

Genders and Sexualities in History

The Memoirs of
John Addington Symonds

A Critical Edition

AMBER K. REGIS



Genders and Sexualities in History

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A Critical Edition

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Genders and Sexualities in History

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In memory of Caitlin Rose Regis

SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE

The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds is published here in its entirety for the first time. Symonds, notable in his time as a Classicist and litterateur, is today regarded as one of the foremost nineteenth-century thinkers in the developments in discourse on sexuality and sexualised aesthetics. Amber Regis's superbly edited critical source edition is an invaluable contribution to scholarship, and Symonds's memoir is a fascinating resource for anyone interested in the development of concepts of homosexuality at the *fin-de-siècle*, and in nineteenth-century literary lives. The memoir was not publishable in its time, and provides a candid and incisive clandestine autobiography of Symonds's personal and intellectual struggle with his desires for other men. In common with all volumes in the *Genders and Sexualities in History* series, *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds* presents a multifaceted and meticulously researched scholarly study, and is a sophisticated contribution to our understanding of the past.

John H. Arnold
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London, UK

NOTES ON THE TEXT

The manuscript of John Addington Symonds's *Memoirs* exceeds six hundred pages of varying size, colour, contents and provenance. Pausing to reflect upon the practice of writing autobiography, Symonds provides a rationale for this eclecticism:

No man can see himself as others see him. [...] The report has to be supplemented indeed, in order that a perfect portrait may be painted of the man. But it is impertinent to maintain that anyone has the same right to speak about a person as the person himself has. (p. 478 in this edition)

The *Memoirs* combine report and supplement: Symonds's retrospective narrative is interspersed with poems, letters and diaries, transcribed or inserted into the manuscript. Many are the work of Symonds's younger self, but others belong to different hands: his sister's governess, Sophie Girard; his wife, Catherine; and his lover, Norman. In a letter to Horatio Brown, his future literary executor and biographer, Symonds confessed that writing and compiling the manuscript 'tends *ad infinitum*, and [...] it will hardly be fit to publish.'¹ One suspects that textuality compounded these fears, for the *Memoirs* resist homogeneity and the manuscript is a bulky assemblage of diverse materials, genres and narrative voices.

Following Symonds's death in 1893 many unpublished and private papers passed into the hands of Horatio Brown. Symonds left particular instructions that the *Memoirs* should be protected, '[saved...] from destruction after my death' (p. 534 in this edition), and reserved for future publication to ensure its revelations did no harm to his family. Brown

stored the *Memoirs* manuscript in a cardboard box alongside other inherited items: an autograph book and further diaries and letters, the raw material from which he compiled *John Addington Symonds: A Biography* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1895). In 1925 Brown made arrangements in his will to bequeath the cardboard box and its contents to the London Library. The Librarian, Charles Hagberg Wright, accepted the bequest and Brown's accompanying conditions: access would be restricted and a fifty-year embargo was placed on publication. The box arrived in 1926 and its contents were examined by Hagberg Wright and Edmund Gosse, Chair of the London Library committee. The *Memoirs* manuscript was sealed and the package stored in the Library's safe, but the fate of other papers is less clear: some have survived along with the *Memoirs* (see Appendices), while others have almost certainly been destroyed (see Introduction).

The sealed package was first reopened in 1949 to allow Symonds's daughter, Katharine Furse, to read her father's autobiography. In November 1954 the London Library committee resolved to relax restrictions on access, permitting scholars to consult the material. In response to this greater openness, anticipating readers' requests and working to protect the manuscript, the Library arranged for its loose-leaf materials to be bound into two volumes and a typescript copy prepared. To this day, the London Library remains the owner and custodian of Symonds's *Memoirs*.

ESTABLISHING THE TEXT

The *Memoirs* comprise a preface and epigraph, eighteen substantive chapters, and a series of miscellaneous papers and letters. This edition is the first to reproduce all materials contained within the manuscript, but the intention has been (as far as possible) to acknowledge and reveal the source text's eccentricities and uncertainties. The binding of the manuscript respected the arrangement of surviving materials in the sealed package, but the resulting volumes create a misleading appearance of stability and fixity. Internal inconsistencies suggest that any attempt to arrange the text must remain provisional.

This edition contains two significant deviations from the order of material as fixed in the manuscript's bound volumes: two rewritten pages in Horatio Brown's hand, and a series of letters from Symonds to his sisters, Edith and Charlotte (mounted and bound into Chapter 16), are reproduced out of sequence. There is no surviving evidence, no marginalia, to associate these papers with Symonds's writing and compilation. As such, this material is treated as evidence of Brown's editorial intervention as he prepared the 1895 biography: they are removed from the main text and

reproduced in appendices. Where Symonds introduces material from letters, diaries, poems and other sources, these sections of text are indented and offset (and where an original document is inserted into the manuscript, a brief description is given in a footnote).

Marginalia, corrections and cross-references reveal the changing, unsettled process of composition. Chapter numbers are frequently revised, with some degree of internal logic and consistency (see Table 1). It is tempting

Table 1 *Memoirs* MS chapter numbering

<i>Chapter (in this edition)</i>	<i>Original MS numbering</i>	<i>Correction(s) and/or marginalia</i>
1	iii	Renumbered 'i' in pencil.
2	iv	Renumbered 'ii' in pencil.
3	iv	Renumbered 'v' in blue pencil. Renumbered 'iii' in pencil.
4	vi	The 'i' is a later addition added in blue pencil and overwritten in ink. Renumbered 'iv' in pencil.
5	vii	Not corrected.
6	viii	Renumbered 'vi' in pencil. An earlier chapter title remains partially legible, written in pencil and erased: 'Adolescence [?] Life at Oxford [?] From 1858 to 1863' (MS 169).
7	vii	Renumbered 'ix' in ink.
8	x	Not corrected.
9	x	Not corrected.
10	xi	Scored through in pencil.
11	xii	Scored through in pencil.
12	xiii	Not corrected.
13	iv	Renumbered 'xiv' and title ('Norman') added in ink. Chapter originally conceived as the fourth section of Chapter 12 on 'Emotional Development'.
14	xiv	Renumbered 'xv' in ink. Combines sections headed 'Literary development' and 'Intellectual development'. These appear to have been conceived and written as separate chapters.
15	xvi	Not corrected.
16	xvii	Not corrected.
17	xviii	Not corrected. An earlier chapter title remains legible, written in pencil and erased: 'Passage to Davos' (MS 511).
18	xviii	Renumbered 'xix' in ink.

to speculate upon these changes, but what is certain is that the *Memoirs* once contained at least nineteen chapters, possibly more. Sections of text are also missing or remain unfinished (see Introduction). Page numbers are similarly inconsistent. The manuscript is numbered in pencil in the top right-hand corner of each page, but two distinct hands are evident: a dominant hand in faded and smudged pencil, employing numerals only and found on the majority of pages; and a second hand in bright and clear pencil, adding alphanumeric sequences to supplementary materials such as letters and diaries. The latter is clearly a more recent addition, presumably contemporary with the binding of the manuscript. But the dominant hand contains errors, contradictions and lacunae: two pages are numbered 272 (the second renumbered 273 in the newer hand); page 381 is misnumbered 391 (corrected in the dominant hand); 402 does not appear in the number sequence (though no material is missing); material is missing between pages 425 and 426 (though the number sequence remains uninterrupted); Chapter 15 is numbered twice in the dominant hand (520–31 is scored through and replaced by 487–99, suggesting these pages might once have formed part of Chapter 16); and pages 550–5 are missing (see Introduction). It is the fate of print to elide these uncertainties in the order and arrangement of manuscript materials, but the present edition seeks to limit this erasure. Where material is certainly or possibly missing, where the flow of words is interrupted or a promised interpolation has been omitted, this is recorded in a footnote and a section break is introduced. These white spaces highlight the incompleteness of the text.

The main period of composition spanned March to May 1889. It is clear, however, that Symonds never absolutely dotted the final ‘i’ or crossed the final ‘t’. He revised and updated his manuscript until at least 1891, and these ineluctable returns have produced a text replete with emendations: deletions, substitutions (superscript and subscript), interpolations and additions written in the margins and on the verso sides of pages. The majority of these interventions and instructions are in Symonds’s hand: in pencil, blue pencil (traditionally used for editing) and ink—the latter often used to overwrite pencil corrections. Where emendations belong to Symonds, they have been followed or recorded (in the case of marginal notes and reflections, for example) as a matter of course. It has not been possible to record all changes, but where they are significant—illuminating Symonds’s difficulties in articulation or revealing his ambivalence, for example—the original text is given in a footnote. Identifying the provenance of emendations is not always straightforward, for the manuscript

bears the trace of Horatio Brown's editorial work as he prepared his 1895 biography: sections of text are marked up with pencil lines, parentheses and annotations. On occasion Brown will initial his interventions and comments, but more often he works silently, without attribution, and his editing pencil marks the page alongside that belonging to Symonds. Brown's annotations are given in footnotes, and where markings or emendations are not unequivocally in Symonds's hand they have been compared against the selection and arrangement of material in Brown's biography (and potential correlations given in footnotes). Both Symonds and Brown favour the term 'omit' in their editing of the manuscript; where the hand is unclear, or where an annotation appears to correspond with Brown's editorial practice, the instruction has been recorded in a footnote but not followed.

SILENT CORRECTIONS AND NOTATION

Minor misspellings are silently corrected throughout the edition, as are Symonds's errors in French, German, Greek, Italian and Latin. Capitalisation has been standardised throughout, and Symonds's effusive use of hyphens is regulated (with the exception of occurrences in poetry). Ampersands have been replaced and full words substituted for abbreviations (e.g. 'which' for 'wh'). Where Symonds misremembers a detail, such as the date of an event or a person's name, the error is left to stand in the main text and a correction given in a footnote.

Three notations are employed throughout the edition to indicate the manuscript's contingencies, markings and omissions:

- [] Square brackets contain a section of text with editorial markings in the manuscript, whether by Symonds or Brown. Each instance is accompanied by a footnote recording specific details and context.
- { } Curved brackets contain a section of text written in the margin or on the verso side of a manuscript page. These have been integrated into the main narrative following Symonds's instructions.
- || A double vertical bar indicates missing material or a break in the narrative. In the case of missing words, these are supplied between the bars. All other instances are accompanied by a footnote recording specific details and context.

Every editor is indebted to their predecessors, and I would like to acknowledge the work of Phyllis Grosskurth: her 1984 edition of the *Memoirs* has served as a starting point and guide. It has been a privilege to continue her work and correct errors (such as misidentifications and misattributions) made at a time when the world's knowledge was more than a button-click away. Contextual footnotes provide biographical and bibliographical details concerning Symonds's relations, friends and acquaintances, and his frequent references to literature, history and art. Where possible quotations have been identified, rare and obscure terms have been defined, and historical allusions clarified. Much of this information has been drawn from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (edited by John Venn and J.A. Venn, 1922–53), the published registers of Oxford colleges and public schools, particularly *The Harrow Register* (Third Edition, edited by M.G. Daughlish and P.K. Stephenson, 1911), and Robert Graves's *The Greek Myths* (Revised Edition, 1960). Translations are provided throughout: Fraser Dallachy translated and identified material in Latin; Iona Hine translated, transcribed and identified material in ancient Greek; Maria Parrino translated and identified material in Italian; Eloise Roberts translated and identified material in German; and Karine Zbinden translated and identified material in French.

The following abbreviations are used in footnotes and appendices:

- Babington Percy L. Babington, *Bibliography of the Writings of John Addington Symonds* (London: John Castle 1925; repr. New York: Burt Franklin, 1968)
- Brady *John Addington Symonds (1840–93) and Homosexuality: A Critical Edition of Sources*, ed. by Sean Brady (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)
- Brown Horatio F. Brown, *John Addington Symonds: A Biography*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1895)
- Letters *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, ed. by Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters, 3 vols (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967–69)
- Crozier Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds, *Sexual Inversion: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Ivan Crozier (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

This edition can only present a version of Symonds's original text: it is not a surrogate or replacement. I hope that interested readers will

continue to visit the London Library and consult the *Memoirs* manuscript—to enjoy that irreplaceable haptic encounter.

NOTE

1. Symonds to Brown (3 April 1889). *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, ed. by Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters, 3 vols (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967–69), III (1969), p. 367.

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Working as an editor reveals the truly collaborative nature of all research, writing and publication. This new edition of John Addington Symonds's *Memoirs* would not have been possible without the cooperation, support and encouragement of family, friends, colleagues and institutions. I am truly in their debt.

The London Library has been a partner on the project since its inception. They are the owners and custodians of the *Memoirs* manuscript and I would like to thank the Librarian, Inez Lynn, for her permission to edit and publish the text, and to quote from the Library's administrative and acquisition records. I am particularly grateful to Helen O'Neill, Archive, Heritage and Development Librarian, for her help with countless queries and for her encouragement and friendship. The University of Bristol Library holds an extensive archive of Symonds's papers and material belonging to his daughters, Katharine Furse and Margaret Vaughan. I would like to thank Hannah Lowery, Michael Richardson and Jamie Carstairs from the Library's Special Collections for help and hospitality received on research visits, and for the provision of photographs to accompany this edition. I am also grateful to Commander J.R.C. Furse OBE (RN Rtd) for his permission to quote from Katharine Furse's unpublished letters. The Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Sheffield has generously funded research visits to London and Bristol, and has provided a period of study leave in which to complete the project.

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Introduction

‘THE MEMOIRS OF JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS WRITTEN BY HIMSELF’

The Victorian poet, historian and man of letters, John Addington Symonds, began writing his *Memoirs* in March 1889. To his friend, Henry Graham Dakyns, he reflected upon the work in progress:

My occupation with Cellini and Gozzi has infected me with their *Lues Autobiographica*; and I have begun scribbling my own reminiscences. This is a foolish thing to do, because I do not think they will ever be fit to publish. I have nothing to relate except the evolution of a character somewhat strangely constituted in its moral and aesthetic qualities. The study of this evolution, written down with the candour and precision I feel capable of using, would I am sure be interesting to psychologists and not without its utility. There does not exist anything like it in print; and I am certain that 999 men out of 1000 do not believe in the existence of a personality like mine. Still it would be hardly fair to my posterity if I were to yield up my vile soul to the psychological investigators.

[...] You see I have ‘never spoken out.’ And it is a great temptation to speak out, when I have been living for two whole years in lonely intimacy with men who spoke out so magnificently as Cellini and Gozzi did.¹

Having worked as a translator of life-writing, Symonds caught the contagion of his subject’s *lues autobiographica*—their autobiographical plague. He resolved to ‘speak out’, a turn of phrase borrowed from Matthew Arnold: ‘*He never spoke out*. In these four words is contained the whole history of [Thomas] Gray, both as a man and as a poet.’² Fearing himself a Gray-like figure, at risk of being lost, misunderstood or forgotten amidst the works left behind him, Symonds commenced his most extraordinary writing project: an account of his experience as a homosexual man living subject to the moral and legal constraints of nineteenth-century society.

Symonds wavered between conflicting assessments of the *Memoirs*’ potential use and value: the act of writing was a ‘foolish thing to do’, but the resulting text was ‘not without its utility.’ He believed the manuscript would provide an important record of an otherwise elided facet of human existence, and he determined to present his sexuality as an integral part of broader roles, responsibilities and identifications. Born in Bristol in 1840, he was acutely aware of the intellectual inheritance received from his father, a highly respected physician, and the duties owed to his family (which included three sisters: Edith, Mary Isabella and Charlotte) as the only surviving son. Symonds married Catherine North in 1864, adding husband and father (to four daughters: Janet, Charlotte or ‘Lotta’, Margaret or ‘Madge’, and Katharine) to the roster of familial responsibilities. Symonds had somehow to accommodate a narrative of sexual development within this otherwise normative framework. The *Memoirs* also present a panoramic view of the social, cultural and intellectual milieu that prepared men of Symonds’s class to take their place among the ruling elites of Victorian society: public school, university, foreign tours, personal and professional networks of friends and acquaintances. His account explores the function of these spaces, journeys and relationships in the construction, regulation and expression of licit and illicit identities, gender and sexuality. In response, Symonds attempts to construct a socially legitimate conception of same-sex desire, drawn from studies of ancient Greece, Renaissance history and culture, the poetry of Walt Whitman and emergent sexological literatures.³ His *Memoirs* document these efforts, complicated further by narratives of disease and poor health—his suffering from ‘phthisis’ (tuberculosis).

But if the *Memoirs* could be useful, Symonds reserved their utility for posterity. In a Preface appended to the manuscript in May 1889, he appropriates the self-deprecating remarks of Carlo Gozzi, who ‘called his Memoirs “useless”, and published them (as he professes) from motives of “humility.” Mine are sure to be more useless than his; for *I* shall not publish them’ (p. 59 in this edition). However valuable the record of his multifaceted life, however precious the evidence he assembled, Symonds knew that immediate publication was impossible. Even if he found a publisher willing to set the type, booksellers in England would have risked prosecution under the terms of the Obscene Publications Act 1857. Perhaps more worrying still, the details recorded in his manuscript threatened more than just the reputation of those named within its pages. The Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 had criminalised sexual acts between men: imprecise in terminology but far-reaching in consequence, it declared that so-called ‘gross indecency’ in public or private could be punished by up to two years’ imprisonment. Symonds was an expatriate writer, moving to Davos in 1877 and dividing his time between Switzerland and Italy. He lived and worked outside the reach of these laws: in Switzerland, customs and legislation varied according to canton, but the influence of the French *Code Napoleon* could be felt in the general tolerance of private acts; in Italy, the Penal Code 1889 (again, following the precedent of the *Code Napoleon*) decriminalised homosexual acts between consenting adult men. But England was home to Symonds’s friends and extended family, and he continued to write for an Anglophone audience. As such, he was sensitive to the hurt his *Memoirs* might cause—even after his death.

In the Preface, Symonds imagined two future readerships for his manuscript: the first was scientific, the second was sympathetic. Psychologists and sexologists (the latter a burgeoning field of research on the continent that was soon to make inroads in Britain) might welcome the evidence contained within its pages: they might ‘appreciate [his] effort to be sincere in the dictation of a document’ (p. 60 in this edition) that could form the basis for future study. Other readers, he hoped, would ‘feel some thrill of pity’ (p. 60 in this edition) at the record of his life. In both cases the intention was to advance change: to challenge medical misunderstanding, legal injustice and social prejudice through the act of self-revelation and self-analysis. To this end, Symonds worked hard to ensure the manuscript’s survival after his death—fearing, not without justification, that it might be destroyed. But he also left instructions for caution to be exercised with regard to publication, for he wished to protect the reputation and

happiness of his surviving family. That these instructions were followed is remarkable, and his *Memoirs* are a fascinating and rare survival.

The present edition is the first to reproduce all the manuscript's surviving materials, allowing its wonderfully detailed, diverse and digressive narrative to stand. 'The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds Written by Himself', to give the manuscript its full title, has been made public on two previous occasions: a significant body of material was printed in *John Addington Symonds: A Biography Compiled from his Papers and Correspondence* (1895), a dutifully sanitised work undertaken by his friend and literary executor, Horatio Brown; and in 1984, nearly one hundred years after the manuscript was assembled, Phyllis Grosskurth produced an abridged edition containing two thirds of the original text.⁴ The present edition enables a first full reading, and by way of preface, the remainder of this introduction is concerned with the history of the manuscript: the difficulties, idiosyncrasies and contingencies that marked its composition and compilation, and the obstacles to reading that have characterised its legacy and afterlife. Since his death in 1893, Symonds's manuscript has passed through many hands, subject to restrictions and regulations imposed by successive custodians. His attempt to 'speak out' is bound up with the actions of relatives and executors, biographers and editors, libraries and publishers—it is a history to which the present edition adds another chapter.

Composition and Compilation

In his letter to Henry Graham Dakyns, Symonds presents the memoirs-in-progress as an extended (sexual) case study, an anomaly within the broader field of written lives. At first glance the manuscript confirms this description: broadly chronological, it takes Symonds from his earliest memories in Bristol through to later life in Davos and Venice, and as the narrative progresses we learn of his early sexual fantasies; his place within sexual cultures at Harrow and Oxford; his attempts to suppress and sublimate desire through marriage, work and study; and his later establishment of settled relationships with men from lower social classes. Among these revelations, perhaps the most surprising are those concerned with schooling and university life: the former is marked by sexual bullying and an affair between head master and pupil, while the latter is permeated by fears of exposure and blackmail.

But the *Memoirs* are more than a determinedly narrow and linear account of sexual heterodoxies. As Symonds worked upon the manuscript, the project changed and evolved. Thematic chapters on sexual development (Chapter 2), emotional development (Chapter 12), intellectual and literary ‘evolution’ (Chapter 14) and religion (Chapter 15) disrupt the chronology, prompting him to repeat or revise the narrative, drawing out new inferences and conclusions. Late in the *Memoirs*, Symonds reflects upon the practice and problems of autobiography, expounding more fully his reasons and methods for writing a life. Chapter 16 opens with a lengthy digression on the inevitable distortions of singular, self-written narratives:

They are so absorbed in themselves that, when they have begun to write, they dwell with even too much emphasis upon their marked peculiarities. They are aware that they, and they alone, possess sources of information concerning the person they are painting; and these they determine to bring forth, in order to explain that person’s action in the world, to justify him by appeal to his specific nature, and to let his neighbours know how little they understood the hidden motives of his character. In this way autobiographies are, for the most part, only too veracious—in spite of suppressions, minor mendacities, and falsifications of fact. (pp. 477–8 in this edition)

Symonds feared he would exaggerate or indeed produce (through the act of writing) the very strangeness of which he had previously boasted to Dakyns. Whatever errors he might inadvertently or purposefully introduce into the text, he was determined to tell the truth about his sexual nature. But he saw this as a threat to the broader autobiographical enterprise: focusing upon ‘marked peculiarities’ risked ‘the artistic error of depicting a psychological monster’ (p. 479 in this edition). By the time he made these observations, Symonds had rejected the position outlined in his letter to Dakyns. He no longer wished to produce an extended case study, fearing the impression left to posterity would be that of a man consumed by sex. Instead he posited a new set of methodological principles that would help to shape his *Memoirs*.

First, he insisted upon the important counterbalance of quotidian things. These are absent, Symonds argued, from the pages of any ‘too veracious’ autobiography: ‘the want of atmosphere, the neglect of qualifying considerations, the absorption in certain engrossing aspects of self to the exclusion of the common stuff of humanity’ (p. 478 in this edition). But he doubted his ability to supply this lack through his

own retrospective narrative: ‘I cannot chronicle the little daily doings, or stipple in the myriad touches of fact and behaviour which, in their combination with deeper psychical preoccupations, constitute a living man’ (p. 479 in this edition). Symonds’s solution to this problem constitutes his second methodological principle: ‘The report has to be supplemented indeed, in order that a perfect portrait may be painted of the man’ (p. 478 in this edition). In other words, autobiographers unable to escape from the tyranny of ‘marked peculiarities’ must turn to the writings of others.

These reflections illuminate Symonds’s practice in compiling the *Memoirs*, and they help to explain the presence of certain materials contained within the manuscript. Appended to Chapter 3, in a subsection entitled ‘Note on the preceding chapter’, Symonds includes the text of a letter received from Sophie Girard, his sister Charlotte’s governess. This supplement is intended to ‘correct the impression’ of his early childhood, to modify and moderate the ‘somewhat disagreeable picture’ he had painted (p. 123 in this edition). Girard provides a near-hagiographic account of the young Symonds’s ‘perfect’ temper, and his ‘joyous and bright’ demeanour (p. 124 in this edition)—though she later reminds us of her indebtedness, sending ‘warmest thanks with compound interest for [the] yearly contribution to my income’ (p. 125 in this edition). Girard’s original letter is inserted into the manuscript: her words, in her own hand, join the collection of writings that comprise the *Memoirs*. Symonds’s wife, Catherine, is also given a voice. Approximately 9000 words are taken from her diary across two separate instalments. As before, the original documents are inserted into the manuscript. This material takes the place of Symonds’s own diary: he claims to have destroyed the volume in which he recorded their courtship out of ‘respect for [his] wife’ (p. 259 in this edition). But the inclusion of Catherine’s account goes beyond the plugging of gaps in the evidence. If Symonds’s destroyed diary was the ‘self-conscious, self-analytical, [and] self-descriptive’ (p. 259 in this edition) record he claimed it to be, this material would do nothing to counter the *Memoirs*’ distorting focus on ‘marked peculiarities.’ But Catherine’s words are perceived differently:

For once, in these pages, I shall drop the hateful *I* and *me*, and let the reader see me, not as I saw or see myself, but as a far superior, happier and diviner being—a pure, beautiful and steadfast woman—saw me, when she deigned to love me. (p. 259 in this edition)

Symonds emerges from the first diary instalment as Johnnie, a young and attractive suitor. But if one begins to suspect that supplements are included to flatter his vanity, the second diary instalment dispels this thought. Though Catherine continues to praise her husband ('Johnnie is so good and patient to me always', p. 279 in this edition), her disillusioned account of marriage and motherhood is deeply touching. She captures their shared unhappiness just fourteen months after their wedding: 'Married life is not all romance and glitter, there is much in it that is, that *must* be painful, wearying' (p. 277 in this edition).

Catherine and Girard produce alternative versions of Symonds. These sit alongside the various selves that emerge from his retrospective narrative and varied use of diaries, letters and poems. These other personal documents are by no means free from 'marked peculiarities', but Symonds valued their contemporary record: he transcribes long passages, and includes several poems cut from privately printed editions. Some of this material can seem digressive or tangential, such as his account of journeys to France, Switzerland and Italy, replete with humorous anecdotes of travellers' foibles and detailed descriptions of churches and cathedrals. But Symonds will often provide an explicit justification for their inclusion, focusing in particular upon the beliefs and behaviours of his earlier self: for example, letters used to reconstruct a tour of Normandy indicate 'hyperaesthesia [...] upon every page' (p. 311 in this edition), while a privately printed prose-poem, 'The Song of The Swimmer', reveals his persistent tendency to idealise sexual desire, being 'clearly produced under the influence of Walt Whitman' (p. 371 in this edition).

Many of these supplements survived into the 1895 biography compiled by Symonds's literary executor, Horatio Brown—with the exception of Catherine's diary and homoerotic passages in poems, diaries and letters. Indeed Brown increased the number of supplements, using 'diaries and letters wherever that was possible; holding that they portray the man more truly at each moment, and progressively from moment to moment.'⁵ But, as Sarah Heidt first revealed, this is exactly where the 1984 edition of the *Memoirs* concentrated its excisions. Phyllis Grosskurth made public Symonds's narrative of sexual development, but her editorial practice overlooked his high regard for quotidian things and supplementary materials. For Heidt, these had now become 'the *Memoirs*' hidden existence, the innermost secrets of the manuscript.'⁶ Grosskurth did not reproduce Girard's letter and she included just the second (and shorter) of Catherine's two diary instalments. Of the more than 50,000 words

removed from the text, a significant number are taken from diaries and letters. Inevitably these large cuts alter the composition of Symonds's self-portrait. For Heidt, 'Grosskurth's editorial choices have created the impression that Symonds conceived of and represented his sexual self as far more detachable from the rest of his life than his multifarious manuscript shows him to have done.'⁷ There is, of course, an irony here: Grosskurth's edition reconstitutes the text as a study of 'marked peculiarities', moulding the *Memoirs* to fit Symonds's earlier (and rejected) idea of an extended case study.

The present edition restores Symonds's quotidian narratives and supplementary texts. Some of these are made public for the first time, including Catherine's first diary instalment and several examples of homoerotic verse. For Heidt, their presence in the text serves a dual purpose. First, they are not digressions—they 'do not displace [Symonds's] oft-proclaimed purpose for writing the *Memoirs*: his desire to "speak out" about his sexuality'—but reveal his conviction that sexual desires formed part and were connected to all aspects of his life. And second, these materials 'vividly present the contradictions and confusion which Symonds confronted in the process of "speaking out".'⁸ Quotidian narratives and supplementary texts speak to Symonds's multiple identifications and empathies as father and husband, son and brother, respectable man of letters and sexual subject. These roles could be difficult to reconcile but they were impossible to distinguish and divide. When recounting his relationship with Norman Moor, building his narrative from the evidence of diaries, Symonds had intended to separate 'mental development' from the record of his 'emotional life' (p. 381 in this edition). But he soon abandoned the effort: Symonds realised that Norman had been 'inextricably interwoven with my whole life', and his account must inevitably demonstrate 'the rapport existing in my nature at that time between the domestic, literary, emotional and active aspects of life' (p. 381 in this edition). The *Memoirs*' collage-like organisation stands as evidence of this concurrence, but the 'contradictions and confusion' identified by Heidt are compounded by further difficulties.

Historians of sexuality have characterised the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a period of terminological struggle with regard to Western conceptions of sexuality. Though I employ the term 'homosexual' when describing Symonds's desires, this is something of an acknowledged anachronism—it provides a convenient shorthand, but one that invokes a later understanding of acts and identities: a 'medicalised con-

ception' that neatly bifurcates into 'heterosexual/homosexual or gay/straight.'⁹ Symonds did not share this conceptual model: he employed the term 'homosexual' on rare occasions, but it was never a favoured expression. In the main his sexual lexicon was tentative, uncertain and ambivalent—the product of what H.G. Cocks has called the nineteenth century's 'simultaneous negation and description of homosexuality.'¹⁰ As Matt Cook puts it, our convenient use of the term 'homosexual' should not be presumed to refer to any 'self-consciously assumed or applied identity' current during the period.¹¹ Symonds lived and worked on the continent from 1877 onwards, but he was keenly interested in English socio-cultural and legal developments (and was sensitive to the expectations of his Anglophone readership). His writings were thus subject to an evasive public discourse reluctant to name and enumerate homosexual acts and desires, despite the increasing incidence of medical and legal definition. And there was also (then, as now) no clear or coherent alternative to heteronormative sexual orthodoxies; rather, there was a multiplicity of practices shaped by countless variables—such as age, class, race, location, etc.¹² Late in Symonds's career, when he began to write more openly (and autobiographically) about homosexual phenomena, these uncertainties were an obstacle. In his privately printed essay, *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891), he bemoaned this lack of appropriate and non-prejudicial language:

I can hardly find a name which will not seem to soil this paper. The accomplished languages of Europe in the nineteenth century supply no term for this persistent feature of human psychology, without importing some implication of disgust, disgrace, vituperation. Science, however, has recently—within the last twenty years in fact—invented a convenient phrase, which does not prejudice the matter under consideration. She speaks of the 'inverted sexual instinct'; and with this neutral nomenclature the investigator has good reason to be satisfied.¹³

Sexual inversion soon became his favoured term, borrowed from the supposed scientific objectivity of early sexological literatures. But inversion is largely absent from the *Memoirs*: the term occurs just once in the main narrative (Chapter 11), and on four occasions in notes added to the text after the main period of composition. In the margins of his manuscript, and in an addendum to Chapter 2, Symonds admits that his account was written before he had discovered and studied those 'cases of sexual inver-

sion' documented by continental sexologists (cf. pp. 102 and 372 n. 1 in this edition). This 'neutral nomenclature' came too late—he could not use it to shape the *Memoirs*. Symonds's manuscript is thus an invaluable record of his attempts to forge alternative languages and identifications, to resist the 'disgust, disgrace, [and] vituperation' that formed part of other available terminologies.

Symonds will often employ long or verbose descriptions in preference to precise labels that might carry unwanted (or unknown) connotations: he refers to his own 'congenital inclination toward persons of the male sex' (p. 152 in this edition), or more generally to the 'sexual relation between man and man' (p. 519 in this edition). These seemingly dispassionate constructions sit awkwardly alongside a range of ideal forms borrowed from art, history and literature: these include Arcadian and Greek love, pederastia and Whitman's class-crossing comradeship. Ideals proved useful when Symonds sought to sublimate the corporeal realities of sex, but when faced with bodies and bodily acts, he struggled to free himself from medical and legal terminology. His studies convinced him that legal prohibition was built upon the sand of social, cultural and historical contingencies, but Symonds could not escape the fact that English law considered all (male) homosexual acts to be criminal. Science may have held out the promise of a morally neutral language, but Symonds had also to contend with its register of disease and morbidity. It was inevitable that he would internalise and reproduce certain aspects of this homophobic culture, and the *Memoirs* manuscript reveals the near-impossibility of 'speaking out' in terms that are not self-condemnatory. Examples are legion. In Chapter 14, for instance, Symonds adopts the voice of his imagined reader, ventriloquising their summary of his life: 'He cherished an engrossing preoccupation, an absorbing and incurable proclivity, which found no outlet except in furtive ~~sin~~ self-indulgence' (MS 424; cf. p. 418 in this edition). Adopting the voice of another, Symonds condemns and forgives himself: his desires become a disease, clearing him of volition; but having reverted to a discourse of sin, he revises the text to transform theological transgression into human weakness. The present edition is the first to offer an extensive record of Symonds's emendations to the manuscript, making legible these struggles with terminology—a previously elided aspect of his attempt to 'speak out.'

Symonds was aware that social standards of propriety and respectability, however unjust, inevitably and irrevocably circumscribed the narratives and subjectivity delineated in his *Memoirs*. He developed a model of compromised selfhood: 'composite beings' caught between 'impulses

and instincts' on the one hand, and 'social laws which gird us round' on the other (p. 188 n. 50 in this edition). Until these laws were changed, self-condemnatory language was inevitable: it was 'frigid reason's self' that '[condemned] the natural action of his appetite', requiring him to view 'his own misdoing not in the glass of truth to his nature, but in the mirror of convention' (p. 524 in this edition). But however difficult, however constrained by available terminologies and discourse, writing and 'speaking out' about homosexual phenomena was imperative if new languages and identities were to be forged. This formed part of Symonds's original intention in writing the *Memoirs* (as outlined in the letter to Dakyns): the 'utility' of documenting a 'somewhat strangely constituted' character for a future audience. But it also formed part of writing projects after the *Memoirs*: his privately printed essay, *A Problem in Modern Ethics*, in which he celebrated the 'neutral' discourse of inversion, critiqued sexological theories and outlined proposals for legislative change; his biography of Michelangelo Buonarroti (1893) and study of Walt Whitman (1893), both dealing openly with homoeroticism; *In The Key of Blue* (1893), a daring collection of essays permeated by musings upon masculine beauty; and *Sexual Inversion*, a collaboration with Havelock Ellis that Symonds would not live to see completed (first published in German in 1896 under the title *Das Konträre Geschlechtsgefühl*).¹⁴ With the posterity project of the *Memoirs* and this accumulation of attempts to 'speak out'—however coded, however limited by 'social laws'—Symonds worked hard to document, describe and defend sexual difference.

Unfinished

One of the final references to the *Memoirs* in Symonds's surviving correspondence occurs in a letter to his daughter, Madge, written in July 1892:

What vexes me is the thought that not only am I growing old, but that I have some unconquerable malady to face—death in fact is near. My soul keeps whispering this to my spiritual ear.

And before I go hence and see the lovely earth no longer, I want to do so much still. I want to write my History of Graubünden, to publish my work on Sexual Aberrations, and to get my Autobiography finished.¹⁵

He would not live to complete these works: the history of Graubünden was set aside in March that year following the death of Walt Whitman,

allowing Symonds to complete his monograph on the poet; and his collaboration with Havelock Ellis would not be published until 1896. But the *Memoirs* remain perpetually and inescapably unfinished.

The manuscript was in progress by March 1889 and the Preface (written towards the close of the main period of composition) is dated May 1889. Later additions and marginal comments reveal that Symonds revised the text until at least 1891, but the manuscript is incomplete. Promised materials are missing: in Chapter 12 a marginal note reminds Symonds to introduce a ‘passage on Imaginative Sin’ (p. 376 n. 64 in this edition) from his privately printed *Miscellanies* (1885), and in the main text he refers to a letter in French written ‘after a passage of intoxicating self-abandonment’ (p. 371 in this edition). Neither document is supplied and unfilled spaces are left in the manuscript (MS 377 and 380). It is possible that Symonds intended to fill these gaps at a future point and never did, but other lacunae are not so easily attributed to forgetfulness. Promised chapters are missing: in what now stands as Chapter 1, Symonds refers back to an earlier ‘chapter on our [family] origin’ (p. 82 in this edition), but this genealogy no longer forms part of the manuscript; and in Chapter 12 a marginal note records the duplication of material from ‘the [...] Chapter on Sexual Aberration’ (p. 376 n. 63 in this edition), but no such chapter title (or duplication) is present in the text. Material is missing between MS 425 and 426 (cf. p. 418 in this edition), although the page number sequence is uninterrupted; and six pages are missing from Chapter 18 (MS 550-5) that presumably contained the promised but unsupplied ‘Venetian episode’ (cf. p. 519 in this edition). These chapters and pages have been removed or lost, and it is tempting to suspect foul play. But the scant evidence that remains suggests that Symonds had a hand in the removal of materials during the period of revision after 1889. The genealogy, for example, corresponds to an appendix published in Horatio Brown’s 1895 biography.¹⁶ Yet Brown appears to have sourced the material from a privately printed edition, not the *Memoirs* manuscript. Symonds’s cousin, Horatio Percy Symonds, published a commemorative edition of this essay on family origins in 1894: ‘The manuscript of the foregoing pages was given to me by the author ... to use as I thought fit ... I have decided to have it printed for distribution among the members of the family.’¹⁷ These prefatory remarks suggest that Symonds removed the chapter and gifted the manuscript before his death, going some way to explain why Chapter 1 was originally numbered ‘iii’ (see Table 1). On the basis of this evidence, it is sensible to view Symonds’s revisions between 1889 and 1891 as a practice of addition and subtraction, of doing and undoing the *Memoirs*.

But the manuscript was never a closed text. Symonds repeatedly looks outward to published and private writings by himself and others, producing a highly intertextual narrative. Many intertexts form part of the manuscript itself, transcribed or pasted onto the page. But Symonds also invites his reader to digress, to turn to other works and re-read them in the light of his autobiographical revelations. This is particularly true of poetry. In Chapter 18, for example, Symonds urges his reader to look again at more than fifty poems from *Animi Figura* (1882) and *Vagabunduli Libellus* (1884). He outlines the exact order in which they should be re-read and offers the following reflection: ‘Taken in the order I have indicated, and detached from the artificial context framed to render publication possible, these sonnets faithfully describe the varying moods, perplexities and conflicts of my passion before it settled into a comparatively wholesome comradeship’ (p. 514 in this edition). The resulting poetic sequence constitutes a narrative beyond the bounds of Symonds’s *Memoirs*: a counterpart to be read alongside his later act of remembering, producing a dual narrative that will better explain his relationship with Angelo Fusato, a Venetian gondolier. Elsewhere Symonds requests that poetic intertexts be published as part of his *Memoirs* in the form of appendices: a series of poems entitled ‘Dead Love’ and the ‘Tale of Theodore’ should accompany Chapter 6, while the poem ‘John Mordan’ should accompany Chapter 12. These appendices are absent from the present edition and their alternatives narratives are not easily accessible to readers—a fact that requires further explanation.

Symonds began composing ‘John Mordan’ in January 1866; it soon became the titular poem of a homoerotic cycle ‘illustrating the love of man for man in all periods of civilization’ (p. 367 in this edition). Symonds worked upon the cycle between 1866 and 1875 (most intensively during the late 1860s, contemporary with his relationship with Norman Moor) but on the advice of friends it was abandoned and suppressed. The poems were broken up, dispersed and several are now lost, presumably destroyed. ‘John Mordan’ numbers among these missing works and Symonds’s request to have it printed as an appendix cannot be fulfilled (unless the work is rediscovered at some future point). It remains an inevitable lacuna with the *Memoirs*. But the same cannot be said of Symonds’s other request. ‘Dead Love. A Lieder Kreis in Minor Keys. With The Tale of Theodore’ was privately printed in the late 1870s and at least three extant copies of this pamphlet survive. They are held by the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; Somerville College

Library, Oxford; and in the Special Collections at the University of Bristol. The latter copy is annotated in Symonds's hand, and in a prefatory remark on the verso side of the title page, he anticipates his future editor:

This book is in a deep sense of the term a posthumous publication. In spite of its imitative immaturity, the feelings that produced it were spontaneous and genuine, and the editor has reason to believe that they will find an echo in not a few young minds.¹⁸

Reading these words in the Special Collections at Bristol was an uncanny experience, for here was Symonds feeding me lines. He writes *as* his editor. There is no date, so I cannot be sure if this statement is contemporary with the writing of the *Memoirs* but the coincidence is striking: Symonds's reference to 'posthumous publication' is in keeping with his appendix request. In both the *Memoirs* and this prefatory remark, Symonds insists upon the importance of the poems as a record of first love and I was determined to provide the appendix, if I could.

Sarah Heidt cites this appendix request as part of a test case demonstrating the difficulties faced by any editor of the *Memoirs*. As such, it is important to consider the manuscript context:

A privately printed series of poems, entitled 'Dead Love', and the 'Tale of Theodore', portray the state of my mind at that epoch better than I can now describe it. If these Memoirs see the light of publication, I hope that the poems I have indicated will be printed in an appendix. They were written from day to day under the stress and storm of the moral influences which controlled me. No autobiographical resumption of facts after the lapse of twenty-five years is equal in veracity to such contemporary records.

Omit { Here I feel inclined to lay my pen down in weariness. Why should I go on to tell the story of my life? The back of my life was broken when I yielded to convention, and became untrue in soul to Willie.
But what is human life other than successive states of untruth and conforming to customs? We are, all of us, composite beings, made up, heaven knows how, out of the compromises we have effected between our impulses and instincts and the social laws which gird us round.

(MS 190; cf. p. 178 in this edition)

The request occurs before two paragraphs marked for deletion, containing what Heidt describes as ‘one of Symonds’s most powerful, poignant, and succinct acknowledgments of the complicated relationship between his desires and his life’s atmosphere.’ She also suggests that the appendix request occurs in a paragraph ‘almost certainly not intended for publication’ (presumably because of the reflective, commentary-like tone employed by Symonds at this point).¹⁹ Responding to this material, Heidt imagines multiple, contradictory versions of Symonds to whom the editor might seek to be faithful: ‘Should this future editor be true to the Symonds who wrote these two paragraphs or to the Symonds who willed their omission but nonetheless left them, unobliterated, in the manuscript?’ Heidt presents a range of possible scenarios:

Should she fulfil Symonds’s request by reproducing the poems in an appendix, then omitting part or all of the text containing that request? Should she reproduce exactly the words that appear in the manuscript, then offer the poems as a footnote to his proposal of their inclusion? Should she offer the poems as an appendix, then provide Symonds’s proposal as an explanatory footnote to that appendix?²⁰

Heidt rightly seeks to exorcise the spectre of final authorial intention and to demonstrate the competing claims of equally justified editorial interventions. Symonds’s instructions to his editor, alongside alternatives and contradictions within the text, reveal the *Memoirs* to be ‘a work that will ultimately be “made up” not only by his act of writing but also his editors’ and readers’ reactions to and handling of that writing.’²¹ But Heidt does not imagine a scenario in which the appendix request remains unfulfilled. And yet, if an editor must choose, disobeying some authorial acts in favour of others, might not this request be refused? The omission of ‘Dead Love [...] With The Tale of Theodore’ from the present edition is indicative of my own practice in making up the *Memoirs*. But my handling of the manuscript and Symonds’s literary remains has been affected by conditions and requirements beyond the text. Where Heidt examines the complex relation between editors and implied authors, my practice has been shaped by external authorities.

So let me outline my response to this editing test case. First, I have removed the two paragraphs marked for deletion, placing them in a footnote. This, as Heidt observes, is a ‘quieting but not [a] silencing’ of the material: it is a compromise that disobeys without prejudice, disregarding the instructions of both ‘the Symonds who wrote these [...] para-

graphs' and 'the Symonds who willed their omission.'²² But significantly, it makes legible the simultaneous presence of contradictory instructions and acknowledges the incoherence and mutability of authorial intention. Second, I have reproduced Symonds's appendix request in the main body of the text: no markings or notations indicate that the material should be omitted. But I have not been able to reproduce the poems themselves, for the editorial scenarios outlined by Heidt all proved impossible. Symonds had limited copies of 'Dead Love [...] With The Tale of Theodore' privately printed, but this does not constitute publication: the pamphlet remains unpublished in the eyes of copyright law. Under current UK legislation Symonds's unpublished work remains in copyright until 31 December 2039, but the identity of copyright holder(s) is less clear. On his death Symonds bequeathed to Horatio Brown: 'all my Copyright interest in my published works and all my manuscripts and unpublished writings (whether in print, or not) and all my letters.'²³ In effect he disinherited his family of a literary legacy. Following Brown's death in 1926, a box of Symonds's unpublished papers and their accompanying copyright passed into the hands of the London Library (see below). But the copyright in other unpublished materials remains uncertain. In principle, at least, ownership passed into the hands of Brown's beneficiaries—two Australian nephews, Hugh and Alexander—and continues to be held by their living descendants. 'Dead Love [...] With The Tale of Theodore' is a substantial text: the pamphlet numbers forty-eight pages and permission is required to reproduce the material.²⁴ It has not been possible to trace Brown's living relatives beyond the 1940s, so permission has not been forthcoming. Arguably Symonds's unpublished writings can be declared orphan works, but this does not eliminate the risks of publication without permission. Although the poems are extant and accessible in archives, the decision was taken not to publish.

