawthorne in Liverpool in November 1856, en route to the Middle East—a trip funded by his father-in-law, Judge Lemuel Shaw, in response to family concerns about Melville's physical and mental health. Melville had recently completed *The Confidence-Man* (1857), which would prove to be the last piece of fiction he would publish in his lifetime. Hawthorne's characterization of Melville's religious plight has been enormously influential on interpretations of Melville.*



**November 20<sup>th</sup>, Thursday [1856].** A week ago last Monday, Herman Melville came to see me at the Consulate, looking much as he used to do (a little paler, and perhaps a little sadder), in a rough outside coat, and with his characteristic gravity and reserve of manner. He had crossed from New York to Glasgow in a screw steamer, about a fortnight before, and had since been seeing Edinburgh and other interesting places. I felt rather awkward, at first; because this is the first time I have met him since my ineffectual attempt to get him a consular appointment from General Pierce. However, I failed only from real lack of power to serve him; so there was no reason to be ashamed, and we soon found ourselves on pretty much our former terms of sociability and confidence. Melville has not been well, of late; he has been affected with neuralgic complaints in his head and limbs, and no doubt has suffered from too constant literary occupation, pursued without much success, latterly; and his writings, for a long while past, have indicated a morbid state of mind. So he left his place at Pittsfield, and has established his wife and family, I believe, with his father-in-law in Boston, and is thus far on his way to Constantinople. I do not wonder that he found it necessary to take an airing through the world, after so many years of toilsome pen-labor and domestic life, following upon so wild and adventurous a youth as his was. I invited him to come and stay with us at Southport, as long as he might remain in this vicinity; and, accordingly, he did come, the next day, taking with him, by way of baggage, the least little bit of a bundle, which, he told me, contained a night-shirt and a tooth-brush. He is a person of very gentlemanly instincts in every respect, save that he is a little heterodox in the matter of clean linen.

He stayed with us from Tuesday till Thursday; and, on the intervening day, we took a pretty long walk together, and sat down in a hollow among the sand hills (sheltering ourselves from the high, cool wind) and smoked a cigar. Melville, as he always does, began to reason of Providence and futurity, and of everything that lies beyond human ken, and informed me that he had "pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated"; but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation; and, I think, will never rest until he gets hold of a definite belief. It is strange how he persists—and has persisted ever since I knew him, and probably long before—in wandering to-and-fro over these deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sand hills amid which we were sitting. He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other. If he were a religious man, he would be one of the most truly religious and reverential; he has a very high and noble nature, and better worth immortality than most of us.

He went back with me to Liverpool, on Thursday; and, the next day, Henry Bright met him at my office, and showed him whatever was worth

seeing in town. On Saturday, Melville and I went to Chester together. I love to take every opportunity of going to Chester; it being the one only place, within easy reach of Liverpool, which possesses any old English interest. . . .

We left Chester at about four o'clock; and I took the rail for Southport at half-past six, parting from Melville at a corner in Liverpool, in the rainy evening. I saw him again on Monday, however. He said that he already felt much better than in America; but observed that he did not anticipate much pleasure in his rambles, for that the spirit of adventure is gone out of him. He certainly is much overshadowed since I saw him last; but I hope he will brighten as he goes onward. He sailed from Liverpool in a steamer on Tuesday, leaving his trunk behind him at my consulate, and taking only a carpet-bag to hold all his travelling-gear. This is the next best thing to going naked; and as he wears his beard and moustache, and so needs no dressing-case—nothing but a toothbrush—I do not know a more independent personage. He learned his travelling-habits by drifting about, all over the South Sea, with no other clothes or equipage than a red flannel shirt and a pair of duck trowsers. Yet we seldom see men of less criticizable manners than he.

**July 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday [1857], Old Trafford.** Day before yesterday, I went with my wife to the Arts Exhibition, of which I do not think that I have a great deal to say.<sup>77</sup> The edifice, being built more for convenience than show, appears better in the interior than from without—long vaulted vistas, lighted from above, extending far away, all hung with pictures, and, on the floor below, statues, knights in armour, cabinets, vases, and all manner of curious and beautiful things, in a regular arrangement. Scatter five thousand people through the scene; and I do not know how to make a better outline sketch. I was unquiet, from a hopelessness of being able fully to enjoy it. Nothing is more depressing than the sight of a great many pictures together; it is like having innumerable books open before you at once, and being able to read a sentence or two in each. They bedazzle one another with cross-lights. There never should be more than one picture in a room, nor more than one picture to be studied in one day; galleries of pictures are surely the greatest absurdities that ever were contrived; there being no excuse for them, except that it is the only way in which pictures can be made generally available and accessible. We went first into the gallery of British Painters, where there were hundreds of pictures; any one of which would have interested me by itself; but I could not fix my mind on one more than another; so I left my wife there, and wandered away by myself, to get a general idea of the exhibition. Truly, it is very fine; truly, also, every

great show is a kind of humbug. I doubt whether there were half a dozen people there who got the kind of enjoyment that it was intended to create; very respectable people they seemed to be, and very well behaved, but all skimming the surface, as I did, and none of them so feeding on what was beautiful as to digest it, and make it a part of themselves. Such a quantity of objects must be utterly rejected, before you can get any real profit from one! It seemed like throwing away time to look twice even at whatever was most precious; and it was dreary to think of not fully enjoying this collection, the very flower of Time, which never bloomed before, and never by any possibility can bloom again. Viewed hastily, moreover, it is somewhat sad to think that mankind, after centuries of cultivation of the beautiful arts, can produce no more splendid spectacle than this. It is not so very grand, although, poor as it is, I lack capacity to take in even the whole of this.

**Wednesday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, Old Trafford [1857].** Day before yesterday, I paid a second visit to the Exhibition, and devoted the day mainly to seeing the works of British painters, which fill a very large space—two or three great saloons on the right side of the nave. Among the earliest are Hogarth's pictures,<sup>78</sup> including the *Sigismunda*, which I remember to have seen before, with her lover's heart in her hand, looking like a monstrous strawberry; and the *March to Finchley*, than which nothing truer to English life and character was ever painted, nor ever can be; and a large, stately portrait of Captain Coram, and several others, all excellent in proportion as they come near to ordinary life, and are wrought out through its forms. All English painters seem to resemble Hogarth in this respect; they cannot paint anything high, heroic, and ideal, and their attempts in that direction are wearisome to look at; but they sometimes produce good effects by means of awkward figures in ill-made coats and small-clothes, and hard, coarse-complexioned faces, such as they might see anywhere in the street. They are strong in homeliness and ugliness; weak in their efforts at the beautiful. Sir Thomas Lawrence, for instance, attains a sort of grace, which you feel to be a trick, and therefore get disgusted with it. Reynolds is not quite genuine, though certainly he has produced some noble and beautiful heads.<sup>79</sup> But Hogarth is the only English painter, except in the landscape department; there is no other (unless it be some of the modern pre-Raphaelites) who interprets life to me at all. Pretty village-scenes of common life—pleasant domestic passages, with a touch of easy humor in them—little pathoses and fancyness—are abundant enough; and Wilkie, to be sure, has done more than this, though not a great deal more. . . .

No doubt, I am doing vast injustice to a great many gifted men, in what I have here written; as, for instance, Copley,<sup>80</sup> who certainly has painted a

slain man to the life; and to a crowd of landscape-painters, who have made wonderful reproductions of little English streams and shrubbery, and cottage-doors, and country-lanes. And there is a picture called the "Evening Gun" by Danby,<sup>81</sup> a ship of war on a calm, glassy tide, at sunset, with the cannon-smoke puffing from her port-hole; it is very beautiful, and so effective that you can even hear the report, breaking upon the stillness with so grand a roar that it is almost like stillness too. As for Turner, I care no more for his light-colored pictures than for so much lacquered ware, or painted gingerbread. Doubtless, this is my fault—my own deficiency—but I cannot help it; not, at least, without sophisticating myself by the effort.