This edition is not, therefore, a complete and finished text despite its being the first to reproduce all the manuscript's surviving materials. But incompleteness is an essential feature of the *Memoirs*: its missing materials cannot be supplied, barring future discoveries, and its readers are repeatedly directed to alternative narratives outside the text. It is also an essential feature of autobiography: a retrospective narrative that can never reach or look back upon its end point, the death that is (in narrative terms) forever desired and deferred. Chapter 18 stutters to a

close with a series of endings and continuations: a catalogue of works written and published during Symonds's residence in Davos; a summary repetition of his 'singular life history' (p. 523 in this edition); a *nota bene* afterthought commenting upon the scene of writing; and a reflection upon the conflict between sexual desires and social laws. Symonds's final sentence insists upon the impossibility of reconciliation: 'The quarrel drives him into blowing his brains out, or into idiocy' (p. 524 in this edition). But Symonds was to live for some years yet and he continued to revise the *Memoirs*: correcting assertions, amending terminology, adding and removing materials. Every editor will construct a particular version of this incomplete text, their choices and arrangements affected by the concerns and priorities of interested parties: authors, readers and publishers.

LEGACIES AND AFTERLIVES

Symonds died in Rome on 19 April 1893. On his death-bed, he penned the following note to his wife, Catherine:

There is something I ought to tell you, and being ill at Rome I take this occasion. If I do not see you again in this life you remember that I made H.F. Brown depository of my printed books. I wish that legacy to cover all MSS Diaries Letters and other matters found in my books cupboard, with the exception of business papers. I do this because I have written things you would not like to read, but which I have always felt justified and useful for society. Brown will consult and publish nothing without your consent.²⁵

This final letter confirmed Symonds's intention to appoint Brown his literary executor and hinted at reasons for leaving his unpublished work and copyright out of family hands: Brown would protect those 'justified and useful' writings (including the *Memoirs*) that other friends and relatives might seek to suppress or destroy. Symonds's letter also established an awkward set of dual authorities and obligations: executory and familial, legal and ethical. In the margin next to his assurance that Brown would 'publish nothing without your consent', Symonds scrawled a further instruction: 'Show this at once to him.' With these words and actions he removed Brown's autonomy as executor, binding him to consider family

wishes when performing his duties. From this moment on the *Memoirs*' afterlife has been shaped by the rival concerns of owners and custodians, friends and relatives, readers and editors. And this fascinating story reveals competing desires to uncover and conceal, protect and preserve, read and elide Symonds's words.²⁶

The Art of Biography

Horatio Brown was made aware in 1891 that his duties as literary executor would include custody of the *Memoirs*:

I want to save it from destruction after my death, and yet to reserve its publication for a period when it will not be injurious to my family. I do not just now know how to meet the difficulty. [...] You will inherit my MSS if you survive me. But you take them freely, to deal with them as you like, under my will. I have sketched my wish out that this autobiography should not be destroyed. Still, I see the necessity for caution in its publication. Give the matter a thought. If I could do so, I should like to except it (as a thing apart, together with other documents) from my general literary bequest; so as to make no friend, or person, responsible for the matter, to which I attach a particular value apart from life's relations. (p. 534 in this edition)

Symonds acknowledged the difficulties. In his proposed (but not pursued) plan to treat the manuscript as 'a thing apart'—an institutional bequest, perhaps, under his own terms—he betrayed a fear of asking too much, of placing too great a responsibility upon fallible shoulders. But Brown heeded and conformed to his request: he kept a copy of Symonds's letter with the manuscript, underlining his words concerning preservation and publication (see Appendices). Brown would keep the *Memoirs* safe for the rest of his life and these instructions would guide his practice as both an executor and biographer.

Following the death of a respected man of letters, an authorised biography would have been expected. Catherine asked Brown to take on the task: he was an author in his own right, and as executor he had access to the required papers. *John Addington Symonds: A Biography Compiled from his Papers and Correspondence* was a work of collage and edition: extracts from letters, diaries and lengthy passages from the *Memoirs* were selected, arranged and interspersed with brief commentaries. In the Preface, Brown

explained that he wanted the book ‘to be as closely autobiographical as I could make it.’²⁷ This was an opportunity to make public Symonds’s life-writing, but Brown did not (and could not) include the *Memoirs*’ sexual revelations. He was bound by the trust placed in him by Symonds and he worked closely with Catherine (who, in turn, sought advice from another of Symonds’s friends, Henry Sidgwick). The surviving *Memoirs* manuscript bears the trace of Brown’s editorial practice: his annotations and deletions, comments and revisions mark its pages (see Notes on the Text). And in the published biography, religion was employed to overwrite and disguise Symonds’s sexual self-scrutiny: ‘The central, the architectonic, quality of his nature was religious. By religious, I mean that his major pre-occupation, his dominating pursuit, was the interrogation of the Universe, the search for God.’²⁸

Brown, Catherine and Sidgwick were all concerned to protect Symonds’s posthumous reputation, but there appears to have been some disagreement. That Brown wished to go further than Catherine would allow is suggested by her worried note to Henry Graham Dakyns (to whom she also sent a copy of Symonds’s death-bed note):

You see how the great question was supreme in his mind to the very last. Are we right in being cowardly and suppressing it? I am glad we have Henry’s wisdom for *final* reference. I trust Horatio fully and want to help, but hinder him as you know.²⁹

Catherine remained sensitive to the importance placed by her dead husband on his ‘justified and useful’ writings on sexuality. Despite these doubts, she must have reconciled herself to the role of censor. In 1936 Charles Holmes, an employee of the publisher John C. Nimmo, recalled the extraordinary passage of the biography through the printing press:

Symonds’s own ‘Autobiography’ was another source of trouble. The manuscript was deliberately outspoken on many matters which are usually handled with reticence, so that Horatio Brown, Symonds’s friend and editor, exercised little more than ordinary discretion in cutting out the most intimate self-revelations. But a straiter critic had then to take a hand. The proofs, already bowdlerized, were completely emasculated, so that frank ‘Confessions,’ which might have made some stir in the world (indeed that was generally expected), emerged as pure commonplace.³⁰

The unnamed ‘straiter critic’ could be Catherine herself or Henry Sidgwick (indeed it could be any number of Symonds’s surviving literary friends).³¹ But whoever it was, Holmes bemoans their interference. Ironically, he adopts a gendered discourse to characterise the text’s transformation from confession to commonplace. Symonds’s sexuality was silenced in order to safeguard his public reputation and claims to respectable masculinity, but Holmes’s euphemistic account of the biography’s failure to shock depends upon some implied failure or impotence in the man.

Brown has often been criticised, both in public and private. One of the biography’s first readers was Symonds’s friend, the poet and theologian T.E. Brown, who wryly complained: ‘I confess that I had not known Symonds. [...] I fancy I can recollect a different Symonds, full of enthusiasm for favourite authors, outspoken, critical, of course, but brimming with love for those he preferred.’³² The disconnect between the biography’s portrait of a man tortured by religious doubt, and the memories of surviving family and friends, becomes a characteristic refrain found in many contemporary responses. In the *Saturday Review*, Arthur Symons damned Brown’s ‘art’ of biography with faint praise:

Mr Horatio Brown’s *Life of John Addington Symonds* is composed with so careful and so successful a reticence on the part of the author, that it is not at first sight obvious how much its concealment of art is a conscious subtlety in art. These two volumes [...] present a most carefully arranged portrait, which, in one sense, is absolutely the creation of the biographer.

Symons chooses his words carefully, conceding that Brown had worked with ‘immense ingenuity and diligence’ to produce a portrait with ‘remarkable subtlety and insight.’³³ But his comments emphasise artifice, disguise and deception. Brown’s role as biographer is concealed by an assemblage of life-writing, lending his text the appearance of autobiography (thus borrowing from the perceived authority of self-revelation). But Symons’s telling nod to ‘reticence’ cuts through this façade of authenticity: Brown has practised the biographer’s art of omission. Having raised these objections (albeit through hints and clues), Symons dedicates the remainder of his review to the ‘curious self-analysis’ on display in extracted material from the *Memoirs*, diaries and letters. He was clearly fascinated by the former, ‘which is not likely at present to be published in its entirety.’³⁴

In 1964 these accusations were repeated and extended by Symonds’s new biographer, Phyllis Grosskurth. In the Preface to his 1895 work,

Brown had justified his practice by citing Symonds's claim that 'The report has to be supplemented indeed, in order that a perfect portrait may be painted of the man' (p. 478 in this edition). Grosskurth explicitly countered this move: 'Brown failed to note that a biography which falsifies a man, changes events, and omits important facts, is less than truth.'³⁵ And when, like Brown, she began to work with the *Memoirs* manuscript as its editor, her criticisms went further still. She described his biography as a 'filleted version' of the text: 'Frankly, I believe the publication of Brown's biography was a regrettable decision. If he could not speak the truth, there was no necessity for any sort of publication.'³⁶ These complaints reach their peak in a reflective essay looking back upon her career: 'Brown had been extremely hypocritical, in my view, to suggest that Symonds's problem had been religious doubt. Why bother to publish such a misleading account?'³⁷ Over the years Grosskurth intensified her rhetoric from failure to hypocrisy, maintaining that Brown ought better to have said and published nothing.

Other critics have been far more ready to consider the conditions under which Brown worked, praising the surprising loquacity of this otherwise muted text. Timothy d'Arch Smith and John Pemble were among the first to offer a defence. As early as 1970 (just six years after Grosskurth's biography) Smith claimed it was 'high time that [Brown] was acquitted of the charges of expunging all Uranian material from [the biography's] pages.'³⁸ As evidence, he cites the 'straiter critic' implicated by Charles Holmes. Pemble turned his attention instead to Symonds's family and emphasised the broader context of posthumous publication: Brown's safe biography should be viewed alongside the imminent and far more daring publication of *Das Konträre Geschlechtsgefühl* in 1896.³⁹ More recently, Sarah Heidt has pointed to the ironies at work in Grosskurth's criticism when one considers that she too 'filleted' the *Memoirs*, reproducing just two thirds of the text in her 1984 edition.⁴⁰ David Amigoni, by contrast, has gestured towards new ways of reading Brown's biography, viewing it as part of a broader poetics of translation, one that includes 'movement between genres, perceiving subjects, epistemologies, and systems of discourse.'⁴¹ For Amigoni, Symonds's translation of *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini* (1888) serves as precedent for Brown's translation of private memoirs into public biography. In the Introduction to *Cellini*, Symonds acknowledged his subject's preference for 'darker lusts' and cites (in a footnote) his imprisonment in 1556 'on a charge of unnatural vice.'⁴² These euphemisms prompt Amigoni to identify 'historical and epistemological

translations' that function in addition to alterations in language; in the case of *Cellini*, these 'involve "evasive" maneuvers, suspended between their overt contexts and the "unspeakable" contexts that Symonds cannot publicly broach.'⁴³ So too for Brown, whose editing and framing of the *Memoirs* deployed 'languages of religion and nature' as 'translations of, and alibis for, the language of sexual struggle.'⁴⁴ It is Amigoni's notion of a text 'suspended' between different historical and epistemological contexts that provides an opportunity to reassess Brown's biography, for it suggests the palimpsestic survival of overwritten sexual content. An example will serve to demonstrate.

In Chapter 10 of the *Memoirs*, Symonds records his travels in Normandy with his sister, Charlotte. In Coutances they meet two unnamed women and a man called François (their nephew and son) in a public garden. Symonds transcribes his account from a letter dated 3 June 1867:

He must have a story; for his manners were excellent, and he knew some English, and his intelligence in seizing the nuance of what one said was perfect. And all the while his liquid eloquent eyes were asking me: 'do you want nothing? Is there nothing to give, nothing to get?' In a sort of way I corresponded; for **these meetings with passing strangers, these magnetisms of one indifferent person by another are among the strangest things in life.** I remember, for example, today, as though it had been yesterday, how several years ago a young man in a shirt and trousers, stretched upon a parapet below the Ponte di Paradiso at Venice, gazed into my eyes as I rowed past him, lifted his head, then rose upon his elbows, and followed me till I was out of sight with a fixed look which I shall remember if we meet in the next world. **Well: when the conversation flagged between Charlotte and me and the old women, one of them would say: 'Ah, quelle heureuse rencontre! Nous étions là assises sur les marches de l'église. Nous nous attendions à rien. Et voilà que vous êtes venus! N'est ce pas François?'** And François only smiled a little sadly, and looked at me with a trifle more of meaning in his deep grey eyes. **I, for my part, felt how idiotically human life is made. Charlotte delighted in the kindly, hale, hearty, sweet-tempered, plain-featured, innocent, hospitable, elderly ladies. They liked the amusement of walking with two English tourists. But the young man and I, we wanted to be comrades, if only for a day or two in passing; he to hear of my life, I of his; to embrace and exchange experiences; to leave a mark upon each other's memory; to part at last as friends with something added, each by each to each. And things are so arranged that this may not be, perhaps ought**

not to be, though I cannot, for the soul of me, see why they should not be. (pp. 297–8 in this edition)

Material in bold is reproduced in the 1895 biography: it is permitted to traverse the different historical and epistemological contexts that shape Symonds's private account and Brown's later translation. Omissions serve to lessen but not eradicate the encounter's erotic charge: Brown removes Symonds's imagined acts of unspoken communication with François, his more corporeal desires to embrace the 'passing stranger', and his digression concerning the mutual gaze enjoyed in Venice, the Italian city of pleasures. But even the bowdlerised account remains articulate on the subject of male relations, couched in terms of comradeship and hinting at the social obstacles that prevent their friendship and union. Apprised of Brown's compilation method in the biography's Preface, readers are invited to infer the lost original—to read palimpsestically. This is certainly how Brown chose to defend his work, claiming that sympathetic readers would have no trouble in recognising and decoding the biography-as-translation: 'I have by no means omitted the topic altogether. There are passages [...] which contain the most important of Symonds's views on the subject and which will be understood by those who can understand the matter at all.'⁴⁵

The biography was published just a matter of months before the trials of Oscar Wilde brought male homosexuality to public attention and notoriety. It is tempting to speculate whether any delay might have changed irrevocably Brown's practice as editor, biographer and translator. The question is, of course, unanswerable. But Brown stood by his portrait once unveiled to the public. When preparing a second edition in 1903, working in the shadows cast by Wilde's imprisonment and death, Brown undertook no major revisions (including the encounter with François, which remained unchanged): 'I at least could present no other portrait; and so this second edition differs in no essential outlines from the first.'⁴⁶

Bonfire and Embargo

During the final years of his life, Brown returned to the question of Symonds's posthumous reputation and the trust placed in him as literary executor. In 1923 he edited *The Letters and Papers of John Addington Symonds*, making public a new selection of material from letters and diaries. In the Preface to this work, Brown drew once more upon a discourse

of portraiture: his stated aim was ‘to present a portrait—not the only possible portrait, of course, no portrait is ever that—of a singularly interesting and even challenging personality.’⁴⁷ The edition supplements and extends his earlier biography; it was designed to pique the interest of readers who continued to discuss Symonds’s work ‘in varying tones of sympathy or of dislike.’⁴⁸ He sought to reinvigorate public discourse, doing justice to a bold prefatory claim: ‘[Symonds’s] name is still alive in the world of letters.’⁴⁹ But the decision to review this public reputation through the lens of private writing necessitated some further comment on Symonds’s life apart from his work as a man of letters. For Brown, the edition revealed ‘an idiosyncratic *animi figura*’ or portrait of a mind (the phrase is borrowed from Symonds’s 1882 poetry collection, that ‘self-revealing series of Sonnets’),⁵⁰ bearing witness to the subject’s ‘independence of, and [...] antagonism towards, current opinion and accepted standards which had its roots deep down in the anarchic complex of his nature, in the hidden roots of self, where the battle of his *dipsychia* was fought though never finished.’⁵¹ But there would be no revelation. Brown was bound by Symonds’s exhortation to publish nothing that might hurt his surviving family, and though the edition gestures toward a double life, a self at odds with society, it never exceeds the respectable limits of inference and implication.⁵²

Once Brown had seen this new literary portrait into print, he turned his attention to posterity and the private record. Under the terms of Symonds’s will he was the owner and custodian of his late friend’s unpublished writings, and he had to decide what would become of the material in his possession after his own death. Minded by Symonds’s particular request that the *Memoirs* ‘should not perish’, Brown sought to make special provision in his will for the manuscript’s preservation and protection. A codicil (dated 6 October 1925) reveals an original plan: ‘I am endeavouring to get the British Museum to accept custody of J.A. Symonds’ Autobiography, with an embargo of fifty years, against publication.’⁵³ But negotiations soon failed and a subsequent codicil (dated 22 December 1925) outlines a revised solution:

I desire that a green card-board box tied with strings and labelled J.A. Symonds’ Papers, bequeathed to The London Library...subject to conditions agreed on in the Letter of the Librarian (Mr Hagberg Wright) to me dated Dec. 15th 1925 and the letter from me to the Librarian, dated Dec. 21st.⁵⁴

Only the second letter has survived.⁵⁵ It reveals that Brown consulted and made arrangements with Charles Hagberg Wright and Edmund Gosse (a member of the Library committee), and the following conditions were agreed: ‘the greatest possible discretion’ was to be exercised in granting access to the material, and a fifty-year embargo was placed on publication.⁵⁶ These documents also reveal that Symonds’s *Memoirs* were not the only item contained within the cardboard box. Brown’s will makes reference to an autograph book (with such illustrious contributors as William Gladstone, Thomas Hardy and John Ruskin), while his letter offers the following description: ‘This box will contain the Autobiography which Symonds was anxious to have preserved, the Diaries and his letters (of which I have made great use already) and my letters which he kept, will probably be destroyed on my death.’⁵⁷ Phyllis Grosskurth has noted the striking ambiguity of the final clause: ‘Did Brown mean that his own letters or his letters *and* Symonds’s letters and diaries would “probably be destroyed”?’⁵⁸ In the event, of course, he would not be there to adjudicate how these wishes and arrangements were interpreted and put into practice.

Brown died of heart failure on 19 August 1926. Eight months later, on 11 April 1927, the London Library committee formally accepted his bequest:

It was proposed and seconded that the gift of the Ms. autobiography of John A. Symonds should be accepted, and that a notice should be placed on the Ms. that it is not to be opened by the Librarian or any other person without leave of the Committee.⁵⁹

The *Memoirs* manuscript was sealed and the package stored in the Library’s safe. Most other materials in the cardboard box—the autograph book, diaries and letters—were almost certainly destroyed. That anything is known about this shadowy episode in Symonds’s literary afterlife is due to the investigations and testimonies of his descendants. Shortly after Brown’s death, Symonds’s youngest daughter, Katharine Furse, began enquiries as to the fate of her father’s papers.⁶⁰ From her niece (and Symonds’s granddaughter), Janet Vaughan, she discovered that his autobiography was in the possession of the London Library—Janet had this information from Symonds’s friend and Brown’s Clifton College schoolfellow, T.H. Warren. On 21 April 1927, ten days after the Library sealed the *Memoirs*, Katharine took to the streets of London. She visited Somerset House to read her

father's will; this confirmed that copyright and ownership of his unpublished work had passed to Horatio Brown, and she promptly sent a letter to his executors for further information concerning the disposal of his effects. Travelling from The Strand to St James's Square, her next meeting would bear extraordinary fruit.

Katharine recorded these events and discoveries in a memorandum composed later that day:

I then went to see Doctor Hagberg Wright at the London Library and he gave me a lot of information, including the following

All Father's M.S. have been destroyed by Horatio's Executors. This was done after they had been looked through by Sir Edmund Goss [*sic*]. They had been sent in 2 or 3 boxes to Dr. Hagberg Wright by H.B. together with sundry privately published papers.

Dr. Hagberg Wright said, in answer to a question from me, that he thought there were among these papers no M.S. of Father's published works. He did not know what had happen [*sic*] to the latter. The M.S. which were destroyed to be of a nature which they though it better to destroy.⁶¹

Hagberg Wright would later contradict this account. In June 1939 he claimed not to remember Gosse being involved with Brown's bequest, and in July 1939 he declared (in direct contradiction of Brown's will): 'The London Library only received the ms, and Horatio Brown's collection of Italian pamphlets. There were no other letters or mss in the box. There was nothing to destroy.'⁶² These retractions cloud the truth, but Katharine's memorandum was later supported by Janet Vaughan (see below). In Katharine's version of events, Hagberg Wright and Gosse take a hard line on Brown's ambiguous statement concerning the destruction of papers, acting as guardians and censors of Symonds's posthumous reputation. Their hands may have been tied with regard to the special arrangements made for the *Memoirs*, but Symonds's letters, diaries and 'privately published papers'—presumably copies of *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (1873), *A Problem in Modern Ethics*, and materials collected in preparation for *Sexual Inversion*—were most likely consigned to the flames. That Hagberg Wright misjudged the purpose of Katharine's visit in April 1927 is suggested by the further reassurances he took pains to offer:

Dr. H.W. assured me that there was nothing in any of the papers now extant to which anyone [*sic*] could take much exception. I told him that we were not

very anxious about this as we felt that, now that all subjects were so much more freely discussed, we did not think it mattered.

Gosse and Hagberg Wright sought to make safe the archival record, silencing Symonds's historical, legal and scientific studies of sexual inversion and suppressing his personal revelations in letters and diaries. On the evidence of Katharine's memorandum, it seems that Hagberg Wright presumed she would share their concerns and approve of their efforts to prevent public scandal. But Katharine insisted the family would have thought and acted differently.

It is tempting to view this meeting in terms of generational conflict: a daughter fighting to recover her father's legacy from the outmoded pruderies of his Victorian friends and contemporaries. This all too convenient narrative is compounded by Janet Vaughan's memories of an encounter with Gosse:

When I was a young medical student living in London I used to take tea with Edmund Gosse and Mrs. Gosse on Sunday afternoon. [...] One afternoon Gosse said he particularly wanted to talk to me. He said he knew how glad I should be to hear what he had done to preserve the good name of my grandfather J.A.S. [...] Then he explained that when Horatio Brown died, Horatio had left all J.A.S.'s papers to him, Gosse, to dispose of as he thought best. Hagburgh Wright [*sic*] and I had a bonfire in the garden and burnt them all, my dear Janet, all except his autobiography [...]. I am sure you will agree that this was the right and proper thing to do. I said very little. It was not safe to let myself speak as I thought of those two old men destroying, one could only guess, all the case histories and basic studies of sexual inversion that J.A.S. is known to have made, together no doubt with other letters and papers that would have thrown much light on J.A.S.'s work and friendships.

Gosse's smug gloating delight as he told me, the sense that he had enjoyed to the full the honour fate had given him, was nauseating. There was nothing to be said, I walked out and never went back.⁶³

The indignant articulacy of Janet's retrospective account stands in marked contrast to her silence during the *tête-à-tête*. That she did not feel it 'safe' to speak gives the lie to Katharine's assertion that 'all subjects were so much more freely discussed.' Janet penned her account in September 1967, just two months after the passing of the Sexual Offences Act that decriminalised (male) homosexuality in England and Wales. Forty years had loosed

her tongue but the spectre of giving offence haunts this exchange: it provides the motive for Gosse's actions (his fear that Symonds's private papers would offend the reading public), and it lies at the heart of Janet's silent protest. Shared anxieties concerning appropriate public behaviours and utterances cross the generations, cautioning against unproblematic appeals to age difference—the liberated and liberating young, the constrained and constraining old. This was something that Katharine herself rejected in a letter to Hagberg Wright: 'I appreciate the differences in outlook between the Victorian era and the present one, but having my feet in one and my head in the other I cannot be content with a dividing line.'⁶⁴ She was barely thirteen years younger than Hagberg Wright, and as she sat in the Librarian's Room at the London Library, it was relatively easy for this much-decorated, much-honoured Dame Grand Cross of the British Empire to speak back to authority. Not so the young medical student taking tea in a private sitting-room.

Access Denied

Posthumous bonfires have long been a primal scene of biographical romance; they are endlessly fascinating and frustrating, inciting desires for archival completion that can never be satisfied. Symonds's lost papers stirred the imagination of his grand-daughter: Janet Vaughan's retrospective account unfolds a counterfactual narrative, conceiving of irretrievable evidence that might prove Symonds's place in genealogies of sexual research and emancipation. Katharine's response was different: she documented her discoveries in a memorandum, wrote 'to sundry people for further information' and sought the surviving material remains of her father's literary legacy.⁶⁵ She investigated the sale of Horatio Brown's library at Sotheby's and by Messrs. Hodgson's, the latter having disposed of some pamphlets ('by arrangement of Dr. H.W.')

that were part of the Brown bequest to the London Library.⁶⁶ The sale was reported in the *Saturday Review*, which noted the presence of 'fourteen slim pamphlets of verse' by Symonds among the available items. Several of these were purchased by A.J.A. Symons, future biographer of Frederick Rolfe (Baron Corvo) and the author of the *Saturday Review* article. He hinted at their 'far franker self-revelation': the pamphlets revealed that certain poems in *Many Moods* (1878) and *New and Old* (1880) were 'palimpsests', public texts that partially erased and disguised original, private sentiments.⁶⁷ While Katharine pursued these lines of investigation, she also sought permission to read the *Memoirs*.

Hagberg Wright laid this request before the London Library committee on 9 May 1927, but not before warning her against the action: ‘from my own very cursory glance at one page of it I don’t think you would be glad to have seen it.’⁶⁸ His concern for Katharine’s modesty and memories of her father mattered little, for the committee refused access on account of the conditions imposed by Brown. Katharine did not protest and she recorded her response in an annotation to Hagberg Wright’s letter: ‘Replied that I accepted decision. All I wanted to establish was that, if anyone saw Father’s M.S. his daughter ought to be allowed to do so.’⁶⁹

Here there is a pause in the story of the *Memoirs* manuscript: the package remained sealed in the Library’s safe where it lay undisturbed until 1939. In this year Katharine began to write her own memoirs, researching and drafting the book that would become *Hearts and Pomegranates: The Story of Forty-five Years, 1875 to 1920* (1940). Her writing prompted her to consider how lives intersect, how her story was bound up with the stories of others. In May she asked *The Times* to print an advert seeking further information concerning her father, her aunt Marianne North, and her late husband Charles Furse. *The Times* recommended that she write her request as a letter, which they published on 12 June. More articles in other newspapers soon followed: on 13 June the *News Chronicle* ran a story (under the headline ‘Poet’s Daughter Seeks Lost Works’) detailing Katharine’s attempts to unravel the ‘family mystery’ concerning ‘the disappearance of the private papers of her father’; and the *Daily Telegraph* on 14 June published a short piece suggesting that ‘clues in Australia’ (where Brown’s nephews lived) might reveal the whereabouts of Symonds’s papers and autobiography.⁷⁰ It is not, perhaps, surprising that the press sensationalised the story, eliding the aunt and husband in favour of the father’s lost archive. But no mention was made of Katharine’s prior discovery of the *Memoirs* being in the London Library’s collection. The *Daily Telegraph* explicitly described the autobiography (in headline and text) as ‘missing’, while the *News Chronicle* implied the same by listing it alongside other ‘missing papers.’⁷¹

That Katharine did not conceal (or forget) the whereabouts of her father’s manuscript is suggested by the apology she felt compelled to offer Hagberg Wright:

I am sorry you were rung up about the Autobiography of J.A.S. by the *Evening Standard*. I begged them to drop the subject which they did I think but the *News Chronicle* started the herd with headlines about my searching for father’s missing M.S.⁷²

Katharine renewed her correspondence with the Library shortly before her letter to *The Times* was published, but she did not repeat her request to read the *Memoirs*. Instead she sought Hagberg Wright's assistance in identifying Horatio Brown's literary executors and contacting Percy Babington, author and compiler of the *Bibliography of the Writings of John Addington Symonds* (1925). Without prompting, Hagberg Wright offered to raise the question of access once more but he remained pessimistic and expanded upon his previous warning: 'My recollection of one page that I read is not a pleasing one and *personally* I should like it destroyed as not conducing to add to the reputation of an author whose works I have read and admired and bought.'⁷³ In an echo of their meeting twelve years earlier, Katharine again took the contrary position: she could 'well imagine' that he wanted the document destroyed, but did not 'altogether agree' with him.⁷⁴ On 17 July, the committee refused to grant access. But this time the decision was a close-run thing. Writing to Katharine, Hagberg Wright broke the secrecy of the meeting room: he informed her that the committee was divided, and that the Deputy Chair (who was against) held the casting vote. He went on to assure her that the issue would be raised again at the next meeting (scheduled for the autumn), and that the Chair, Lord Ilchester, had no objections to her reading the manuscript. He thought it likely that permission would be granted and suggested that she send a formal written request.⁷⁵ This Katharine did on 11 August, offering the following self-justification: 'It is not idle curiosity which induces me to make this request but a feeling that, as his only surviving daughter, I should be allowed to see what he wrote.'⁷⁶ She would have to wait two months for a decision.

Back in June, when Hagberg Wright repeated his warning that the *Memoirs* were far from 'pleasant', Katharine had sent him a 'copy of *Mental Hygiene*' and boldly asked: 'Have you studied Sexual Inversion at all?'⁷⁷ Her own research in this line owed much to the autobiography she was writing and to nascent plans to correct (as she saw it) Symonds's posthumous public image. She discussed these plans with Virginia Woolf, who was writing a biography of Roger Fry and facing similar difficulties with regard to the public disclosure of private, heterodox desires.⁷⁸ Woolf discovered references to Symonds and Brown in Fry's papers; these remarks '[hinted] at the forbidden topics' and Woolf was curious to know how Katharine planned to confront the issue: 'Are you being open? —anyhow more so that [*sic*] the Horatio Brown Biography.'⁷⁹ 'I am trying to write of the "skeleton in the cupboard",' Katharine replied, insisting that

‘To my mind, the more said the better.’⁸⁰ Her book was under contract with Macmillan and Katharine claimed to have informed the publishers of her intention: she met with Horatio Lovat Dickson (her contact at the publisher) and told him that one of her primary concerns was ‘to write of father from this point of view.’⁸¹ Rumours of her writing were also beginning to spread through literary and academic circles. Katharine’s appeal in *The Times* provoked quite a response, and in letters to Woolf she complained of importunate advice received from strangers on the subject of Symonds’s sexuality. She enclosed an example of the encouraging kind from S.E. Cottam, an Oxford clergyman and Uranian poet: he declared that Symonds was ‘a Platonist, a fact stamped on all his writings, and as plain as a pike’s staff to at least the initiated’; he hoped this would be ‘frankly admitted’ in her book and called for the publication of the *Memoirs* ‘in extenso.’⁸² By contrast, other unlooked-for correspondents ‘begged [her] not to write of the subject. Implying that I risk my own good name which does not interest me.’⁸³ Woolf took an optimistic view of the risk to reputation, adding her voice to the chorus of support: she testified to a growing desire to have ‘the question openly discussed’ and claimed that ‘a woman could do it more openly.’⁸⁴ Woolf’s rhetoric depends upon female exclusion from male same-sex desire, seeming to offer a safeguard against accusations of prurience or vicariousness (and, of course, Katharine could claim the redoubled protection of being a daughter). But her attempt to write of the ‘skeleton in the cupboard’ did not go to plan.

Katharine’s typescript was too long. She revised the text but the publishers insisted that more material needed to be removed; in particular, they wanted to reduce her account of childhood and ‘to cut a great deal about J.A.S.’⁸⁵ Katharine feared that Macmillan was becoming censorious and no longer wished ‘to get mixed up with this subject.’⁸⁶ In the event, she must have felt unable to concede to their editorial demands. The contract was broken, and when *Hearts and Pomegranates* finally appeared in September 1940 it was published by Peter Davies. ‘You will be disappointed in my book where it writes of J.A.S.,’ she confessed to Woolf:

What you wrote urging me to “let the cat out of the bag” is not in my text. I re-wrote the chapter about J.A.S. from that point of view several times and each time shed some of my own inhibitions. You may detect some still.⁸⁷

Katharine’s self-criticism was only partly justified. In a chapter dedicated to her father she sought to correct the ‘morbid impression’ left by Brown’s

biography.⁸⁸ She claimed that his account was incomplete because it elided Symonds's 'most vivid and brilliant and amusing personality' and omitted 'except through inference here and there, all reference to [his] study of homosexuality.'⁸⁹ In 1940 it was no longer possible for Katharine to ignore the latter. Symonds's private writings upon male same-sex desire—literary, historical and sexological—had been brought to wider public knowledge in 1925 by Percy Babington's *Bibliography*. Brown, however, should take some share in the credit: he granted Babington access to his extensive library of Symonds's works—'the most valuable material in his possession'—including seven private poetry pamphlets, *A Problem in Greek Ethics*, *A Problem in Modern Ethics* and rare editions of *Sexual Inversion*.⁹⁰ But the bibliography went further than simply enumerating contents: Babington's notes highlight original readerships and dissemination, revisions and reuse, and the controversies provoked. His entry for *Greek Ethics* includes a letter to Richard Burton, written by Symonds in 1890 to accompany a gifted copy. This document reveals how the essay circulated among coteries of sympathetic readers, for Symonds had read and admired Burton's discussion of pederasty in the 'Terminal Essay' of his edition of the *Arabian Nights* (1885–88), sending the work 'as a very little sign of my respect' (and requesting its return, if Burton did not care 'to read, or to keep, the *opuscle*').⁹¹ Entries for the poetry pamphlets reveal Symonds's acts of self-censorship as he revised private texts for a public audience. For example, an early version of 'From the Gulistân' in *Many Moods* had appeared in 'Lyra Viginti Chordarum' (under the title 'Imitated from Sady') and Babington identified significant changes: 'In the version in *Many Moods*, the second line of the poem as printed here "Walking the streets I saw a boy most beauteous" is omitted, and the sex of the Beloved is altered from male to female.'⁹² But the bibliography was at its most expansive and suggestive when dealing with *Sexual Inversion*, dedicating five and a half pages to four distinct editions: the 1896 German translation, the first and second English editions of 1897, and an American edition of 1901. In a précis of Havelock Ellis's Preface to the first English edition, Babington reveals that Symonds instigated the collaboration, and in his notes he hints at the project's controversies: the first English edition of *Sexual Inversion* was 'suppressed', while the second 'was successfully prosecuted as an obscene work.'⁹³ He also supplies a 'comparative table' recording the arrangement of material across editions, rendering visible the gradual elision of Symonds's contribution.⁹⁴ For Katharine, writing after Babington, the cat was already part-way out of the bag.

In *Hearts and Pomegranates* she rejected those binaries, those ‘clean cut divisions of individuals into classes, such as healthy and unhealthy, moral and immoral, homosexual and heterosexual’, that would presume to identify, describe and fix her father’s nature.⁹⁵ She refused this specificity: ‘there are intermediate grades as varied as are shades of colour.’⁹⁶ Katharine’s discomfort is reminiscent of Symonds’s own struggle to articulate his sexuality, wavering between sin and disease, working to reconcile masculinity with prevailing models of same-sex desire. But if Symonds came to hope for future accommodation within a revised medical discourse, Katharine found solace in ambiguity. She equivocates, offering a general observation that her father ‘cannot be fitted into any mould’, and making no clear statement about his sexuality.⁹⁷ If her insistence upon the various ‘shades’ (not binaries) can be read as a subtle dislocation of heterosexuality, the same is also true of homosexuality. Throughout the chapter Symonds remains a scholar and his interest in homosexuality remains almost exclusively academic. Katharine is at her most direct when she concedes that her father was sometimes ‘described as a platonist.’⁹⁸ Her turn of phrase is a direct echo of S.E. Cottam’s letter, but she does not permit the term to resonate freely. In a footnote, she provides the following definition:

It has been stated in the *Encyclopaedia of Sexual Knowledge*, edited by Dr. Norman Haire, Ch.M., M.B. and published by Aldor, that Plato did not think of human love but of the ideal love of beauty, truth, goodness, of the ideal of superhuman perfection. Plato’s metaphysical conception, therefore, refers not to concrete individuals but to an abstract idea.⁹⁹

Leaning heavily upon the titles and post-nominals of the medical profession, Katharine obfuscates as she clarifies. There is an implicit fear of unfettered euphemism—that readers will understand all too much, all too clearly, by this allusion to the Greeks. But the term loses specificity as it is defined: it becomes ‘abstract’ rather than ‘concrete’, concerning itself with ideas and ideals, not the messy facts of human bodies and desires. But this disembodied love does not sit easily alongside her account of Symonds’s ‘pioneering in the subject of the psychology of sex.’¹⁰⁰ To enact a rapprochement, Katharine emphasises disinterest and altruism. She quotes extensively from her father’s correspondence with Havelock Ellis, identifying his efforts to correct medical error and legal injustice. In these letters Symonds insists that sex must be studied inclusively: ‘It ought to be

scientifically, historically, impartially investigated, instead of being left to Labby's inexpandible legislation.¹⁰¹ Throughout the chapter his scholarly conduct remains (paradoxically) personal but selfless:

There seems to be no doubt that it was the loneliness of his childhood, combined with his revulsion against the social conventions of public school and university which fixed the introspective tendencies in my Father and led him, at an early age, from altruistic motives as much as for the satisfaction of his own analytical interest, to a deep and conscientious study of homosexuality. For he realised, through his own experience, how many difficulties, physical and psychological, have to be faced by those individuals who, through no fault of their own, may be different in their make-up from most of their more virile companions.¹⁰²

Katharine identifies a sympathetic (not empathetic) point of origin for her father's work. She paints him as an outsider: physically weak, lonely and introspective, possessing a 'delicate and sensitive' personality, attuned to the plight of other (sexual) outsiders.¹⁰³ That Symonds too was 'different in [his] make-up', sharing those desires that formed his object of study, remains an implication to be noticed or ignored at the reader's whim.

Katharine published her autobiography before she was able to read her father's *Memoirs*. But *Hearts and Pomegranates* proved a prescient text. In it she replicated Symonds's appeals to Platonic idealism and scientific objectivity, but she employed them differently. In his engagements with sexology, Symonds repeatedly sought to add his personal experience to the store of evidence: in the posterity project of the *Memoirs*, and through the case study he supplied for *Sexual Inversion*. He also came to reject the possibility (and advisability) of sexual sublimation through appeals to higher principles. Rather optimistically, he described his relationship with Norman Moor as '[closing] the period of idealism', prompting him 'to seek a new solution upon lower and more practical lines of conduct' (p. 404 in this edition). Katharine, by contrast, did not permit the scholar's mask of intellectual detachment to slip fully from her subject's face.

Broken Seals and Light Edits

Katharine's third request to read the *Memoirs* was put before the London Library committee on 9 October 1939. The vote was carried and permission granted 'owing to the confidence which the Committee [placed] in

Dame Katharine's loyalty and discretion.¹⁰⁴ The final word is telling. As Symonds's daughter she was deemed an exception to the rules imposed by Brown's bequest, and in a 'Rider' to its permission the Library made sure to underscore this point: 'It is not to be taken as a precedent for similar requests which may be made to the Committee in the future.'¹⁰⁵

Katharine did not read the *Memoirs* for another ten years. In the interval between her August request and the October committee meeting, war was declared against Germany and Katharine moved away from London. She was also busy with her book, writing and revising the typescript and negotiating with publishers. Once *Hearts and Pomegranates* was published, there was little immediate incentive to return to a city under bombardment during the Blitz. The Second World War removed Katharine from proximity to the *Memoirs* and interrupted her research into family histories and the fate of literary remains. But she did not forget the manuscript, and she began to toy with the idea of writing a book about her father. In December 1940 she once again renewed her correspondence with the London Library. By then a new Librarian was in post (Charles Hagberg Wright having died in March that year), and she wrote to Christopher Purnell to check on the manuscript's safety. She offered to store it 'down here [at Ebbesbourne Wake, near Salisbury] where it would be as safe from air raids as anywhere [in] these islands.'¹⁰⁶ Purnell politely refused.

It was not until 1949, four years after the conflict had ceased, that Katharine made use of the hard fought and won permission to read her father's autobiography. This delay seems extraordinary and there is frustratingly little evidence among her surviving papers to explain its cause. To her friend Walter ('Wattie') Roch, she simply claimed to have '[waited] till I had leisure and felt the *Stimmung* to look at it.'¹⁰⁷ The necessary humour arrived with the spring. In March 1949 she wrote again to Purnell: 'now I feel the time is coming when I should look at the M.S. of JAS Autobiography so, as soon as I see a free time ahead I hope you will let me do so.'¹⁰⁸ On 18 May she visited the Library and began to read the manuscript. In a note among her papers, she records her experience: 'Was absolutely absorbed by the Autobiography to Page 18.'¹⁰⁹ Katharine soon became a regular visitor; she was permitted to sit in the Librarian's Room (the scene of her encounter with Hagberg Wright in 1927), reading the manuscript in peace and privacy, completing the task by the end of June. During this period Katharine put her hand to two extraordinary and seemingly contradictory acts of writing: the first was a piece of marginalia; the

second was a series of letters to Lord Ilchester, President of the London Library and Chair of its committee.

In Chapter 11 of the *Memoirs*, Symonds reflects upon his experience of different forms of love:

Later on, I found the affirmation of religion and contentment in love—not the human kindly friendly love which I had given liberally to my beloved wife and children, my father and my sister and my companions, but in the passionate sexual love of comrades. (p. 343 in this edition)

Horatio Brown has annotated this section of text in the manuscript: the second instance of ‘love’ (in ‘human kindly friendly love’) is double underlined in pencil and accompanied by a marginal note: ‘=affection’; the phrase ‘sexual love’ is single underlined in pencil and accompanied by ‘=lust.’ Brown also initialled these comments. Below them, also in pencil, is written: ‘Let JAS words stand. KF June 1949.’ Katharine’s rejoinder was first identified by Sarah Heidt, for whom the annotation constituted ‘an impossible response to Brown and an unmistakable imperative to future editors.’ It was:

[A] belated reply to her father’s first autobiographical editor, pencilled some fifteen years or more after that editor’s death—and pencilled somewhat furtively, one would imagine, since Furse had to deface the London Library’s property in order to defend her father’s diction.¹¹⁰

Katharine’s hand joins the multitude of others whose writings constitute the *Memoirs* manuscript: her father, her mother, Sophie Girard and Horatio Brown. Like Brown, her hand occupies the margins of the text and is present through an act of volition (not Symonds’s composition); like Brown, her intervention is framed as an action taken on Symonds’s behalf. Katharine’s written protest would therefore seem an apt and romantic conclusion to the narrative of her efforts to gain access to her father’s *Memoirs*, but shortly after taking this stand, she opened her correspondence with Lord Ilchester.

Katharine wrote on 25 June 1949 to thank him for the hospitality she had received at the London Library, describing her ‘great relief’ at having finally read the *Memoirs*. She asked leave to write again once she had ‘thought things out’, for she had come to the conclusion that the manuscript ought to be ‘lightly edited for the sake of a few other people.’¹¹¹ The

promised missive followed a few days later (misdated 1 June, but presumably 1 July) and in it she outlined her anxieties. She began by returning to her correspondence with Charles Hagberg Wright:

In one letter dated 10th June 1939 he wrote
 “I can ask the present Committee if they would let you see the M.S. we have but I cant [*sic*] believe it would help you. My recollection of one page I read is not a pleasing one and *personally* I should like it destroyed as not conducing to add to the reputation of an author whose works I have read and admired and bought.”

The page to which I think he must allude is among the first pages of the M.S. and, read by any one who is not accustomed to accounts of childhood attitudes to sex, is surprising to say the least of it.

It seems to me to be sheer bad luck—almost as though some Poltergeist had placed it at the top of the M.S.—that it should be there. It is not, in my estimation, necessary to the biography.

It describes the sort of thing which many children go through but which most adults seem to forget.

Anyway I agree with Sir Charles Hagberg Wright in wishing that it might be destroyed. It seems to be incidental and leave no gap in the story.

There is no more of the same sort of description in the rest of the M.S.¹¹²

When Katharine first received Hagberg Wright’s warning back in June 1939 her response had been one of contradiction. In June 1949 she saw things differently. She now chose to interpret the pronoun—the ‘it’ that Hagberg Wright wished to see destroyed—as referring specifically to the ‘one page’ he claimed to have read. But the antecedent is ambiguous and ‘it’ can just as easily (and more likely) refer back to the object of his previous sentence: the surviving manuscript in its entirety. This is certainly how Katharine previously understood his words: ‘I can well imagine that you may feel that the M.S. should be destroyed but I don’t altogether agree with you.’¹¹³ Ten years later she had revised her position, co-opting Hagberg Wright in support of her request for light editions and leaning upon the authority she had previously denied. This is an ironic twist to the story of Katharine’s fight to gain access to the manuscript: she concludes her dealings with the London Library by choosing to side, however pragmatically, with the very Librarian who had joined Edmund Gosse in lighting the bonfire of her father’s papers.

There are several lacunae in the *Memoirs* manuscript where material is missing, but there is no evidence to suggest that any of these gaps are the

result of Katharine's request. Lord Ilchester side-stepped the question of partial destruction: his reply made clear that the terms of Brown's bequest prevented any such action.¹¹⁴ And the material to which she took exception survives: Katharine's euphemistic description of an offending 'page' (more likely several pages) corresponds to Symonds's account of 'the first stirrings of the sexual instinct' (p. 99 in this edition) in Chapter 2. This is the shortest chapter of the *Memoirs* and it recounts several pre-pubescent fantasies and sexual encounters, the latter primarily concerned with genital display and stimulation among peers. It is something of a stretch to describe this material as being 'among the first pages of the M.S.'; furthermore, Katharine's light-hearted joke about poltergeists raising-up superfluous material stands in direct contradiction to Symonds's claim that it would be 'impossible [...] to omit' this account of early sexual development 'from a truthful autobiography' (p. 102 in this edition). These words form part of a postscript added to the chapter sometime during or after 1891. Symonds had been reading a range of sexological literatures while at work upon *A Problem in Modern Ethics*, and this research convinced him of the importance of recording and examining our 'earliest sexual impressions': they were central to a 'proper understanding of *vita sexualis*' (p. 102 in this edition).

Katharine had also grown anxious about dissemination. Having raised the possibility of editing the manuscript, she went on to query the Library's access arrangements:

In a letter from Mr Purnell dated 16th Dec. 1940 he writes of the M.S.
 "The packet is labelled Symonds papers and is sealed, but I understood that the MS was autobiographical."

When I went to the Library and the packet was produced for me the seals were broken.

This is a small point but seems worth recording.¹¹⁵

Katharine did not state her reasons for drawing Lord Ilchester's attention to the broken seals, but the implicit question is clear: could more pairs of eyes have seen the manuscript (and its offending pages) than those belonging to herself and Hagberg Wright? In his reply, Lord Ilchester reassured her that Lionel Bradley, an employee of the London Library, had broken the seals ahead of her first visit in May.¹¹⁶ Between the lines, he offered a guarantee against unknown readers.

Writing in the margins of a private text, Katharine defended Symonds's right to speak as he saw fit: she called for his words to 'stand.' But looking

to posterity, she sought to shape and control the potential narratives that might emerge from his manuscript. Her first action contested Horatio Brown's authority as editor and translator, but her second action was reminiscent of his editorial practice. In *Hearts and Pomegranates* Katharine characterised her father's executor as 'the old hen', an over-cautious and mothering figure who edited the *Memoirs* in line with Victorian taboo, bound (as he was) by Symonds's instructions to 'publish nothing which my mother might prefer to have withheld.'¹¹⁷ She confessed to feeling 'haunted by the belief that J.A.S. was sacrificed to puritanical and Victorian conventions on behalf of his family', but her later reading of the *Memoirs* was similarly (and inevitably) shaped by taboo.¹¹⁸ Though happy to countenance the public discussion of homosexuality (albeit, in *Hearts and Pomegranates*, couched in terms of her father's studies and not his desires), Katharine was unwilling to extend this privilege to childhood sexuality. Her wish to edit the manuscript emerged from an impulse contrary to her desire to preserve its discourse on love, yet both these actions serve as attempts to reassert authority over a text no longer in the family's ownership or possession: she countered the actions of an editor, and tested the practices of a library. In her final letter to Lord Ilchester on the subject, Katharine sought to write the family back into the London Library's records. She sent a transcription of Symonds's note to her mother, written on his death-bed at Rome; this letter included his statement of familial authority over Brown's actions as executor ('Brown will consult and publish nothing without your consent'). 'I should be very grateful,' she added, 'if this could be put with the M.S. or with the correspondence between H.F. Brown and the London Library.'¹¹⁹

Sub-committees and Scholars

Katharine's transcription of her father's final note is among the earliest dated documents in the London Library's acquisition file.¹²⁰ The bulk of these records were compiled in 1954 as a result of the first enquiry received from a scholar: the eminent Renaissance historian, John Hale. In June that year Hale wrote to the Librarian, Simon Nowell-Smith, to ask if any papers belonging to Symonds were among the Library's collection. His interest had been piqued by research conducted for a chapter on Symonds in his recently published *England and the Italian Renaissance* (1954)—the first study of Symonds's life and work to openly acknowledge and discuss 'the homosexual element in his nature.'¹²¹ Having procured a copy

of Horatio Brown's will, Hale learnt of his original scheme to offer the *Memoirs* to the British Museum, and his bequest to the London Library of a green cardboard box containing papers belonging to Symonds.¹²² Nowell-Smith only had access to limited records but he could confirm the Library's possession of the *Memoirs*, acknowledging the fact of Brown's embargo and revealing that Symonds's daughter had been granted special access in 1949.¹²³ But Hale's enquiry prompted the Library to investigate the *Memoirs*, establishing a sub-committee (comprised of Raymond Mortimer, Rose Macaulay and John Trend) to '[consider] the whole question of the Library's moral responsibility towards Symonds and Brown and the propriety of giving scholars access to the manuscript.'¹²⁴ Hale shared his copy of Brown's will and made a request to read the manuscript—but this request had to wait until the sub-committee concluded its work.

Mortimer was tasked with reading the *Memoirs* and writing a report on its contents and the likely impact of publication: he considered the subject matter no longer at odds with social mores and saw no reason to deny scholars access; he noted Symonds's wishes for future publication and hoped this might turn a profit for the Library after the expiration of Brown's embargo.¹²⁵ Copies of his report were sent to Macaulay and Trend, and the former's response survives: she concurred with Mortimer, but went further to recommend immediate publication (with the family's permission).¹²⁶ Nowell-Smith was tasked with reviewing the Library's records and investigating the circumstances of acquisition. His report was startlingly brief. On the evidence of Brown's will and Library committee minutes, he could do little more than confirm the embargo and precedents for access: namely, permission to read the manuscript should be obtained from the committee, and this had previously been granted to Katharine Furse.¹²⁷

The sub-committee submitted their joint report and recommendations sometime in August or early September 1954.¹²⁸ They sought to clarify the Library's position in relation to Brown's bequest and to establish a compromise with regard to his conditions. But throughout their investigations, the sub-committee did not have access to Brown's letter to Charles Hagberg Wright—dated 21 December 1925 and mentioned in his will—in which he outlined precisely their agreed terms. (The Library acquired a copy of this letter in October 1954 after the sub-committee had concluded its work—see below.) In the absence of explicit instructions—which called for 'the greatest possible discretion' when granting access and forbade publication 'without [Brown's] consent in writing' for fifty years—the sub-committee enjoyed considerable freedom to reinterpret the Library's

responsibilities as owner and custodian.¹²⁹ They conceded that full publication was impossible before 1976, but they also asserted the Library's right to grant access and publish in part (following the precedent set by Brown in his biography). Here the sub-committee underscored a legal entitlement to manage private property, but they also set out to defend the Library's moral duties. Times had changed and the sub-committee considered it part of the Library's academic mission to set the needs of present scholarship above the outmoded ideas and prejudices of the past. From 1927 to 1954, in less than thirty years, the Library's position had shifted dramatically—from clandestine bonfires and sealed packages, to ideals of open scholarship. On 6 September Stanley Gillam, Assistant Secretary and Sub-Librarian, wrote to John Hale granting him permission to read the *Memoirs*.¹³⁰ And on 12 October the Library committee reviewed the sub-committee's joint report and accepted its recommendations. Soon after arrangements were put in place for a typescript copy of the *Memoirs* to be made, and both manuscript and typescript were bound into two volumes (see Notes on the Text).¹³¹ These conservation measures anticipated an increase in the number of reader requests, where binding and duplication would expedite and confirm the Library's commitment to increasing access.

One of the first scholars to take advantage of these new arrangements was a former member of the Library committee and its future Vice President: E.M. Forster.¹³² Though an Honorary Fellow at King's College, Cambridge, Forster's interests were not strictly academic: he cherished a long-standing desire to read the unexpurgated *Memoirs*. On 10 January 1912, after an evening spent with the surviving family of Symonds's friend, Henry Graham Dakyns (who died in 1911), he recorded the following in his journal:

J.A. Symonds. Feel nearer to him than any man I have read about—to near to be irritated by his flamboyance which I scarcely share. But education—(Classics, Renaissance, Eng. Lit.)—, health—(tendency to phthisis [*sic*])—literary interest in philosophic questions, love of travel, inclination to be pleasant and above all, minorism. True, he married, but he had better not have. His contrary inclinations only dragged him asunder till the strongest triumphed. [...] What wouldn't I give to read the Autobiography entire but Horatio Brown will never let me.¹³³

Forster's remarks are testament to the persistent open secret of Symonds's sexuality and rumours surrounding the survival of his unpublished autobiography. On this latter point, Forster would become 'nearer' still to the

man he admired. In 1913 he began work upon *Maurice* (published posthumously in 1971), a fictional exploration of homosexual love inspired by the lived example and writings of Edward Carpenter. This novel remained in typescript and manuscript for the rest of Forster's life: it underwent intermittent periods of revision and circulated among friends and sympathetic readers, finally joining Forster's private archive of homoerotic writings (including many short stories collected together and published in *The Life to Come* in 1972). Like Symonds's care for the survival of his *Memoirs*, Forster made arrangements to preserve *Maurice* after his death: a note was found among his papers revealing the location and provenance of six copies of the novel.¹³⁴ There was safety in numbers. Forster's hope and intention was that one or more of these copies would survive the potential bonfire for the sake of posthumous reputation.

But Forster made no attempt to publish *Maurice* during his lifetime. He did not believe that society was willing to accept his work in this vein, and in time he grew decidedly sceptical. In September 1960 he composed a 'Terminal Note' to the novel, doubting whether favourable conditions for publication would ever arrive. He believed the novel's chances were hindered by the happy ending for Maurice and Alec ('Happiness is its keynote'), and by the government's failure to implement the recommendations of the Wolfenden report.¹³⁵ This document had been published in 1957 and called for the decriminalisation of 'homosexual behaviour between consenting adults [read: men] in private.'¹³⁶ Three years later and Forster was dismayed by inaction—for legal reform would take ten years to accomplish with the passing of the Sexual Offences Act 1967.¹³⁷ As such, the 'Terminal Note' ends bitterly:

I [...] had supposed that knowledge would bring understanding. We had not realized that what the public really loathes in homosexuality is not the thing itself but having to think about it. If it could be slipped into our midst unnoticed, or legalized overnight by a decree in small print, there would be few protests. Unfortunately it can only be legalized by Parliament, and Members of Parliament are obliged to think or to appear to think. Consequently the Wolfenden recommendations will be indefinitely rejected, police prosecutions will continue and Clive on the bench will continue to sentence Alec in the dock. Maurice may get off.¹³⁸

Forster's frustration at the status quo, born of the wilful blindness and deafness of the establishment, provides the context for his reading of the *Memoirs*. Forty-nine years after confessing his 'nearness' to Symonds in his

journal, Forster had the opportunity to test this sympathy and identification through an act of reading. In early 1961 he requested and was granted access to the manuscript; as he read, he paraphrased and copied passages into his commonplace book. Forster's notes focus upon the head master's affair at Harrow, Symonds's dreams and sexual fantasies, his marriage and relationships with men. Forster also composed the following reflective digression:

The above, and all that follows, is in J.A.S' unpublished autobiography in the L.L. which may not at present be quoted from, nor I think referred to. *Will anyone who reads this remember that?* Publication possible in 1976. About 150,000 in typescript. A complete life, the many 'literary' bits of which S. has published elsewhere. —He gave up all work to complete it.¹³⁹

Forster's remarks concerning quotation and reference suggest the discovery in October 1954 of Brown's letter to Hagberg Wright had tightened restrictions previously loosened by the Library sub-committee. He responds by turning to posterity, imagining a future reader whose eyes might peruse his commonplace book after his death: would this reader turn from the pages of one private text to those of another? Would this reader *remember* Symonds? If Forster's rhetorical question remains unanswered, an array of potential responses rise up to fill this silence. He doubts and implores in equal measure. The question functions as an imperative to action, but it also invites a negative reply: Forster cannot help but imagine a future where Symonds's manuscript has fallen victim to a collective amnesia that does not wish to 'think' about homosexuality.

Forster need not have worried. In March 1961, around the same time he was reading the *Memoirs* in the London Library, the following notice appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* in a column entitled 'Information, Please':

John Addington Symonds (1840-1893): —Any unpublished letters or manuscripts, especially the present location of his unpublished Autobiography, which he left to his literary executor Horatio Brown...
(Mrs) P. M. Grosskurth.¹⁴⁰

Phyllis Grosskurth was studying for a doctorate at the University of London. Her dissertation explored Symonds's literary criticism, and despite discouraging words from her supervisor, she was determined to locate the *Memoirs*. By this time Stanley Gillam had succeeded

Nowell-Smith as Librarian and he responded to her notice. Gillam informed her of Brown's bequest and embargo: 'He told me that he possessed the precious manuscript of the autobiography in a safe right there in his office.' As a scholar Grosskurth was granted permission to read the *Memoirs*, but she did not make immediate use of her discoveries: 'Of course this was not the sort of material which one would put into a doctoral thesis in those days.'¹⁴¹ But rumours soon began to circulate in publishing circles, and before too long, John Guest of Longmans commissioned Grosskurth to write a biography of Symonds.

Gillam granted Grosskurth permission to paraphrase information contained in the *Memoirs*, but her biography would contain no direct quotation from unpublished material. Nonetheless she dealt frankly and explicitly with Symonds's sexuality, declaring the fact in the final sentence of her Prologue: he was '[a] man hidden behind a mask, a writer who never attained first-rank, he suffered the tormented struggle of a homosexual within Victorian society.'¹⁴² Her most sustained discussion of Symonds's 'mask' was reserved for a chapter entitled 'The Problem':

'THE PROBLEM'—homosexuality—was the overwhelming obsession of Symonds's life. His inclinations affected his friendships, his sympathies coloured his tastes, and all his writing—biography, criticism, poetry, or history—was influenced by this central fact about the man.¹⁴³

Never before had a critic or biographer spoken so publicly and unequivocally about Symonds's desires for men. Grosskurth's chapter title was an allusion to his terminology in *A Problem in Greek Ethics* and *A Problem in Modern Ethics*, but it also positioned his sexuality as a question in need of an answer. Here too she followed Symonds's lead, for both were concerned with origins. The *Memoirs* record Symonds's conviction that his sexual instinct was innate though shaped by external circumstance: words such as 'inborn', 'natural' and 'congenital' abound. Grosskurth, by contrast, would adopt the pose of psychoanalysis. She doubted Symonds's model of 'inborn bias', turning instead to Freudian accounts of 'undifferentiated' infant sexuality as a counter to the *Memoirs*.¹⁴⁴ She sought an originating trauma, analysing Symonds's dreams as recorded in poems and private papers, and examining a series of women who, together or alone, might serve as surrogate mothers (in relation to whom he could have experienced 'fixation on a female').¹⁴⁵ Looking back on this chapter in 1998, Grosskurth considered it 'a period-piece': she confessed to knowing

‘so little about Freud that I was naïve enough to believe that he was the final authority.’¹⁴⁶

The biography caused a minor sensation when it was published in June 1964. It received remarkable coverage for a first book, and Grosskurth recalled a night-time visit to Fleet Street to read the first reviews while ‘the ink [was] still wet.’¹⁴⁷ She attributed the book’s success to two major factors: her outsider status as an unknown Canadian scholar (one who ‘did not seem driven by any polemical purpose’), and the broader context of socio-legal suspense following the Wolfenden report (to paraphrase Forster, her book required readers to ‘think’ about the continued illegality of homosexual acts).¹⁴⁸ But it was not the biography’s subject matter *per se* that caught the attention of some readers. On 22 October 1964 the following letter was printed in the *Times Literary Supplement*:

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

Sir,—Horatio Brown left the letters and diaries to the London Library on condition that they were not published for fifty years after his death. The Library accepted the legacy and the condition. How comes it that an author has been allowed to copy and publish substantial extracts before the appointed date?

Has the Library abrogated its responsibility?

L.H. GREEN.¹⁴⁹

Grosskurth had announced the terms of Brown’s bequest and embargo in her Preface, but Green overlooked (wilfully or otherwise) her clarification that quoted material was limited to passages from the 1895 biography. It was also possible that Green did not consider prior publication to be a necessary permission for re-use.

The following week Stanley Gillam wrote in defence of the Library’s policy and practice. His reply borrowed heavily from the 1954 sub-committee report, reasserting the precedent of Brown’s biography and stressing that access was limited to scholars; he also closed down the possibility left open in 1954: ‘any public use to which [scholars] sought to put unpublished passages should be subject to [the Librarian’s] prior approval, and [...] no permission to print any passages verbatim should be given.’¹⁵⁰ This rule runs counter to the sub-committee’s recommendation that the Library assume authority to permit publication of extracts not contained in Brown’s biography. The reason for this *volte face* is suggested by an annotated copy of the sub-committee’s report held in the Library’s records. Simon Nowell-Smith

added the following proviso: ‘no permission to print any passages verbatim shall be given until the ownership of the copyright of the autobiography shall have been determined.’¹⁵¹ Following enquiries to Brown’s solicitors and executors, Mackenzie and Black, the Library confirmed their ownership of the material and its copyright.¹⁵² But the Library also requested further information concerning the terms of Brown’s bequest. Mackenzie and Black were able to supply a copy of the missing letter (dated 21 December 1925) from Brown to Charles Hagberg Wright mentioned in the former’s will (see above). In the face of this new evidence the case was altered, and Gillam’s letter in the *TLS* confirmed the Library’s revised position. He concluded by offering a rebuttal of Green’s accusatory questions: Grosskurth had neither copied nor published extracts beyond those already made public by Brown, and the charge of abrogating responsibility ‘surely [required] no answer.’¹⁵³

This exchange sparked a fascinating debate in the *TLS* concerning the ethics of acquisition and access. The first to throw their hat into the ring was Ian Fletcher, a Professor of English at the University of Reading with a background in Librarianship. He wrote in support of Gillam, arguing that Grosskurth’s use of the *Memoirs* as a ‘skeleton framework’ (as described in her Preface) was perfectly legitimate: it ‘[respected] the letter of Horatio Brown’s injunction.’ ‘Far from being censured,’ he continued, ‘the London Library is to be congratulated on not placing pedantic obstacles before a responsible scholar.’¹⁵⁴ But in the event, Fletcher’s defence proved a minority position. Leon Edel entered the debate, having recently joined the ranks of biographers following the publication in 1962 of the first two volumes of his life of Henry James. He expounded ‘the serious ethical problem’:

[Brown’s] published portions have been used as an argument for showing the unpublished portions to *bona fide* scholars. But assuredly the logic of Brown’s terms is inescapable. And the *showing* of material, even to discreet scholars, is, in effect, a kind of premature publication. [... A]s a biographer myself, I feel some concern about what has been perhaps a violation of the spirit of a gift even while there has been faithful adherence to its letter. The danger in such a procedure—that of finding ways of ‘getting around’ testamentary or other stipulations—is that friends, relatives and executors of writers will feel privacy wholly unprotected. They may in such circumstances prefer to burn documents rather than lock them away.¹⁵⁵

While Fletcher was concerned with the letter of Brown’s bequest, Edel privileged the spirit: as writers in a field often maligned—preying upon the dead, invading and exposing the private lives of their subjects—biographers

needed to act above suspicion. Libraries and archives must also respect (not reinterpret) conditions of acquisition. He reasoned this was in the mutual interest of all concerned, reducing the likelihood of posthumous bonfires of the very kind that had already depleted Symonds's archive. David Randall, a Librarian at Indiana University, wrote in support of Edel: 'The ethical point for custodians seems clear. Either respect the restrictions on use, or simply do not accept the material in the first place.'¹⁵⁶

General principles will rarely accommodate the complexities and contradictions of an individual case. From the date of acquisition in 1926, the London Library was forced to negotiate the competing claims of executors, daughters and scholars calling for access and limits, openness and discretion. Brown's fifty-year embargo remained a guiding principle, but as Katharine Furse feared, the wishes of an executor (however altruistic) came to supersede those of a writer. Setting aside the question of right and wrong with regard to the Library's granting of access to Furse, Hale, Forster and Grosskurth (among others), there was certainly no contradiction when it came to Symonds's hope that the manuscript would survive and be published. When the expiration of Brown's embargo drew near, the Library invited Grosskurth to prepare an edition of the *Memoirs*.¹⁵⁷ This was not, perhaps, the afterlife he imagined for his manuscript; but nonetheless, Symonds had found his sympathetic reader, a 'fellow creature' who would 'feel some thrill of pity' at the record of his life.

NOTES

1. Symonds to Dakyns (27 March 1889). *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, ed. by Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters, 3 vols (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967–69), III (1969), p. 364. I am grateful to Andrew Dakyns for sharing a copy of the original letter.
2. Matthew Arnold, 'Critical Introduction to Thomas Gray', in *The English Poets*, ed. by Thomas Humphrey Ward, 5 vols (London: Macmillan, 1880–1918), III (1880), p. 303–16 (p. 303). Italics in the original.
3. For a detailed discussion of Symonds's engagement with these varied sources and discourses, see Emily Rutherford, 'Impossible Love

- and Victorian Values: J.A. Symonds and the Intellectual History of Homosexuality’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 75.4 (2014), 605–27.
4. The extent of Grosskurth’s excisions was first revealed by Sarah Heidt. See “‘Let JAS words stand’”: Publishing John Addington Symonds’s Desire’, *Victorian Studies*, 46.1 (2003), 7–31.
 5. Horatio F. Brown, *John Addington Symonds: A Biography Compiled from his Papers and Correspondence*, 2 vols (London: John C. Nimmo, 1895), I, p. ix.
 6. Heidt, p. 19.
 7. Heidt, p. 15.
 8. Heidt, p. 15.
 9. Matt Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. xiv. See also Sean Brady, *Masculinity and Male Homosexuality in Britain, 1861–1913* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 4–24.
 10. H.G. Cocks, *Nameless Offences: Homosexual Desire in the Nineteenth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), p. 11.
 11. Cook, p. xiv.
 12. Matt Houlbrook has argued for the importance of recognising ‘the historical production of diverse models of sexual difference and “normality”’. See *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918–1957* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 7–8 (p. 8). Recent work by Helen Smith, for example, has uncovered a range of sexual cultures and self-understandings that vary according to class, region and work. See *Masculinity, Class and Same-Sex Desire in Industrial England, 1895–1957* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
 13. Symonds, ‘A Problem in Modern Ethics’, in *John Addington Symonds (1840–1893) and Homosexuality: A Critical Edition of Sources*, ed. by Sean Brady (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 125–208 (p. 128).
 14. For a detailed discussion of Symonds’s later writings and queer public utterance, see Amber K. Regis, ‘Late style and speaking out: J.A. Symonds’s *In The Key of Blue*’, *English Studies*, 94.2 (2013), 206–31.
 15. J.A. Symonds to M. Symonds (8 July 1892). *Letters*, ed. by Schueller and Peters, III, p. 711.

16. 'Note on the English Family of Symonds' (Appendix 1). Brown, *John Addington Symonds*, II, pp. 365–86.
17. Quoted in Percy L. Babington, *Bibliography of the Writings of John Addington Symonds* (London: John Castle 1925; repr. New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), p. 91.
18. 'Dead Love. A Lieder Kreis in Minor Keys. With The Tale of Theodore' [A401b]. This pamphlet forms part of *Lyra Viginti Chordarum*, a bound collection of Symonds's poetry pamphlets in two volumes. Bristol University Library holds sixteen pamphlets in total (including 'Fragilia Labilia', which has enjoyed a far wider readership on account of pirate editions).
19. Heidt, pp. 21, 22.
20. Heidt, p. 22.
21. Heidt, p. 23.
22. Heidt, p. 22.
23. Last will and testament of John Addington Symonds. MS copy in the possession of the Probate Department of the Principal Registry of the Family Division, London.
24. Fifteen constituent poems from 'Dead Love' were published as part of the *intermezzo* essay, 'Clifton and a Lad's Love' in Symonds's *In The Key of Blue and Other Prose Essays* (London: Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1893), pp. 155–75.
25. J.A. Symonds to C. Symonds (n.d.). *Letters*, ed. by Schueller and Peters, III, p. 839.
26. Episodes in this story have been told, in part, by Trev Lynn Broughton in *Men of Letters, Writing Lives: Masculinity and Literary Auto/Biography in the Late Victorian Period* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 14–20; Phyllis Grosskurth in *The Woeful Victorian: A Biography of John Addington Symonds* (New York, Chicago and San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), pp. 318–23; and by John Pemble in *Venice Rediscovered* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 54–70.
27. Brown, *John Addington Symonds*, I, p. vii.
28. Brown, *John Addington Symonds*, I, p. xii.
29. C. Symonds to Dakyns (2 November 1893). *Letters*, ed. by Schueller and Peters, III, p. 840 n. 2.
30. C.J. Holmes, *Self and Partners (Mostly Self)* (London: Constable, 1936), pp. 151–2.

31. Timothy d'Arch Smith favours Edmund Gosse as a candidate for the 'straiter critic'. See *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English 'Uranian' Poets from 1889 to 1930* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 15.
32. T.E. Brown to H. Brown (28 December 1894). Quoted in Grosskurth, *The Woeful Victorian*, p. 322.
33. 'John Addington Symonds', *Saturday Review*, 29 December 1924, pp. 709–10 (p. 709). Later reprinted in Arthur Symons, *Studies in Prose and Verse* (1904).
34. 'John Addington Symonds', p. 710.
35. Grosskurth, *The Woeful Victorian*, p. 320.
36. 'Introduction' to *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds*, ed. by Phyllis Grosskurth (London: Hutchinson, 1984), p. 27.
37. Phyllis Grosskurth, 'Bringing Symonds out of the Closet: Some Recollections and Reflections', in *John Addington Symonds: Culture and the Demon Desire*, ed. by John Pemble (Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 170–177 (p. 172). This essay was first delivered as a talk at an academic symposium dedicated to Symonds's life and work: 'John Addington Symonds: The Private and the Public Face of Victorian Culture', University of Bristol (April 1998).
38. D'Arch Smith, p. 14.
39. Pemble, *Venice Rediscovered*, pp. 55–6 (and cf. p. 57).
40. Heidt, pp. 12–14.
41. David Amigoni, 'Translating the Self: Sexuality, Religion, and Sanctuary in John Addington Symonds's *Cellini* and other Acts of Life Writing', *Biography*, 32.1 (2009), 161–72 (p. 162).
42. 'Introduction' to *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, trans. by John Addington Symonds, 2 vols (New York: Scribner & Welford, 1888), I, p. lv.
43. Amigoni, p. 165.
44. Amigoni, p. 169.
45. Brown to Edward Carpenter (n.d.). Quoted in Pemble, *Venice Rediscovered*, p. 57.
46. Horatio F. Brown, *John Addington Symonds: A Biography Compiled from his Papers and Correspondence*, 2nd edn (London: Smith, Elder, 1903), p. viii.
47. 'Preface' to *Letters and Papers of John Addington Symonds*, ed. by Horatio F. Brown (London: John Murray, 1923), p. vii.

48. 'Preface' to *Letters and Papers*, p. v.
49. 'Preface' to *Letters and Papers*, p. v.
50. 'Preface' to *Letters and Papers*, pp. vii, vii–viii.
51. 'Preface' to *Letters and Papers*, p. viii.
52. Brown encountered resistance from Symonds's family, particularly his daughter Madge. As a result, the published *Letters and Papers* were not as explicit as he had hoped. See Pemble, *Venice Rediscovered*, pp. 59–65.
53. Last will and testament of Horatio Brown. TS copy, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/014/005].
54. Last will and testament of Horatio Brown. Ellipsis in the original.
55. The London Library acquired a copy of this letter in October 1954 from Mackenzie and Black, Horatio Brown's solicitors and executors.
56. Brown to Hagberg Wright (21 December 1925). TS copy, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/014/005].
57. Brown to Hagberg Wright (21 December 1925).
58. 'Foreword' to *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds*, ed. by Grosskurth, p. 10.
59. Minutes of the London Library committee (11 April 1927). Quoted in the 'Foreword' to *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds*, ed. by Grosskurth, p. 11.
60. Katharine's research into her father's life, and her attempts to gain access to his *Memoirs*, were first documented by John Pemble. See *Venice Rediscovered*, pp. 68–70.
61. Katharine Furse, 'Memorandum regarding my Father, John Addington Symonds' papers' (21 April 1927). TS, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/9].
62. Hagberg Wright to Furse (10 June and 19 July 1939). MSS, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/21 and 24].
63. Vaughan to Herbert Schueller and Robert Peters (23 September 1967). *Letters*, ed. by Schueller and Peters, II (1968), pp. 381–2 n. 1.
64. Furse to Hagberg Wright (18 July 1939). TS copy, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/23].
65. Furse to Hagberg Wright (21 April 1927). TS copy, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/11].
66. Furse, 'Memorandum regarding my Father, John Addington Symonds' papers' (21 April 1927).

67. A.J.A. Symons, 'The Connoisseur: J.A. Symonds and Others', *Saturday Review* (8 January 1927), p. 58.
68. Hagberg Wright to Furse (22 April 1927). MS, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/12].
69. Annotation dated 16 May 1927, added to a letter received from Hagberg Wright (10 May 1927). MS, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/14].
70. 'Poet's Daughter Seeks Lost Works', *News Chronicle* (13 June 1949), p. 3. 'Missing Symonds Autobiography', *Daily Telegraph* (14 June 1939), n.p. Cuttings held at the University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM1733].
71. 'Missing Symonds Autobiography', n.p. 'Poet's Daughter Seeks Lost Works', p. 3.
72. Furse to Hagberg Wright (20 June 1939). TS copy, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/22].
73. Hagberg Wright to Furse (10 June 1939). MS, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/21].
74. Furse to Hagberg Wright (20 June 1939).
75. Hagberg Wright to Furse (19 July 1939).
76. Furse to the Secretary of the London Library (11 August 1939). TS copy, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/25].
77. Furse to Hagberg Wright (20 June 1939). *Mental Hygiene* was the journal published by the National Council for Mental Hygiene.
78. Fry, for example, had several extra-marital relationships while his wife, Helen Coombe, was resident in a mental institution. One of these lovers was Woolf's sister, Vanessa Bell: 'What am I to say about you? [...] Do give me some views; how to deal with love so that we're not all blushing.' Woolf to Bell (8 October 1938). *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann, 6 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975–80), VI (1980), p. 285.
79. Woolf to Furse (21 July 1939). Rowena Fowler, ed., 'Virginia Woolf and Katharine Furse: An Unpublished Correspondence', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 9.2 (1990), 205–27 (p. 207).
80. Furse to Woolf (31 July 1939). Fowler, p. 208.
81. Furse to Woolf (2 December 1939). Fowler, p. 220.
82. S.E. Cottam to Furse (23 October 1939). Fowler, p. 217.
83. Furse to Woolf (26 October 1939). Fowler, p. 216.

84. Woolf to Furse (9 November 1939). Fowler, p. 218.
85. Furse to Woolf (2 December 1939). Fowler, p. 219.
86. Furse to Woolf (2 December 1939). Fowler, p. 220.
87. Furse to Woolf (27 August 1940). Fowler, pp. 222–3.
88. Katharine Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates: The Story of Forty-five Years, 1875 to 1920* (London: Peter Davies, 1940), p. 96.
89. Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates*, pp. 89, 97.
90. Babington, p. ix.
91. Symonds to Burton (15 August 1890). Babington, p. 50.
92. Babington, p. 19.
93. Babington, pp. 124, 125.
94. Babington, p. 126.
95. Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates*, p. 101.
96. Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates*, p. 101.
97. Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates*, p. 101.
98. Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates*, p. 101.
99. Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates*, p. 101 n.
100. Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates*, p. 99.
101. Symonds to Ellis (July 1891). Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates*, p. 105. ‘Labby’ refers to Henry Labouchère, the politician responsible for introducing Section 11 into the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 (known as the Labouchère Amendment).
102. Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates*, p. 100.
103. Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates*, p. 100.
104. Hagberg Wright to Furse (10 October 1939). MS, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/28].
105. Hagberg Wright to Furse (10 October 1939).
106. Furse to Purnell (12 December 1940). TS copy, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/34].
107. Furse to Roch (19 May 1949). TS copy, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/71].
108. Furse to Purnell (15 March 1940). TS copy, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/64].
109. Annotation dated 18 May 1949, added to a letter sent to Purnell (27 April 1949). MS, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/69].
110. Heidt, p. 28. As Heidt notes, the final two numbers in the year ‘1949’ are smudged. The evidence of Katharine’s letters allows for a degree of certainty in the dating of this annotation.

111. Furse to Lord Ilchester (25 June 1949). TS copy, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/89].
112. Furse to Lord Ilchester (1 July 1949; misdated 1 June 1949). TS copy, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/75]. This letter begins *in media res*—‘May I add a point to the letter which I wrote to you a few days ago about the M.S. of my father’s Autobiography.’—and supplies the ‘thoughts’ promised in Katharine’s letter of 25 June. On 1 June she had not yet completed her reading of the *Memoirs*: in a letter to Purnell dated 28 May, she reveals that she has only reached the hundredth page (TS copy, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/73]). Therefore, the original dating must be incorrect.
113. Furse to Hagberg Wright (20 June 1939).
114. Lord Ilchester to Furse (6 July 1939).
115. Furse to Lord Ilchester (1 July 1949; misdated 1 June 1949).
116. Lord Ilchester to Furse (6 July 1939). MS, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/88].
117. Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates*, pp. 95, 98.
118. Furse, *Hearts and Pomegranates*, p. 102.
119. Furse to Lord Ilchester (22 September 1949). TS copy, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM911/96].
120. The Library still possesses Brown’s label to the original cardboard box containing the *Memoirs* manuscript. This is the earliest document: MS, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/013].
121. John Hale, *England and the Italian Renaissance: The Growth of Interest in its History and Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), p. 174.
122. Hale to Nowell-Smith (1 June 1954). TS, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/014/038].
123. Nowell-Smith to Hale (3 June 1954). TS copy, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/014/038].
124. Nowell-Smith to Hale (21 July 1954). TS copy, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/014/038].
125. Raymond Mortimer, ‘Report on the Autobiography of John Addington Symonds’ (22 July 1954). TS, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/014/040].
126. Macaulay to Nowell-Smith (29 July 1954). TS, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/014/040].

127. Nowell-Smith, 'Autobiography of J.A. Symonds'. TS, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/014/003].
128. Macaulay, Mortimer and Trend, 'Report of the Sub-Committee appointed to consider problems connected with the manuscript of the autobiography of John Addington Symonds'. TS, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/014/002].
129. Brown to Hagberg Wright (21 December 1925).
130. Gillam to Hale (6 September 1954). TS copy, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/014/038].
131. Preparation of the typescript was underway in January 1955 when Symonds's grand-daughter, Katharine West, requested permission to read the *Memoirs*. The bound TS volumes are stamp-dated 31 March 1955, while the bound MS volumes are stamp-dated 28 June 1955. Nowell-Smith to West (28 January 1955). TS copy, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/014/034].
132. Forster was present at the meeting of the London Library committee in October 1939 when Katharine Furse was finally granted permission to read her father's *Memoirs*. See E.M. Forster, *Commonplace Book*, ed. by Philip Gardner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), pp. 352–3n.
133. *The Journals and Diaries of E.M. Forster*, ed. by Philip Gardner, 3 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), II, p. 35.
134. Forster, 'Note on the whereabouts of six copies' (c. 1960). MS, King's College Archive Centre, Cambridge [EMF/1/5/18].
135. Forster, 'Terminal Note' to *Maurice*, ed. by David Leavitt (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 219–24 (p. 220).
136. *Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957), p. 115.
137. The 1967 Act decriminalised homosexual acts in private between consenting men over the age of twenty-one. This statute only applied to England and Wales, and it made exceptions for men serving in the merchant navy and armed forces, and for acts involving more than two people. *Sexual Offences Act 1967*, <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1967/60/contents>> [accessed 6 January 2016].
138. Forster, 'Terminal Note', p. 224. Symonds expressed similar sentiments in a letter to Edmund Gosse in February 1891; he believed 'unprejudiced people' would accept decriminalisation if the law could be changed '*without discussion*', for '[w]hat everybody

- dreads is a public raking up of the question.’ *Letters*, ed. by Schueller and Peters, III, p. 552. Italics in the original.
139. Forster, *Commonplace Book*, p. 225.
 140. ‘Information, Please’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 March 1961, p. 190.
 141. Grosskurth, ‘Bringing Symonds out of the Closet’, p. 172.
 142. Grosskurth, *The Woeful Victorian*, p. 54.
 143. Grosskurth, *The Woeful Victorian*, p. 262.
 144. Grosskurth, *The Woeful Victorian*, p. 264.
 145. Grosskurth, *The Woeful Victorian*, p. 262.
 146. Grosskurth, ‘Bringing Symonds out of the Closet’, p. 174.
 147. Phyllis Grosskurth, *Elusive Subject: A Biographer’s Life* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter and Ross, 1999), p. 84.
 148. Grosskurth, *Elusive Subject*, p. 84.
 149. ‘Letters to the Editor’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 22 October 1964, p. 959.
 150. ‘Letters to the Editor’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 29 October 1964, p. 979.
 151. Macaulay, Mortimer and Trend, ‘Report of the Sub-Committee’.
 152. Mackenzie and Black to Nowell-Smith (20 October 1954). TS, London Library acquisition file [LO/CORR/014/005].
 153. ‘Letters to the Editor’, 29 October 1964, p. 979.
 154. ‘Letters to the Editor’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 November 1964, p.999.
 155. ‘Letters to the Editor’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 3 December 1964, p.1107.
 156. ‘Letters to the Editor’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 31 December 1964, p.1181.
 157. For a detailed discussion of Grosskurth’s edition and editorial method, see Heidt, pp. 7–31.

The Memoirs of John Addington
Symonds

Preface

It would be difficult to say exactly why I have begun to write the Memoirs of my very uneventful life.¹ The most obvious reason for my doing so, perhaps, is that I have been to a large extent occupied during the last three years with the autobiographies of Benvenuto Cellini and Carlo Gozzi, both of these personal histories.² I have translated them into English and sent them to press, acquiring in the process certain opinions with regard to the method of self-portraiture, and considerably adding to the interest which I always felt for this branch of literature. Other and more important reasons—more important in their bearing on my psychological condition and the anxious problem of the coming years—will reveal themselves to those who read the ensuing chapters.

Carlo Gozzi called his Memoirs ‘useless’, and published them (as he professes) from motives of ‘humility.’ Mine are sure to be more useless than his; for *I* shall not publish them; [and it is only too probable that they will never be published]³—nobody’s humility or pride or pecuniary interests being likely to gain any benefit from the printing of what I have veraciously written concerning myself.

That I have a definite object in the sacrifice of so much time and trouble⁴ upon a task so useless and so thankless, will not be doubted by men who understand the nature of human indolence, and who are also able to estimate the demands made upon the industry of a fairly successful writer

in his forty-ninth year. {Without vanity, I may affirm that the author of *Renaissance in Italy* and *Studies in Greek Poets*⁵ has had to refuse lucrative offers and to postpone labours of remunerative literature for many months, in order to produce this piece of sterile self-delineation.}

My object is known to myself. But it is not one which I care to disclose in set phrases. Someone, peradventure, will discover it; and if he is a friend, will shed perhaps a tear at the thought of what these lines have cost me—if he is a scientific student of humanity, will appreciate my effort to be sincere in the dictation of a document—if he be but a fellow creature⁶ will feel some thrill of pity, and will respect the record of a soul which has still to settle its accounts with God.

A life without action seems to fall naturally into three main sections. The first of these comprises childhood, boyhood, and adolescence. The second extends over early manhood, when habits are formed and character is fixed. The third exhibits the mature man in his development and in possession of his faculties.

I propose therefore to divide my Memoirs into three unequal parts. The first part will be concerned with my life from birth in 1840 to November 1864 when I married and took leave of Oxford. The second part will deal with the years 1864-77. The third will be devoted to my intellectual, emotional and religious experience—partly retrospective and partly confined specially to the period which I have spent in residence at Davos Platz. What cross-divisions and subdivisions I shall introduce into these main sections, I am unable to foresee. It is the peculiarity of an autobiography, which consists of self-delineation, and is not determined by the narration of salient events, that the third of these parts should be resumptive of the earlier and to a large extent a commentary on the past.

Palazzo Gritti. Santa Maria Zobenigo. Venice
May 1889

When I read the book, the biography famous,
And is this then (said I) what the author calls a man's life?
And so will some one when I am dead and gone write my life?
(As if any man really knew aught of my life,
Why even I myself I often think know little or nothing of my real
life,
Only a few hints, a few diffused faint clews and indirections
I seek for my own use to trace out here.)

Walt Whitman, 'Inscriptions'⁷

NOTES

1. Marginal note: 'Written in 1889 partly at Venice mostly at Davos Platz' (MS i).
2. *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini* (1888) and *The Memoirs of Carlo Gozzi* (1890).
3. Material underlined and accompanied by a marginal note: 'NB HFB' (MS i).
4. Deletes 'labour', substitutes 'trouble' (MS ii).
5. *Renaissance in Italy* (1875-86) and *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873 and 1876).
6. Deletes 'man', substitutes 'fellow creature' (MS ii).
7. From 'When I Read The Book', part of the 'Inscriptions' cluster in *Leaves of Grass* (1881-82 edition) by Walt Whitman. This poem first appeared in the 1867 edition, but Symonds quotes the later version.

Chapter 1: Childhood—No. 7 Berkeley Square, Bristol—From the Year 1840 to the Year 1851

I was born upon the 5th October, 1840, at 7 Berkeley Square, Bristol. Here I lived until June 1851, when our home was changed for Clifton Hill House. This section of my autobiographical notes will be confined to recollections of the first ten years of my life.

I cannot say that I have a distinct memory of my mother.¹ She died of scarlet fever when I was four years old, and she had been always too weak in health to occupy herself energetically in the household. Those who knew her intimately, were unanimous in saying that she combined rare grace and beauty of person with singular sweetness of character, and distinguished mental endowments.

The one thing which I can clearly remember about her is that we were driving alone together in my father's² carriage {(a chariot with glass windows at the front and sides, drawn by two horses)} down a steep hill by Cornwallis Terrace to the Lower Crescent, when the horses plunged and broke into a gallop. Her fright must have made a deep impression on me. I can still see a pale face, a pink silk bonnet and beautiful yellow hair. These have for background in my memory the glass windows of a *coupé* and the red stone walls overhung with trees which embanked the garden of Cornwallis Terrace. I do not know now whether the road has been altered. It is long since I walked there. But the instantaneous flash of that moment on my brain persists as I describe it.

I can also remember the morning of my mother's funeral. We children were playing in our nursery with tin soldiers and clumsy wooden cannon painted black and yellow. These were on the floor beside us. We were dressed in black. The nurses took us away to my grandmother's house in the Lower Crescent.

This is all I recollect about my mother. I have been told that my name was the last upon her lips when she was dying. But my father never spoke to me much about her, and only gave me a piece of her hair.