*Hawthorne visits the Exhibition once again and observes Tennyson in one of the rooms.*



### **Thursday, July 30<sup>th</sup> Old Trafford [1857].**

After getting through the portrait-gallery, I went among the engravings and photographs, and then glanced along the Old Masters, but without seriously looking at anything. While I was among the Dutch painters, a gentleman accosted me; it was Mr. Ireland, the Editor of the Manchester Examiner, whom I once met at dinner with Bennoch.<sup>82</sup> He told me that the Poet Laureate (and it was rather English that he should designate him by this fantastic dignity, instead of by his name) was in the Exhibition Rooms; and as I expressed great interest, Mr. Ireland was good enough to go in quest of him. Not for the purpose of introduction, however; for he was not acquainted with Tennyson, and I was rather glad of it than otherwise. Soon, Mr. Ireland returned to tell me that he had found the Poet Laureate; and going into the saloon of Old Masters, we saw him there, in company with Mr. Woolner, whose bust of him is now in the Exhibition.<sup>83</sup> Tennyson is the most picturesque figure, without affectation, that I ever saw; of middle-size, rather slouching, dressed entirely in black, and with nothing white about him except the collar of his shirt, which methought might have been clean the day before. He had on a black wide-awake hat, with round crown and wide, irregular brim, beneath which came down his long black hair, looking terribly tangled; he had a long, pointed beard, too, a little browner than the hair, and not so abundant as to incumber any of the expression of his face. His frock coat was buttoned across the breast, though the afternoon

was warm. His face was very dark, and not exactly a smooth face, but worn, and expressing great sensitiveness, though not, at that moment, the pain and sorrow which is seen in his bust. His eyes were black; but I know little of them, as they did not rest on me, nor on anything but the pictures. He seemed as if he did not see the crowd nor think of them, but as if he defended himself from them by ignoring them altogether; nor did anybody but myself cast a glance at him. Mr. Woolner was as unlike Tennyson as could well be imagined; a small, smug man, in a blue frock and brown pantaloons. They talked about the pictures, and passed pretty rapidly from one to another, Tennyson looking at them through a pair of spectacles which he held in his hand, and then standing a minute before those that interested him, with his hands folded behind his back. There was an entire absence of stiffness in his figure; no set-up in him at all; no nicety or trimness; and if there had been, it would have spoiled his whole aspect. Gazing at him with all my eyes, I liked him well, and rejoiced more in him than in all the other wonders of the Exhibition.

Knowing how much my wife would delight to see him, I went in search of her, and found her and the rest of us under the music-gallery; and we all, Fanny and Rosebud included, went back to the saloon of Old Masters. So rapid was his glance at the pictures, that, in this little interval, Tennyson had got half-way along the other side of the saloon; and, as it happened, an acquaintance had met him, an elderly gentleman and lady, and he was talking to them as we approached. I heard his voice; a bass voice, but not of a resounding depth; a voice rather broken, as it were, and ragged about the edges, but pleasant to the ear. His manner, while conversing with these people, was not in the least that of an awkward man, unaccustomed to society; but he shook hands and parted with them, evidently as soon as he courteously could, and shuffled away quicker than before. He betrayed his shy and secluded habits more in this, than in anything else that I observed; though, indeed, in his whole presence, I was indescribably sensible of a morbid painfulness in him, a something not to be meddled with. Very soon, he left the saloon, shuffling along the floor with short irregular steps, a very queer gait, as if he were walking in slippers too loose for him. I had observed that he seemed to turn his feet slightly inward, after the fashion of Indians. How strange, that in these two or three pages I cannot get one single touch that may call him up hereafter!

I would most gladly have seen more of this one poet of our day, but forbore to follow him; for I must own that it seemed mean to be dogging him through the saloons, or even to have looked at him, since it was to be done stealthily, if at all. I should be glad to smoke a cigar with him. . . . He might well enough pass for a madman at any time, there being a wildness

in his aspect, which doubtless might readily pass from quietude to frenzy. He is exceedingly nervous, and altogether as un-English as possible; indeed, an Englishman of genius usually lacks the national characteristics, and is great abnormally, and through disease. Even their great sailor, Nelson, was unlike his countrymen in the qualities that constituted him a hero; he was not the perfection of an Englishman, but a creature of another kind, sensitive, nervous, excitable, and really more like a Frenchman.

Un-English as he was, and sallow, and unhealthy, Tennyson had not, however, an American look. I cannot well describe the difference; but there was something more mellow in him, softer, sweeter, broader, more simple, than we are apt to be. Living apart from men, as he does, would hurt any one of us more than it does him. I may as well leave him here; for I cannot touch the central point.