He sometimes took me with him to her grave. This was in the Arnos Vale Cemetery, high up upon a grassy hill-side, where harebells and thyme blossomed in the short turf of a down. A plane tree spread its branches over the tomb; and the flat stone which marked her resting place was enclosed by iron railings. My father took jealous care that these railings should be over-rioted with ivy, roses, and clematis, growing in unpruned luxuriance. He wished to withdraw the sacred spot from vulgar eyes. I could not see inside it. It was our custom to pluck leaves from the plane tree and the creepers, and to return in silence to the carriage which stood waiting by the gate. These leaves, gathered from my mother's grave, were almost all I knew about her, all I had of her. I used to put them into a little book of texts called *Daily Food*³ which had belonged to her, and which I read every night, and still read at all hours of the day in the year 1889. [It was Auntie⁴ who gave me this little amulet in the year 1854.]⁵

I cannot pretend that I greatly desired to have a clearer notion of my mother, or that I exactly felt the loss of her. It was all dreamy and misty to my mind. I did not even imagine what she might have been to me. Sometimes I thought that I was heartless and sinful because I could not want her more. But this was foolish, because I had never really felt the touch of her. My father showed no outward sign of grief, and said nothing. He was only more than usually reserved on these occasions, and inspired me with a vague awe. Death was a mystery, into which the mother I had never really known was now forever drawn away from me.

I doubt whether the following is worth reading. But, since it is the first event of which I seem to have a distinct recollection, I must do so. My sister Charlotte, younger than myself by two years short of two months, was christened at St George's Church, Bristol. So far as I can now recall it, the building is of pseudo-Graeco-Roman architecture, rectangular in the body, faced with a portico, and surmounted with a nondescript Pecksniffian⁶ spire in the bastard classic style. Of its internal

arrangement I remember nothing definite. And yet I seem to see this picture vividly—an area of building, dim, grey, almost empty; a few people grouped about in my immediate neighbourhood; tall enclosed pews of a light yellow colour round the groups; something going on at no great distance to our left, which makes the faces turn in that direction, looking backwards; myself dressed in white, with a white hat and something blue in the trimmings of it, half standing, half supported, so as to look over the rim of the pew. This is what I remember, or think I remember, of my sister's christening.

It is surely impossible to be certain whether these very early memories, definite as they may be, and not improbable, are actual impressions of scenes left upon our senses, or whether they are not rather the product of some half-conscious act of the imagination working reflectively upon what has been related to the child.

About another of these recollections I have not the same kind of doubt. I was in the nave of Bristol Cathedral during service time, lifted in my nurse's arms and looking through the perforated doors of the organ screen, which then divided nave from choir. The organ was playing and the choristers were singing. Some chord awoke in me then, which has gone on thrilling through my lifetime and has been connected with the deepest of my emotional experiences. Cathedrals, college chapels, 'Quires and places where they sing',⁷ resuscitate that mood of infancy. I know, when I am entering a stately and time-honoured English house of prayer, that I shall put this mood upon me like a garment. The voices of choiring men and boys, the sobbing antiphones and lark-like soaring of clear treble notes into the gloom of Gothic arches, the thunder of the labouring diapasons, stir in me that old deep-centred innate sentiment.

So it is with another of my earliest experiences. When I was still a little child, my father began to take me with him on his long drives into the country. After jolting through the city streets, we broke away at his quick travelling pace into unknown regions of field and wood and hedgerow, climbing the Somersetshire hills, threading their deep lanes and bosky coombs, passing under avenues of ancient parks, halting at low-roofed farmhouses. Then I used to leave the carriage and wander for a while alone in fairyland, knee-deep in meadowsweet and willowherb, bruising the water mint by shallow brooks, gazing at waterlilies out of reach on sleepy ponds, wondering why all about me was so strangely still and who the people were who dwelt there. The hush of sickness and expected death sobered the faces of the men and women who received my father; and he

was often very thoughtful when he left their homesteads, and we journeyed back in silence. It used to be late in the evening generally when we returned from these excursions. Twilight added to the mystery of the unknown, the shadow of the unintelligible sorrow I had felt. The shimmer of moonlight blending with late sunset upon boughs of wild roses or spires of fox-glove or hyacinths in ferny hedges—a sallow western sky seen from the healthy heights of Mendip or of Dundry—the heavy scent of clematis or privet when the air is hot and moist in June—the grey front of lonely farm buildings flanked by yew trees—the perfume suddenly distilled from limes and laurels through darkness at some turning of a road—such things have always brought the feeling of those solemn evenings back. I used often to fall asleep in the carriage, and woke up startled by a carter's shout as we swept onward, or by the glare of the city lamps when we broke at last away from the country roads and rattled over the pavement of the city streets.

I had no love for my birthplace, 7 Berkeley Square. I am distinctly aware of the depressing effect produced upon me by the more sordid portions of this town house—especially by a dingy dining-room and a little closet leading through glass doors into a dusty back-garden. The garden had one miracle, however, to ennoble it. That was a cherry tree which clothed itself in silver beauty once a year, *maugré*⁸ the squalor which surrounded it. {I ought also not to forget that our back windows looked out on Brandon Hill, from which a glorious prospect over city, river, meadow, distant hills and wooded slopes, could then be gained.}

The front-door of our house was fairly well proportioned and surmounted with a pediment, boldly hewn of Bath-stone, grey and mossy. I felt a particular affection for this pediment. It had style. The limes and almond trees and bright berries of the mountain ashes in the square garden were also a great consolation. But certain annuals—escholchia, Virginia, stock and minor convolvulus—have always remained unpleasantly associated with the forlorn, ill-cared-for flower-beds. I found some difficulty in conquering my dislike for the nasturtium on account of the innumerable earwigs which its gorgeous trumpet-blooms concealed. On the other hand, certain dusky-green and brownish-pink hawk-moths, fluttering about the limes on summer evenings, seemed to me like angels from a distant land.

Trifling as these matters are, they indicate the spontaneous development⁹ of powerful instincts. My long exile in the High Alps has been rendered more than tolerable by the fact that nothing which man makes, can wholly debase the mountains of Graubünden. Simplicity and purity and

wayward grace in natural things, strength and solidity and decent form in things of art, were what my temperament unconsciously demanded.

The sense of meanness which annoyed me in our house, afflicted me far more keenly in the Chapel of the Blind Asylum, where we attended service twice on Sundays. The bastard Gothic lancets, dead grey, rough-cast walls and ugly painted wood-work of that paltry building gave me absolute pain. It suffocated my soul and made me loathe evangelical Protestantism. Most of all, at night, when gas-lamps flared in open jets upon the sordid scene, I felt defrauded of some dimly apprehended birthright.

It is significant, in this respect, that two tales made a deep impression at this period on my mind. One was Andersen's story of the Ugly Duckling. I sympathized passionately with the poor bird swimming round and round the duck-pond. I cried convulsively¹⁰ when he flew away to join his beautiful wide-winged white brethren of the windy journeys and the lonely meres. {Thousands of children have undoubtedly done the same, for it is a note of childhood, in souls destined for expansion, to feel solitary and debarred from privileges due to them.} The other was a kind of allegory, called *The Story Without An End*, translated, I think, by Lucie Duff Gordon from the German.¹¹ The mystical, dreamy communion with nature in wild woods and leafy places took my fancy, and begat a mood of *Sehnsucht*¹² which became habitual.

My sisters and I were riding one day upon a rocking horse, which stood on the landing of the attic floor. I was holding onto the tail, I remember, a little anxious lest the tuft of grey horsehair should suddenly give way and precipitate me backwards, as it often did. We were screaming out Scott's lines upon the death of Marmion in chorus:

With dying hand, above his head,
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted 'Victory!—'
'Charge, Chester, charge! On Stanley, on!'
Were the last words of Marmion.¹³

Suddenly I ceased to roar. A resolve had formed itself unbidden in my mind: 'When I grow up, I too will be an author.'

I was a very nervous child and subject to many physical ailments, which made me no doubt disagreeable to the people round me. It seems that I suffered from a gastric fever soon after my birth, and this left me weak—liable to recurrent attacks of diarrhoea and non-retention of

urine. Being sensitive to the point of suspiciousness, I imagined that I inspired repugnance in others; and my own condition not unfrequently made me noisome to myself. My constitutional dislike of squalor had to suffer severe mortification. I became unreasonably shy and timid. {In connection with these childish illnesses, and what follows about night terrors, it is proper here to say that I had an elder brother, John Abdy Stephenson, who only lived seven months, and died of cerebral inflammation. He had been preceded by twin sons, premature and stillborn. My elder sister Mary Isabella¹⁴ was born in 1837, the twins in 1838, John Abdy Stephenson in 1839, myself in 1840. There is every reason to suppose that my mother's constitution at this time was inadequate to the strain of childbirth, and that she transmitted a neurotic temperament to certain of her children.}

At night I used to hear phantasmal noises, which blended terrifically with the caterwauling of cats upon the roof. I often lay awake for hours with my fingers in my ears.

I fancied there was a corpse in a coffin underneath my bed, and I used to wake up thinking it had risen and was going to throw a sheet over me.

Lights seemed to move about the room if I opened my eyes in the dark. I feared them; but I was fated to stare and follow them about, until I either sank back hypnotized, or rushed from the bed and sat in my nightshirt on the staircase. Yet I did not dread the dark so much as the light of a rush-candle burning in a perforated cylinder of japanned metal, which cast hideous patterns on the roof and walls of the nursery.

When I slept, I was frequently visited with the following nightmare. I dreamed that we were all seated in our well-lit drawing-room, when the door opened of itself just enough to admit a little finger. The finger, disconnected from any hand, crept slowly into the room, and moved about through the air, crooking its joints and beckoning. No one saw it but myself. That was the horror. What would happen, if it should touch me or any other person present, I never discovered; for I always woke before the catastrophe occurred.

My father, thinking, I suppose, that I needed to be looked after, took me to sleep with him in his own bed. He added to my terror by talking in his sleep. I remember one especially grim night, when I woke up and saw a man seated by the bed and conversing with my father earnestly in a low voice about some case of fever. I did not miss a word, though all I can now recall of the conversation related to the swollen blackness of the patient's tongue.

In some way or another—perhaps by listening to the dismal sermons of the Blind Asylum—I developed a morbid sense of sin, and screamed at night about imaginary acts of disobedience. My aunt or my father, hearing me sob and cry, left their chairs in the drawing-room and tried to reassure me. I can see him on one occasion entering the bedroom with a yellow pamphlet in his hand—a number of *Vanity Fair*, which began to come out in January 1847.¹⁵

I was persuaded that the devil lived near the door-mat in a dark corner of the passage by my father's bedroom. I thought that he appeared to me there under the shape of a black shadow, skurrying about upon the ground, with the faintest indication of a slightly whirling tail.

When the cholera was raging in the year 1848, I heard so much about it that I fell into a chronic state of hysterical fear. Someone had told me of the blessings which attend ejaculatory prayers. So I kept perpetually mumbling: 'Oh, God, save me from the cholera!' This superstitious habit clung to me for years. I believe that it obstructed the growth of sound ideas upon religion; but I cannot say that I ever was sincerely pious, or ever realized the language about God I heard and parroted.

Apropos of the cholera in Bristol, this scene comes before me very clearly now. Whether it is the memory of fact or vision, I cannot say. We were returning from Clevedon late one evening in an open carriage. I noticed men stirring up great bonfires of tar-barrels at the corner of a street near the quays. When I asked my aunt what they were doing, she replied that they were burning the infection in the air. After this, I thought of the cholera as a tangible substance capable of passing into our bodies from the air.

Burglars entered my father's house in Berkeley Square one evening, while a dinner-party was going forward. They carried off considerable booty from my aunt's and sisters' wardrobe and trinket boxes. It appeared that they had worked their way through the attic windows from an adjacent house which was empty at the time. We could see the marks of their dirty clumsy hands upon the staircase wall next morning. I then made the mental reflection that people who were afraid of robbers could never have seen visions or dreamed nightmares. These men did not affect my imagination disagreeably. So far as I thought about them at all, I sympathized with their audacity and felt my curiosity aroused. Neither then nor afterwards did I fear anything so much as my own self. What that contained was a terror to me. Things of flesh and blood, brutal and murderous as they might be, could always be taken by the hand and fraternized

with. {They were men; and from men I did not shrink. I always felt a man might be my comrade.} Dreams and visions exercised a far more potent spell. Nigh to them lay madness and utter impotence of self-control.

These childish terrors, of which I have written thus much, were stimulated by the talk of our head nurse Sarah Jones, a superstitious country-woman. She was not exactly kind in her ways with us,¹⁶ and used to get drunk at times. Then she would behave strangely and threaten us children. I lived in fear of her. Sarah's theory of discipline may be illustrated by the following anecdote. We were passing some weeks of the summer at an old inn on Kings Weston Down—a very delightful place for children with a swing suspended from the bough of a huge elm tree, breezy downs where mushrooms grew and blackberries were plentiful, a farmyard, an old park hard by, and shady copses of arbutus and juniper to wander in. Indoors the furniture was deficient; I found it difficult to fall asleep in a stiff armchair, covered with black horsehair, and prolonged I do not know how into a makeshift for a bedstead. Sarah sat beside me working in the evening light, prodding the pillow and mattress at intervals with her needle, under the impression that she could frighten me into slumber.

A very superior being to Sarah Jones was Mrs Leaker, head nurse in the family of my cousins the Nashes. She had much to do with fostering and ennobling my sense of the supernatural. Mrs Leaker had been born and bred in a Devonshire village on the sea-coast. She claimed gypsy blood, and belonged to a family of smugglers. So at least she told us. Her physiognomy and complexion, and the legends with which her head was stored, accorded with this account of her ancestry. She was a great reader of good literature, and had the plays of Shakespeare and the history of our old English wars by heart. Sitting round the nursery fire, we used to make her tell us stories. It was easy then to pass from Shakespeare and the landing of Monmouth in the West to eerier traditions of the countryside—haunted churches, whose windows burned at night before a tempest—East-Indiamen¹⁷ from Bristol firing distress guns in the offing—the parson leaving his pulpit and the seamen stealing off to join the wreckers—the avenue to the old hall, up which a phantom lord rode in his chariot drawn by six black horses, holding his head upon his knees—the yeoman belated on Dartmoor, following a white rabbit, which disappeared when he arrived at home and found his only daughter dead in bed there—the wild carousings of smugglers in their caves and murderous conflicts with coast guardsmen—the wicked gentlemen who sat up days and nights at play, deep to their knees in scattered cards, losing fortunes, and sallying forth

to exchange shots upon a Sunday morning. Ghosts naturally took a large place in these legends. But Mrs Leaker had a special partiality for presentiments and warnings. She knew the dream of Lord Camerford before his duel, and the clasp of a fiery hand upon Lady Tyrone's wrist, and the bird which fluttered against the window of Lord Lyttelton at Hagley.¹⁸ Tales like these she related in the twilight with intense conviction of their truth and with a highly artistic sense for the value of vagueness.

To sum up this chapter of the spiritual terrors of childhood, I may mention some literature which took hold of my imagination. We had a book of old ballads in two volumes, illustrated by Maclise and other draughtsmen. The pictures to 'Glenfinlas', the 'Eve of St John' and 'Kempion', made me feel uncomfortable.¹⁹ But I think that Marley's ghost in one of Dickens's Christmas tales—was it done by Cruikshank?—bit deeper.²⁰ The most impressive books of all were not illustrated. These were a series of articles on spectral illusions in *Chambers's Miscellany*, and a translation of a German collection of murder stories—by some name like Feuerbach.²¹ It is certain that I ought not to have had access to these scientific or semi-scientific sources. They worked potently and injuriously on my brain. But books abounded in our house, and I was naturally drawn to literature. I used even to examine the atlases of pathological anatomy in my father's cupboards, and to regard the skeletons of man and beast with awful joy.

Our family consisted of my father, my aunt Miss Mary Ann Sykes and my three sisters, Edith, Mary Isabella and Charlotte.²² I cannot recollect any bond of friendship between me and my sisters, though we lived together in amity. One touch of sympathy drew me closer to Maribella than the others. When I began to learn arithmetic, I could not understand the simplest sums. She noticed me crying over a sum in long division, and with great gentleness and kindness helped me through the task.

My hair was light and fell in curls over my shoulders. This I have been told; but it survives in my memory owing to the following incident. I was walking with Edith and Maribella in Berkeley Square, pacing up and down the pavement before our house. I took it into my head to promenade with my eyes shut and my hands clasped behind my back. The result was that I ran up against a lamp-post, and fell half-stunned to earth with the concussion. My sisters hastened to the spot, and while they were lifting me, the long fair curls upon their arms attracted my dazzled eyesight.

We used to go to children's parties together. On these occasions, I was reputed to have brought some confusion on my elder sisters. Once, when I thought I was being neglected at table, I pointed to a cake and said: 'I

never ask, but I point.’ At another party, impatient of waiting for supper, I asked the mistress of the house: ‘Lady, when are you going to help?’

My aunt was sometimes very kind, sometimes very irritable, but always amusing. She lost my confidence and a good portion of my affection by an act of thoughtless want of sympathy. I collected curiosities; and among them was a stuffed kingfisher on which I doted—probably because it reminded me of *The Boy and the Birds*.²³ At any rate I used to take it to bed with me. It so happened that my aunt went to stay at the house of her uncle Admiral Sykes²⁴ in Wilton Crescent, and there met a French lad who was also fond of curiosities. When she came home, she induced me, sorely against my will, to give up the kingfisher, and sent it to her new acquaintance. I have rarely suffered such distress of mind as the loss of this stuffed bird and the sense of my aunt’s injustice caused [me].²⁵

My grandmother Sykes played a considerable part in our young lives. She was a handsome old lady with strongly marked features and a great air of blood and breeding. This contrasted strangely with her material and social surroundings. She had become a Plymouth Sister,²⁶ and held the most innocent amenities of life for sinful. Her house in Cornwallis Crescent, or the Lower Crescent, had nothing in it to rejoice the eye, except flowers to which she was devoted. Yet it never impressed me with a sense of squalor. The perfume of potpourri in a blue Chinese bowl and of Tonquin beans exhaling from drawers and work baskets gave distinction to the rooms, and the old lady’s stately person rendered it impossible to regard any of her possessions as beneath the dignity of a gentlewoman. Nevertheless all objects, of taste and luxury, all that delights the sense, had been carefully weeded out of the grim bare dwelling. And what company my grandmother kept! It was a motley crew of preachers and missionaries, tradespeople and cripples—the women dressed in rusty bombazine and drab gingham—the men attired in greasy black suits with dingy white neckties—all gifted with a sanctimonious snuffle, all blessed by nature with shiny foreheads and clammy hands, all avid for buttered toast and muffins, all fawning on the well-connected gentlewoman, whose wealth, though moderate, possessed considerable attractions and was freely drawn upon.

I often went to stay with my grandmother when circumstances—generally some infectious ailment in our nursery—made it desirable that I should be away from home. So I had plenty of opportunities for studying these strange people and appreciating the marvellous figure which that formidable old lady, aristocratic to the backbone and terribly ill-tempered, cut among them.

Heavy teas like those described by Dickens were a frequent occurrence, after which the Chadband of the evening discoursed at a considerable length.²⁷ Then followed prayers, in the course of which a particularly repulsive pharmaceutical chemist from Broad Mead uplifted his nasal voice in petitions to the Almighty which too often alas! degenerated into glorifications of the Plymouth sect at Bristol and oburgations against the perverse members of other religious bodies. My grandmother came in for her due share of fulsome flattery under the attributes of Deborah and Dorcas.²⁸ My father was compared to Naaman,²⁹ who refused to bathe in Jordan—Jordan being Bethesda, or the meeting house of the Plymouth Brethren.

Sometimes I was taken to Bethesda, a doleful place, which brought no healing to my soul, but seemed to me a pool of stagnant pietism and turbid middle-class Philistinism. This chapel did not, however, afflict me so grievously as the Blind Asylum. Partly perhaps because I knew it less, and it always had a kind of novelty. Partly because nothing which my grandmother touched was wholly commonplace or sordid. I think too that I was even then capable of appreciating the ardent faith and powerful intellect of George Müller³⁰ who preached there, and who founded the celebrated Orphanage at Horfield near Bristol.

My grandmother naturally made a strong point of family prayers. She delighted in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, the minatory chapters of the Prophets, and the Apocalypse. In a deep sonorous voice, starting with a groan and rising to a quaver, she used to chant forth those lugubrious verses which began or ended with 'Thus saith the Lord!' I remember hearing nothing of the Gospel or the love of Christ for the whole human race either in the readings from scripture or in the extempore prayers which followed. She concentrated her attention on the message to the chosen people, with a tacit assumption that all who lived outside the Plymouth fold were children of wrath.

She had one redeeming quality of great price. That was her love of flowers. The public garden of the Lower Crescent flourished under her assiduous care; and the small plot therein which was her own particular property abounded with old-fashioned plants—grape hyacinths and double primroses, auraculas and polyanthuses and oxlips, *pyrus japonica* and ribes and gum cistus with its papery stained petals, and heavy-scented jessamine and burly cabbage roses.

[Bred in the deer-park and pleasancess which surround Albvyns Hall,³¹ built by her ancestor Sir Robert Abdy in the reign of King James I, she]³² retained an affection for nature, which gloomy religion did not forbid her to indulge.

Her married life had been embittered by the lingering illness of my grandfather. He died, as I have said, of consumption, after trying all the doctors of the spas of England. The poor man used to be bled, cupped, blistered, and bathed in vinegar, after the method of those days. One humorously pathetic saying of his survived in my aunt's memory: 'I cannot tell, girls, how I caught this cold, unless it was through not going to bed in my boots.' During his lifetime there was no lack of money; and after his death a handsome competency remained to his widow. But she believed that a great and terrible crime³³ had been committed during his last hours, which defrauded her and his three daughters of the larger portion of his fortune. My great-grandfather Sykes had been a navy agent, and prospered during the long war with Napoleon. He left his business to his sons. My grandfather finding himself at the point of death, had a deed prepared which was intended to dissolve the partnership and enable him to bequeath by will his share in the joint capital. This deed only awaited his signature, when my great-uncle Admiral Sykes demanded to be introduced alone into his brother's sick room. He wanted to speak on business of importance, and would not suffer the wife to be present at the interview. When he left the room, my grandfather had died, the deed was not executed, and the interest in the Navy Agency passed to him. Certainly Admiral Sykes became a very rich man, while my grandmother remained far poorer than she had a right to expect. It is to be hoped that the foul play ascribed to my great-uncle had no foundation in fact. It certainly rested on no proof. But the circumstances of his brother's death and his own subsequent behaviour, which was harsh and ungenerous, lent colour to the dark suspicions. Looking back upon the past, known to me only by hearsay, I absolve him of the guilt of fratricide—even of such comparatively innocent fratricide as the puffing out of the last flame of life in an expiring candle. It would have been assuredly better if Admiral Sykes had fulfilled his dead brother's intentions, as though the deed of separation had been legally executed. Instead of that, he claimed his full rights of inheritance, and bred a hatred in the proud soul of my grandmother, which proved disastrous to the interests of her own descendants. But for the facts which I have related, I might in the natural [course of events have succeeded to a fortune of some £5000 a year upon the death of Admiral Sykes in 1857.]³⁴

My grandmother was a thorough Abdy, subject to chronic insomnia and irritable to the highest degree. She lived alone with two servants in a tolerably large four-storied house. She slept upon the second floor, and no one was allowed to inhabit the third. When I was there, I occupied a

bedroom next the drawing-room on the first floor. There was no living creature except a cat and cockroaches in the house below me. Between me and the servants slept the imposing old lady in her solitude. And the whole habitation during the long night hours resounded to my fancy with the doleful litany of ‘Thus saith the Lord: Woe, woe to the ungodly.’ It may be imagined how prolific of nightmares No. 14 Lower Crescent was for me!

Many of my mother’s relations used to visit us at this time. Among these I must give the first place to my aunt Isobel.³⁵ She was a beautiful and highly gifted woman, accomplished in language, endowed with remarkable facility for art. She sang with true feeling, and painted with the skill of Prout.³⁶ {There was genius in all she did and said, a felicity of aptitude for culture.} I am not exaggerating. Many of her watercolour drawings remain to show that I am speaking the truth. Such a nature could not thrive in the grim environment of Mrs Sykes’s home. A mutual attachment between her and John Sterling came to nothing.³⁷ Disappointed in her affections and galled by the uncongenial society of Plymouth Brethren, she imprudently accepted the offer of a certain Dr Harpur Gamble. The marriage was unhappy, and condemned her to a miserable life in Upper Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, London. Her husband was sincerely attached to her.³⁸ But he was jealous, quarrelsome, suspicious, violent, cross-tempered, out of humour with the world in which he had failed to win position. She died young of slow consumption, unalleviated by the comforts of tranquillity and home-happiness.

Colonel Abdy,³⁹ retired from the Indian Service, was a frequent inmate of 7 Berkeley Square. His lonely cadaverous dyspeptic form remains impressed upon my memory; and how he used to bolt his food still fills me with a shudder. He had a trick of rhyming proverbs, three of which I have retained and found to some extent serviceable. The first was:

Change not a clout till May be out:
Change not in May, change not in one day.

There is the philosophy of clothing in the *demi-saison*.⁴⁰ The second ran thus:

If you eat till you’re cold, you’ll live to be old.

I have never fathomed the depth of wisdom contained in this aphorism. But I suppose it means that people who rise from hearty meals with a

diminished sense of surface heat, are in a healthy condition—their vital forces being absorbed in the assimilation of food, not wasted upon any feverish process. The third was extremely applicable to the squeamish stomachs of fastidious childhood:

What does not poison fattens,
And what does not fatten helps to fill.

It is singular that Colonel Abdy should have passed into a little kinsman's consciousness and have passed out of it again, leaving no memory but that of a lean gaunt voracious man and these three homely proverbs.

John Abdy, now Regius Professor of Law in the University of Cambridge, at that time an undergraduate, was our frequent playfellow.⁴¹ He let us children climb over him and pull him about, always ready for a game or romps. [It is mainly owing to a little incident with him in one of our after-luncheon rampages that I can remember the drawing-room at Berkeley Square. I happened to press heavily with my hand upon a sensitive part of his body. He gave an involuntary start; the armchair in which he was lounging between the window and the fireplace, the piano at the opposite end of the room and a copy from a Madonna by Van Dyck which hung over it,⁴² swim into distinctness when I recall that contraction of the long kindly young man under the momentary pang I gave him.]⁴³

In the same way, a very trifling occurrence brings James Byron,⁴⁴ my mother's first cousin, before me. He was a gigantic fellow with a huge copper-coloured face—good-natured like a giant, but subject to sudden fits of passion. We called him Goliath of Gath;⁴⁵ and one day, leaning from the drawing-room window above my favourite pediment of the front-door, I screamed this nickname after him as he was walking down the square. He looked up with a not unnatural scowl of irritation. The background of trees to his burly figure, the moss-grown Bath stone of the pediment, the window-sill where I was sprawling, and the angry face of the good-tempered Titan, were photographed upon my brain. Later on, when I first went to Harrow, James Byron was very kind to me. He used to drive down from London in a Hansom, take me to dine at the King's Arms, talk to me about our kinsman Lord Byron,⁴⁶ and press a sovereign into my hand when we said Goodbye. I followed his cab with grateful eyes, as it sped backward on the London road.

One of the families with whom we were intimate during the period of my childhood, and who still exercise an influence over my life—though each

member of the same has long since died without posterity—bore the name of Sisson.⁴⁷ They came from Cumberland, where their ancestors had been settled as small country gentry in the neighbourhood of Penrith for many generations. At the time when I first knew them the father had died. An old bed-ridden mother, two brothers and three sisters, were living together in a house on the Lower Crescent. Neither of the brothers had any business or occupation. The sisters were past the age of marrying. They lived comfortably upon the produce of their farms and other property in Cumberland. But it sufficed to spend a couple of hours in their society to be aware that some mysterious doom hung over them. This doom was madness.

The bed-ridden mother was imbecile. She used to sit propped up with pillows in the middle of a huge mahogany four-poster, her weakened wrinkled face surrounded with the double frills of an exquisitely white mob cap. Her complexion was of a dark amber yellow; hair white as snow; eyebrows coal black, bushy above little restless beady brown eyes. She had no teeth; and her jaws kept incessantly moving and mumbling between the beaked nose and the pinched chin, which seemed as though they were always vainly trying to touch. A well-developed moustache and beard of glossy black completed the singular appearance of this old lady. I used to be lifted up to sit beside her on the bed; and when she stretched her skinny trembling arms out, and kissed me with her bearded toothless mouth, it was the utmost I could do to keep from screaming. All the same, I was not exactly afraid of her, even when she asked me sudden questions about people and things in the remote past of her life, or followed persons with her eyes about the room, whom I could not see, and sometimes spoke to them in tones of angry irritation, and then smiled in a sickly satisfied way and fumbled with her hands upon the counterpane. One of her children was always present during these interviews; and the ancient dame, witch though I thought her, had always some little present ready to be handed to me when I left her.

The affairs of the family were managed by the eldest sister and the eldest brother—Mary Sisson, a sweet resigned and yet cheerful lady, who needed all the Christian virtues to sustain her through the troubles of her shadowed life—and William Sisson, an excellent man of business with an intellect of some power, though troubled at times by the hereditary malady of his blood. Mary died while I was still a little boy. William lived on into the autumn of 1867. [His friendship for me lasted through a quarter of a century; and when he died, I found that he had confided to me a trust of consequence and delicacy, the more remarkable because its execution depended solely on my sense of honour.]⁴⁸

The second brother, Richard Sisson, was undoubtedly insane. He died eventually in a madhouse. But during several years, when I used to meet him from time to time, the attacks of his disorder only necessitated occasional retirement to a private asylum in the neighbourhood. He used to go and come mysteriously, and was a gentle, dreamy easy-going fellow.

The second sister, Anne Sisson, terrified us children; for we not unfrequently saw her in the paroxysms of what looked like spasmodic epilepsy. I fancy that in her case the family disease assumed the form of dipsomania.⁴⁹ Yet even she was a thorough lady in her intervals of health, and took great interest in natural history. She possessed a cabinet of minerals, stalactites and fossils, collected on the fells of Cumberland, which fascinated my imagination, partly by the beauty of the sparkling crystals, but more, I think, by the extraordinary enthusiasm with which she spoke about them and the tales she told about the places they came from. One frail finger of stalactite, white, and glistening like a fragment of Pentelican marble, had been brought between his teeth by her brother through a winter snow-storm, on a twenty miles' ride across the moors.

Elizabeth, the youngest sister, had lost her reason in early womanhood under peculiarly romantic circumstances. She was engaged to be married to a young squire of the neighbourhood. The wedding day arrived, and she was dressed in her bridal clothes, ready to go to church. The bridegroom was expected on horseback. Instead of him, news came that he had been thrown from his horse and killed upon the spot, while riding to join the wedding party. From this shock she never recovered. When her malady assumed an acute form, it manifested the approaching crisis by her re-enacting the scene of that fatal morning. She sat up before a looking-glass, arranged her imaginary bridal wreath and kept anxiously asking why her lover did not come. Dickens can, I suppose, never have heard the story of Elizabeth Sisson. But when I read *Great Expectations*, I was not a little astonished to find its main point repeated in the eccentricities of Miss Havisham.⁵⁰

Mr William Sisson died in November 1867. I was then at Cannes, too ill to take a journey. A copy of his will was sent me, by which it appeared that he had left the whole of his estate to three Trustees during his sister's life, W.M. Gray Esq., Douglas Hebson Esq., and myself, with full powers of sale and disposable for his sister's benefit, and on her death the residue to myself unconditionally. The estate was almost entirely in land. It must at one time have been considerable. But the expenses of a family

situated as the Sissons were, had reduced it to moderate dimensions, and a rough calculation showed that the income in the hands of the trustees would amount to something over £800 a year. Nearly half of the property belonged to Miss Elizabeth Sisson, the sole surviving member of the family, and was destined to pass at her death to her legal representative, a Colonel Salkeld. What Mr William Sisson could dispose of by his will, he left absolutely to myself after the decease of his sister.

So far the matter seemed simple enough. My father had already told me that Mr Sisson wished to make me his heir, but that he had strongly dissuaded him from doing so. During the whole period of their residence at Clifton, the Sissons had relied upon him for advice and help in every difficulty. They worshipped him in fact. My father's scrupulous sense of professional honour made him averse to a bequest in my favour, which might carry a slight odour of capitation. Therefore he had prevailed upon Mr William Sisson to lay aside the plan which he had formed. All this my father told me before the death of Mr Sisson; and I presumed that the latter had complied with the wishes thus expressed by his old friend and counsellor. In fact I ceased to think about this heritage; and Mr Sisson, neither by word nor sign, gave me any hint that he designed to name me his residuary legatee.

Now it appeared that when he drew up his last will in 1866, he had returned to his original intention. His sister was not very old, and might live for many years. She occupied a house of her own in Victoria Square, No. 2. I had recently bought a house in the same square, No. 7. Her insanity rendered her totally helpless. She had a lady companion, a devoted female attendant, a manservant, a brougham, and two servants for the house. But her brother naturally thought that her property ought to be managed by trustees, and that it would be desirable to name as one of these trustees an old friend of the family, resident within a few doors of her abode. Certain memoranda relating to his estate showed that he thought it might be necessary, under possible eventualities, for the trustees to use his own capital as well as the income of his sister's portion for her maintenance. Being *non compos mentis*,⁵¹ but not legally declared so, her capital could not be touched. {She had no power to make a will, and her property would go upon her death to a relative, Colonel Salkeld.} There was some probability therefore that the residue bequeathed me by his will might amount to a trifle. I saw nothing unreasonable in the disposition he had made, and felt sincerely grateful to him for this mark of his confidence and friendship.

So far, I repeat, the matter seemed simple. But with the will arrived a sealed packet from Mr Gray, whom I have named above, and who was a solicitor in London. Together with a letter of explanation, it contained a copy of a short epistle addressed to me by Mr Sisson at the time he made his will. He set forth his reasons for selecting me as co-trustee for his sister and as residuary legatee after her decease. The terms used were highly honourable to myself. Then he proceeded to say that he hoped I would retain for my own use a farm on Derwentwater, called Thornyplatt, worth about £3000, and that I should expend the rest of the capital accruing from his residuary estate in certain charities, which he left to my judgment, only indicating the possibility of establishing a dispensary at Penrith or a village hospital, or endowing Bible-women for the countryside, or providing for the education of poor boys from the villages where his farms lay. Mr Hebson and Mr Gray were acquainted with his charitable wishes. But he had not communicated them to me during his lifetime, since my knowledge of his intentions would have rendered my acceptance illegal. The estate being in land, a direct bequest of them for charitable objects contravened the Mortmain Act.⁵²

Practically, therefore, Mr Sisson bequeathed me a *fidei-commisum*⁵³ of a peculiarly delicate and rather dangerous kind. He trusted solely to my honour to dispose of his landed property in the way he indicated. He ran the risk of me dying before his sister, in which case his legacy would have formed an integral portion of my own estate. It was not likely that I should saddle my executors and heirs with a prolongation of this quasi-trust, during the lifetime of Miss Elizabeth Sisson. He also knew clearly that from the legal point of view I became absolute owner of his residue, and that I was not bound by his privately communicated instructions, —nay more, that action upon those instructions, the treatment of his epistle as constituting a trust, would expose me to the risk of prosecution under the Mortmain Act. The extraordinary confidence displayed by the testator in my uprightness and devotion to his wishes touched me deeply.

But I also had to reflect that the will might be disputed, not merely on the ground of the Mortmain Act, but also on account of the testator's eccentricity. The family record was terrible; and William Sisson was not entirely free from oddities which could be made to pass for madness.

In the perplexity of the first week after studying these documents, I felt almost inclined to refuse the trust. That would not have implied foregoing the legacy; and it would have cleared me of all responsibility.

Reflection showed the baseness of such conduct.⁵⁴ I felt that, in return for such full and simple reliance on my loyalty, I was bound to undertake the charge of Miss Elizabeth Sisson. If I did so, there remained no alternative except to assume the whole position offered by the will. Acting under the advice of lawyers, and supported by my father and my brother-in-law Sir Edward Strachey,⁵⁵ I proceeded to prove the will.

Miss Elizabeth Sisson lived on until April, 1877. During this period of ten years I acted as her guardian and the controller of her household. The charge proved lighter than I had imagined it might be. At that time England did not suffer from agricultural depression. Rents came regularly in; and I placed my ward's expenditure upon a footing which left a fairly liberal margin for extraordinary disbursements. The income sufficed for the outgoing, and allowed us to keep the farms in decent order. I learned something of management by this discharge of duty, which proved eventually useful to myself. Regarding myself as steward for my dead friend, I dealt scrupulously with all the details of his property, and exercised an economy in his affairs which was alien to my nature. By acting thus, I acquired a sense of the relation between capital and expenditure, a feeling about money, an instinct as to the control of an estate, which nothing but the stern responsibility of honour could have taught me. A worse man of business than myself was never born. And if I have acquired the smallest capacity in that sphere, it is mainly owing to the peculiar conditions under which I accepted the abnormal duties forced upon me by the will of Mr Sisson. Peace be to his ashes! He was a good man, and he trusted me. Responding to his confidence, I have lived through many anxious days; but I have been exercised by a sound discipline. And now, while I am writing in the spring of 1889, I still regard myself as his faithful steward, ready to render account for all my actions under the trust he so eccentrically left me.

Two grimly tragic incidents occurred during this ten years' guardianship of Miss Elizabeth Sisson. She had an old manservant from the North, called George. He used to drive her daily in her brougham, with the lady companion, Miss Kitteridge. The man was solemn, dumb, mechanical. One evening he left the house alone, and committed suicide by throwing himself from the suspension bridge above the Avon. After this catastrophe, I thought it best to job the brougham and horse, and put them under the charge of a man called Gerrish. Things went well for some months. The daily procession of my mad ward and her lady companion was dull enough, and sad enough, but decorous.⁵⁶ It might have gone on

for decades, had not Gerrish taken the same course as George. The second coachman of Miss Sisson committed suicide by throwing himself from the suspension bridge above the Avon. Then I felt that madness might be a communicable malady, and that my poor ward's carriage was infected. I put it down. Henceforth she took her daily airing in hired vehicles.

Miss Elizabeth Sisson died in April, 1877. Her own fortune passed to Colonel Salkeld. The family estate was sold. After the payment of legacies and the discharge of other obligations, I found myself, as Mr Sisson's residuary legatee, in possession of about £19,000. Of this I took for myself about £3,000, that being the product of the farm on Derwentwater (Thornycliff), he wished me to possess. The rest I placed out on good trustees' securities. At the present moment, March 28th, 1889, the capital amounts to a trifle under £19,000, with which I have still to deal in the discharge of his private trust. Counsel's opinion, taken in 1884, warned me to be cautious how I used the property for charitable bequests. The suspicion of evasion of the Mortmain Act clung to it; and the will might yet be subject to inquiry. I have therefore resolved to prorogue the final settlement of affairs until the Statute of Limitations renders my position as legatee irreversible. Meanwhile I have made provision by a codicil to my will for the separation of this portion of my estate from the rest. And every year I have spent a very small portion of the income on such private charities as fell within the scope of the testator's intentions. My personal accounts show how these monies have been expended.

These records of the Sisson family have carried me far beyond the limits fixed for this section of my reminiscences.⁵⁷ I thought it best to follow up one clue in my life history to its present point. The story had to be written, and the episode forms a chapter disconnected from all other experiences I shall have to relate.

Some of my father's relatives were settled in Bristol, Clifton and the neighbourhood. Having spoken of my mother's kindred, I will now narrate what seems to me at all noteworthy regarding my paternal kith. They were excellent folk, distinguished by the virtues of the backbone of the English nation—the great middle class. They also shared its faults—faults inseparable from a Nonconformist ancestry of several generations, complicated by ineradicable family pride. How this pride had formed itself, I am incapable of saying. They knew little about what was really interesting in their genealogy. That I have sketched in the chapter on our origin.⁵⁸ A tradition, however, survived of ancient gentry sacrificed to a religious and political creed. They were proud of being members of a family which had

relinquished the world, and dedicated all its energies during two centuries to the maintenance of an ideal. How narrow the ideal was, and how inconsistent with the progress of modern thought it had become, they did not stop to consider. If the *bourgeois* is a good element in society, then my paternal relatives were the salt of the earth. If impermeability to ideas, adherence to antiquated ways of thinking, conventional and commonplace notions about life, are detrimental to society, then these same persons have to be regarded as a stubborn sect of Jew among the Gentiles.

My father was a *rara avis*⁵⁹ in this family. They looked upon him with suspicion, modified by respect and admiration. Intellectually, he had joined the ranks of progress, and belonged to the age of widening thought. Morally, he held with them, and exemplified in his own life what was best and noblest in the family tradition. To keep himself unspotted by the world, to admit no transaction with base motives,⁶⁰ to live purely and act uprightly, to follow honour, to postpone mundane⁶¹ and selfish interests to duty, to deal mercifully sympathetically tenderly justly with his brother men, to be unsparing in condemnation of rebellious evil, painstaking and long-suffering with struggling good, these were the principles which ruled his conduct. He transfigured in himself the inheritance he had derived from six generations of Puritan ancestors; and he retained something of their rigidity. But he also felt the influence of the age in which he lived. He was open at all pores to culture, to art, to archaeology, to science, to literature. In a large and liberal sense he yielded his spirit up to beauty, and imbibed the well-spring of modern philosophy. Judged by the narrow standard of his kindred, he was unsound on doctrine, dangerously alive with the revolutionary forces of the century. They not unnaturally regarded him as a bird of different feather from themselves; and while they looked up to him as the mainstay of their fortunes, the most eminent example of the vigour of their race, they felt a certain aloofness for this eagle born in the hen-coop.

A son cannot speak adequately about his father. There is a certain impiety in formulating sentences about the author of our being and the moulder of our character. Still, though I cannot express the truth of what I feel, it is possible for me to state the mature opinion⁶² that my father typified an exceptionally interesting moment of English evolution. He had abandoned the narrow standpoint of Nonconformist or Evangelical orthodoxy. But he retained what was ethically valuable in the religious tradition. He opened his mind to every influence of knowledge and of culture. He relinquished nothing which affected character and principle.

In this way he formed a link between the past and future, attaining to an almost perfect harmony of conservative and liberal ideas. I, the product of a younger period, regard his attitude with reverent admiration. I have been unable to preserve the equilibrium which he maintained, and which appears to me the flower of human virtue. He helped to liberate my spirit; and starting from the point which he reached, I have been carried further, not so wisely, not to a result so mellow, so morally and aesthetically beautiful. We dare not regret the inevitable. We are impotent to strive with fate. What I am, is what I had to be. But these reflections do not prevent me from recording the conviction that my father was a man of plastically noble character—plastic in the sense that Hegel⁶³ attributed to that word—all functions of his nature meeting in a well-strung symphony which made the powerful yet kindly-tempered personality he had.

His constitution favoured him perhaps. He always said that he was of a cold temperament, not indifferent to women, but not easily seduced by their attractions. {Facts, which need not now be dragged from their⁶⁴ oblivion, confirm this statement conclusively, and proved him always wise and honourable in circumstances of great delicacy.} The serious obligation of his life, the duty of working for his family, helped him. And it must not be forgotten that his self-emancipation from the narrowing conditions of his earlier environment absorbed a large part of his energy. This is no deduction from his merit. It only serves to show how natural bias and circumstance contributed to make him the fine specimen of English manhood in the second half of the nineteenth century which he became.

How I, the son of such a father, came to be what I am, is a problem I must leave to Francis Galton⁶⁵ and the students of heredity. Of my propensities,⁶⁶ of my sensibilities, of my audacities he had no share. They were inborn in me, [and I shall have to tell the truth about them.]⁶⁷

Two of his near relatives had helped to form my father's character. These were his own father and his great-uncle, Dr John Addington, a courtly and stately old gentleman, who lived at Ashley Court on the Northern side of Bristol. It was mainly by Dr Addington's advice that my father settled in that city. Dr Addington belonged to the small school of advanced thinkers who formed themselves in England on the type of the French *philosophes* and Hume and Hartley.⁶⁸ He boasted of having been present at the Bastille dinner.⁶⁹ He was a friend of Rammohun Roy.⁷⁰ He corresponded with the leading Liberals in politics, religion and philosophy. His carriage, conversation and deportment combined aristocratic *hauteur*⁷¹ with the sarcastic wit and frankness of expression which characterized professed freethinkers

at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This was remarkable in the case of a man, whose father was a non-juror⁷² and Nonconformist minister, who claimed kinship with Lord Sidmouth,⁷³ and who had acquired a moderate fortune by the practice of medicine in London. He had no children; and after his decease, this branch of the Addington family was represented by my father. From the point of view of genealogy and heraldry, the inheritance is interesting. Dr Addington, through his mother, represented the ancient family of Reymes of Overstrand County Norfolk. The arms of Addington: ‘per pale ermin and ermins, a chevron counterchanged’, quartered with D’Abernon: ‘azure, a chevron or’; together with the shield of Reymes: ‘sable, a chevron ermine between three lions rampant argent’, were added to our coat. But this was all. My father derived no pecuniary benefit from his great-uncle, who not unwisely, being childless, used his fortune in his lifetime. Intellectually and socially, my father owed, I think, a great deal to the enlarged opinions and liberal breeding of this old Englishman, himself a *rara avis* in his family.

The gradual emergence from narrow intellectual conditions in a Puritan pedigree is always interesting. We see the process going forward in the case of Quakers and of Dissenters who have acquired importance at the present time. The annals of my own family furnish an excellent example. When I broke up our house on Clifton Hill in 1881, I deliberately burned the correspondence of five generations—that is to say, the letters of my grandfather and of his immediate ancestors through four descents. I had two good reasons at the time for doing this. One was that I did not know where to deposit these bulky documents, some of which contained matters too personal for publication or for transference to any public library. The other was that the perusal of them left a deeply painful impression on my mind. The intense preoccupation with so-called spiritual interests, the suffocating atmosphere of a narrow sect resembling that of a close parlour, the grim stern dealing with young souls not properly convinced of sin, the unnatural admixture of this otherworldliness with mundane marrying and giving in marriage and professional affairs, caught me by the throat and throttled me. I could not bear to think of my own kith and kin, the men and women who had made me, lived in this haunted⁷⁴ cavern, from which ‘eternity’s sunrise’,⁷⁵ the flooding radiance of nature’s light, seemed ruthlessly excluded. So I committed an act of vandalism, whereof I am now half-repentant and half-proud. No doubt these documents, carefully sifted by successive members of the family from other papers of less moment in their eyes, epitomized the spiritual archives of a race who scorned their ancient and

decaying gentry, and who boasted—I remember the phrase in one of these letters—that they had been ‘renowned for their piety through two centuries.’ This, by the way, was written by the head of the family about 1830 to one of its younger members, who innocently asked for information about such insignificant trifles as Sir Richard Fitz-Simon, KG temp.: Edward III and the quartering of Mainwaring.⁷⁶ He was told that seats and crowns in the heavenly Jerusalem had far more value and were far more difficult to win than coronets or garters bestowed by kings, or than arms inscribed after the Heralds’ books by Clarendon.⁷⁷ An undoubted truth. The man who penned those sentences of scornful rebuke, displayed no ignoble pride. Yet he was proud and stubborn to the backbone in his unworldliness; and if I have any grit in me, I owe it to this proud humility of my forefathers.

This brings me to speak of my grandfather, John Symonds of Oxford, who was the first to react against the hereditary narrowness of the family creed. Remaining a Dissenter, he became in mature life what may best be described as a Christian Stoic. He was a good Latin scholar, and wrote voluminous diaries and meditations in the style of Seneca.⁷⁸ Not an elastic or optimistic nature—on the contrary rigid and circumscribed, depressed by a melancholy temperament and by the gloom of Calvinism, which assumed in him the form of philosophical fatalism. This comparative disengagement from sectarian doctrine, combined with the study of the classics and of English thought from Bacon through Locke to Hume and Adam Smith,⁷⁹ formed a type of character well calculated to start my father upon his own path of emancipation. A severe uncompromising sense of duty, a grim incapability of any transactions with the world, marked my grandfather out as the lineal and loyal descendant of his Puritan ancestors. These moral qualities were transmitted to my father. In my father they became transfigured and spiritualized. The advanced ground reached by my father, was the soil in which I grew up. These three generations of men—my grandfather, my father and myself—correspond to the succession of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides,⁸⁰ to the transition from early pointed Gothic through Decorated to Flamboyant architecture. *Medio, tutissimus ibis*. ‘You will go most safely by the middle course.’⁸¹ The middle term of such a series is always superior to the first and vastly superior to the third. How immeasurably superior my father was to me, as a man, as a character, as a social being, as a mind, I feel, but I cannot express.⁸²

My grandfather left Oxford and came to live with his daughter Mrs James Nash at Cassington Villa, Clifton. He soon proposed to teach me Latin. I began to learn this language before I was five years old, and can

remember declining some Latin nouns to my father on my fifth birthday. It was rather a long walk for a little boy from Berkeley Square to Cassington Villa, which stood in its own garden not far from Buckingham Chapel.

The grammar used for instructing me in Latin was, so far as I remember, one by Arnold.⁸³ When we came to the doctrine of the Potential and Subjunctive Moods, I could not comprehend the rules, and refused to learn them by rote. Considering that I was an extremely docile and timid child, this argued an extraordinary amount of intellectual repugnance.

My grandfather declared that he would not teach me any more; I was incorrigibly stupid or obstinate. I had to write an apologetical letter, which I remember doing with mighty solemnity and sense of importance, propped up on cushions at a big high table. On these conditions he took me back as a dull but repentant pupil.

The difficulty of grasping abstract statements made learning very irksome for me. Some branches of knowledge I wholly failed to acquire. Among these was arithmetic. I could not do the sums, because the rules, which were never properly explained, oppressed me with a nightmare sense of unreality. Even when I got hold enough upon them to apply them, I was sceptical about the results. The whole process seemed to me like a piece of jugglery, which offended my intelligence. Euclid,⁸⁴ on the other hand, offered no obstacles. Geometry gave me pleasure by its definite objectivity, clear chains of reasoning, and direct appeal to the senses. I could remember the figures, and work a theorem or problem out with ease. I always learned best through the eyes; and I am convinced that a tutor who discovered this bias in me for the concrete, could have taught me anything in mathematics.

As time went on, I used to take country walks with my grandfather and cousins. What he told me then—the names of plants and the Latin words for things we saw—I have never forgotten.

During our excursions on the Downs, nature began to influence my imagination in a peculiar way. When the light of the evening was falling, or when we found ourselves in some secluded corner with a prospect toward the Bristol Channel and the Welsh Hills, I passed from the sense of a tangible presence into a dream. This was a very definite phase of experience, approaching hypnotism in its character. I partly dreaded the subjugation of my conscious will, and partly looked forward to it with a thrill of exquisite anticipation. I learned to recognize the symptoms of this on-coming mood. But I could not induce it by an act of volition. It needed some specific touch of the external world upon my sensibility.

I am not sure whether this was the rudimentary stage of another form of self-absorption, which afterwards for many years recurred at intervals, giving more of serious disturbance than of pleasure when it came. That was a kind of trance. Suddenly, at church, or in company, or when I was reading, and always I think when my muscles were at rest, I felt the approach of the mood. Irresistibly, it took possession of my mind and will, lasted what seemed like an eternity, and disappeared in a series of rapid sensations which resembled the awakening from anaesthetic influence.⁸⁵ One reason why I disliked this kind of trance, was that I could not describe it to myself. I cannot even now find words to render it intelligible, though it is probable that many readers of these pages will recognize the state in question. It consisted in a gradual but swiftly progressive obliteration of space, time, sensation and the multitudinous factors of experience which seemed to qualify what we are pleased to call ourself. In proportion as these conditions of ordinary consciousness were subtracted, the sense of an underlying or essential consciousness acquired intensity. At last nothing remained but a pure, absolute, abstract self. The universe became without form and void of content. But self persisted, formidable in its vivid keenness, asking or rather feeling the most poignant doubt about reality, ready as it seemed to find existence break as breaks a bubble round about it. And what then? The apprehension of a coming dissolution, the grim conviction that this state was the last state of the conscious self, the sense that I had followed the last thread of being to the verge of the abyss and had arrived at demonstration of eternal Maya⁸⁶ or illusion, stirred or seemed to stir me up again. The return of ordinary conditions of sentient existence began by my first recovering the power of touch, and then by the gradual though rapid influx of familiar impressions and diurnal interests. At last I felt myself once more a human being; and though the riddle of what is meant by life remained unsolved, I was thankful for this return from the abyss—this deliverance from so awful an initiation into the mysteries of scepticism.

This trance returned with diminishing frequency until I reached the age of twenty eight. Though I have felt its approaches often, I have not experienced it fully now for many years. It served to impress upon my growing nature the phantasmal unreality of all the circumstances which contribute to a merely phenomenal consciousness. Often have I asked myself with anguish, on waking from that formless state of denuded keenly sentient being: which is the unreality—the trance of fiery vacant apprehensive sceptical self from which I issue—or these surrounding phenomena and

habits which veil that inner self and build a self of flesh and blood conventionality? Again: are men the factors of some dream, the dreamlike unsubstantiality of which they comprehend at such eventful moments? What would happen if the final stage of the trance were reached—if after the abduction of phenomenal conditions beyond recovery, the denuded sense of self should pass away in a paroxysm of doubt? Would that be death and entire annihilation? Would it be absorption into the real life beyond phenomena? Could another garment of sensitive experience clothe again that germ of self, which recognized the unsubstantiality of all that seem to make it human?

It is obvious that I am straining the resources of language at my disposal in the effort to adumbrate the exact nature of this trance. I find it impossible, however, to render an adequate account of the initiation. Nor can I properly describe the permanent effect produced upon my mind by the contrast between this exceptional condition of my consciousness and the daily experiences—physical, moral, intellectual, emotional, practical—with which I compared it. {Like other psychical states, it lies beyond the province of language.}

When I first read Pindar, his exclamation: ἐπαμέροι · τί δέ τις; τί δ' οὐ τις; σκιᾶς ὄναρ ἄνθρωπος—‘Things of a day! What is a man? What is a man not? A dream of a shadow is man’—this awoke in me reverberating echoes.⁸⁷ It was for me no casual poet’s question, no figure of rhetoric let fall to point the moral of man’s fleeting day on earth. The lyric cry pierced to the very core and marrow of my soul.⁸⁸

When I was eight years old, my father sent me to a tutor, the Rev. William Knight. This gentleman kept a school. His house in Buckingham Villas (now part of the Pembroke Road) was at least a mile from Berkeley Square. I used to perform the journey, going and coming, four times in a working day. The institution was probably not worse than the majority of private schools. How bad it was, I dare not say. Mr Knight had little to do with the teaching. One of his ushers was a whoremonger, and the other a paederast. The boys—several of them sons of Somersetshire gentlemen, others, like me, day-scholars—did pretty much as they liked. Bullying of a peculiarly offensive sort took place there. But I am bound to say that I was neither bullied nor contaminated in my morals. I think that Mr Knight, owing special obligations to my father, insisted on my being treated with more consideration than the other pupils.

It was rather a *via dolorosa*⁸⁹ from Berkeley Square to Buckingham Villas. The road led first through a street of poor people, among whom I

became interested in a family of mulattoes, the children of a negro sailor and a Bristol woman. A narrow alley led to the Roman Catholic church, then half-finished; and this alley was always adorned on both sides with obscene or blasphemous graffiti. Emerging at the top, I passed through some dismal decaying terraces and villas, and then took a straight line along decent dwelling-houses with a great field on the right hand until I eventually arrived at the school. The whole line of march recurs to my mind's eye but I am characteristically oblivious to the names of places.

Just before I reached Buckingham Villas, there was a tall house on the right, cresting the rising slope and looking down upon the large field I have mentioned. I think it was also called Buckingham something. There was a grating in the basement floor of this house, which gave light to a cellar of some sort. I fancied that a magician lived in the semi-subterranean apartment. I used to see him squatting by a fire on the floor, raking up embers, and stirring ingredients in a cauldron. He became a positive reality to my imagination. But I never attempted to converse with him, and did not feel sure whether he was a wizard or an alchemist. The alternative puzzled me.

About this figment of my fancy I spoke freely at home, and proposed to take my sisters to watch the magician at work. My aunt, however, looked seriously on the matter, and requested me not to tell lies. The same thing happened when I arrived one evening in a state of considerable excitement at home, and declared that I had been attacked by robbers on the way. The artlessness of my narration must have proved its worthlessness. I was soundly scolded. Yet neither the magician nor the robbers are less real to my memory than most of the people who surrounded me at that time. It was right to treat me harshly about such waking dreams. I learned in this way to distinguish what we call true from what we call false.

To my father I owe a debt of gratitude for his sympathetic treatment of quite a different occurrence. I sold my Latin dictionary to a comrade called Emerson for sixpence. When I was asked at home where I had lost it, I said that I did not know. Stings of conscience made me speedily confess the truth, and I did so with no little trepidation to my father in his library. He spoke gently and wisely on the topic, pointing out that lies were not only wrong but ignoble. What he then said touched my sense of honour, and struck my intelligence. I was thenceforward scrupulous about telling the exact truth.

The occurrences I have related seem to me important in the development of my character. They saved me from becoming a visionary, to

which I was too prone by temperament. They forced me to draw a sharp line of distinction between what happened in my dreaming self and what impinged upon my senses from outside. They revealed the all-importance of veracity—the duty and the practical utility of standing on a common ground of fact with average men and women in affairs of life. In other words I became capable of discriminating between fancies and things, and I learned to abhor and scorn mendacity.

NOTES

1. Harriet Symonds, née Sykes (c.1808–44). She was the daughter of James and Maria Henrietta Sykes of Wyresdale, Leatherhead. She married John Addington Symonds Snr in 1834.
2. John Addington Symonds Snr (1807–71) studied medicine in Edinburgh, graduating with an M.D. in 1828. He served as an assistant to his father (John Symonds, a surgeon-apothecary) in Oxford before moving to Bristol in 1831. Symonds Snr helped to found the General Hospital, lectured at the Medical School, and was a prominent member of Bristol society. In 1871 Symonds edited and published his father's *Miscellanies*.
3. *Daily Food for Christians; Being A Promise, And Another Scriptural Portion, For Every Day In The Year*, published by the Religious Tract Society. The British Library holds an early edition from 1830.
4. Mary Ann Sykes (d. c.1900) was Symonds's maternal aunt, his mother's sister. Following Harriet Symonds's death, Mary Ann joined the household to help raise her nephew and nieces. After John Addington Symonds Snr died, she moved to Oxford and lived with her niece, Charlotte, and her husband, T.H. Green.
5. Later addition in a smaller script (MS 3).
6. Seth Pecknsiff, a hypocritical and deceitful architect, appears in Charles Dickens's *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843–44).
7. From 'The Order for Morning Prayer' in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662).
8. Trans.: in spite of.
9. Deletes 'evolution in my nature', substitutes 'development' (MS 8).
10. Deletes 'hysterically', substitutes 'convulsively' (MS 9).

11. *The Story Without An End* (1834) was translated by Sarah Austin, Lucie Duff Gordon's mother. Symonds originally attributed the translation to Austin, but alters the manuscript in error (MS 9).

Lucie Duff Gordon (1821–69) was a writer and translator, and her daughter, Janet Ross, would become a close friend of the Symonds family.

12. Trans.: yearning, nostalgia. 'Sehnsucht' is also the title given to poems in Symonds's privately printed pamphlet, 'Liber Temporis Perditi', and his published collection, *Many Moods: A Volume of Verse* (1878). They are different poems, not a reprint.
13. From *Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field* (1808) by Walter Scott.
14. Mary Isabella ('Maribella') Strachey, née Symonds (1837–83), married Edward Strachey in 1857. They settled at Sutton Court, Somerset, and had three children. Like her younger brother, Maribella suffered from phthisis (tuberculosis).
15. William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair: Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society* (later subtitled, 'A Novel Without A Hero') was serialised between January 1847 and July 1848. The monthly parts were published by *Punch* and issued in striking yellow covers.
16. Deletes 'a good woman', substitutes 'kind in her ways with us' (MS 15).
17. 'A ship (typically a large sailing ship) engaged in the East India trade.' (*OED*)
18. Thomas Pitt, 2nd Baron Camelford (1775–1804), died from the injuries sustained during a duel with his friend, Captain Best.

Nichola Sophia Hamilton (1666–c.1713), wife to Tristram Beresford, claimed to have been visited by the apparition of her recently deceased friend, John Power, 2nd Earl of Tyrone; she was left with a mark upon her wrist where the apparition was said to have touched her. Her son, Marcus Beresford, was created Earl of Tyrone in 1746.

Thomas Lyttelton, 2nd Baron Lyttelton (1744–79), was rumoured to have been visited by a bird who foretold his death.

19. Presumably *The Book of British Ballads* (1842–44) edited by S.C. Hall. An illustration of 'King Arthur's Death' by Daniel Maclise was used as the frontispiece to a later edition published in 1879, but he was not a contributor to the original volumes.

Illustrations for ‘Glenfinlas’ were designed by H.J. Townsend, for ‘The Eve of St. John’ by J.N. Paton, and for ‘Kempion’ by W.B. Scott. All three poems are by Walter Scott.

20. Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* (1843) was illustrated by John Leech. Symonds appears to be thinking of the illustration entitled ‘Marley’s Ghost’, but misattributes the artist. Dickens collaborated with George Cruikshank on *Sketches by Boz* (1836), *The Mudfog Papers* (1837–38) and *Oliver Twist* (1838).
21. Presumably *Chambers’s Miscellany of Useful and Entertaining Tracts* (1844–47).

Phyllis Grosskurth identifies the German collection of murder stories as *Merkwürdige Criminalfälle* (1808–11) by Paul Johann Anselm Feuerbach. Lucie Duff Gordon translated this work into English as *Remarkable Criminal Cases* (1846).

22. Marginal note: ‘People’ (MS 18).

Edith Harriet Cave, née Symonds (d.1912), married Charles Daniel Cave in 1859. They settled at Sidbury Manor, Devon, and had five children.

Charlotte Byron Green, née Symonds (1842–1929), married her brother’s friend, the philosopher T.H. Green, in 1871. Green died in 1882, after which Charlotte studied nursing at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, and the London Hospital. She was a founding member of the Association for Promoting the Education of Women, and in 1884 she joined the Council of Somerville College, Oxford.

23. *The Boy and the Birds* (1835) by Emily Taylor.
24. Admiral John Sykes (1774–1858) was Commander of the *Nautilus* during the Napoleonic Wars.
25. Later addition in a smaller script (MS 20).
26. A member of the nonconformist Christian movement, the Plymouth Brethren. Adherents insist upon the precedence of scripture and simplicity over ritual and tradition, and the movement can trace its roots back to Dublin in the early nineteenth century. The first Brethren meeting in Plymouth, England, was held in 1831; it was organised by John Nelson Darby, Benjamin Wills Newton and George Wigram.
27. Mr. Chadband, a hypocritical and gluttonous minister, appears in Charles Dickens’s *Bleak House* (1852–53). In Chapter 19 this

- ‘gorging vessel’ eats a very large dinner before preaching at Jo the crossing-sweeper.
28. Deborah was a prophetess (Judges 4–5). Dorcas, or Tabitha, was a female disciple raised from the dead by Peter (Acts 9. 36–42).
 29. Naaman is cured of leprosy by Elisha, the prophet, who commands him to wash in the River Jordan seven times (2 Kings 5).
 30. George Friedrich Müller (1805–98) was born in Prussia and moved to England in 1829. He came to Bristol in the early 1830s where he preached at the Bethesda Chapel attended by Symonds’s grandmother. Müller also helped to found the Ashley Down Orphanage.
 31. Albyns in Stapleford Abbot, Essex, had been in the Abdy family since the seventeenth century. It was demolished in the 1950s and the site redeveloped.
 32. Passage marked for deletion (MS 23). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from ‘burly cabbage roses’ (MS 23) to ‘My grandmother was a thorough Abdy’ (MS 24b). See Brown, I, p. 19.
 33. Deletes ‘wrong’, substitutes ‘crime’ (MS 24).
 34. Passage marked for deletion (MS 24b). Brown does not reproduce this material—see note 32.
 35. Isobel (‘Isabelle’) Gamble, née Sykes (dates unknown), married Harpur Gamble (an M.D. and member of the London Zoological Society) in 1840.
 36. Samuel Prout (1783–1852) was championed by John Ruskin in *Modern Painters*, and in 1879 Ruskin organised a posthumous exhibition of Prout’s work alongside that of William Holman Hunt. Prout was best known for his watercolours.
 37. John Sterling (1806–44) was a writer, poet and the subject of a biography written by his friend, Thomas Carlyle.
 38. Deletes ‘loved her’, substitutes ‘was sincerely attached to her’ (MS 25).
 39. Lieutenant-Colonel James Nicholas Abdy (d. 1855) served with the East India Company.
 40. Trans.: mid-season.
 41. Phyllis Grosskurth identifies an error in Symonds’s account. At the time of writing the *Memoirs*, John Thomas Abdy (1822–99) was a Professor of Civil Law at Gresham College in London. He had

previously been Regius Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge (1854–73).

42. Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641) was a Flemish painter whose work includes several images of the Madonna and child. He is now best known for his English court paintings during the reign of Charles I.
43. Passage marked for deletion (MS 26–7). Brown does not reproduce Symonds's account of John Abdy, James Byron and the Sisson family, jumping from '14 Lower Crescent was for me!' (MS24b) to 'Some of my father's relatives' (MS 41). See Brown, I, p. 20.
44. Captain James Byron (1803–58) served in the British Army. He was the son of Symonds's great-aunt, Sarah Sykes.
45. Champion of the Philistines famed for his large stature and defeated by David (I Samuel 17).
46. George Gordon Noel Byron, 6th Baron Byron (1788–1824), famous Romantic poet. Symonds's connection to the Byron family was distant, forged by the marriage of his great-aunt, Sarah Sykes, to Richard Byron, the poet's first cousin once removed.
47. Marginal note: 'Omit' (MS 28)—see note 43.
48. Marginal note: '?' (MS 30)—see note 43.
49. An early nineteenth-century medical term for alcohol dependency used to describe sporadic bouts of excessive drinking.
50. Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* was serialised in *All The Year Round* between December 1860 and August 1861.
51. Trans.: of unsound mind.
52. Legislation limiting the bequest of lands, goods and money to charitable organisations. In English law, these measures can be traced to the Statutes of Mortmain passed during the reign of Edward I.
53. Trans.: to commit to trust. In Roman law, 'A bequest which a person made by begging his heir or legatee to transfer something to a third person.' (*OED*)
54. Here a sentence is deleted: 'Indeed I never actually entertained the notion' (MS 37).
55. Edward Strachey, 3rd Baronet (1812–1901), writer and associate of John Sterling and F.D. Maurice. He married Symonds's sister, Maribella, in 1857.
56. Deletes 'funereal', substitutes 'decorous' (MS 39).
57. Marginal note: 'Omit' (MS 41)—see note 43.

58. Chapter not contained within the *Memoirs* manuscript—see Notes on the Text.
59. Trans.: unique; literally, rare bird.
60. Deletes ‘evil’, substitutes ‘base motives’ (MS 42).
61. Following ‘mundane’, deletes ‘worldly’ (MS 42).
62. Deletes ‘my cold conviction’, substitutes ‘my mature opinion’ (MS 44).
63. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), German philosopher famed for his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), *Science of Logic* (1812–16) and *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (1821).
64. Following ‘dragged from their’, deletes ‘deserved’ (MS 45).
65. Francis Galton (1822–1911) was a polymathic man of science and Fellow of the Royal Society. He was the author of *Heredity Genius: An Inquiry into its Laws and Consequences* (1869).
66. Deletes ‘vices’, substitutes ‘propensities’ (MS 45).
67. Material in parentheses accompanied by a marginal note: ‘Omit’ (MS 45). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from ‘inborn in me’ (MS 45) to ‘Two of his near relatives’ (MS 46). See Brown, I, p. 23. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 45 blank (6 cms of clear space).
68. The *philosophes* were an informal association of European Enlightenment thinkers who advocated reform and called for freedom of the press and religion.
David Hume (1711–76) was a writer and philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment. His works include *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) and *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (first published in 1748 as *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding*).
- David Hartley (1705–57) was a philosopher best known for his *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (1749).
69. Bastille Day dinners celebrate the fall of the infamous Parisian prison during the first days of the French Revolution in 1789, and their origins can be traced to the *Fête de la Fédération* celebrated in July 1790. In 1791 a Bastille Day dinner was held in Birmingham, England, by a group of radical Dissenters led by James Kier, a member of the Lunar Society of Birmingham. The dinner provoked several days of rioting, with protesters targeting Dissenting chapels, meeting places, and the homes of prominent Dissenters

such as Joseph Priestley. It is, presumably, this dinner that Symonds believed his father's great-uncle attended.

70. Rammohun Roy (c.1772–1833) was a Bengali writer and scholar who campaigned against the Hindu custom of 'suttee' or sati (self-immolation by a widow upon her husband's funeral pyre), idolatry and polytheism. He spent the last three years of his life in England, dying at Bristol where he is buried in the Arnos Vale Cemetery. A commemorative statue of Roy stands outside Bristol Cathedral.
71. Trans.: haughtiness; literally, height.
72. Non-juring clergy refused to swear an oath of allegiance to William and Mary of Orange after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. They included the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Sancroft, amongst their number.
73. Henry Addington, 1st Viscount Sidmouth (1757–1844), became Prime Minister in 1801 following the resignation of William Pitt the Younger. The Treaty of Amiens (1802) with France was signed during his term in office.
74. Deletes 'dull', substitutes 'haunted' (MS 48).
75. From 'Eternity' (c.1793) by William Blake. This poem is contained within a notebook held by the British Library, commonly known as the Rossetti Manuscript after its former owner, Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
76. Richard Fitz-Simon (c.1295–c.1349) was a founding member and the 15th Knight of the Order of the Garter established during the reign of Edward III.

In heraldry, quartering is the means by which different coats of arms are combined within a single shield.

77. Clarendieux, or Clarenceux, is the second of three Kings of Arms with the authority to grant heraldic coats of arms.
78. Seneca (c.1 BCE–65 CE) was a Roman Stoic philosopher and adviser to Emperor Nero. He was implicated in the Pisonian conspiracy and ordered to commit suicide. His writings include essays, letters and tragedies.
79. Francis Bacon (1561–1626) was a writer, philosopher and statesman who advocated an inductive method of reasoning in his *Novum Organum* (1620).

John Locke (1632–1704) was a philosopher influenced by Francis Bacon. He is best known for *An Essay Concerning Human*

Understanding (1690) which in turn was an influence upon David Hume.

Adam Smith (1723–90) was a philosopher and political economist of the Scottish Enlightenment. His most famous work is *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776).

80. The three great ancient Greek tragedians: Aeschylus (c.525–456 BCE) was known as the ‘Father of Tragedy’ and his plays include *The Seven Against Thebes* (c. 467 BCE) and the *Oresteia* trilogy (c. 458 BCE); Sophocles (c.496–06 BCE) is best known for *Oedipus Rex* (c.430 BCE); and Euripides (c.484–06 BCE) is the author of nineteen surviving plays, including *Medea* (c. 431 BCE) and *The Bacchae* (c. 406 BCE).
81. Symonds provides his own translation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Book 2 (l.137). Phyllis Grosskurth identifies this allusion to the sun god’s advice to his son, Phaëthon.
82. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 51 blank (18 cms of clear space).
83. Presumably *A Practical Introduction to Latin Prose Composition* (1839) by Thomas Kerchever Arnold.
84. Euclid (fl. 300 BCE) was the author of *Elements*, a multi-volume work of mathematics and geometry.
85. Symonds describes the effect of being ‘put under the influence of chloroform and laughing gas together’ in a letter to Henry Sidgwick in February 1873. See Brown, II, pp. 79–80, and *Letters*, II, pp. 271–3.
86. ‘In Hindu mythology: illusion, magic; the supernatural power wielded by gods and demons. In Hindu and Buddhist philosophy: the power by which the universe becomes manifest; the illusion or appearance of the phenomenal world.’ (*OED*)
87. From Pindar’s *Pythian* 8 (‘For Aristomenes of Aegina Wrestling 446 BC’, l. 95). Symonds provides his own translation.
Pindar (c.518–c.438) was a Greek poet best known for his choral lyrics and *epinicia* (odes celebrating the victories and victors in Hellenic games).
88. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 57 blank (4 cms of clear space).
89. Trans.: way of sorrows. Via Dolorosa is also the name given to a pilgrimage route through the city of Jerusalem believed to be that taken by Jesus as he carried the cross to his crucifixion.

Chapter 2: Containing Material Which None But Students of Psychology and Ethics Need Peruse

The plan of these Memoirs, which are intended to describe the evolution of a somewhat abnormally constituted individual, obliges me to interpolate a section here, which might otherwise have been omitted with satisfaction to myself. When the whole interest of a life centres, not in action, but in mental development and moral experience, truth becomes imperatively necessary with regard to points of apparent insignificance.

No one, however, can regard the first stirrings of the sexual instinct as a trifling phenomenon¹ in any life. It is only prejudice and false shame which lead people to conceal the facts and phases of the *vita sexualis*,² so essentially important in the formation of character and the determination of mental qualities.

The earliest idea I gained of sex was caught from a coarse remark made by our head nurse Sarah Jones. We were out walking with the nursery-maid and my sisters, passing through a turnstile which led from George Street to the gravel path round Brandon Hill. The sudden revelation that there is something specific in the private parts, distinguishing them from other portions of the body, made a peculiar and uneasy impression on my

Many of the details and experiences recounted in this chapter are repeated, near verbatim, in Symonds's case study for *Sexual Inversion*, his collaboration with Havelock Ellis. See Appendices and Crozier, pp. 142–3

sensibility—so strong that an image of the landscape, as it was that morning, remains imprinted on my memory: Bristol below, with its church towers and ships, the freshness of the west wind blowing from the channel, the wavering soft English sunlight.

About the same time, I heard much whispered conversation in our nursery concerning a man, who stood and exposed his person before the maids at a spot fronting our back-window. I could not understand the indignation mingled with excitement and curiosity, expressed by the women.

Among my earliest recollections, I must record certain visions, half-dream, half-reverie, which were certainly erotic in their nature, and which recurred frequently just before sleeping. I used to fancy myself crouched upon the floor amid a company of naked adult men: sailors, such as I had seen about the streets of Bristol. The contact of their bodies afforded me a vivid and mysterious pleasure. Singular as it may appear that a mere child should have formed such fancies, and unable as I am to account for their origin, I am positive regarding the truth of this fact. The reverie was so often repeated, so habitual, that there is no doubt about its psychical importance.

A handsome lad of a full-blown healthy type once masturbated in my presence during this period of childhood. He wanted me to try the game. But though the sight disturbed me not uncomfortably, I shrank with horror from his touch, and managed to escape from the room. The attractions of a dimly divined almost mystic sensuality persisted in my nature, side by side with a marked repugnance to lust in action, throughout my childhood and boyhood down to an advanced stage of manhood.

At the same time, I was unfortunate enough to be thrown into the society of a coarse girl, who liked to expose herself and make me touch her sexual organs. They neither attracted nor repelled me, nor did they rouse my curiosity. Only they displeased my sense of smell. Once when I found a male cousin of mine preparing to copulate with her, I felt a strange and powerful disgust.

A dirty-minded schoolfellow, when I was about nine years old, initiated me into the mysteries of sexual duality,³ coition, impregnation,⁴ childbirth. This interested my intelligence, but did not affect my imagination. My reveries still reverted to the naked sailors, whose physical contact seemed so desirable. And in all these early experiences, the sex which drew me with attraction was the male.

Our earliest memories of words, poems, works of art, have great value in the study of psychical development. They indicate decisive points in the growth of personality. The mere sharp recollection we retain of certain images is a sign of their potency. Now the first English poem which impressed me deeply—as it has, no doubt, impressed thousands of boys—was Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. I read it certainly before we left 7 Berkeley Square, and, I think, before I was ten years old. It gave form, ideality and beauty to my previous erotic visions. Those adult males, the shaggy and brawny sailors, without entirely disappearing, began to be superseded in my fancy by an adolescent Adonis. The emotion they symbolized blent with a new kind of feeling. In some confused way I identified myself with Adonis; but at the same time I yearned after him as an adorable object of passionate love.⁵ Venus only served to intensify the situation. I did not pity her. I did not want her. I did not think that, had I been in the position of Adonis, I should have used his opportunities to better purpose. No: she only expressed my own relation to the desirable male. She brought into relief the overwhelming attraction of masculine adolescence and its proud inaccessibility. Her hot wooing taught me what it was to woo with sexual ardour. I dreamed of falling back like her upon the grass, and folding the quick-panting lad in my embrace.

I cannot of course tell what would have happened, if Shakespeare had emphasized the fascination of the female instead of dwelling on the fascination of the male. Probably the poem would have made no more impression on me than did *The Rape of Lucrece*, to which I remained indifferent. As it was, I took *Venus and Adonis* in the way Shakespeare undoubtedly meant it to be taken. And doing so, it stimulated, while it etherealized, my inborn craving after persons of my own sex.

Character might be described as the product of inborn proclivities and external circumstance. If we regard temperament as one factor and circumstance as another, we must also bear in mind that temperament takes and rejects, assimilates and discards, the elements of nutrition afforded by circumstance according to an instinct of selection. Boys of more normal sexuality might have preferred *The Rape of Lucrece* to *Venus and Adonis*. Or, in the latter, they might have felt the attraction of the female—condemning Adonis for a simpleton, and wishing themselves for ten minutes in his place.

I am glad to close this section, in which, after long reflection, I have set down what I know to be absolutely certain facts about the development of sex in me before the age of eleven.

NOTE TO THE FOREGOING SECTION

When I wrote these recollections of my earliest sexual impressions, I was not aware how important they were for the proper understanding of *vita sexualis*, and how impossible it would have been to omit them from a truthful autobiography. I had not then studied the works of Moreau, Tarnowski, Krafft-Ebing,⁶ who attempt to refer all cases of sexual inversion to neurotic disorder inherited or acquired. I had not read the extraordinary writings of Ulrichs, who maintains that the persons he calls *Urnings* form a sex apart—having literally a feminine soul included within a male body.⁷

It does not appear to me that either Ulrichs or the school of neuropathical physicians have solved the problem offered by individuals of my type. The ‘neuropathic grandmother’ is too common an occurrence in modern families to account for what is after all a somewhat rare aberration of sexual proclivities; and the hypothesis of a female soul shut up within a male body savours of bygone scholastic speculation.

The problem being then still one awaiting solution, all facts which throw light upon it, especially upon the origination of abnormal sexual feelings, their spontaneity and probable innate character, are scientifically useful.

It is certain that the medical school of theorists would claim me as the subject of neurotic disease. My mother’s family on the paternal side (Sykes) was tainted with pulmonary phthisis, and on the maternal side (Abdy) with extreme nervous excitability, eccentricity, even madness. Of four male children conceived by my mother, two (twins) were still-born into the world, the third died of acute hydrocephalus: I, the last and the survivor, suffered from night terrors, extreme shyness, nervous affections, somnambulism; I shunned the society of masculine boys, disliked physical exercises of a violent kind, preferred solitude and study to games, because subject at the age of puberty to excessive involuntary losses of semen, stammered for a period in my speech; in short I exhibited many of the symptoms which Krafft-Ebing and his school recognize as hereditary neuroticism predisposing its subject to sexual inversion.⁸

Still I do not think that the whole tenor of my life up to the age of fifty, which I have now reached, justifies the opinion that I have been the victim of exceptional neurotic malady. It is notorious that in literature I have done a very large amount of work, not only brilliant, but solid and laborious, which has placed me in the front rank of English authors. My literary

achievement is no doubt due in part at least to a high degree of nervous sensibility; and compared with the average of men, I may be pronounced to have exhibited an abnormal⁹ strain of nervous energy. This nervousness has been the condition of my performance. But is it either logical or prudent to diagnose so marked a specimen of the artistic temperament as morbid? I leave that question to psychologists, only remarking that it seems dangerous to classify poets, men of letters, painters, almost all of whom exhibit some nervous abnormalities, with the subjects of hereditary disease. Here we approach too near to the paradox that genius is a species of madness.¹⁰

With regard to Ulrichs, in his peculiar phraseology, I should certainly be tabulated as a *Mittel Urning*, holding a mean between the *Mannling* and the *Weibling*; that is to say, one whose emotions are directed to the male sex during the period of adolescence and early manhood; who is not marked either by an effeminate passion for robust adults or by a predilection for young boys; in other words, one whose comradely instincts are tinged with a distinct sexual partiality. But in this sufficiently accurate description of my attitude, I do not recognize anything which justifies the theory of a female soul. Morally and intellectually, in character and taste and habits, I am more masculine than many men I know who adore women. I have no feminine feelings for the males who rouse my desires. The anomaly of my position is that I admire the physical beauty of men more than women, derive more pleasure from their contact and society, and am stirred to sexual sensations exclusively by persons of the male sex.

Finally, it appears to me that the abnormality in question is not to be explained either by Ulrichs's theory, or by the presumptions of the pathological psychologists. Its solution has to be sought far deeper in the mystery of sex, and in the variety of type exhibited by nature. For this reason, a detailed study of one subject, such as I mean to attempt, may be valuable.

NOTES

1. Deletes 'fact', substitutes 'phenomenon' (MS 62).
2. Trans.: sexual life, sexuality.
3. Deletes 'difference of the sexes', substitutes 'mysteries of sexual duality' (MS 65).
4. Deletes 'pregnancy', substitutes 'impregnation' (MS 65).
5. Deletes 'desire', substitutes 'love' (MS 66).

6. Symonds responds to these ‘medico-psychological’ writers in Chapter 7 of *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891). See Brady, pp. 143–62.

Paul Moreau (1844–1908) was a French physician and the author of *Des Aberrations du Sens Génésique* (1877).

Benjamin Tarnowski (1837–1906) was a Russian physician and the author of *Die krankhaften Erscheinungen des Geschlechtesinnes* (first published in Russian in 1885).

Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902) was an Austro-German physician and the author of *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886). Later editions would revise and expand this work—see Harry Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature: Krafft-Ebing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Sexual Identity* (2000).

7. Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–95) was a German jurist who sometimes wrote under the pseudonym ‘Numa Numantius’. Between 1864 and 1879 he published twelve works known collectively as *Forschungen über das Räthsel der mannmännlichen Liebe*. Ulrichs’s taxonomy of sexual types distinguished between *Dionings* (so-called normal men) and *Urnings* (so-called abnormal men who experience same-sex desire). The latter he considered to possess a female soul within a male body, and within this category he distinguished between *Mannlings* (who desire effeminate men), and *Weiblings* (who desire masculine men). Symonds responds to Ulrich’s ‘polemical’ writing in Chapter 9 of *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891). See Brady, pp. 175–94.
8. Deletes ‘would pronounce decisive’, substitutes ‘and his school recognize as hereditary neuroticism predisposing its subject to sexual inversion’ (MS 69).
9. Deletes ‘a morbid’, substitutes ‘an abnormal’ (MS 70).
10. Marginal note: ‘Since this paragraph was written, we have had Lombroso’s *Man of Genius* and Nisbet’s *Insanity of Genius*, upholding the hypothesis I attempted to combat’ (MS 70).

Cesare Lombroso (1836–1906) was an Italian physician and criminologist. His *L’uomo Di Genio* (1888) was translated into English in 1891.

John Ferguson Nisbet (1851–99) was a Scottish journalist and the author of *The Insanity of Genius and the General Inequality of Human Faculty* (1891).

Chapter 3: First Period of Boyhood— Clifton Hill House—From the Year 1851 to the Year 1854

Up to this point I have recorded memories of my life before the age of ten, admitting only those which can be referred by some clear local indication to that period. I now pass from childhood to the first period of boyhood. The transition is defined by the change of residence from 7 Berkeley Square to Clifton Hill House.¹

This stage, which extended from June 1851 until May 1854, was one of greatly increased happiness. My health improved. We were nearer the country; and our new house satisfied my sense of what is beautiful. I had a pony and began to ride. This I enjoyed, though I did not become a good horseman, mainly, I think, because I was allowed to go out riding alone before I had been trained by a groom.

My youngest sister Charlotte and I became great friends, and we both profited by the companionship of her governess Mlle Sophie Girard, of whom I shall have more to say. We three formed a little coterie within the household.

Hitherto, so far as people were concerned, my inner life had been almost a blank.

It is a great misfortune for a boy to lose his mother so early as I did; and my father was so busy in his profession that he had very little time to bestow on me. Yet even in my childhood his strong and noble character, his sense of honour and duty, and his untiring energy impressed me. The drives I took with him were not thrown away. In the evenings also, when he had a spare hour, he used to read to us, choosing ballads, portions

of Scott's poems, passages from Hood's 'Miss Kilmansegg', stories from Hans Andersen, adapted to our intelligence.² These readings stimulated my literary instincts.

So far as my father was concerned, I grew up in an atmosphere of moral tension, and came to regard work as the imperative duty imposed on human beings.

My aunt, who came to take our mother's place, exercised an opposite influence. It is difficult to describe her character with any exactitude or fairness. She was essentially kind, but neither just nor tender—variable in temper, nervous and timid in her dealings with my father. He demanded strenuous physical energy and unwavering rectitude from those who formed his household. These she was unable to give, being constitutionally of quite a different complexion—subject to sleeplessness, dyspepsia and headaches—and what was worse in this respect, indifferent to truth in trifles. She therefore adopted a system of shifts, excuses and transactions, which to a child's keen instinct bore the aspect of unverity.³ She had a great sense of humour; but she exercised this rather reluctantly, turning people to ridicule behind their backs and uttering off-hand sarcasms which stung a child's sensitiveness like scorpions. By fits and starts, she showed real generosity and bursts of affection. {You could always rely upon her liberal impulses on serious occasions.} But justice had no place in her vocabulary, and her changes of mood were bewildering. Her religion was sincere. Yet it did not penetrate her daily life, and was mixed up with man-worship—at this epoch with, to my judgement, a wholly unaccountable enthusiasm for the Rev. William Knight and the Church Missionary Society.⁴ When she was not prostrated with headache, or worried with uncongenial social duties, her cheerfulness made her an amusing companion. To sum up; her chief faults were the want of steadiness, the want of veracity, and the want of equity. Her position as head of our family without being either mother or wife was a very difficult one. [I remain constant in my gratitude to her for what she meant to do and what she did through a long series of trying years.]⁵

It was a great day for all of us when my father announced on one June morning that he had bought Clifton Hill House, and drove us in his carriage to visit our future home.

This house had been built by a Bristol merchant named Paul Fisher. It carries on its garden front the date 1747, together with the coat of Fisher

impaling what other arms I know not. Paul Fisher himself sleeps in Clifton churchyard, and the vestibule to what is now the parish church contains his defrauded and neglected monument.

At the time when this substantial piece of early Georgian architecture was erected, Clifton still remained a country village. Paul Fisher's habitation had no rivals in antiquity but the Church House and the Manor House, none in stateliness except the fine suburban villa of the Goldney family.⁶ At this period—a period anterior to *Humphrey Clinker* and *Evelina*,⁷ novels which have made the Hotwells of Clifton famous in literature—Bristol merchants had begun to plant a few rare mansions in the immediate neighbourhood of the city, while the overflow of Bath fashion crowded the incommodious lodgings which nestled beneath St Vincent's rock upon the sheltered banks of Avon.

In those days Clifton must have been beautiful and wild indeed. The few houses of the gentry clustered around the humble village church—not that ugly building which now perpetuates the bad taste of the incipient Gothic revival, and the dismal piety of the Simeon trustees—but a rustic West of England chapel, with narrow windows and low sloping roof. Grass fields spread around this church, open to clear heavens and pure breezes from the Bristol channel. The meadows merged in heathy downs, stretching along the Avon at the height of some three hundred feet above water, until the land again broke into copse and pasture, sweeping with gentle crests and undulations to the estuary of the Severn.

At a considerable distance below the village, slept the great city, which next to London was still at that epoch the most important town in England. Bristol stands at the junction of the rivers Frome and Avon, which from this point flow together through a winding defile of high limestone cliffs to the Severn. Sea waters from the channel washed its walls, and tided merchant vessels to the quays of antique commerce. They brought with them the sugar and the spices, the tobacco and rare timber of Virginia and the Indies, [to be stored in the warehouses of the city wharves. When]⁸ Paul Fisher gazed from the windows of his new-built mansion over an expanse of verdure, he saw the streets and squares of the red-roofed town threaded with glittering water-ways, along which lay ocean-going ships, their tall masts vying with the spires and towers of clustered churches. St Mary de Redcliffe's broken spire, the square tower of the cathedral (that old Abbey church of the Augustinian monks, enriched by Barons of

Berkeley Castle), the sharp shaft of St Nicholas, the slender column of St Stephen, surveyed from the altitude of Clifton Hill, were all embedded in groves of limes and elms and masts with pennons waving from their tops.