**November 8<sup>th</sup> Monday [1857].** All this month, we have had genuine, English November weather; much of it profusely rainy, and the rest overcast and foggy, making it a desperate matter to venture out for a walk. Since my last record—describing a visit to Warwick—I have taken only a few strolls up and down the Parade, or in the immediate neighborhood of the town. Yesterday afternoon, being merely damp, chill, and foggy, I made a little longer stretch of my tether, and walked to Whitnash Church, with Miss Shepard, Una, and Julian. This is one of the small, old churches of the vicinity, and stands in the midst of a village that retains as much of its primitive aspect as any one that I have seen; the dwellings being mostly the old, timber and plaister cottages and farmhouses, with thatched roofs; and though there are a few new brick buildings, the air of antiquity prevails. In front of the church tower is a small, rude and irregular space, in the midst of which grows a very ancient tree, with a huge, hollow trunk, and a still verdant head of foliage growing out of its mutilated decay. I should not wonder if this tree were many centuries old, and a contemporary of the gray, Norman tower before which it has flourished and decayed; perhaps even older than that. The old, rustic dwellings of the village stand about the church; and the churchyard with its graves is especially central and contiguous to the living village; so that the old familiar forms and faces have had but a little way to go in order to lie down in their last sleep; and there they rest, close to their own thresholds, with their children and successors all about them, chatting, laughing, and doing business within hearing of their grave-stones. It makes death strangely familiar, and brings the centuries together in a lump. But methinks it must be weary, weary, weary, this rusty, unchangeable village-life, where men grow up, grow old,

and die, in their fathers' dwellings, and are buried in their grandsires' very graves, the old skulls, and cross-bones being thrown out to make room for them, and shovelled in on the tops of their coffins. Such a village must, in former times, have been a stagnant pool, and may be little better even now, when the rush of the main current of life has probably created a little movement. We went a few paces into the church-yard, and heard the indistinct, dull drone of the parson within the church, but thought it not best to enter the church. Passing through the village, we paused to look at a venerable farm-house—spacious and dignified enough, indeed, to have been a manor-house—with projecting bay-windows, an old, square portal, a lawn, shadowy with great trees, and an aspect of ancient peace diffused all around. It was a timber and plaster house, the timber-frame marked out in black on the white plaster, and, if I mistake not, a thatched roof, though the house was two stories high and very extensive. These thatched roofs are very beautiful, when time has made them verdant; it makes the house seem to be a part of Nature, and, so far as man has anything to do with it, as simple as a nest.

**24 Gt Russell-street, Dec<sup>r</sup> 6th, Sunday [1857].** All these days, since my last date, have been marked by nothing very well worthy of detail and description. I have walked the streets a great deal, in the dull November days, and always take a certain pleasure in being in the midst of human life—as closely encompassed by it as it is possible to be, anywhere in this world; and, in that way of viewing it, there is a dull and sombre enjoyment always to be had in Holborn, Fleet-street, Cheapside, and the other thronged parts of London. It is human life; it is this material world; it is a grim and heavy reality. I have never had the same sense of being surrounded by materialism, and hemmed in with the grossness of this earthly life, anywhere else; these broad, thronged streets are so evidently the veins and arteries of an enormous city. London is evidenced in every one of them, just as a Megatherium is in each of its separate bones, even if they be small ones.<sup>84</sup> Thus I never fail of a sort of self-congratulation in finding myself, for instance, passing along Ludgate Hill; but, in spite of this, it is really an ungladdened life, to wander through these huge, thronged ways, over a pavement foul with mud, ground into it by a million of footsteps; jostling against people who do not seem to be individuals, but all one mass, so homogeneous is the street-walking aspect of them; the roar of vehicles pervading me, wearisome cabs and omnibusses; everywhere, the dingy brick edifices heaving themselves up, and shutting out all but a strip of sullen cloud that serves London for a sky;—in short, a general impression of

grime and sordidness, and, at this season, always a fog scattered along the vista of streets, sometimes so densely as almost to spiritualize the materialism and make the scene resemble the other world of worldly people, gross even in ghostliness. It is strange how little splendor and brilliancy one sees in London-streets; in the city, almost none, though some in the shops of Regent-street.