Clifton Hill House, at the present day, turns a grim grey frontage to the road. It is a ponderous square mansion, built for perpetuity, with walls three feet in thickness, faced with smooth Bath stone. But, passing to the southern side, one still enjoys the wonderful prospect that I have described. Time has done much to spoil the landscape. Mean dwellings have clustered round the base of Brandon Hill, and crept along the slopes of Clifton. The city has extended on the further side toward Bedminster. Factory chimneys, with their filth and smoke, have saddened the simple beauty of the town and dulled the brightness of its air. But the grand features of nature remain. The rolling line of hills from Lansdowne over Bath, through Dundry with its solitary church tower, to Ashton guarding the gorge of Avon, presents a free and noble space for cloud shadows, a splendid scene for the display of sunrise. The water from the Severn still daily floods the river-beds at Frome and Avon; and the ships still come to roost, like ocean birds, beside the ancient churches. Moreover, the trees which Paul Fisher planted in his pleasance, have grown to a great height; so that a sea of many-coloured foliage waves beneath the windows of his dwelling-house.

On that eventful June morning, I entered the solemn front-door, traversed the echoing hall, vaulted and floored with solid stone, and emerged upon the garden at the further end. An Italian double flight of balustraded steps, largely designed, gives access to the gravelled terrace which separates the house from the lawn. For us it was like passing from the prose of fact into the poetry of fairyland.

The garden, laid out by Paul Fisher in 1747, had not been altered in any important particular, except that a large piece of it was cut away at the bottom to build a row of houses called Bellevue Terrace. Four great tulip trees, covered with golden blossoms, met our eyes at four points of vantage in the scheme. Between them, on either hand, rose two gigantic copper beeches, richly contrasted with the bright green of the tulip trees. Eight majestic elms, four on each side, guarded the terrace. They dated from an older period than the foundation of the dwelling house. The grove which clustered round the central grass plot, was further diversified by ilexes and mulberry trees, wych elms and pear trees, a fragile *ilanthus* and a feathery acacia, with cypresses from the black boughs of which the clambering roses fell in showers. Sycamores, beeches and walnuts formed

a leafy background to these choicer growths, and masked the ugly frontage of Bellevue.

Two ponds, quaintly enclosed with wired railings, interrupted at proper intervals the slope of soft green turf. Each had a fountain in its midst, the one shaped like a classic urn, the other a Cupid seated on a dolphin and blowing a conch. When the gardener made the water rise for us from these fountains, it flashed in the sunlight, tinkled on the leaves and cups of floating lilies, disturbed the dragonflies and gold fish from their sleepy ways. Birds were singing, as they only sing in old town gardens, a chorus of blackbirds, thrushes and finches. Rooks cawed from the elms above. The whole scene was ennobled by a feeling of respect, of merciful abstinence from superfluous meddling. When Paul Fisher planned his pleasure-ground, he meant it, according to the taste of that period, to be artificial and yet to vie with nature. Now nature had asserted her own sway, retaining through that century of wayward growth something which still owed its charm to artifice.

Although I am speaking of my home, and must of necessity be partial, I do not think I violate the truth when I say that this garden possessed a special grace and air of breeding, which lent distinction to the dignified but rather stolid house above. It was old enough to have felt 'the unimaginable touch of time',⁹ and yet not old or neglected enough to have fallen into decay. Left alone, it had gained a character of wildness; and yet kind touches had been given, which preserved it from squalor. Wealthy folk had always inhabited the mansion, and their taste reflected the peculiar beauty of the place. Afterwards, at New College and St John's, among the Oxford college gardens, I recognized the same charm. But the distinctive feature of the Clifton Hill garden was that the ground fell rapidly away from the terrace and the house—so that the windows above enjoyed a vast prospect, across its undulating roof of verdure, to the towered city, the glimpses of the Avon, the sea-going ships, and, far away beyond all that, to the hills of Bath and the long stretch of Dundry. It was a remarkable home for a dreamy town-bred boy of ten to be transported into.

On that eventful morning, the air hung heavy with a scent of hidden musk. The broad flower-beds upon the terrace and along the walls were a tangle of old-fashioned herbs in bloom—mulberry-coloured scabious, love-in-idleness, love-in-a-mist, love-lies-a-bleeding, corn-cockles, devil-in-the-bush, hollyhocks, carnations, creeping jenny, damask and cabbage and York and Lancaster roses. The mingled perfume of musk and rose pervades my memory when I think of that day; and when I come by accident

upon the scent of musk in distant places, I am again transported to the fairyland of boyhood. The throat-notes of thrush and blackbird, the music of tinkling fountains, the drowsy rhythm of hammers struck on timber in the city dockyards, blend in my recollection with pure strong slumberous summer sunlight and rich odours.

There was much in the mansion itself which satisfied my craving for architectural solidity and stateliness. The pediment of stone above our front-door in Berkeley Square had, as I have already mentioned, consoled my childish senses. The style of that detail was here expanded through the whole substantial edifice. The rusticated work upon the spacious massive basements, the balustraded staircases descending to the terrace, the huge balls of Bath stone placed at proper intervals upon the lower line of office buildings, the well-proportioned if too lofty rooms, the dignified waste of useful space in the long passages: all these characteristics of the Georgian manner gave satisfaction to my instinct of what is liberal in art, though of course they could not feed my fancy. I did not then reflect how gloomy that square house might be, how prosaic the inspiration of its builder was, how like prisons the upper rooms with their high windows are, and how melancholy the vast prospect over city, sky and stretching hills would afterwards appear to me in moods of weariness.

Then there were stables with haylofts and a paved yard, where my father generally kept eight horses; a summer house, upon the walls of which vines clambered and nectarines ripened; a kitchen-garden full of strawberries and currant bushes, apricots and plums and peaches. The top of the house itself formed a capital playground for us children. A rambling attic, which we called the loft, stretched away into mysterious recesses and dark corners. In some [of] these obscure chambers cisterns were hidden, which supplied the house with rainwater; from the narrow windows of others we could clamber out upon the roof, the sloping gables of which were covered with solid lead and fenced about with broad slabs of rough clean chiselled stone. From this height the eye swept spaces of the starry heavens at night; by day, town, tower and hill, wood, field and river lay bathed in light and flecked with shadows of the clouds.

The transition from Berkeley Square to Clifton Hill House contributed greatly, I am sure, to make me what I am. I cannot, of course, say what I should have become, had we remained in our old home. But I am certain that the new one formed my character and taste at a period when youth is most susceptible. My latent aesthetic sensibilities were immediately and powerfully stimulated.

Some years after the time of which I am writing, I brought a Balliol friend to stay with me at Clifton. On taking leave at the end of his visit, he remarked: 'I understand you now, and know what it is that made you what you are.' He was right, I believe. Places exercise commanding influence in the development of certain natures. Mine is one of them; and Clifton, with the house we lived in, had a magic of its own. Thirty-nine years have elapsed since I first went to live on Clifton Hill. The place has changed to such an extent that anyone who knows it now, might be excused for thinking I am rhapsodizing. He must bear in mind, however, that there were few buildings then between the parish church and Durdham Downs. The suburb which has grown up round the college, was a tract of fields, at the end of which lay the Zoological Gardens. Pembroke Road formed part of a narrow footway between quickset hedges, bearing the agreeable title of Gallowsacre Lane. The Tyburn of old Bristol occupied a plot of ground at the head of it toward the Downs. Coal smoke had not contaminated the air to any appreciable extent. The sea and river fogs of November were fleecy-white. No ironworks defaced the vale of Ashton. The thousands of middle-class houses, which now stretch from Clifton Church to Redland, and which are crawling on from Redland to Westbury, were then represented by two or three straggling terraces, by here and there a villa enclosed in its own crofts and gardens, by the long line of miscellaneous dwellings, called Whiteladies Road, which extended from the top of Park Street to the sign of the Black Boy, and there abruptly stopped before the silence and solitude of the windy down. The Downs too were wild, heathy and covered in the spring with flowers: not, as now, a kind of suburban park, but a real wilderness, a pleasure-ground for the romantic soul.¹⁰

My tutor, the Rev. William Knight, gave up his school, and came to live at no great distance from our house. He occupied a dreary abode in Wetherell Place; the outer walls roughcast and painted a dull lilac; standing in a stuffy plot of shrubbery between a blank wall to the front and a tall row of houses to the back. How any reasonable human being could in Clifton—the very essence of which place was poetry in some form or another—whether of the ancient town beside it, or of the free nature on its northern borders—have selected to abide in Wetherell Place, that region of shabby-genteel prose and stifling dullness, I am not prepared to say. Probably there were economical reasons, and social inducements, together with conveniences of contiguity to the Blind Asylum and St Michael's Church, which determined Mr Knight in his choice. But the choice sufficiently indicated the nature of the man, who was dyspeptic, melancholic,

constitutionally indolent, hopelessly unpractical and clogged with pecuniary and domestic cares. He realized the notion of a disappointed man; one who thought he had the right, and in some respects had really the right to expect from life more than he extracted from it; but who was baffled by debilities of will and character deep-seated in his temperament.

At the time of which I speak, Mr Knight was already ageing. He had lost his wife, and had several children to provide for. There were two invalid daughters, hunchbacked Hester, and gentle Margaret, who passed her life upon a couch. The eldest son, William, was a Secretary to the Missionary Society, and came at intervals to collect funds at Bristol for the Tinnevelly Station.¹¹ How I hated and mistrusted the cooked accounts and sordid pietisms of that vaunted¹² Mission! The Greek in me instinctively rebelled against the methods used for drawing money from our purses to provide¹³ some scores of rupee-Christians for the faith—the faith of what? A narrow, hide-bound, starched, commercial, middle-class, Anglo-Saxon, Evangelicalism. The Rev. William Knight Jr did much to evoke my hostility against English missionaries into existence. Even as a boy, and long before I could reason, I was profoundly sceptical. The second son, Robert, was at college in Cambridge, preparing himself for orders. Of him I shall speak when I describe my entrance into Harrow. There was a third son, Charles, who went to sea in boyhood, and was now beginning his career as marine and landscape painter. I always liked this man the best of the whole family, with the exception of gentle uncomplaining Margaret, stretched on her invalid's bed. A third daughter I ought not to omit. She was called Agnes: a good girl, I believe, but hard, ill-favoured, and sharing the personal ungraciousness which distinguished all the Knights—Margaret, the invalid, alone excepted.

It was necessary to describe the Knight family, since they played a considerable part in my life for several years to come.

Mr Knight could not be called an ideal tutor. He was sluggish, and had no sympathy for boys. Yet he was a sound scholar of the old type, and essentially a gentleman. He let me browse, much as I liked, about the pastures of innocuous Greek and Latin literature. He taught me to write Latin verses with facility. If I did not acquire elegance, that was the defect of my own faculty for style. I think he might have grounded me in grammar better than he did; and it would have been an incalculable advantage to me if he had been able to direct my keen, though latent, enthusiasm for books. In this respect, I owe him one and one only debt of gratitude. We were reading the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. He noticed

what a deep hold the description of Elysium took on my imagination and lent me Warburton's *Divine Legation of Moses* to read.¹⁴ A chapter in that book about the Mysteries opened dim and shadowy vistas for my dreaming thoughts. I cannot remember any other instance of my tutor's touching the real spring of thirst for knowledge in my nature. For the rest, he took care that I should understand the Odes of Horace and be capable of reproducing their various metres. This gave me a certain advantage when I came to Harrow.

[Mr Knight had generally one or two pupils living in his house, boys who were being prepared for the university. I had not much to do with them. But I remember one well. I think his name was Metcalfé. He had just left Harrow—why, I do not know—and something of the place still clung about him. I liked the big long lad, and sat upon his knees, and felt that it was good to sit there. Once he kissed me; but I sprang away from him with an undefined impulse of pride mingled with resentment and the tumultuous stirring of some perilous sense. He must have been a good youth, for he did not follow up his obvious advantage. He only laughed, and said: 'When you go to Harrow, you will be "sent up for first copy", and you will be some fellow's...' He stopped before the word escaped his lips. But in a year or two I learned what his respect for my innocence had left unuttered. The prophecy was not fulfilled, except as regards my facile successes with bad Latin verses.]¹⁵

With Mr Knight I read a large part of the *Iliad*. When we came to the last books, I found a passage which made me weep bitterly. It was the description of Hermes, going to meet Priam, disguised as a mortal:

κούρω αἰσυμνητῆρι εἰοικώς
πρώτον ὑπημήτη, τοῦ περ χαριστάτη ἦβη

The Greek¹⁶ in me awoke to that simple, and yet so splendid, vision of young manhood. 'In the first budding of the down on lip and chin, when youth is at her loveliest.'¹⁷ {The phrase had Greek sculpture in it; and all my dim forebodings of the charm of males were here idealized. The over-powering magic of masculine} adolescence drew my tears forth. I had none to spare for Priam prostrate at the feet of his son's murderer; none for Andromache bidding a last farewell to Hector of the waving plumes.¹⁸ These personages touched my heart and thrilled a tragic chord. But the disguised Hermes, in his prime and bloom of beauty, unlocked some deeper fountains of eternal longing in my soul.

Somewhat later, I found another line which impressed me powerfully and unsealed hidden wells of different emotion.¹⁹ It was in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides:

ἡ γλῶσσ' ὀμόμοχ ἡ δὲ φρῆν ἀνώματος²⁰

The sense of casuistry and criticism leapt into being at that touch. I fore-saw, in that moment, how²¹ pros and cons of moral conduct would have to be debated, how every thesis seeks antithesis and resolution in the mental sphere.

These were but vague²² awakenings of my essential self. For the most part, I remained inactive, impotent, somnambulistic, touching life at no edged point, very slowly defining the silhouette of my eventual personality.

Walking to and fro between Clifton Hill and Wetherell Place, I used to tell myself long classic stories, and to improvise nonsense verses on interminable themes. The vehicle I used was chiefly blank verse or trochaics. I delighted my sense of rhythm with the current of murmured sound. The subject I chose for these peripatetic rhapsodies was the episode of young Apollo in his sojourn among mortals, as the hind of King Admetus.²³ What befell him there, I expanded into nebulous epics of suffering and love and sorrow—dimmed deity involved with human sympathies. I declaimed the verses *sotto voce*,²⁴ as I walked. But now I can recall no incidents in the long poem, which, like a river, flowed daily, and might for ever have flowed on. The kernel of my inspiration was that radiant figure of the young Apollo, doomed to pass his time with shepherds, serving them, and loving them. A luminous haze of yearning emotion surrounded the god. His divine beauty penetrated my soul and marrow. I stretched out my arms to him in worship. It was I alone who knew him to be Olympian; and I loved him because he was a hind who went about the stables, milking cows. All this while, I felt that the god of my adoration drank life and love among the sheep-cotes of Admetus, clasped with that sturdy shepherd folk, more naturally than on the peaks of Parnassus, surrounded by the nine Muses.²⁵

As in the case of Adonis, I was in fact reading myself into this fable of Apollo; and quite unconsciously, as I perceive now, my daydreams [of the sailors and myself among them]²⁶ had assumed an objective and idealized form. Indeed, this preoccupation with the legend of the discrowned Phoebus casts vivid light upon my dumbly growing nature. It is singular that a boy should have selected any legend so dim and subtle for treatment in the way I have described. But, what is far more curious, it seems

that I was led by an unerring instinct to choose a myth foreshadowing my peculiar temperament and distant future. I have lived to realize that obscure vision of my boyhood. The sequel of this autobiography will show that I have brought my cultured self into the sheep-cotes, have lost it or disguised it there, and have found with hinds and peasants pleasure and profit which Parnassus and the Muses could not yield me. In our age, Parnassus is the shop of some famed publisher, girt round about its base with bristling undergrowths of cities. The Muses are society, or coteries composed of sympathetic females. Such a Parnassus, such Muses, cannot satisfy a sincere right-feeling spirit. Man loves man and nature; the pulse of human life, the contact with the genial earth, are the real things. Art must ever be but a shadow for truly *puissant*²⁷ individualities. In this way I have grown to think and feel. And just for this reason, my boyish preoccupation with the legend of Apollo in the stables of Admetus has psychological significance. It shows how early and instinctively I apprehended the truth, by the light of which I still live, that a disguised god, communing with mortals, loving mortals and beloved by them, is more beautiful, more desirable, more enviable, than the same god uplifted on the snow-wreaths of Olympus or the twin peaks of Muse-haunted Parnassus.

Rightly or wrongly, the principles involved in that boyish vision of Phoebus, the divine spirit serving and loving in plain ways of pastoral toil, have ended by fashioning my course. It has become my object to assimilate culture to the simplest things in man's life, and to resume from human sympathy of the crudest kind fuel and fire for the vivifying of ideas. By means of this philosophy I have been enabled to revive from mortal sickness, and, what is perhaps more, to apprehend the religious doctrine of democracy, the equality and homogeneity of human beings, the divinity enclosed in all. It was not therefore by accident, I think, that the prolonged daydream of Apollo in exile haunted me during my somnambulistic boyhood. Temperaments of my stamp come to themselves by broodings upon fancies which prefigure the destiny in store for them, and are in fact the symbols of their soul.

I took no pleasure in athletic sports of any kind. To ramble over the Downs and through the woods was enough for me. I hated the exertion rivalry and noise of games. Want of muscular vigour and timidity²⁸ combined to make me solitary. Yet I could run well and jump standing the height of my own shoulders. I liked riding also, but was neither a bold nor expert horseman. {What I most enjoyed was leading a band of four boys, my cousins, in wild scrambles over Durdham Downs and on the rocks that over-

hang the Avon. We played at defending and attacking castles, which were located upon points of vantage in the gully near the sea-walls and the steep descent of cliff beneath St Vincent's Rock. No harm came of these adventures, although we defied each other to deeds of daring in places where a fall would have been perilous exceedingly. Tired out and panting with this kind of exercise, I used to fling myself upon some grassy ledge among the lady's bedstraw and blue harebells, watching the ships come floating down the Avon or the jackdaws chattering in their ivy-curtained crannies.} ²⁹

For everything which I took up, whether study or amusement, I showed a languid *dilettante*³⁰ interest, pursuing it without energy or perseverance. Thus I played with an electrical machine and microscope, collected flowers and dried them, caught butterflies and pinned them upon corks; but I was far too dreamy and impatient to acquire any solid knowledge of natural science. I crammed my memory with the names of infusorial animalcules, seaweeds, wild flowers—a great many of which still lie in the lumber-room of my brain. I got to know the aspects of such things, and enjoyed the places where I went to find my specimens. But of animal or vegetable physiology I learned nothing. One reason was, perhaps, that I had no one to teach me and no attractive text-books. The real secret of my inefficiency lay, however, in want of will and liking for accurate study. I was a weakling in mind and body, only half awake.

Early in the winter of one year I fell ill of chronic diarrhoea. To this I had been subject at intervals from my earliest infancy; and now I poisoned myself by drinking some cheap effervescing mixtures. My father sent me to stay with friends at Torquay. They lived in a little cottage with a front garden full of sweet-smelling violets, fuchsias, and shrub veronicas in bloom. I date a considerable mental progress from this visit. There I learned the beauty of the sea—low tides and pools upon the shore of Torbay. Dr Tetley used to drive me about the country in his carriage; and a diminutive naturalist was very kind to me. He took me with him out upon the reefs to gather seaweeds. I made a huge collection of such things. Even now I can remember the solemnity with which my friend exclaimed, when I hauled some spidery black weed out of a pool: 'I do believe that you have captured *Gigantea Taedii*!' All through the remainder of the winter and spring, after I returned to Clifton, hampers sent by a Torbay fisherman used to arrive stuffed with the wrack of the shore. Charlotte, Sophie Girard and I divided the shiny mass into three equal portions, floated our booty in three separate tubs, and fished with eager fingers for *Delesseria sanguinea*, *Padina pavonia*, or a fine specimen of *Plocamium coccineum*.

It was on my return from this visit to Torquay that I first set eyes on Sophie Girard. She had arrived in my absence to be my sister's governess. They came back from a walk while I was standing in the hall between the dining-room and drawing-room doors. Her bright face rosy with the freshness of the open air, her laughing eyes and abundance of glossy yellow hair, made a very pleasant impression on me. I felt at once that she would be a great addition to our home circle; and this in truth she was, far more than I could then imagine. She taught me German; the little I know of that language I owe entirely to her. She had a gift for teaching, and was the first person from whom I consciously learned anything whatsoever.

About this time I began to walk in my sleep. It seemed to me that a corpse lay beside me in the bed. To escape from it, I got up and roamed about the house; but there were corpses standing in the doorways as I hurried through the long dark corridors. One night I wandered into the loft, and was walking straight into an open cistern which collected the rainwater from the roof, when I felt the hands of a great angel with outspread wings laid upon my shoulders. For a moment I woke up, and saw the moonlight glinting on the water through some cranny. Then I fell asleep again, and returned unconsciously to bed. Next morning my shins and thighs were badly bruised, and the footman who slept in the loft had a mysterious tale to tell about a white being who had moved about the furniture and boxes. It appeared that the stupid fellow had allowed himself actually to be shoved by me, bed and all, from the door through which I passed into the remote corner where the cistern lay. It was a pity that he had not had the courage to look up, or the impulse to take me into his bed! Something might then have happened which would not, I think, have been otherwise than good for my peculiar nature. After this occurrence my father had me tied into bed by one of my ankles every night. When the corpse came to expel me, I floundered³¹ on the floor until I woke and crept back shivering between the sheets. This Spartan discipline effectually cured me of sleep-walking.

A recurrent dream of quite a new sort now visited my slumber. It was the beautiful face of a young man, with large blue eyes and waving yellow hair which emitted a halo of misty light. He bent down, gazing earnestly and tenderly, until his lips touched my forehead. Then I woke and beheld the aureole fading away into the darkness.

Much might be written about the self-revealing influence of dreams and the growth of the inner man in sleep. This vision of ideal beauty under the form of a male genius symbolized spontaneous yearnings deeply

seated in my nature, and prepared me to receive many impressions of art and literature.

A photograph of the Praxitelean Cupid:

that most perfect of antiques
They call the Genius of the Vatican,
Which seems too beauteous to endure itself
In this mixed world—³²

taught me to feel the secret of Greek sculpture.³³ I used to pore for hours together over the divine loveliness, while my father read poetry aloud to us in the evenings. He did not quite approve, and asked me why I would not choose some other statue, a nymph or Hebe.³⁴ Following the impressions made by Shakespeare's Adonis and the Homeric Hermes, blending with the dream I have described and harmonizing with my myth of Phoebus in the sheep-cotes, this photograph strengthened the ideal I was gradually forming of adolescent beauty. It prepared me to receive the *Apoxyomenos* and Marlowe's Leander,³⁵ the young men of Plato and much else besides. I was certainly a rather singular boy. But I suppose, if other people wrote down the history of their mental growth with the same frankness and patience, I should not stand alone. What I really wanted at this period was some honest youth for comrade, a sailor or a groom or a labourer, who would have introduced me into the masculine existence for which I craved in a dim shrinking way. My equals repelled me. The Cretan customs of heroic pailerastia had much that was good in them. The love of a robust and manly lad, even if it had not been wholly pure, must have been beneficial to a boy like me.³⁶ As it was, I lived into emotion through the brooding imagination; and nothing is more dangerous, more unhealthy than this.

I was very fond of picture books and drew a great deal from Raphael, Flaxman and Retzsch.³⁷ Our house was well stocked with engravings, photographs, copies of Italian pictures and illustrated works upon Greek sculpture. Lasinio's Campo Santo of Pisa, Sir William Hamilton's vases, the Museo Borbonico and the two large folios issued by the Dilettante Society were among my chief favourites.³⁸ But I carried my habitual indolence and³⁹ irresolution into these studies. I had no artistic originality, and would not take the trouble to learn to draw well. We went to an art school just then established in Bristol. The hexagons, cubes, patterns they gave me to copy filled me with repugnance.

It is probable that the abundance of art material at home was not an unmixed good. It certainly familiarized me with a large variety of master-

pieces, and taught me to discriminate styles. But when I came to study critically, my mind was stocked with a mass of immature associations and imperfect memories. The sharp impression made on me by Botticelli, Tintoretto, Signorelli, Mantegna, Bellini, Luini and Gaudenzio Ferrari during my earliest Italian journeys,⁴⁰ may be ascribed to the fact that their works were almost entirely unrepresented in my father's library. We had one piece of Signorelli by the way. It was MacPherson's photograph of the Fulminati at Orvieto.⁴¹ It had come, by accident, I think, and nobody knew what it represented or who had painted it. I used to brood over the forcible, spasmodic vigour of this tragic group—feeling it quite different, far more penetrative, than anything in Raphael or Michelangelo.⁴² Yet Duppa's large studies from the Last Judgement in the Sistine were well known to me.⁴³ Toschi's admirable engravings of Correggio's frescoes at Parma, which were sent to us at intervals by Colnaghi,⁴⁴ as they appeared, taught me to appreciate the melodic suavity of design. I always connected them with the airs from Mozart's masses which my sisters used to play.⁴⁵

My sensibility to natural beauty {meanwhile} expanded. The immersion in the mystery of landscape, which I have already described, yielded to more conscious pleasure and a quicker sympathy. Yet I grew but slowly, and disengaged myself with difficulty from the narcotism of my mental faculties.

When the family was gone to bed, I spent hours alone in my bedroom at the north-east angle of the house, watching the clouds and mists of autumn drifting and recomposing their flying forms around the moon, high up above the city lamps.

I woke at dawn to see the sunrise flood the valley, touch the steeples of the town, shimmer upon the water where ships lay, and glance along the stirless tree-tops of the garden, green and dewy depths below me.

One morning in particular I can remember. On the preceding evening we had picked autumn crocuses in the fields by Westbury. The flowers were placed in a great bowl outside my bedroom door. The sunrise woke me, and I opened the door to look upon them. A broad red ray of light fell upon their lilac chalices, intensifying and translating into glowing amethyst each petal.

Winter sunrise provided pageants of more fiery splendour. From the dark rim of Dundry Hill behind which the sun was journeying, striving to emerge, there shot to the clear sapphire zenith shafts of rosy flame, painting the bars of cloud with living fire and enamelling the floating mists

which slowly changed and shifted across liquid spaces of orange, daffodil and beryl.

Lightning, in thunderstorms of summer nights, made the wide world beneath me visible by flashes; deluged the hissing rain with palpitating whiteness; brought into metallic clearness leaf by leaf of the intensely verdant trees; restored a momentary scarlet to the geraniums and verbenas in the flower-beds.

The evening star, liquid, dilated, in pure sky-spaces above the church-yard gate, or tangled in the distant trees of Ashton, drew my soul out with longings such as melodies of Mozart excite.

Once there was a comet, a thin rod of amber white, drowned in the sapphire of the sunset, which slowly sank and disappeared into the western hills beyond the channel.

Mellow mists above the Avon in October, veiling the russet woods; the masts of great ships slowly moving, scarcely visible through pearly vapour; glimpses of seagulls following the barques from their far ocean journeys;⁴⁶ knee-deep wanderings in Leigh Woods' bracken; climbings of the grey St Vincent's Rocks in search of flowers, where the jackdaws flew frightened from their holes as I came near them; the panoply of silver bloom with which the thorns on Clifton Downs arranged themselves in May; the ripe horse chestnuts found in drifts of rustling leaves in autumn: —it is enough to rapidly note such things, which bred in me the sense of natural beauty and the love of colour.⁴⁷

After my recovery from the illness alluded to above, an amateur artist, Mr Stanhouse Vigor, painted the portrait of me in oils which now hangs in the dining-room of Sidbury Manor.⁴⁸ I used to sit for this picture in the studio, which was a north room of a house in the Royal York Crescent. The likeness was reckoned very good. It shows me to have been a slight boy with abundance of brown hair, soft brown eyes, delicate hands and a dreamy expression.

I am sure that I was not personally vain. My aunt twitted me so unmercifully with my mealy complexion, snub nose, broad mouth and naked gums that I almost shrank from sight and felt grateful to people who did not treat me with merited contempt. 'Oh, Johnnie, how mealy you are!' 'You look as yellow as a lemon this morning!' 'There you go with your mouth stretching from ear to ear!' These were some of her amenities, not unkindly meant, and only expressive of a real concern about my weakly constitution, which developed in me a morbid and unamiable self-consciousness. I had no power of reacting vigorously, and did not set my

back up or assert myself. But I nourished a secret resentment and proud obstinate aloofness.

Physical weakness depressed me. I had more nervous vitality than muscular robustness, a small share of bodily pluck, and no combativeness. Naturally shy and timid through sensitiveness, though by no means morally a coward, I sought to be left alone, convinced that I could interest nobody.

But I developed some disagreeable qualities akin to vanity. My aunt often told us that our name was what she called ‘so common’, though the difference between Symonds and Sykes from a social point of view did not seem to me apparent. The sound of both became odious to my ears. I have never overcome my dislike of hearing my own name roared out by a flunkey, and have neglected many useful opportunities in life through this foolish pride.

She also reminded us, and I think rightly, that the ease in which we lived, the number of servants who waited on us, {the carriages and horses,} the large house and its {profuse}⁴⁹ objects of interest and beauty, the dinner-parties we gave and the crowds of distinguished people who visited our home, were all contingent on my father’s professional success. Doctors, she added, have no rank in society. This was very true, and it argued something ungenerous in my nature that I did not accept it cheerfully.

I soon perceived that my father’s character, ability and many-sided culture separated him from the ordinary run of medical men. He was sought after on his own rare merits by men and women of birth, position, political and social importance. The⁵⁰ friend of John Sterling, Frederick Maurice, Myers of Keswick, Lord Lansdowne, {Hallam, Jowett,} Lord Monteaule, Principal Forbes, Lord Aberdare, Lady Dufferin, Dean Elliot, Sir Edward Strachey, Dr Carpenter, Dr Prichard, Sir Montagu MacMurdo and scores of others I could mention,⁵¹ was an exceptional physician; and his only son enjoyed exceptional advantages in the society of such people.

This did not, however, compensate to my own cross-grained consciousness for the patent facts of my personal drawbacks. I was a physically insignificant boy, with an ill-sounding name and nothing to rely on in the circumstances of my family. Instead of expanding in the social environment around me, I felt myself at a disadvantage, and early gained the notion that I must work for my own place in the world—in fact that I should have no place till I had made one for myself. The result was that, instead of being flattered, I almost resented the attentions paid me as my father’s son, and was too stupid to perceive how honourable as well

as valuable they might be if I received them with a modest frankness. I regarded them as acts of charitable condescension. Thus I passed into an attitude of haughty⁵² shyness, which had nothing respectable in it except a sort of self-reliant world-defiant pride, a resolution to effectuate myself and to win what I wanted by my exertions.

The inborn repugnance to sordid things, which I have already described as one of my main characteristics, now expressed itself in a morbid sense of my physical ugliness, common patronymic, undistinguished status, and mental ineffectiveness. I did not envy the possessors of beauty, strength, birth, rank or genius. But I vowed to raise myself, somehow or other, to eminence of some sort. How this was to be done, when there were so many difficulties in the way, I did not see. Without exactly despairing, I felt permanently discouraged.

My ambition took no vulgar form. I felt no desire for wealth, no mere wish to cut a figure in society. But I thirsted with intolerable thirst for eminence, for recognition as a personality. At the same [time] I had no self-confidence, no belief in my intellectual powers. I was only buoyed up by an undefined instinct that there was stuff in me. Meanwhile, all I could do was to bide my time, and see how things would go, possessing my soul in silence and wrapping a cloak of reserve about my internal hopes and aims.

The state which I have just described began to define itself during the first period of boyhood. But it grew and strengthened with the following years. It was highly characteristic of my temperament that, powerfully as I felt these cravings, they did not take a very distinct form and did not stimulate me to any marked activity.

The depressing conviction of my own unattractiveness and inefficiency saved me perhaps from some evil. If I had been a little vainer, I might have become presumptuous or vulgarly ambitious. I might perhaps too have fallen into moral difficulties; for I was ready to love and be loved. As it was, this conviction kept me aloof from companions and hedged me round with the security of isolation. I wonder whether this seclusion from vice, involving a seclusion from sympathy, was salutary.

I have painted myself at this period in an unamiable light, but truthfully I think. And I must proceed with the not very flattering analysis.

The result of my habitual reserve was that I now dissembled my deepest feelings, and only revealed those⁵³ sentiments which I knew would pass muster. Without meaning to do so, I came to act a part, and no one knew what was going on inside me. A boy wants a mother at such periods of uneasy fermentation. I was ready enough in writing to com-

municate⁵⁴ such portions of my experience as I chose to exhibit⁵⁵—impenetrably reserved in the depth of myself, rhetorically candid on the surface. My father, not unnaturally, misunderstood this complication. He afterwards told me that he sent me with undoubting confidence to Harrow, because he had no conception that I was either emotional or passionate. The unconscious dissimulation I habitually practised, blinded him to the truth. Feeling that I was growing and must grow in solitude to an end I could not foresee, which no one could help me to shape, and which I was myself impotent to determine, I allowed an outer self⁵⁶ of commonplace {cheerfulness} and easy-going pliability to settle⁵⁷ like a crust upon my inner and real character.⁵⁸

Nothing is more difficult than to analyse such psychological conditions without attributing too much deliberation and consciousness to what was mainly a process of spontaneous development. Congenital qualities and external circumstance acted together to determine a mental duality—or shall I call it duplicity,⁵⁹ of which I became aware when it had taken hold upon my nature.

On my twelfth birthday I went up as usual to kiss my father. He said gravely: ‘Shake hands; you are grown too old for kissing.’ I felt rather ashamed of having offered what my twelfth birthday rendered unseemly, and took a step upon the path toward isolation. But there was something virginal and savage in me which accepted the remark with approval. Henceforth I shrank from the exposure of emotion, except upon paper, in letters, and in studied language.

I have drawn a somewhat disagreeable picture of my early boyhood.⁶⁰ I was bound to do so, because it presents itself under these aspects very vividly to my mind,⁶¹ and because I find that the recollection is confirmed by a poem called ‘Theodore’⁶² which I wrote at Malvern in the autumn of 1862 when the facts of that period were still fresh in my memory.

Still it must not be imagined that I was a moody discontented miserable boy. I had high spirits enough, and knew how to make myself agreeable⁶³ in congenial society. I was talkative, easily interested, ready to find amusement in all sorts of petty things—so long as these were not school games and involved no sort of physical competition. I believe that Sophie Girard, if she wrote down what she remembers about me, would correct the impression that I have conveyed through my sincere desire to record the truth of my internal nature. The inner growth was so much more important to myself, and still remains so, that I have failed to communicate a proper notion of the whole. Indeed, no one can get outside himself

and see what he appears. He only knows himself inside, and knows that aspect only in part.

One thing is certain. I acquired a passionate affection for my home and Clifton, which included my family—although I think I cared for them chiefly as forming parts of the delightful environment.

NOTE TO THE PRECEDING CHAPTER

At my request Mlle Girard has written the following account of what she remembers of the first year of her life at Clifton.⁶⁴

37 Friedensgasse.

My dear Johnnie—

I have been exceedingly ill in many ways, so your wish could unfortunately not be attended to. Now I am better and I will endeavour to tell you what you ask and if I fail it is not from want of remembering, but from general stupidity. Those early Clifton days stand in their minutest details before me. I came to you in 53 when I suppose you were 12. We became friends at once over a bundle of seaweeds you had brought back. You were fond of imparting knowledge and I was glad to learn so I very soon became your devoted slave like the rest of the household. We all vied in doing what you would like, and it was a pleasure, a natural instinct I may say.

Your temper was perfect so it was not fear that compelled us to submit to your rule. When you were with us you never showed the least sign of the despondency that troubled you as soon as you were away from home. You were always joyous and bright, fond of teasing us in the manner of boys, and *very* fond of sitting on other people and cutting them to pieces. It was the besetting sin of us all, but certainly you were the leader and were merciless to a set of frumps (your name for them) which before each party Charlotte you and I were ordered to amuse, while Edith and Maribella devoted themselves to a more select company. When the decisive moment came, no one could have been more suave and fascinating than you were and the frumps one and all adored you and had a happy evening.

The acquirement of any kind of knowledge seemed equally easy to you and was pursued until conquered. Natural history and poetry were then your favourite studies and we never took our walks abroad without either Chaucer or Southey.⁶⁵ I speak of quite the earliest days of our acquaintance when I scarcely knew enough English to understand everything you read to me. How well I remember sitting by the pond at the zoological gardens and your reading *Thalabar* and *The Curse of Kehamal*⁶⁶ to me while Charlotte

who certainly had no liking for the divine Muse then, fed the swans and ran about.

In those days you liked women's society and abominated boys. Woe to us, if we dared in order to tease you express admiration or liking for one of your friends. It was not to be tolerated a moment, nor was it ever meant in earnest, for you certainly were the most delightful, intelligent, cheerful and amusing companion. Your activity of mind and body were wonderful, and as I was never so happy as when climbing a tree or a precipitous rock, we got on admirably. Poor Charlotte was timid and nothing would induce her to venture in dangerous places, and quite right too. I feel for her *now* more than then.

I must not forget to mention that you dearly loved arguing and that on Sunday evening when we had tea instead of dinner and recited a poem to Miss Sykes afterwards, you never missed the opportunity of having a religious argument and almost reduced her to tears with your inflexible logic. We all thought you must become a barrister, and you actually promised me a handsome mausoleum when you became Lord Chancellor!

I do not remember your writing poetry or stories then. Many years after when we had the *Constellation* you wrote of course.⁶⁷ Still I do not believe that we thought you would become the greatest writer of your age.

These impressions relate to the time before you went to Harrow. I can still feel the desolation and the void your absence made. You went off bravely enough the first time, but the second you cried and we cried and there seemed no pleasure in the house. How dull the schoolroom was until holidays!

Now, I hope, you will gather some notion of what you were then. I could go on for a long time in the same strain. Don't you really remember what you were like in the least?

[My best love to Catherine, the girls and yourself and also my warmest thanks with compound interest for your yearly contribution to my income. It is better than a handsome mausoleum and being a great poet is better than being a Lord Chancellor.

Ever affectionately and gratefully yours
SR Girard]⁶⁸

NOTES

1. Clifton Hill House was designed by Isaac Ware and built for Paul Fisher, a linen draper and merchant. Ware's designs for the house are featured in his *Complete Body of Architecture* (1756). Clifton

- Hill House was purchased by the University of Bristol in 1909 and converted into a hall of residence.
2. Walter Scott (1771–1832), Scottish poet and novelist best known for the *Waverley Novels* series (1814–31).
Thomas Hood (1799–1845), poet and writer for magazines, periodicals and annuals. His ‘Miss Kilmansegg and Her Precious Leg. A Golden Legend’ (1840–41) was a satirical poem first published in the *New Monthly Magazine*.
Hans Christian Andersen (1805–75), Danish writer best known for his fairy tales.
 3. Deletes ‘lies’, substitutes ‘unveracity’ (MS 74).
 4. The Church Missionary Society was founded in 1799. Then known as the Society for Missions to Africa and the East, it drew influence (and many members) from the Clapham Sect of reformers and campaigners.
 5. Later addition in a smaller script (MS 74).
 6. The Goldney family purchased their Clifton villa in the early eighteenth century and redeveloped the building in the 1720s. Goldney Hall was purchased by the University of Bristol in 1956 and converted into a hall of residence.
 7. *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) by Tobias Smollett.
Evelina: Or The History of A Young Lady’s Entrance into the World (1778) by Frances Burney.
 8. Later addition in a smaller script (MS 76).
 9. From ‘Mutability’ in *Ecclesiastical Sketches* (1822) by William Wordsworth.
 10. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 85 blank (8 cms of clear space). MS 86 begins with the following passage, marked for deletion:

With our removal to Clifton Hill House, a new chapter opened in my life experience. Childhood was passed, and the first period of boyhood began. It was a stage of greatly increased happiness and accelerated growth. My health improved, my senses enlarged, and I began to perceive dim glimmerings of intellectual activity.

This stage covered the interval between June 1851 and May 1854. If I were so foolish as to waste regrets about the past and its inevitable progress toward the present, I might be sorry that a time so tranquil and fruitful of results was broken by my being sent to Harrow. (MS 86)

The opening sentence recurs on MS 105, where it is again marked for deletion.

11. A missionary station in southern India. ‘Tinnevely’ was the anglicised name given to the city of Tirunelveli while under British colonial rule.
12. Deletes ‘crack’, substitutes ‘vaunted’ (MS 88).
13. Deletes ‘convert’, substitutes ‘provide’ (MS 88).
14. *Divine Legation of Moses* (1737–41) by William Warburton.
15. Passage marked for deletion accompanied by a marginal note: ‘Omit’ (MS 90–1). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from ‘when I came to Harrow’ (MS 90) to ‘With Mr Knight I read’ (MS 91). See Brown, I, p. 48.
16. Following ‘The Greek’, deletes ‘soul’ (MS 91).
17. Symonds translates the above lines from Homer’s *Iliad*, Book 24 (ll. 347–8). He tries ‘bloom of beauty’ and ‘prime of beauty-bloom’ (both marked for deletion) before settling on ‘loveliest’ (MS 91).
 In Book 24 of *The Iliad*, Hermes (son of Zeus and Maia; a messenger often portrayed with winged ankles or sandals) is commanded by Zeus to accompany Priam, King of Troy, as he journeys to recover the dead body of his son, Hector, from Achilles. Hermes undertakes this journey disguised as an adolescent boy or youth.
18. Andromache was Hector’s wife. The ‘waving plumes’ refer to the horsehair in Hector’s helmet—cf. *The Iliad*, Book 6 (ll. 466–75) where Hector’s plumed helmet frightens his son Scamandrius (or Astyanax).
19. Deletes ‘fountains of my hidden consciousness’, substitutes ‘hidden wells of different emotion’ (MS 92).
20. Trans.: The tongue has sworn, but the heart is unsworn. From Euripides’s *Hippolytus* (l. 612).
21. Deletes ‘as in a dream, that’, substitutes ‘in that moment, how’ (MS 92).
22. Following ‘but vague’, deletes ‘casual’ (MS 92).
23. In Greek mythology, Apollo (or Phoebus; son of Zeus and Leto) was commanded by Zeus to serve as a shepherd to Admetus, King of Therae, following his killing of the Cyclops.
24. Trans.: whisper; literally, below voice.

25. In Greek mythology, the Muses were mountain goddesses of inspiration and the arts. They were variously associated with the springs of Helicon and Mount Parnassus near Delphi.
26. Material in parentheses (MS 93). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from ‘my daydreams’ (MS 93) to ‘assumed an objective and idealised form’ (MS 93). See Brown, I, p. 50.
27. Trans.: powerful, forceful.
28. Following ‘and timidity’, deletes ‘with boys’ (MS 96).
29. Marginal note: ‘Games with cousins’ (MS 96).
30. Trans.: amateur, dabbling.
31. Symonds tries ‘lay’ and ‘grovelled’ (both marked for deletion) before settling on ‘floundered’ (MS 100).
32. From *Aurora Leigh* (1856) by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.
33. Praxiteles was a Greek sculptor of the 4th century BCE. The *Eros of Centocelle*—known by various names, including the ‘Genius of the Vatican’—is thought to be a marble copy of a lost original: Praxiteles’s *Eros of Thespiae*. Symonds addresses a poem to the *Eros of Centocelle*: ‘To the Praxitelean Statue called the Genius of the Greeks’ was included in his privately printed pamphlet, ‘Pantarkes’, and later reprinted in *Many Moods: A Volume of Verse* (1878).
34. In Greek mythology, Hebe (daughter of Zeus and Hera) was cup-bearer to the gods before her position was usurped by Ganymede. She later married Heracles.
35. Presumably the Vatican’s *Apoxyomenos*, thought to be a marble copy of a lost original by Lysippos, a Greek sculptor of the 4th century BCE.
Hero and Leander (1598) by Christopher Marlowe.
36. Deletes ‘my nature’, substitutes ‘a boy like me’ (MS 102).
37. Raffaello Sanzio, or Raphael (1483–1520), Italian Renaissance painter and architect.
 John Flaxman (1755–1826), English sculptor, designer and draughtsman.
 Friedrich August Moritz Retzsch (1779–1857), German engraver and illustrator who published the multi-volume *Gallerie zu Shakespeare’s Dramatischen Werken in Umrissen* (1828–46).
38. Carlo Lasinio (1759–1838), Italian engraver and curator of the Campo Santo in the Piazza del Duomo (now the Piazza dei Miracoli) at Pisa. He is best known for his *Pitture a fresco del Camp Santo di Pisa* (1812).

William Hamilton (1731–1803), English politician, diplomatist and art collector. In 1766 he purchased a collection of ancient Greek vases from Prince Porcinari; in 1789 he began to amass a second collection, later described in *Collection of Engravings from Ancient Vases* (1791–95).

The Real Museo Borbonico in Naples (now known as the Museo Archeologico Nazionale) was established in 1777 by King Ferdinand IV, unifying the collections of the Museo Farnesiano di Capodimonte and the Herculaneum Museum at Portici.

The Society of Dilettanti is believed to have been established in 1732 as a dining club for gentlemen who had been on the Grand Tour. It soon began to advocate for the public appreciation and further study of ancient Greek and Roman art.

39. Deletes ‘the same dreamy’, substitutes ‘my habitual indolence and’ (MS 103).
40. Symonds lists famous artists of the Italian Renaissance: Sandro Botticelli (c.1445–1510), Jacopo Tintoretto (c.1518–94), Luca Signorelli (c.1440–1523), Andrea Mantegna (c.1430–1506), Giovanni Bellini (d. 1516), Bernardino Luini (c.1480–1532), and Gaudenzio Ferrari (d. 1545).
41. Robert Macpherson (c.1814–72), Scottish photographer and painter who lived and worked in Rome. In 1858 he contributed more than one hundred photographs to an exhibition in London curated by the Architectural Photographic Association, including a print entitled *Group from a fresco by Luca Signorelli at Orvieto*.
42. Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564), Italian Renaissance artist, architect and writer. Symonds included a study of Michelangelo in the third volume of his *Renaissance in Italy* (*The Fine Arts*, 1877). He later published a translation of *The Sonnets of Michael Angelo Buonarroti and Tommaso Campanella* (1878) and a biography, *The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti* (1893).
43. Presumably *A Selection of Twelve Heads from the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo* (1801) by Richard Duppa.
44. Paolo Toschi (1788–1854), Italian engraver commissioned to reproduce frescoes by the Renaissance artists Correggio and Parmigianino. In June 1845, the *Spectator* advertised that forty-eight of Toschi’s prints would be published by Paul and Dominic Colnaghi.

45. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 104 blank (6 cms of clear space).
46. Following 'far ocean-journeys', deletes 'as I fancied' (MS 107).
47. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 107 blank (8 cms of clear space).
48. This portrait now hangs in the Symonds Music Room at Clifton Hill House. Sidbury Manor, Devon, was the home inherited by Charles Cave in 1880. Cave was Symonds's brother-in-law, the husband of his sister, Edith.
49. The word 'profuse' has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 110).
50. Following 'The', deletes 'intimate' (MS 110).
51. Frederick Denison Maurice, also known as F.D. Maurice (1805–92), Christian socialist and a close friend of John Sterling.

Frederic Myers (1811–51), clergyman best known for his *Catholic Thoughts on the Bible and Theology* (written and privately circulated amongst friends in the 1830s–40s; first published in 1873).

The most likely candidate for the unnamed Lord Lansdowne is Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, the 3rd Marquess (1780–1863). He served as Chancellor of the Exchequer (1806–7) and Home Secretary (1827–28), acting as patron to Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1st Baron Macaulay, another close friend of Symonds's father and a visitor to Clifton Hill House. A weaker case can be made for the 4th Marquess, also named Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice (1816–66), on account of his dates and career in politics.

Henry Hallam (1777–1859), historian and father to Arthur Henry Hallam, whose early death in 1833 inspired Alfred Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850).

Benjamin Jowett (1817–93), scholar, translator and editor of ancient Greek literature, appointed Master of Balliol College, Oxford, in 1870.

Thomas Spring Rice, 1st Baron Monteagle of Brandon (1790–1866), politician who served as Chancellor of the Exchequer (1835–39).

James David Forbes (1809–68), scientist who helped to found the British Association for the Advancement of Science; he was appointed Principal of United College, University of St Andrews, in 1859.

Henry Austin Bruce, 1st Baron Aberdare (1815–95), politician who served as Home Secretary (1868–73).

Helen Selina Hay, née Sheridan (1807–67), was the Baroness Dufferin and Claneboye. She was a writer and musician from a famous family: her father was an actor, Thomas Sheridan, and her grandfather was a playwright, Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Gilbert Elliot (1800–91), Dean of Bristol Cathedral between 1850 and 1891.

William Benjamin Carpenter (1813–85), physician and naturalist. He was awarded the Royal Medal by the Royal Society in 1861.

James Cowles Prichard (1786–1848), physician and writer with diverse interests, including historical linguistics and ideas of moral insanity. In March 1849, Symonds's father delivered a memorial lecture on Prichard's life and work. Symonds published this lecture as part of his father's *Miscellanies* (1871).

William Montagu Scott McMurdo (1819–94), army officer who achieved the rank of Major-General in 1868. McMurdo served in the Crimean War as Director-General of the Land Transport Corps.

52. Following 'haughty', deletes 'suspicious' (MS 111).
53. Following 'revealed those', deletes 'conventional' (MS 114).
54. Deletes 'reveal', substitutes 'communicate' (MS 114).
55. Deletes 'produce', substitutes 'exhibit' (MS 114).
56. Deletes 'I found it easy to construct an external self', substitutes 'I allowed an outer self' (MS 115).
57. Deletes 'grow', substitutes 'settle' (MS 115).
58. Deletes 'nature of my temperament', substitutes 'character' (MS 115). Symonds also tries 'self' instead of 'character', but deletes this alternative.
59. Following 'call it duplicity', deletes 'of character' (MS 115).
60. Marginal note: 'It is very probable that I am to some extent importing into this period qualities which were really developed by my intense hatred for life at Harrow' (MS 116).
61. Following 'my mind', deletes 'at the present moment' (MS 116).
62. This poem is included in Symonds's privately printed pamphlet, 'Dead Love. A Leider Kreis in Minor Keys with The Tale of Theodore'.

63. Deletes ‘amuse myself’, substitutes ‘make myself agreeable’ (MS 116).
64. Following this postscript, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 117 blank (12 cms of clear space). Sophie Girard’s original letter is bound into the manuscript (MS 118–19a).
65. Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1340–1400), poet best known for *Troilus and Criseyde* (c.1385–37) and the unfinished *Canterbury Tales* (c.1390–1400).
Robert Southey (1774–1843), Bristol-born poet and associate of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He was appointed Poet Laureate in 1813.
66. *Thalabar the Destroyer* (1801) and *The Curse of Kehamah* (1810) by Robert Southey.
67. Brown identifies the *Constellation* as ‘A magazine compiled by members of Clifton Hill House.’ See Brown, I, p. 69.
68. The final paragraph and signature to Girard’s letter are marked for deletion (MS 119a^v). Brown does not reproduce this material. See Brown, I, p. 69.

Chapter 4: Second Period of Boyhood— Harrow on the Hill—From the Year 1854 to the Year 1858

When I left home for Harrow in the spring of 1854—it was the month of May—I had acquired a somewhat curious personality. Weakness and strength, stoicism and sensibility, frigidity and tenderness, ignorance of the world and stubborn resistance to external influences, were strangely blent in my raw nature. The main thing which maintained me was a sense of self, imperious, antagonistic, unmalleable. But what that self was, and why it kept aloof, I did not know.

My aunt and my sister Edith left me at the King's Head.¹ They drove back to London. I walked down alone to my tutor's house. This was the house of the Rev. Robert Knight, son of my Clifton tutor and curate to the vicar of Harrow. He took, so far as I remember, three boys as lodgers; a son of Abel Smith the banker, a young Wingfield, and myself.² We slept in one room.

I felt that my heart would break as I scrunched the muddy gravel, beneath the boughs of budding trees, down to this house. But I said to my heart: 'I have to be made a man here.' This was the one thought uppermost.

Sometimes, when I was alone in bed, I cried—thinking of Clifton. I remember one night when I felt sure that I had been at home, and stood in twilight at the end of the bedroom corridor, looking through elm branches into the grey south-western skies. I did not doubt that my spirit could somnambulistically travel from the place I hated to the place I loved.

But this made no impression on my daily conduct. I accepted life at Harrow as a discipline to be gone through. It was not what I wanted. But being prescribed, it had its utility. Thus from the commencement of my schooling I assumed an attitude of resistance and abeyance. Unutterably stupid this, perhaps. Yet it could not have been otherwise. Such was my nature.

I had never been thrown so entirely upon my own resources before. The situation accentuated that double existence, which I have described, and which was becoming habitual. Internally, as a creature of dreams, of self-concentrated wilfulness, of moral force sustained by obstinate but undeveloped individuality, I was in advance of my new comrades. Externally, compared with them, I was a baby—destitute of experience, incapable of asserting myself, physically feeble, timid, shrinking from contact.

The imperious, unmalleable, uncompromising egotism, which dwelt unformed within me, kept me up. I did not realize whither I was going. I felt that my course, though it collided with that of my schoolfellows, was bound to be different from theirs. To stand aloof, to preserve the inner self inviolate, to await its evolution, was my dominant instinct. I cannot imagine a more helpless and more stiff-necked, a more unsympathetic and more unloveable boy than I was.

To make the situation worse, I had no escapement from self, no really beautiful enlargement of nature at Harrow. I shrank from games of every sort, being constitutionally unfit for violent³ exercise and disliking competition. {I had a perfect horror of cricket, football, racquets and I even disliked fencing. My muscular build was slight. I could not throw a ball or a stone like other boys. And, oddly enough, I could not learn to whistle like them. And yet I was by no means effeminate.} My father, judging rightly or wrongly of my physical capacity, took measures for having me excused from playing either cricket or football. I was placed too high in the school for fagging.⁴ In this way I did not come into salutary contact with my schoolfellows. It would assuredly have been far better for me had I been cast more freely upon their society. My dislike for games has more to do with a dreamy and self-involved temperament than with absolute physical⁵ weakness. I could jump standing to a height just below my own chin, and could run with the swiftest. Fagging again would have brought me into practical relations with the elder boys, and have rubbed off some of my fastidious reserve.

Intellectually, in like manner, I did not prosper. I got a remove from one form into the next above it every term, and always at the head of the new detachment. But none of my form masters, who were Cober Adams, Rendall, Ben Drury, Harris and C.J. Vaughan,⁶ took hold upon my mind or woke me up. I was a very imperfect scholar when I left Harrow in 1858; and though I competed for the prizes—Latin and Greek verse; English Essay and Poem—I invariably failed. Such mark as I made, was due to general ability and punctuality in work.

The spring for which my whole nature craved, did not come for me at Harrow. My tutor Rendall—to whose house, called Monkey's, I went at the end of my first year—used to write in his reports that I was 'deficient of vigour both of body and mind.' I do not think he was mistaken. Want of physical and cerebral energy showed itself in a series of depressing ailments. I slept uneasily and dreamed painfully. [Puberty brought⁷ spermatorrhoea, to which I became chronically subject.]⁸ Repulsive weaknesses—boils, styes in the eyes, tedious colds which lasted the whole winter—lowered my stamina, and painfully augmented my sense of personal squalor. I grew continually more and more shy, lost my power of utterance, and cut a miserable figure in form. I contracted the habit of stammering. This became so serious that Vaughan left off putting me on to read and construe Greek. The monitors had to recite poems on Speech Day,⁹ which were previously rehearsed before the school. On one occasion I chose Raleigh's 'Lie' for my piece.¹⁰ At the rehearsal I got through the first stanza, well or ill. Then my mind became a blank; and after a couple of minutes' deadly silence, I had to sit down discomfited.

My external self, in these many ways, was being perpetually snubbed and crushed and mortified. Yet the inner self hardened after a dumb blind fashion. I kept repeating: 'Wait, wait! I will, I shall, I must!' What I was to wait for, what I was destined to become, I did not ask. But I never really doubted my capacity to be something. In a vague way, I compared myself to the ugly duckling of Andersen's tales.¹¹

Life at Harrow was not only uncongenial to my tastes and temperament. It was clearly unwholesome. Living little in the open air, poring stupidly and mechanically over books, shut up for hours in badly ventilated schoolrooms and my own close study, I dwindled physically. A liberal use of nerve tonics, quinine and strychnine, prescribed by my father, may have been a palliative; but these drugs did not reach the root of the evil and they developed other evils which I afterward discovered.

It is no wonder that I came to be regarded as an uncomradely unclubbable boy by my companions. Yet I won their moral respect. The following little incident will show what I mean. One day the mathematical master accused me before the form of cribbing, or copying from my neighbour's papers. I simply declared that I had not cribbed. He punished me with 500 lines. I accepted the punishment in silence. Thereupon the other boys cried loudly, Shame! 'Symonds,' they shouted, 'cannot crib'; and those who were sitting near me, said I was a fool to bear it.

In like manner, though I was neither intellectually brilliant nor athletic, I acquired a considerable influence in my house, of which I was the head for nearly two years. I maintained discipline, and on one occasion I remember caning two big hulking fellows in the Shells for bullying.¹² When I left Harrow the boys at Monkey's subscribed to present me with a testimonial. It was Mure's *History of Greek Literature*,¹³ handsomely bound, which my successor Currey¹⁴ handed to me with a speech of kindly congratulation.

Rendall, I think, made a great mistake in not consulting me with regard to the management of the house. According to the Rugby system,¹⁵ which Vaughan applied with certain modifications at Harrow, important duties devolved upon the Sixth Form, and monitors were theoretically held responsible for the behaviour of their juniors. Yet I cannot remember any act of personal friendliness or sympathy on Rendall's part toward myself. He never asked me to breakfast or to walk with him, never invited me to talk with him in the evenings, never consulted me about the conduct of the lower boys or explained his own wishes with regard to discipline. I daresay he did not feel the want of my assistance; for he was very well served by his house tutor, John Smith.¹⁶ But he missed the opportunity of discharging his duties toward the ostensible head of his house with kindness, and through me of making his authority felt.

These remarks will serve as prelude to an incident which illustrates my isolation and at the same time serves to define the specific moral fibre of my character.¹⁷ The Sixth Form were competing for a scholarship given by the Headmaster. Henry Yates Thompson was head of the school.¹⁸ Alfred Pretor¹⁹ and I sat as junior members on the bench of monitors. As luck would have it, I came out far away first in the examination, and Pretor second. We both of us won this distinction rather by our regularity in all-round work than by brilliant quality in any one department. Thompson was naturally mortified. But instead of stomaching the disappointment, he lost his temper. Rushing from the Sixth Form room, after the lists had been read out, he seized Pretor and myself by the collar of our coats, and half-

hurled, half-kicked us down the steep steps which lead from Great School to the gravelled yard below. This happened before the eyes of a whole crowd of boys, senior and junior. The insult was brutal, and it seemed to me unpardonable. That the head of the school should thus maltreat two monitors merely because they had beaten him fairly in an examination, was bad enough. But that he should have done so trusting to their physical inferiority and unpopularity, was worse. What became of the belauded monitorial system, how could we maintain our supposed authority, how could we enforce the respect due to our office, if we sat down meekly under this outrage? Picking myself out of the mud, I said to Pretor: 'We shall go at once to Vaughan, and ask for redress.' Pretor refused to do so. I exerted my superior moral force, and dragged him to the school house door. We were shown, with battered top hats and draggled swallow-tails—such was then the Harrow costume—into Vaughan's study. I told him what had happened; said that I relied upon his sense of justice; and added that unless I obtained an ample apology from Thompson, my position at Harrow would become intolerable; I should request my father to withdraw me from the school, and I knew that he would place the cause of my removal before the public. Vaughan of course acceded to my demand. That afternoon, Thompson read out an apology before the whole Sixth. That happened in November 1857.

It required a certain amount of moral courage to act so promptly as I did in this affair. Boys dislike nothing more than what they call sneaking. But I saw that in the present case there was no question of being called a sneak. The only other alternative open to me would have been to summon the monitors and seek redress from them. Unfortunately, I could not put the necessary machinery into motion; and if I had been able to call an assembly of my peers, the body of that time was not likely to have done me justice. I was forced therefore either to swallow the humiliation in silence or to invoke the only power superior to the head of the school. The former course was not to be thought of for a moment. The latter had this propriety, that Thompson's insult was a wholly unprecedented violation of the principle on which school discipline rested. Nobody but the Headmaster was fit to deal with it. {I might indeed have gone first to Rendall and asked his advice. This I should probably have done, if he had made a friend of me. That was, however, not the case. And after all, to put the matter into Rendall's hands would have been a half-measure.}

As a matter of fact, the soundness of my reasoning obtained immediate recognition. Instead of losing, I gained respect; and I must add that

Thompson digested²⁰ the pill he had to swallow, like a man.²¹ On leaving Harrow he presented me with a book—the *Ballad of Lenore* illustrated by Maclise.²²

A sign that Harrow did not suit me in any way was the sentiment approaching to aversion which I felt for the fat clay soil and pasture landscape of the country round it.²³ During long summer days, the slumberous monotony of grass-land, hedgerows, buzzing flies and sultry heat oppressed me. I could not react against the genius of the place, and kept contrasting it with Clifton's rocks and woods and downy turf.

Sordid details, inseparable from a boy's school life, in a cheaply built modern house, revolted my taste: —the bare and dirty roughcast corridors, the ill-drained latrines, the stuffy studies with wired windows, the cheerless refectory. But these things, I reflected, were only part of life's open road, along which one had to trudge for one's affairs—not worse, not more significant to the indwelling soul of man, than the *via dolorosa* from Berkeley Square to Buckingham Villas had been.

The uncongeniality of Harrow life and landscape made my holidays at Clifton very charming by contrast. There were long walks and talks with Charlotte and Sophie Girard, rides on the Downs or toward the Bristol Channel, drives with my father through the Somersetshire lanes, discussions²⁴ about poems and pictures, ramblings in the city streets, prowlings around the shelves of musty bookshops, musings in the cathedral and St Mary Redcliffe, dreamy saunterings in the alleys of our garden, lonely hours upon the house-top with that wide and varied scene outspread beneath me, dinner-parties and the company of cultured men and women.

All this, as I have said, contrasted only too sweetly with Harrow and the realities of school existence. In justice to myself, I think I ought to say that, although I always returned to Harrow unwillingly, I did so with the sense that Clifton was a Capua, and Harrow the camp,²⁵ where I had to brace myself to discipline.

Meanwhile, I formed the habit of idealizing Clifton, with results which the history of my after-growth will make apparent. More and more it became for me the haunt²⁶ of powerful emotions, the stage on which my inner self would have to play its part.

It would be absurd to pretend that I formed no friendships at Harrow. In order to complete the picture of my life there, I must devote some paragraphs to sketching them.

The Rev. John Smith takes the first place. To his generous sympathy, manly and wise, at a period when I sorely needed sympathetic handling,

I ascribe the only pure good of my Harrow training. Doubtless, not I alone, but hundreds of boys who came within the influence of that true²⁷ Christian gentleman, whether they are now alive or sleeping in their graves upon all quarters of the habitable globe, would deliver the same testimony. It is possible, however, that I enjoyed a double portion of his kindly interest; for he had recently settled at Harrow, as form master and house tutor to Monkey, at the time when I was cast adrift upon school-life. He took notice of me, and must have felt my special needs. Without making any demonstrations of friendship, he so arranged that a peculiarly delightful comradeship should spring up between us. We took long walks together through the fields. It was our custom on these walks to repeat alternate passages from Shelley, Tennyson, and Keats,²⁸ which we had previously learned by heart. In this way I absorbed a stupendous amount of good English verse. The house where his dear old mother dwelt at Pinner, was frequently the goal of our excursions. Here we rested, after spouting the ‘Skylark’ or ‘The Palace of Art’, ‘The Two Voices’ and the ‘Ode to a Nightingale’,²⁹ during an early morning or late evening passage over dewy fields and high-built styles. There was always a cold veal and ham pie to be eaten with voracious appetite, strawberry jam to follow, and an excellent brew of tea with thick country cream. Gradually I learned much about the history of this pure-hearted friend—his father’s death by suicide—his own dread of hereditary madness—the deep humility of his strong patient nature—the calm and mellow touch of his religious philosophy upon feverish things of human life.

Gustavus Bosanquet comes next.³⁰ He joined the school in the same term as I did; and though I left him behind in our progress through the forms, we remained firm friends until the last. His parents, or rather his mother, who was a Miss Bevan, had trained him in narrow Evangelical principles. These did not sit quite easily upon the boy. A strong religious bias formed the hardpan of his nature. Yet, in his own way, he felt the riddle of the universe, being devoid of Pharisaical self-complacency and alive at intervals to agitating problems. Had he possessed greater activity of mind and a clearer apprehension of ideas, he might have been influenced by the speculations of our century. But his purely intellectual capacity was limited; and he never seemed able to grasp thought with lucidity. There resulted a curiously inarticulate and subconscious struggle in his mind, which later on in life intensified the purblindings of an ardent soul with doubt. His exuberant affectionateness, indomitable humour, and generous devotion to a few friends raised him in the moral sphere

high above the ranks of mere intelligence. Down to this day, I owe him a deep debt of gratitude for the love he gave me, for the admiration which he felt for me, for the loyalty with which he sustained me in my hours of self-abasement, and for the homely cheerfulness of his familiar conversation. We chummed together, cooked sausages together, played childish pranks and called each other by ridiculous nicknames, living a little life of comradeship secluded from the daily round of lessons and school business. Gustavus had his feet more firmly fixed upon the common ground of experience than I had. He saw the comic side of things, and this was very helpful to me. With him I was able to laugh and joke about incidents which angered and depressed my solitary nature. In return I gave him something from my ideality. Our fraternal love was very precious during my school-life; and if I were asked who was my bosom-friend at Harrow, I should reply ‘Gustavus Bosanquet.’

Randall Vickers³¹ was a boy at Monkey’s, with whom Bosanquet and I had much to do. He tickled Bosanquet’s sense of humour by his devout moon-stricken manners. Bosanquet was round and sturdy, with a large pale face and a great nose which he flapped on both sides of his ample cheeks. I christened him ‘the Buzzard’ because of his awkward unwieldy flopping flight. He called me ‘Monny’, an affectionate diminutive of Simonides, my patronymic in the isles of ancient Hellas—not without burlesque³² satire on my lofty aspirations. Vickers, the lean lanky stripling, sallow-complexioned, black-haired, with sleek demure veiled eyes and cat-like movements, formed a contrast to us both. He had no humour, no intelligence, no struggles, no moral or mental energy of any kind. A living mask of humanity I should say, as I now look back upon him. But he possessed what neither Bosanquet nor I could boast of—the insect-like devotion to a creed. This was ritualism, then in its green infancy. Half-laughing at Vickers and ourselves, we followed him to nones and complines,³³ donned surplices and tossed censers, arrayed altars in our studies, spent spare cash on bits of execrable painted glass to dull our dingy windows, and illuminated crucifixes with gold dust and vermilion.

Three of my comrades in the Sixth Form must be placed upon this list of friends, though they stood distinctly apart from the others. One of these was Alfred Pretor, a fair scholar, but a vain light-headed and corrupt lad, without intellectual or moral foundation. As he was superficially bright and attractive, I got into the way of passing a good deal of my time with him. We were drawn together by the common interests of school work. Charles Dalrymple of Newhailes,³⁴ a well-born well-connected Scotchman, Scotch

to the backbone, was another. Cat-like and precise, delicate in his tastes, thin in mental quality, but gifted with a certain fastidious distinction, he chimed in with some of my supposed qualities and occupied a fair amount of leisure. Robert Jamieson,³⁵ a raw youth from Glasgow, with the face of a convict but gifted with a powerful personality—strong in the brain, indolent in the will, wanting in real intelligence of life, essentially perverse and cross-grained—was the third of these friends. Juxtaposition brought us four together—so dissimilar in our temperaments, destined to such different lines in life, fated so soon to be divided by a cruel stroke of fortune. Pretor became a tutor at Cambridge, Dalrymple a leading Scotch Member of Parliament, Jamieson I know not what, I an exile at Davos.

In the company of these five boys—Bosanquet, Vickers, Pretor, Dalrymple, Jamieson—I was confirmed. Confirmation ought, if it means anything, to exercise a decisive influence over the religious life of the individual—to mark a new epoch in his spiritual progress. To some extent it did so with me. The preparation for the sacrament worked like a plough-share on the sub-soil of my piety. It turned up nothing valuable; but it stimulated my aesthetical and emotional ardour.³⁶ I now inclined to the farcical ritualism of Vickers, handling pseudo-sacred vessels in a night-gown surplice before a pseudo-altar. I laid myself open to enthusiasms of the shrine and sanctuary, which afterwards coalesced with a wholly human passion for a chorister. In a dim way I felt God more. But I did not learn to fling the arms of soul in faith upon the cross of Christ. That was not in me. And it would be unfair to expect from any sacrament of the church that it should work a miracle on catechumens.³⁷

At this period of my misused boyhood, I dreamed a great deal of my time away and wrote a vast amount of idiotic verses. During the night-time I was visited by terrible and splendid visions, far superior to my poetry. In the long slow evolution of my self, it appears that the state of dreamful subconscious energy was always superior to the state of active intelligent volition. In a sense different from Charles Lamb's, I was a dream child, incapable of emerging into actuality, containing potential germs of personality which it required decades to develop.

In this respect I was probably by no means singular. The situation might be summed up in one sentence: I was a slow-growing lad. The memory of my experience at Harrow—of my non-emergence, of my intense hidden life, of my inferiority in achievement to people like Thompson, Jamieson, Pretor, and others who could easily be mentioned—not to speak of the superb athletic beings round me, whose lives were completely joyous to

themselves and satisfying to aesthetic contemplation—has made me infinitely tender toward young men in whom I recognized the same qualities of tardy laborious growth.

I have left for a separate chapter the consideration of a matter deeply-important to my inner self at Harrow.

NOTES

1. The King's Head was a coaching inn and hotel that stood near the village green of Harrow on the Hill. Popular accounts trace its history back to 1535 and the site of a hunting lodge belonging to Henry VIII. The King's Head was converted into private residences in 2001.
2. Albert Smith (1841–1914) would enter the church. His father was Abel Smith, a politician and member of the Smith banking dynasty whose family seat was at Woodhall Park, Hertfordshire.
William Wriothesley Mills Wingfield (1841–1903) would embark upon a career in the army.
3. Symonds appears to struggle with this word; he tries 'physical' and 'muscular' (both marked for deletion) before settling on 'violent' (MS 122).
4. A fag is 'a junior who performs certain duties for a senior' (*OED*). Fagging was common practice at English public schools until the late twentieth century; it was believed to instil discipline and reinforce social hierarchies. Fagging was often subject to accusations of bullying and abuse.
5. Deletes 'actual muscular', substitutes 'absolute physical' (MS 122).
6. Symonds misremembers the name of his form master: Coker Adams (1827–91) was likely a temporary appointment at Harrow as his name is not listed in the published registers. He would enter the church and later served as Rector of Stockton (1870–76) and Saham Toney (1876–91). I am grateful to Brian Pearson for supplying this information.

Frederic Rendall (1822–1912), house master at Grove Hill, the boarding house he founded at Harrow in 1854. Rendall was nicknamed 'Monkey' by the boys. After his death Grove Hill House was renamed Rendalls.

Benjamin Heath Drury (1817–1902), house master at The Abbey and part of a family dynasty of Harrow masters: his father,

Henry Joseph Drury, was tutor to Byron, and his grandfather was Joseph Drury, head master of Harrow between 1785 and 1805. The Druries boarding house takes its name from this family.

George Frederic Harris (1812–69), house master at The Park and under master (1864–68).

Charles John Vaughan (1816–97), head master of Harrow (1845–59). Vaughan was educated at Rugby School under Thomas Arnold, and he is credited with rescuing the dwindling fortunes of Harrow following the headmastership of Christopher Wordsworth.

7. Deletes ‘revealed itself by’, substitutes ‘brought’ (MS 123).
8. Passage marked for deletion (MS 123–4). ‘Puberty’ and ‘spermatorrhoea’ are heavily scored through in pencil. Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from ‘dreamed painfully’ (MS 123) to ‘Repulsive weakness’ (MS 124). See Brown, I, p. 73.
9. Speech Days have been a Harrow tradition since 1772. Parents and dignitaries are invited to hear the boys recite speeches and poems, and to present awards. There were originally three Speech Days per year, but since 1844 it has become an annual event.
10. ‘The Lie’ (c.1592) is commonly attributed to Walter Raleigh.
11. ‘The Ugly Duckling’ in *New Fairy Tales* (1844) by Hans Christian Andersen.
12. Shell was the name given to a new form created between the Fourth and Fifth in 1780. The term is now used to refer to boys in their first year at Harrow, but Symonds (who left before the creation of the Remove in 1859, a higher form that pushed the Shell lower down the school) is more likely to intend the earlier meaning.
13. *Critical History of the Language and Literature of Antient Greece* (1850–57) by William Mure.
14. William Edmund (‘Pat’) Currey (1840–1908), son of the Duke of Devonshire’s land agent at Lismore Castle in Ireland. He would become a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and a member of the Cambridge Apostles.
15. Vaughan was seen as the inheritor and perpetuator of Thomas Arnold’s doctrines at Rugby, with their focus upon moral as well as intellectual development and instruction. As part of this adapted ‘Rugby system’, Vaughan authorised monitors to maintain and enforce discipline amongst the boys, including the delivery of corporal punishment.

16. John Smith (1823–93) was a popular assistant master and tutor to the Fourth Form who features in several histories and memoirs by old Harrovians, including *Harrow School and its Surroundings* (1885) by Percy M. Thornton, and *Recollections and Impressions of the Rev John Smith MA* (1913) by Edward D. Rendall.
17. Marginal note: ‘Omit’ (MS 127). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from ‘his authority felt’ (MS 127) to ‘A sign that Harrow’ (MS 130). See Brown, I, p. 76.
18. Henry Yates Thompson (1838–1928) would become proprietor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1880–92) and a renowned collector of medieval manuscripts.
19. Alfred Pretor (1840–1908) would become a Fellow of St Catherine’s College, Cambridge, and a Lecturer at Girton. He edited classical literature and published works of fiction, including *Ronald and I* (1899).
20. Deletes ‘took’, substitutes ‘digested’ (MS 129).
21. Deletes ‘well’, substitutes ‘like a man’ (MS 129).
22. Presumably *Leonora* (1847) translated by Julia Margaret Cameron and illustrated by Daniel Maclise.
23. Partially legible marginal note: ‘w[?] up XLI LII XLV XLVIII XLVIX’ (MS 130).
24. Following ‘Somersetshire lanes, discussions’, deletes ‘with him’ (MS 131).
25. Phyllis Grosskurth identifies this allusion to the failing discipline and degradation of Hannibal’s troops during a winter spent at Capua—cf. Livy’s *History of Rome*, Book 23.
26. Deletes ‘was becoming the receptacle’, substitutes ‘became for me the haunt’ (MS 131).
27. Deletes ‘pure’, substitutes ‘true’ (MS 132).
28. Symonds lists famous Romantic and nineteenth-century poets: Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), Alfred Tennyson (1809–92) and John Keats (1795–1821).
29. ‘To A Skylark’ (1820) by Percy Bysshe Shelley; ‘The Palace of Art’ (1833) and ‘Two Voices’ (1842) by Alfred Tennyson; ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ (1819) by John Keats.
30. Gustavus Bosanquet (1840–1932) would study Classics at Trinity College, Cambridge, before entering the church.
31. Randall William Vickers (d. 1918) would study at Exeter College, Oxford, before entering the church.

32. Deletes 'gentle', substitutes 'burlesque' (MS 135).
33. Nones are prayers said or sung at mid-afternoon (during the ninth hour of the day), while complines are said or sung at night.
34. Charles Dalrymple (1838–1916) would become a politician. He was M.P. for Bute, then Ipswich, and in 1905 was elected a member of the Privy Council. In 1898 he contributed a biographical essay on C.J. Vaughan's headmastership to *Harrow School*, edited by E.W. Howson and G. Townsend Warner.
35. Robert Jamieson (d. 1894) would join Symonds at Balliol College, Oxford, before becoming a barrister.
36. Symonds appears to struggle with this sentence; he tries 'added new material for my aesthetical and emotional growth' and 'supplied fuel to my aesthetical and emotional furnace' (both marked for deletion) before settling on 'stimulated my aesthetical and emotional ardour' (MS 137).
37. A catechumen is 'A new convert under instruction before baptism. [...] Sometimes applied to young Christians generally, and especially to those preparing for the rite of confirmation.' (*OED*)

Chapter 5: Painful Circumstances Connected with the Last Year of My Life at Harrow

One thing at Harrow very soon arrested my attention.¹ It was the moral state of the school. Every boy of good looks had a female name, and was recognized either as a public prostitute or as some bigger fellow's 'bitch.' Bitch was the word in common usage to indicate a boy who yielded² his person to a lover. The talk in the dormitories and the studies was incredibly obscene. Here and there one could not avoid seeing acts of onanism, mutual masturbation, the sports of naked boys in bed together. There was no refinement, no sentiment, no passion; nothing but animal lust in these occurrences. They filled me with disgust and loathing. My schoolfellows realized what I had read in Swift about the Yahoos.³

I particularly disliked two boys: a clever Irish lad called W.J. Currey,⁴ and a brutal clown called Clayton.⁵ Of Clayton I need speak no more. He was too stupid and perverse and clumsy to deserve description. Currey, on the other hand, was a better scholar than myself, and possessed a variety of facile talents. He spent much of his time on music and drawing, played games, and loafed. Yet though he never seemed to work, he always took a good place in his form. Unfortunately he was dirty in his dress and person, filthy in his talk, and shamelessly priapic in his conduct. We went through the school side by side. At the end of our time together, I discovered really fine intellectual and emotional qualities beneath his Satyric exterior. I imagine that he may

have permanently injured his constitution by his youthful vagaries;⁶ for Currey's career in after life has not been as distinguished as might have been expected.

A third boy, named Barber,⁷ annoyed and amused me. He was like a good-natured longimanous ape, gibbering on his perch and playing ostentatiously with a prodigiously developed phallus. A fourth, Cookson,⁸ was a red-faced strumpet, with flabby cheeks and sensual mouth—the *notissima fossa*⁹ of our house. {I have seen nothing more repulsive¹⁰ in my life—except once at the Alhambra in Leicester Square, when I saw a jealous man tear the earrings out of the ruptured lobes of a prostitute's ears, and all the men in the saloon rose raging at¹¹ him for his brutality¹²—I have seen nothing more disgusting in my life, I say, than the inhuman manner in which this poor creature¹³ Cookson came afterwards to be treated by his former lovers.¹⁴ What he did to deserve his punishment I never heard, not being initiated into their mysteries. But, after a certain period—after they had rolled upon the floor with him and had exposed his person¹⁵ in public—they took to trampling on him. Whenever he appeared, in that mean¹⁶ dining-room, about those dirty¹⁷ passages, upon the sordid¹⁸ court through which we entered from the road into our¹⁹ barracks, Currey and Clayton and Barber and the rest of the²⁰ brood squirted saliva and what they called 'gobs' upon their bitch, cuffed and kicked him at their mercy,²¹ shied books at him, and drove²² him with obscene curses whimpering²³ to his den.}

These four were all at Rendall's. A fifth fellow, E. Dering, in Steel's house²⁴ both fascinated and repelled me. He resembled a handsome Greek brigand in face. I remember noticing a likeness to his features in the photograph of one of the decapitated Marathon cut-throats. His body was powerful, muscular, lissom as a tiger. The fierce and cruel lust of this magnificent animal excited my imagination. {Dering used to come into our house after a plump fair-haired boy, called Ainslie,²⁵ whom we dubbed Bum Bathsheba because of his opulent posterior parts.}

So much had to be said in general about the moral atmosphere into which I was plunged at the age of thirteen. It will appear in the sequel that Harrow exercised a powerful influence over certain phases of my development. But I must not omit to mention that, while I was at school, I remained free in fact and act from this contamination. During my first half year the 'beasts', as they were playfully called, tried to seduce me. But it was soon decided that I was 'not game.'

The distinction in my character between an inner and real self and an outer and artificial self, to which I have already alluded, emphasized itself during this period. So separate were the two selves, so deep was my *Dipsychia*,²⁶ that my most intimate friends there, of whom I shall soon speak, have each and all emphatically told me that they thought I had passed through school without being affected by, almost without being aware of, its peculiar vices. And yet those vices furnished a perpetual subject for contemplation and casuistical reflection to my inner self.

The earliest phase of my sexual consciousness was here objectified before my eyes; and I detested in practice what had once attracted me in fancy. Personally, I thought that I had transcended²⁷ crude sensuality through the aesthetic idealization of erotic instincts. I did not know how fallacious that method of expelling nature is. The animalisms²⁸ of boyish lust sickened me by their brutality, offended my taste by their vulgarity. I imagined them to be a phase of immature development, from which my comrades would emerge when they grew to manhood. Nevertheless, they steeped my imagination in filth. I was only saved from cynicism by the gradual unfolding in myself of an ideal passion which corresponded to Platonic²⁹ love. This ideal was not derived from Greek literature; for I had not yet read the works of Plato and Theocritus. It sprang up spontaneously, proving that my thought was lodged in ancient Hellas.

While my schoolfellows, therefore, regarded me as an insensible student, immersed in what they called ‘swatting’, and incapable of active good or evil, I was theorizing, testing and sublimating the appetites which they unthinkingly indulged.

An incident occurred which made a deep impression on my mind. Dering sent a note in school time to a handsome lad, O’Brien,³⁰ who went by the name of Leila. It informed him that Dering had a good bed ready, and asked him to come there³¹ in the interval between third and fourth school—that is from 4 to 5 p.m. This note fell into the hands of the form master, who gave it up to Vaughan. The whole school was summoned to the Speech Room. Here Vaughan met us alone, without any of the other masters. He read the letter aloud, strongly condemned the use of female names for boys, and pronounced sentence on the culprits. Dering was to be ‘switched’,³² and O’Brien had lines set him—how many I do not recollect.

The conclusion which I drew from this very inadequate form of punishment was that our masters did not realize what the matter meant, and how widespread was the evil in the school. In my own mind I felt sure

that these vices were pernicious to our society; and I regarded them as sins which ought to have been harshly dealt with. Accordingly this episode added to my mental and moral confusion.³³

In the month of January 1858 Alfred Pretor wrote me a note in which he informed me that Vaughan had begun a love affair with him. I soon found that the boy was not lying, because he showed me a series of passionate letters written to him by our head master.

When I recovered from the first astonishment into which Pretor's extraordinary revelation plunged me, I submitted the fact to casuistical analysis. It proved convincingly that I was wrong in imagining that this species of vice formed only a phase of boyish immaturity. I was disgusted to find it in a man holding the highest position of responsibility, consecrated by the church, entrusted with the welfare of six hundred youths—a man who had recently prepared me for confirmation, from whose hands, kneeling by the side of Alfred Pretor, I received the sacrament, and whom I had been accustomed to regard as the pattern of my conduct. Disgust, however, was mitigated by a dumb persistent sympathy. My own inclinations, the form which my erotic idealism had assumed, prevented me from utterly condemning Vaughan. I did indeed condemn Vaughan's taste; for I regarded Pretor as a physically and emotionally inferior being. But the love drama, which I now watched daily, perusing the enthusiastic letters submitted to my curiosity by Pretor's vanity, roused a keen inquisitive interest in my mind. A sense of humour supervened—'What a topsy-turvy world is this that I am living in!' After all, I think that indignation against our head master prevailed. I knew what serious harm the school was suffering from these customs, so ill-adjusted to the spirit of the times we lived in. I felt acutely the moral perplexities, {which the observation of them bred in me.³⁴ And} here was he, not merely trifling with them, as in the case of Dering and O'Brien, but recklessly indulging his own forbidden³⁵ impulse.

Boys are singular beings in this that they easily accept a situation, however abnormal it may be. I vaguely wondered whether I ought not to tell my father. But the knowledge had already begun to sophisticate my moral sense.³⁶ I felt also bound to respect³⁷ the seal of secrecy. At any rate I ought first to use my influence with Pretor. This I did, and begged him to break off the connection. But I soon found it impossible to persuade him. Then I wondered whether I should confront Vaughan, and ask him bluntly what the whole thing meant. I used to take essays and verses at intervals to Vaughan in the study, which was the scene of his clandestine pleasures. It

was a fairly-sized square room, dark, on the ground floor, looking upon the street. On those occasions my young brains underwent an indescribable fermentation. I remember once that, while we sat together reading Greek iambics, he began softly to stroke my right leg from the knee to the thigh. This insignificant caress, of which I should have thought nothing two months earlier, and which probably meant nothing, seemed then disagreeably suggestive. I never liked the man; he did not possess the intellectual qualities I admired. Now I began positively to dislike him.

Nothing could have been worse for a boy of my temperament than this unhealthy state of things. It poisoned and paralysed my moral nature,³⁸ confused my judgement, perplexed my thoughts about religion. Had it not been for a strong physical repulsion, I should certainly have taken to bad courses. As it was, I began to coquette with vice. I fell in love with a handsome powerful boy³⁹ called Huyshe;⁴⁰ and I remember stealing his hymn-book from his seat in chapel; but I never spoke to him. I also fell in love with Eliot Yorke,⁴¹ who used to come to my room; but I kept at a respectful distance from him. There must have happened some change in my manner or appearance; for a⁴² depraved lad, whom I had known for three years, on one occasion finding me alone in my room, suddenly dared to throw⁴³ his arms round me, kissed me, and thrust his hand into my trousers. At that moment I nearly gave way to sensuality. I was narcotized by the fellow's contact⁴⁴ and the forecast of coming pleasure. But in this, as in all other cases, the inclination for vulgar⁴⁵ lust was wanting. That saved me from self-abasement and traffic with the unclean thing.

A fatigued cynicism took possession of me. My health, which had never been good, suffered. I neglected my work. At the same time, my self-consciousness became enormously developed. I felt a terrible new sense of power. For the first time I seemed able to survey myself and the world, to grasp the facts of human nature from a point of view outside my inner and outer egotism. It is certain that, though I grew unhealthily and perversely during this period, I grew fast and to some purpose. I acquired then a certain disengagement from things which are not essential, a certain habit of doubting appearances and disdaining trifles. This attitude of mind has, I believe, been useful to me. But the price paid in disillusionment and moral befoulment⁴⁶ outweighed the gain of mental grit.⁴⁷

The progress of a lad of seventeen has to be reckoned not by years but by months.

We were reading Plato's *Apology*⁴⁸ in the Sixth Form. I bought Cary's crib,⁴⁹ and took it with me to London on an 'exeat'⁵⁰ in March. My hostess,

a Mrs Bain, who lived in Regent's Park, treated me to a comedy one evening at the Haymarket. I forget what the play was—except that there was a funny character in it, who set the house in a roar by his enunciation of this sentence: 'Smythers please, not Smithers; Smithers is a different party, and moves in quite a different sphere.' When we returned from the play, I went to bed, and began to read my Cary's Plato. It so happened that I stumbled on the *Phaedrus*.⁵¹ I read on and on, till I reached the end. Then I began the *Symposium*,⁵² and the sun was shining on the shrubs outside the ground-floor room in which I slept, before I shut the book up.

I have related these insignificant details because that night was one of the most important nights of my life; and when anything of great gravity has happened to me, I have always retained a firm recollection⁵³ of trifling facts which formed its context.

Here in the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*—in the Myth of the Soul and the speeches of Pausanias, Agathon and Diotima—I discovered the true *Liber Amoris*.⁵⁴ At last, the revelation I had been waiting for, the consecration of a long-cherished idealism. It was just as though the voice of my own soul spoke to me through Plato, as though in some antenatal experience I had lived the life of a philosophical Greek lover.

Harrow and Vaughan and Pretor⁵⁵ vanished into unreality. I had touched solid ground. I had obtained⁵⁶ the sanction of the love which had been ruling me from childhood. Here was the poetry, the philosophy of my own enthusiasm⁵⁷ for male beauty, expressed with all the magic of unrivalled style. And, what was more, I now became aware that the Greek race—the actual historical Greeks of antiquity—treated this love seriously, invested it with moral charm,⁵⁸ endowed it with sublimity.

For the first time I saw the possibility of resolving in a practical⁵⁹ harmony the discords of my inborn⁶⁰ instincts. I perceived that masculine⁶¹ love had its virtue as well as its vice, and stood in this respect upon the same ground as normal sexual appetite. I understood, or thought I understood, the relation which those dreams of childhood and the brutalities of vulgar lust at Harrow⁶² bore to my higher aspiration after noble passion.

The study of Plato proved decisive for my future. Coming at the moment when it did, it delivered me to a large extent from the torpid cynicism caused by the Vaughan⁶³ episode. At the same time it confirmed my congenital inclination toward persons of the male sex, and filled my head with an impossible dream, which controlled my thoughts for many years.

What I have just written will perhaps surprise those who may happen to read these pages after I am dead. My friend Professor Jowett, with whom I revised his translation of the *Symposium* at Davos in 1888, wrote to me not

long ago, expressing his astonishment at my regarding the study of Plato as dangerous to certain characters in youth. The following copy of a letter I addressed to him in reply will not inappropriately close this chapter.⁶⁴

Am Hof
Davos Platz
Switzerland

February 1 1889

My dear Master

I am glad to hear from the last letter you wrote me that you have abandoned the idea of an essay on Greek love. Little good could come of such a treatise in your book.

It surprises me to find you, with your knowledge of Greek history, speaking of this in Plato as ‘mainly a figure of speech.’—It surprises me as much as I seem to surprise you when I repeat that the study of Plato is injurious to a certain number of predisposed young men.

Many forms of passion between males are matters of fact in English schools, colleges, cities, rural districts. Such passion is innate in some persons no less than the ordinary sexual appetite is innate in the majority. With the nobler of such predetermined temperaments the passion seeks a spiritual or ideal transfiguration. When, therefore, individuals of the indicated species come into contact with the reveries of Plato, (clothed in graceful diction, immersed in the peculiar emotion, presented with considerable dramatic force, gilt with a mystical philosophy, throbbing with the realism of actual Greek life), the effect upon them has the force of a revelation. They discover that what they had been blindly groping after was once an admitted possibility—not in a mean hole or corner—but that the race whose literature forms the basis of their higher culture, lived in that way, aspired in that way. For such students of Plato there is no question of ‘figures of speech’, but of concrete facts, facts in the social experience of Athens, from which men derived courage, drew intellectual illumination, took their first step in the path which led to great achievements and the arduous pursuit of truth.

Greek history confirms, by a multitude of legends and of actual episodes, what Plato puts forth as a splendid vision, and subordinates to the higher philosophic life.

It is futile by any evasion of the central difficulty, by any dexterity in the use of words, to escape from the stubborn fact that natures so exceptionally predisposed find in Plato the encouragement of their furtively cherished dreams. The *Lysis*, the *Charmides*,⁶⁵ the *Phaedrus*, the *Symposium*—how many varied and imaginative pictures these dialogues contain of what is only a sweet poison⁶⁶ to such minds!

Meanwhile the temptations of the actual world surround them: friends of like temper, boys who respond to kindness, reckless creatures abroad upon the common ways of life. *Erôs Pandemos* is everywhere.⁶⁷ Plato lends the light, the gleam, that never was on sea or shore.⁶⁸

Thus Plato delays the damnation of these souls by ensnaring the noblest part of them—their intellectual imagination. And strong as custom may be, strong as piety, strong as the sense of duty, these restraints have always been found frail against the impulse of powerful inborn natural passion and the allurements of inspired art.

The contest in the soul is terrible, and victory, if gained, is only won at the cost of a struggle which thwarts and embitters.

We do not know how many English youths have been injured in this way. More, I firmly believe, than is suspected. Educators, when they diagnose the disease, denounce it. That is easy enough, because law and social taste are with them, and because the person incriminated feels too terribly the weight of law and custom. He has nothing to urge in self-defence—except his inborn instinct, and the fact that those very men who condemn him, have placed the most electrical literature of the world in his hands, pregnant with the stuff that damns him. Convention rules us so strangely that the educators do all this only because it always has been done—in a blind dull confidence—fancying that the lads in question are as impervious as they themselves are to the magnetism of the books they bid them study and digest.

Put yourself in the place of someone to whom the aspect of Greek life (which you ignore) is personally and intensely interesting, who reads his Plato as you would wish him to read his Bible—i.e. with a vivid conviction that what he reads is the life record of a masterful creative man-determining race, and the monument of a world-important epoch.

Can you pretend that a sympathetically constituted nature of the sort in question will derive nothing from the panegyric of paiderastic love in the *Phaedrus*, from the personal grace of Charmides, from the mingled realism and rapture of the *Symposium*? What you call a figure of speech, is heaven in hell⁶⁹ to him—maddening; because it is stimulating to the imagination; wholly out of accord with the world he has to live in; too deeply in accord with his own impossible desires.

Greek love was for Plato no ‘figure of speech’, but a present poignant reality. Greek love is for modern students of Plato no ‘figure of speech’ and no anachronism, but a present poignant reality. The facts of Greek history and the facts of contemporary life demonstrate these propositions only too conclusively.

I will not trouble you again upon this topic. I could not, however, allow the following passage in your letter—‘I do not understand how, what is

in the main a figure of speech should have so great power over them?—to go unnoticed without throwing what light I can upon what you do not understand.

I feel strongly on the subject; and where there is strong feeling, there is usually the risk of overstatement. But I do not think I have exaggerated and I hope I have not spoken rudely.⁷⁰ It is indeed impossible to exaggerate the anomaly of making Plato a text-book for students, and a household-book for readers, in a nation which repudiates Greek love, while the baser forms of Greek love have grown to serious proportions in the seminaries of youth and in great centres of social life belonging to that nation.

Ever most sincerely yours

J.A. Symonds

March came to an end, and brought this eventful term to its conclusion. In April, at the very beginning of the month, I went to Clifton for the Easter holidays. They lasted three weeks. It was an early spring that year—mild clear and beautiful; with swift and unchecked unfolding of all fair things in nature.

The change from Harrow to my home always tranquilized and refreshed me. It renewed that sense of dignity, repose and beauty in existence, which was absolutely necessary to my spiritual being.

This time I felt the change more strangely than was usual. Clifton did not offer the same simple satisfaction as before. I was jaded, restless, disappointed, perplexed. The recent quickening of my intellect by casuistry, the knowledge of the secret which I carried, the revelation I had found in Plato, removed me almost suddenly away from boyhood. I was on the verge of attaining to a man's self-consciousness

On the first Sunday morning after my arrival, I attended service in Bristol Cathedral. It was a radiant forenoon, and the light streamed in from those large southern windows. My ritualistic pranks with Vickers at Harrow had this much of reality in them, that they indicated a natural susceptibility to the aesthetic side of religion—I felt a real affection and natural reverence for grey Gothic churches. The painted glass and heraldries in this cathedral, crusaders cross-legged on their tombs, carved woodwork and high-built organ lofts, the monuments to folk long dead, and, over all, the quiring voices and reverberations of sweet sacred music, touched me to the quick at a thousand sensitive points. There was no real piety, however, in my mood. My soul was⁷¹ lodged in Hellas; and the Christian in me stirred only, like a torpid snake, sunned by the genial warmth of art.

On this, the morning of all mornings in my life, my eyes fell on a chorister who sat nearly opposite the stall which I had taken. His voice charmed me by its sharp ethereal melancholy. In timbre and quality it had something of a wood instrument; and because of my love for it, I have ever since been sensitive to the notes of hautbois and clarionette. As I gazed and listened through the Psalms and Service and Litany, I felt that a new factor had been introduced into my life. The voice dominated. But the boy who owned that voice seemed the only beautiful, the only flawless being I had ever seen.

From the church I walked home, enveloped in a dream. All that afternoon and evening I dreamed of Willie Dyer.⁷² I have forgotten how I discovered his name. At earliest daybreak I leaned from my bedroom window, sending my soul out to⁷³ him, greeting the cathedral tower beneath me. This went on for two or three days. Ah, those April mornings—that hush of the thin-leaved trees and dewy lawns, those notes of blackbirds, the stillness of the sleeping town, the poetry of flooding light, the steady thrill of flooding love!

There had been nothing like to this emotion in my past experience. It precipitated⁷⁴ the turbid mixture of my blood and brains. I saw ahead of me⁷⁵ the goal to which I had been tending. The close blind alley into which I had blundered at Harrow, and from which there was no escape, seemed now to expand into infinities of free and liberal experience.⁷⁶

I was so intoxicated with the moment that I demanded nothing from the future. I did not enquire how my present mood of feeling squared with the philosophy of love I had imbibed from Plato.

Looking at the boy in church, hearing him sing, dreaming of him at home, were not enough. For the first time in my life, I knew that I must take possession of the dream and clasp it. The experience of the last few months had brought me so far forward that I was capable of acting. My will demanded that the boy and I should be united. What I meant to do, had to be done by and for myself alone. There was no question of making any member of my family or his an intermediary.

I wrote to Willie Dyer, and asked him for his portrait. I gave my address: ‘A.B. Clifton Post Office.’ He responded with a photograph. Next I begged him to meet me. He replied that I might find him in the cathedral cloisters at 10 a.m. upon the 10th of April. Why the boy corresponded to my wishes in this way, I do not know. I only know that he was simple and guileless; and I adored him so that his father and his friends had sub-

sequently nothing to complain of in my treatment of him. Looking back across so many years, it seems to me strange, however, that we should have been permitted to meet together for the first time in this way.

We met then on the morning of the 10th of April 1868.⁷⁷ Swallows were wheeling in sunlight round the tower. The clock struck. I took Willie's slender hand into my own, and gazed into his large brown eyes fringed with heavy lashes. [A quite indescribable effluence⁷⁸ of peace and satisfaction, blent with yearning, flowed from his physical presence and inundated my whole being with some healing and refreshing influence.]⁷⁹

From that morning I date the birth of my real self. Thirty-two years have elapsed since then; and still I can hardly hold the pen when I attempt to write about it.⁸⁰

Much sentimental nonsense has been talked about first love. Yet I am speaking the bare truth when I say that my affection for this boy exhausted my instinctive faculty of loving. I have never felt the same unreason and unreasoning⁸¹ emotion for any other human being.

I could not marry him; modern society provided no bond⁸² of comradeship whereby we might have been united. So my first love flowed to waste. I was unable to deal justly with him; the mortification of the anomalous position he and I were placed in, did much to degrade my character.

These things, however, were not felt at once. From 10th of April in that year 1858, for many months to come, I used either to see Willie or wrote to him daily. He returned my affection with a simple loyal love. Our intimacy, though clandestine—though we two boys, the elder by three years and the younger, met together and exchanged our hearts without the sanction of family or friends—was wholly respectful and absolutely free from evil. More than a year elapsed⁸³ before I dared to do more than touch his hand. Twice only in my life did I kiss him on the lips. The first time I did so I almost fainted from the intense rapture of the contact.⁸⁴ We were together alone, I well remember, in a clearing of Leigh Woods—where the red quarries break down from tufted yews, and dwarf peaches, and wych elms plumed upon the cliff to the riverside. The afternoon sunlight fell upon glossy ivy, bluebells and late-flowering anemones. We were lying side by side. The splash of paddle-wheels and the chant of sailors working a sea-going vessel down the Avon, rose up to us between the two long kisses which I took.

Leigh Woods used to be our favourite resort. In those days there was no suspension bridge. We crossed the ferry, and clambered up the sides of Nightingale Valley until we found some coign of vantage⁸⁵ where we rested. Not a soul disturbed our solitude. The wild rabbits were not more innocent of guile than we were.

I still possess a white anemone gathered on the spot of that first kiss. It marks the place in my Theocritus, where this phrase occurs:

ἦρα τότ' ἔσσαν
 χρῦσειοι πάλαι ἄνδρες ὅτ' ἀντεφίλησ' ὁ φιληθεὶς.⁸⁶

Gratitude mingled with my love for Willie. He had delivered my soul from the Egyptian house of Harrow bondage. He enabled me to realize an ideal of a passionate and yet pure love between friend and friend. All the 'rich foreshadowings of the world'⁸⁷ which filled my boyhood with the vision of a comrade, seemed at the time to be made actual in him. {He restored me to a healthy state of nerves by the sweet magnetism of his presence.} In him too I found the final satisfaction of that dim aesthetic ecstasy which I called religion. Music and the grandeur of Gothic aisles, the mystery of winter evenings in cathedral choirs, when the tumultuous vibrations of the organ shook the giant windows and made the candles in their sconces tremble, took from him a poetry that pierced⁸⁸ into my heart and marrow. 'What tears I shed in the hymns and anthems of thy church, stung with emotion by the voices of thy sweetly choiring acolytes!'⁸⁹

Three soprano solos are indissolubly connected in my memory with Willie. Whenever I have heard them since, I have heard him singing still. One of these is the recitative from Handel's *Messiah*, which follows the slumberous *pifferaro* music of the Pastoral Symphony, and leads up to the angelic Chorus of the *Gloria*.⁹⁰ The second is Spohr's 'As pants the hart',⁹¹ with its thrilling outcry of the soul to God. The third is a portion of one of Mozart's masses, introduced into the anthem 'Praise the Lord'. The melodic phrase adapts itself with perfect rightness to the English words: 'He flourisheth as a flower of the field.'⁹² Beauty and pathos meet and mingle here. The voice of the boy who sings, and the bloom upon his beardless cheeks, they too are like the flower of the field. In their beauty there is the pathos of things doomed to pass away, the loveliness and sadness of the Linus hymn.⁹³

{Alas for youth! alas for eld's dark day!
 This comes apace, while that fleets fast away.

Thoughtless are men and fools, who mourn the dead,
But find no tears for youth's frail flower to shed.⁹⁴

My love enisled me in an enchanted garden, round which the breakers of the world of fact fretted without disturbing the delightfulness of dreaming. I no longer cared for work. I ceased to be ambitious. It was enough to live. My love seemed to me more real than aught in life beside. I came even into sympathy with Harrow—not indeed into harmony with what had poisoned and perplexed me there—but with the comely aspects of the place, the swiftness of young cricketers, the bodies of divers curving for their plunge, the mirth⁹⁵ of laughing boys, the rich empurpled distance of the champaign when the sun sank over those immeasurable fields. These things I hitherto foolishly, arrogantly, neglected. My senses had been blind to them. Now love unsealed the eyes of my soul.

I kept my love secret, and hugged the treasure jealously. It was the final flower of my long-cherished inner self. Secrecy added charm to its romance. Thus it came about that I practised much deceit, and had a lover's lies often on my lips at home. But I said to myself that Harpocrates and Erôs are one deity.⁹⁶ Unhappily there was a grain of evil conscience in the mixture of love's medicine. My thoughts were lodged in Hellas; but centuries rolled between my soul's home in Athens and the English places I was born again to live in. {Only too well enough I knew, alas! that if I avowed my emotion to my father or his friends, I should meet—not merely with no sympathy or understanding or credence—but that I should arouse horror, pain, aversion.}

At this period of my youth, I devoured Greek literature and fed upon the reproductions of Greek plastic art with which my father's library was stored. Plato took the first place in my studies. I dwelt upon the opening pages of the *Charmides* and *Lysis*. I compared these with the *Clouds* of Aristophanes and the erotic dialogues of Lucian and Plutarch.⁹⁷ I explored Theognis and the *Anthology*; learned Theocritus by heart; tasted the fragments of Anacreon and Ibycus and Pindar.⁹⁸ I did not reflect upon the incongruity between this impulse to absorb the genius of Greece and the other impulse which threw me toward medievalism. The *Confessions* of St Augustine⁹⁹ lay side by side upon my table with a copy of the *Phaedrus*. I fancied¹⁰⁰ that I was realizing the antique amorous enthusiasm, while kneeling in a cathedral stall, listening to antiphones, gazing on a beautiful friend's face emerging from a surplice.¹⁰¹

This confusion of ideas was grotesque enough; and gradually it introduced a discord into my life. Yet it marked a period of vigorous development. If the modern man is destined to absorb and to appropriate¹⁰² the diverse strains which make him what he is, some fresh fermentation cannot be avoided. He emerges from it with a mind determined this way or that, and retains a vital perception of¹⁰³ things that differ, grounded in his personal experience.

My mental and moral evolution proceeded now upon a path which had no contact with the prescribed systems of education. I lived in and for myself. Masters and schools and methods of acquiring knowledge lay outside me, to be used or neglected as I judged best. I passed my last term at Harrow, between that April and the ensuing August, in supreme indifference. I left the place without regret, and looked forward to the university without ambition. Life was neither here nor there for me. {The lord of my life was love, by whom I had been inducted into a world of wonders and who had opened my eyes and fortified my understanding.}

In the summer vacation, before I went up to Oxford, I made a tour through Scotland. There were the Forbeses at Pitlochry, Dalrymple at Newhailes, Jamieson on the Gair Loch, the Forrests at Edinburgh,¹⁰⁴ to be visited. All these folk were kind to me. If I chose to indulge in reminiscences, I could tell several curious things about that summer journey. And then, upon the homeward path, I stopped at Manchester, and enjoyed the sight of the first national loan collection of pictures by old masters.¹⁰⁵

Early in the autumn, a great comet swam into our skies.¹⁰⁶ It was a marvellous thing, flaming across the heavens as we beheld them from St Vincent's Rock at Clifton.

The outlines of these matters of fact are blurred in my recollection. They only supplied fuel to the love which burned within me. Love was the one and only actuality.

So it happened that, having utterly abandoned study, I failed to win a Balliol scholarship in November. Next spring I was plucked for Smalls¹⁰⁷ in Greek Grammar. That annoyed me, somewhat in the same way as one finds a mosquito or a fly annoying. I knew that the thing had no importance; but I was not strong enough, or capable enough, to treat the annoyance at its worth.

I remained a commoner¹⁰⁸ at Balliol till the month of June, 1859. Then I was elected to an Open Exhibition; and after that date my academical studies prospered sufficiently. But I failed to tutor myself vigorously into the current of life at Oxford. My self was pursuing its own course, guided at that time, as I thought, by love.

NOTES

1. Marginal note: 'Harrow' (MS 139).
2. Deletes 'gave', substitutes 'yielded' (MS 139).
3. An allusion to the brutish, human-like race encountered by Gulliver in the country of the Houyhnhnms in Jonathan Swift's *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships* (1726).
4. Symonds misremembers the initials of William Edmund ('Pat') Currey.
5. Several boys named Clayton attended Harrow between 1854 and 1859.
6. Deletes 'excesses', substitutes 'vagaries' (MS 140).
7. Symonds misremembers or misspells his schoolfellow's name. There are two candidates for 'Barber': Henry Frederick Barker (1840–87) joined the army after leaving Harrow in 1858; George Barbour (1841–1919) belonged to a wealthy family of Scottish cotton traders and would become High Sheriff of Cheshire in 1890.
8. Norman Charles Cookson (1841–1909) would become a coal owner and lead manufacturer.
9. Trans.: the most famous ditch. From Juvenal's *Satires* 2 (l. 10). This sexual pun refers to anal penetration: a *fossa* was often a drain for sewage.
10. Deletes 'horrible', substitutes 'repulsive' (MS 139^v).
11. Deletes 'fell swearing on', substitutes 'rose raging at' (MS 139^v).
12. Deletes 'bestiality', substitutes 'brutality' (MS 139^v).
13. Deletes 'whore', substitutes 'creature' (MS 139^v).
14. Deletes 'stallions', substitutes 'lovers' (MS 139^v).
15. Deletes 'in public, and masturbated him', substitutes 'and had exposed his person' (MS 139^v).
16. Deletes 'vile nauseous', substitutes 'mean' (MS 139^v).
17. Following 'those dirty', deletes 'squalid roughcast' (MS 139^v).
18. Deletes 'in the stinking', substitutes 'upon the sordid' (MS 139^v).
19. Following 'into our', deletes 'sordid' (MS 139^v).
20. Following 'of the', deletes 'foul' (MS 139^v).
21. Deletes 'the flaccid Cookson', substitutes 'him at their mercy' (MS 139^v).
22. Deletes 'sent', substitutes 'drove' (MS 139^v).

23. Deletes 'howling', substitutes 'whimpering' (MS 139^v).
24. Symonds misremembers the initials of his schoolfellow: Henry Neville Dering, 9th Baronet (1839–1906), would become a politician and diplomat.
 Thomas Henry Steel (1806–81) was an assistant master at Harrow for over thirty years. He was associated with The Grove boarding house.
25. Aymer Ainslie (1841–1901), son of Gilbert Ainslie, Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge. He would become a mining engineer.
26. Trans.: double-mindedness, or double-souled. Phyllis Grosskurth identifies this allusion to Arthur Hugh Clough's closet verse drama, *Dipsychus*, first published in the *Letters and Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough* (1865), a private edition prepared by his widow, Blanche Clough. Symonds assisted with the editing and publication of *The Poems and Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough* in 1869.
27. Deletes 'got beyond', substitutes 'transcended' (MS 142).
28. Deletes 'bestialities', substitutes 'animalisms' (MS 142).
29. Deletes 'to that of Greek', substitutes 'to Platonic' (MS 142).
30. Edward Arthur O'Brien (1840–1912) was from Dublin. He would go on to work in finance and become the manager of a newspaper.
31. Deletes 'to him', substitutes 'there' (MS 143).
32. A switch is a thin, flexible rod used for corporal punishment. Under Vaughan's headmastership, monitors were permitted to punish other boys, but the most serious offences were dealt with by Vaughan and his birch (a collection of twigs and sticks bound together).
33. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 144 blank (18 cms of clear space).
34. Symonds tries and rejects 'these sins and what perplexity they placed myself in' (revised to become 'these customs, so ill-adjusted to the spirit of the times we lived in') and 'perplexities, to which these Harrow-customs brought me' (revised to become 'perplexities, which the observation of them bred in me') (MS 146).
35. Deletes 'lawless', substitutes 'forbidden' (MS 146).
36. Deletes 'and weaken me', substitutes 'my moral sense' (MS 146).
37. Deletes 'not to break', substitutes 'to respect' (MS 146).

38. Deletes 'sense', substitutes 'nature' (MS 148).
39. Deletes 'lad', substitutes 'boy' (MS 148).
40. Francis John Huyshe (1840–1905) would become Vicar of Wimborne and Hon. Canon of Salisbury.
41. Eliot Constantine Yorke (1843–78), son of Charles Philip Yorke, 4th Earl of Hardwicke. He would become a politician and equerry to the Duke of Edinburgh.
42. Following 'for a', deletes 'very' (MS 148).
43. Deletes 'threw', substitutes 'dared to throw' (MS 148).
44. Deletes 'his passion', substitutes 'the fellow's contact' (MS 148).
45. Deletes 'crude', substitutes 'vulgar' (MS 148).
46. Following 'moral befoulment', deletes 'scarcely' (MS 149).
47. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 149 blank (6 cms of clear space).
48. Plato's *Apology* dramatises the defence offered by Socrates at his trial. He was charged with corrupting the Athenian youth and not acknowledging the city's gods.
49. Symonds appears to misremember his crib: Henry Cary was a translator of classical literature, but Phyllis Grosskurth identifies W.B. Kelly's series, *Keys to the Classics* or *Kelly's Classical Keys*, as the more likely candidate. In the latter case, Symonds would be reading *Plato's Apology of Socrates, the Critio, and the Phaedo* (1848) translated by J. Eccleston and Roscoe Mongan.
50. Trans.: to let go out. A term used in English public schools for a permitted leave of absence.
51. Plato's *Phaedrus* is a dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus on the subject of love. It includes a discussion of the soul and immortality (245c–249d) explored through myth and allegory (according to Socrates, the only means available to represent these concepts in human discourse).
52. Like the *Phaedrus*, Plato's *Symposium* explores the subject of love. The speakers are attending a symposium, or drinking party, and they include Pausanias (who distinguishes between 'heavenly' and 'common' forms of desire and love—see note 67) and Agathon (who celebrates the beauty of youth). Socrates also recounts the story of Diotima (who argues that love should be selfless and seek after what is good).
53. Deletes 'deep memory', substitutes 'firm recollection' (MS 151).
54. Trans.: a love without restraint or taint; literally, free love.

55. The names ‘Vaughan’ and ‘Pretor’ have been heavily scored through in pencil (MS 151).
56. Deletes ‘discovered’, substitutes ‘obtained’ (MS 151).
57. Deletes ‘passion’, substitutes ‘enthusiasm’ (MS 151).
58. Deletes ‘beauty’, substitutes ‘charm’ (MS 152).
59. Deletes ‘one’, substitutes ‘a practical’ (MS 152).
60. Deletes ‘own’, substitutes ‘inborn’ (MS 152).
61. Deletes ‘this’, substitutes ‘masculine’ (MS 152).
62. Deletes ‘between my own childish dreams and the Harrovian brutality’, substitutes ‘which those dreams of childhood and the brutalities of vulgar lust at Harrow’ (MS 152).
63. The name ‘Vaughan’ has been heavily scored through in pencil (MS 152).
64. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 153 blank (21 cms of clear space). A copy of the letter to Jowett is bound into the manuscript (MS 154–55).
65. Plato’s *Charmides* and *Lysis* are dialogues concerned with love and the distinction between *erôs* (suggesting sexual passion) and *philia* (suggesting friendship). The *Charmides* explores *sophrosyne*, variously translated as temperance and moderation, and its speakers include Socrates, Chaerephon, Charmides (who is famed for his beauty) and Critias. The *Lysis* explores the relationship between love, discussion and wisdom, and its speakers include Socrates, Ctesippus, Hippothales, Lysis (who is also famed for his beauty) and Menexenus.
66. A possible allusion to *King John* (c. 1598) by William Shakespeare: ‘Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age’s tooth’ (I. 1. l. 214).
67. Pausanias’s speech in the *Symposium* (180c–185c) distinguishes between *Erôs Pandemos* (a common desire or passion) and *Erôs Ouranios* (a heavenly desire or passion). The former can be directed towards men and women, focusing upon ‘the body more than the soul’ (181b); the latter is directed towards men, focusing upon the mind and soul.
68. An allusion to (and common misquotation from) ‘Elegiac Stanzas, Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle in a Storm, Painted by Sir George Beaumont’ in *Poems, in Two Volumes* (1807) by William Wordsworth: ‘The light that never was, on sea or land’ (l. 15).
69. A possible allusion to ‘The Clod and the Pebble’ in *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794) by William Blake: ‘Love

- seeketh not itself to please, | Nor for itself hath any care, | But for another gives its ease, | And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair' (ll. 1–4).
70. Deletes 'my case', substitutes 'and I hope I have not spoken rudely' (MS 155).
 71. Deletes 'thoughts were', substitutes 'soul was' (MS 157).
 72. William Fear Dyer (1843–1905) would become a church organist. Symonds described him as the son of a 'Dissenting tailor', and claims to have paid 'fifty guineas as a premium for his musical education' (see Chapter 6). In 1858 Dyer was a chorister at Bristol Cathedral and a pupil at the Cathedral Grammar School. In 1883 he married Mary Louisa Austin. I am grateful to Brian Pearson who supplied this and further information concerning Willie Dyer to the London Library in 2002 [LO/CORR/012/001].
 73. Deletes 'dreaming of', substitutes 'sending my soul out to' (MS 158).
 74. Following 'It precipitated', deletes 'in the moment' (MS 158).
 75. Deletes 'exhibited', substitutes 'saw ahead of me' (MS 158).
 76. Continuing the sentence before, Symonds tries 'and provided me with my own natural exit from the *cul de sac*' before deleting the material and starting a new sentence: '[The *cul de sac* which I had formed in Harrow,] seemed now to expand into infinities of free and liberal experience.' He deletes the material in square brackets, substituting 'The close blind alley into which I had blundered at Harrow, and from which there was no escape' (MS 158).
 77. Symonds misdates this first meeting: it occurred in 1858.
 78. Deletes 'sense', substituting 'effluence' (MS 160).
 79. Later addition in a smaller script (MS 160).
 80. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 160 blank (14 cms of clear space).
 81. The phrase 'unreasoning and unreasoned' is a revision; the original in heavily scored through and remains illegible (MS 161).
 82. Deletes 'no established form', substitutes 'no bond' (MS 161).
 83. Deletes 'It was eighteen months at least after I first set eyes on him', substitutes 'More than a year elapsed' (MS 161).
 84. Deletes 'moment', substitutes 'contact' (MS 161).
 85. An allusion to *Macbeth* (c.1606) by William Shakespeare: 'no jutty, frieze | Buttress, nor coign of vantage' (I. 6. ll. 7–8). I am grateful to Brian Pearson for bringing this allusion to my attention.

86. Trans.: ‘So it was then, long ago, | Men were golden, when the beloved loved in return.’ From Theocritus’s *Idylls* 12 (ll. 15–16). Symonds’s text follows the Byzantine tradition.
87. From *The Princess* (1847) by Alfred Tennyson.
88. Deletes ‘penetrated deep’, substitutes ‘pierced’ (MS 163).
89. From the *Confessions* (c.400) of St Augustine. This appears to be Symonds’s translation and the manuscript records his rejected readings: ‘church’ was previously ‘services’; ‘stung’ was previously ‘stirred’; following ‘stung with’, he deletes ‘a keen’; and ‘choiring acolytes’ was previously ‘sounding church’ (MS 163).
90. From Part 1 of the *Messiah* (1741), an oratorio by George Frideric Handel. The recitative following the *Pifa*, or pastoral symphony, is known as ‘There were shepherds abiding’. It is the first of two recitatives between the *Pifa* and the chorus, ‘Glory to God’.
91. From Ludwig Spohr’s *Des Heilands letzte Stunden* (1835). This is a setting of Psalm 42, ‘As the hart panteth after water brooks’.
92. Popular church anthem adapted from the *Kyrie* of Mozart’s *Coronation Mass* (1779). This is a setting of Psalm 103, ‘Praise the Lord, O my soul’ (and Symonds cites Psalm 103. 15).
93. A lament taking its name from Linus, variously considered the son and rival of Apollo. He was a great musician credited with the invention of rhythm and melody.
94. From Theognis’s *Elegies* 1 (ll. 527–8, 1069–70). A version of the first couplet appears in Symonds’s *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873), suggesting this is his own translation.
95. Deletes ‘eyes’, substitutes ‘mirth’ (MS 164).
96. In Greek mythology, Harpocrates was the god of silence, a figure derived from the Egyptian deity, Horus.
Erôs was the Greek god of love, variously considered the first god and the son of Aphrodite. He lends his name to a form of love identified with sexual passion
97. Aristophanes (c.450–c.388 BCE) was a Greek comedian and satirist. His play, *Clouds* (423 BCE), attacked Socrates and his methods of education. Plato cites it as an instance of slander in his *Apology*.
Lucian (c.120–c.180) was a Greek rhetorician and satirist. Among his dialogues is the *Symposium*, or *Feast of Lapithae*, but contra Plato, here the philosophers are indecorous and disorderly.

Plutarch (c.46–c.120) was a Greek biographer, historian and essayist. He is best known for *Parallel Lives* (commonly referred to as *Plutarch's Lives*), and his *Moralia* contains a dialogue on love: the *Erotikos* or *Amatorius*.

98. Theognis (fl. 6th century BCE) was a Greek poet. His elegiac couplets survive in two books and number more than 1380 verses.

The *Greek Anthology* is a collection of epigrams and poems compiled by Meleager (fl. 1st century BCE) and containing the work of around fifty writers (including many contributions by Meleager himself). It was originally entitled *Stephanos* (or ‘Garland’).

Theocritus (fl. 3rd century BCE) was a Greek poet credited with the invention of bucolic or pastoral poetry. His works are commonly known as *eidyllia* (or ‘idylls’).

Anacreon (c.582–c.485 BCE) was a Greek lyric poet. Only fragments of his work have survived, including several examples of erotic verse.

Ibycus (fl. 6th century BCE) was included among the canon of lyric poets established by Alexandrian scholars in the 2nd and 3rd centuries BCE. Only fragments of his work have survived.

99. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) was a Christian philosopher and theologian. His *Confessions* are often credited with being the first autobiography in the Western tradition.
100. Deletes ‘dreamed’, substitutes ‘fancied’ (MS 166).
101. The word ‘friend’s’ and the phrase ‘emerging from a surplice’ are heavily scored through in pencil (MS 166). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from ‘copy of the *Phaedrus*’ (MS 166) to ‘This confusion of ideas’ (MS 166). See Brown, I, p. 97.
102. Deletes ‘cannot escape, if he is to feel and to absorb’, substitutes ‘is destined to absorb and to appropriate’ (MS 166).
103. Deletes ‘sympathy for’, substitutes ‘vital perception of’ (MS 166).
104. The family of James Forrest, 1st Baronet (1780–1860), Lord Provost of Edinburgh between 1837 and 1843. Symonds travelled to Edinburgh with his sister, Edith, in September 1858. He visited Edinburgh Castle and Holyrood Palace with one of the Forrest daughters. See *Letters*, I, pp. 161–3.
105. Symonds misremembers his summer vacation: Manchester’s *Art Treasures of Great Britain* exhibition had taken place a year previously. While in Edinburgh with the Forrests, Symonds saw paint-

ings at Holyrood Palace that had been exhibited in Manchester. See *Letters*, I, pp. 161–3.

106. Donati's comet was visible in the skies in late 1858.
107. Plucked is University slang for a failed examination or degree.
 'Smalls' is Oxford slang for Responsions, the first of three traditional examinations for a BA degree at the University of Oxford (i.e. Responsions, Moderations and the Final Schools).
108. A commoner is an undergraduate studying without a scholarship or exhibition.

Chapter 6: Adolescence. Life at Oxford, and the Painful Incidents of My First Year There

I

My first feeling upon coming up to Balliol in the autumn of 1858 was one of relief. The greater freedom of university as compared with school life, both as regards the employment of time and the choice of studies, suited my temperament. I was not one of those boys who after hugely enjoying their career at Eton or Harrow, leave their hearts to some extent behind them. Nor again was I abandoning¹ that prestige and flattering sense of self-importance which a popular head of the school resigns when he enters the ranks of freshmen in a first-rate college. I on the contrary had everything to gain and nothing to lose by the change.

Cambridge absorbed the majority of Harrovians who went up to the universities. Consequently I was but poorly furnished with school friends. Four may be mentioned with whom I had in different ways to do. These were Robert Jamieson, Randall Vickers, Edwyn Arkwright, and a handsome cricketer called Monro.² I began at the same time to make friends with freshmen—Urquhart, Duncan (afterwards Lord Camperdown), Stephens (a nephew of the Lord Chancellor Hatherley), Malcolm (now partner in Coutts's bank), Cecil Bosanquet (the brother of Gustavus), Cholmeley Puller and Wright (two scholars at Balliol), Lyulph Stanley,³ and others whose names I find recorded in my diaries of that date. During my first term I also became acquainted with Edwin Palmer (now

Archdeacon of Oxford), Robinson Ellis (the eminent Latin scholar), and Professor John Conington.⁴ These elder men introduced me to their several sets. I came thus early in my career to know people of distinction like Goldwin Smith, Charles Parker, Charles Pearson, Arthur P. Stanley, Albert Dicey, T.H. Green, Mark Pattison, Francis Otter, A.O. Rutson.⁵

There were two sides to my life. One was healthy and stimulative; the other unwholesome and relaxing. Urquhart, a Scotchman of perverid type, developed a violent personal affection for me. He had⁶ High Church proclivities and ran after choristers. Vickers was a man of somewhat similar stamp. In their company I frequented ante-chapels, and wasted my time over feverish sentimentalisms. But when I perceived that Urquhart was making a dead set at me, I broke off the connection. Whatever I felt about comradeship I was not prepared to be made love to; and Monro did me the good service of pointing out how easily I might be compromised by Urquhart's attention. There was no harm in the man. On the contrary, I have every reason to believe that he grew up a good clergyman and excellent husband. But he had acquired the unpopularity which attached to awkward [excitable enthusiasts in a mixed society of young men.]⁷

The association with Conington was almost wholly good. It is true that I sat up till midnight with him nearly every evening, drinking cup after cup of strong tea in his private lodgings above Cooper's shop near University. This excited and fatigued my nerves. But the conversation was in itself a liberal education for a youth of pronounced literary tastes. Now and again it turned on matters of the affections. Conington was scrupulously moral and cautious. Yet he sympathized with romantic attachments for boys. In this winter he gave me *Ionica*; and I learned the love-story of its author William Johnson (now Cory), the Eton master, and the pretty-faced Charlie Wood of Christ Church who had been his pupil (now Lord Halifax).⁸ That volume of verse, trifling as it may appear to casual readers, went straight to⁹ my heart and inflamed my imagination. It joined on in a singular manner to my recent experiences at Harrow, and helped to form a dream world of unhealthy fancies about love. I went so far as to write a letter to William Johnson, exposing the state of my own feelings and asking his advice. The answer, addressed to O.D.Y. at the Union, duly came. It was a long epistle upon pederastia in modern times, defending it, and laying down the principle that affection between persons of the same sex is no less natural and rational than the ordinary passionate relations.

Underneath Johnson's frank exposition of this unconventional morality there lay a wistful yearning sadness—the note of disappointment and forced abstention. I have never found this note absent in lovers of my sort and Johnson's, unless the men have cast prudence to the winds and staked their all on cynicism.

My studies advanced so badly that I was plucked for Smalls in the spring of 1859.¹⁰ A man called Du Boulay¹¹ of Exeter made me conjugate the Greek verbs εἶμι, to be, and εἶμι, to go, tense by tense. This was perhaps rather severe on any candidate for his *testamur*¹² in Responsions. The examination, however, was meant to search our knowledge of the rudiments; and nobody can deny that an accurate knowledge of the Greek auxiliary verbs is a rudimentary requisite of scholarship. I failed to fulfil the conditions, and deserved to be plucked. The test selected by Mr Du Boulay discovered the weakest point in my panoply, and paralysed a mind which, however quick and sympathetic, was never very self-controlled or ready at a pinch. To confuse me with the multiplication table would have been equally easy. I did not greatly mind this rebuff. I had been gathering fritillaries in Magdalen meadows all the afternoon, and enjoying the sunset from the top of Magdalen Tower. The memory of that pleasant May day is fresher now than my recollection of the disagreeable news that I was plucked. But I greatly disliked¹³ having to go down to Clifton and tell my father that I had been 'ploughed¹⁴ in Smalls for Greek grammar.' Fortunately, before the end of June, I had been elected together with Charles Elton¹⁵ to an Open Exhibition at Balliol and had won the Newdigate prize poem for English verse.¹⁶ At least I think it was in this summer that I got the Newdigate. It may have been in 1860, when I also took a first class in Moderations.¹⁷ At all events my father's wounded feelings were soon soothed by quite sufficient academical successes; and my own sense of duty in¹⁸ study was sharpened by the salutary snub inflicted on my not too stubborn vanity. A dim consciousness of latent ability sustained me, and [rendered me equanimous though somewhat harder. I was still the ugly duckling—*voilà tout*.]¹⁹

II

In the summer term of this year, 1859, I was talking one hot afternoon with Conington about *Ionica* and what I then called Arcadian love. Heaven forgive the innocent euphemism! I took it from an oracle in Herodotus which had attracted my attention by its simple strength and

beauty: Ἀρκαδίαν μ' αἰτεῖς · μέγα μ' αἰτεῖς · οὐ τοι δώσω.²⁰ This, and another oracle, which I only remember in the Latin version, *Spartam nactus es, hanc orna*,²¹ remained in my head like maxims, and were always applied to my outward lot in the domain of the emotions. Well: some turn in the argument—for we were discussing the casuistry of unrecognized passion between male persons—forced²² me to blurt out what I had so long concealed about Vaughan's story. Conington was deeply moved. He shrank into himself, and told me that such things ought not to be lightly spoken of. I replied that I could support what I had said by evidence, and that I was certain of my facts. This happened at the end of term, when we were both going to join a reading party at Whitby. Green, Rutson, Puller, myself and Conington formed the party, and we had engaged a lodging-house, kept by a woman called Storm, whom Conington christened λαῖλαψ.²³ By the way, I may mention that the village churchyard at Whitby is full of graves erected to captains and sailors of the name of Storm, many of whom had perished as whalers and fishers on the northern sea. The church itself was an old-fashioned edifice built on the cliff's brow, with galleries in which the choir sat and droned out hymns and anthems to the accompaniment of a stringed and brass band. It affected my imagination with the feeling of generations of shipwrecked seamen, as though it had been itself a hulk, stranded up there and redolent of marine reminiscences. This church was the place in which I passed many poignant hours of mental tension and moral scrutiny in the company of Conington, Green, Rutson, Puller, boxed up together in a narrow wooden pew.

For here, at Whitby, when we had settled down to our academic studies—Conington to his notes on Virgil, Rutson to his modern history, Green to his German philosophy, Puller and I to our Greek and Latin poets and copies of verses—the question about Vaughan was reopened. I remember a forenoon conversation on the cliff, during which I convinced Conington that I had spoken the truth. He recommended me to go at once with Pretor's letter and my Harrow diaries to Clifton. My father ought to know the fact, whatever happened.

I took two solitary journeys that summer from Whitby to Clifton and back upon this business. I remember reading *Alton Locke*²⁴ on one of them, and seeing a grand evening sky behind the towers of Lincoln Cathedral, the pathos and the calm of which sank into my troubled soul with soothing. It was a singular position for a youth of eighteen. I had become the accuser of my old head master, a man for whom I felt no love, and who had shown me no special kindness, but who was after all the awe-inspiring

ruler of the petty state of Harrow. My accusation rested solely upon the private testimony of an intimate friend, whose confidence I violated by the communication²⁵ of his letter to a third party. To complicate matters, I felt a deeply rooted sympathy with Vaughan. If he had sinned, it had been by yielding to passions which already mastered me. But this fact, instead of making me indulgent, determined me to tell the bitter truth. At that period I was not cynical. I desired to overcome the malady²⁶ of my own nature. My blood boiled and my nerves stiffened when I thought what mischief²⁷ life at Harrow was doing daily to young lads under the autocracy of a hypocrite.

So I went through with the business of exposure painfully but steadily. It took as little to convince my father as it had taken to convince Conington. The evidence was plain and irrefragable.²⁸

What eventually happened was this. My father wrote to Vaughan, intimating that he possessed proofs of his correspondence with Alfred Pretor. He promised not to make a public exposure,²⁹ provided Vaughan resigned the headmastership of Harrow immediately and sought no further advancement in the church. Otherwise the facts³⁰ would have to be divulged.³¹ On the receipt of my father's ultimatum, Vaughan came down to Clifton, where he inspected Pretor's letter. He accepted the terms dictated to him. Mrs Vaughan³² followed after³³ a few days and flung herself at my father's knees. 'Would Dr Symonds not withhold the execution of his sentence? Her husband was subject to this weakness, but it had not interfered with his usefulness in the direction of the school at Harrow.' My father remained obdurate {though he told me he suffered keenly at the sight of this unhappy woman—a Stanley—prostrate on the ground before him. He judged it would be wrong to hush up such a matter of such grave importance to a great public school. In this view of his duty, he} was supported by Conington, and also by the friends whom Vaughan employed in the transaction—his brother-in-law Arthur P. Stanley, and Hugh Pearson, afterwards Canon of Windsor.³⁴

Vaughan then had to withdraw from Harrow; and he did this with consummate skill. No one knew the reason of his sudden abdication, except Conington, my father, myself, and a few undergraduates at Cambridge and Oxford, of whom I shall have to speak.

At the banquet given in his honour when he left Harrow to the care of Montagu Butler (now Master of Trinity Cambridge),³⁵ Vaughan said that fifteen years of headmastership was as much as a man's strength could stand, and quite enough for the welfare of the school he governed. The

public acclaimed this act of resignation with enthusiasm. The government offered him two bishoprics in succession—those, I think, of Worcester and Rochester. He declined the former, though it was well known that he was ambitious for a seat as bishop in the House of Lords. He accepted the latter. But my father telegraphed, on hearing of the news, that he must cancel the act of acceptance. Accordingly, Vaughan again retired, somewhat ambiguously, from the post of honour which the ministers of the Crown wished to force³⁶ upon him. Both Stanley and Pearson, his advocates and friends, were of opinion that the English Church might suffer by Vaughan's advancement to the episcopacy. Therefore they approved of my father's Rhadamanthine justice.³⁷ The withdrawal of Dr Vaughan into private life, and his refusal of two sees, were, however, so mysterious and so dramatic that the suspicions of worldly people awoke, and we had some difficulty for several years to suppress the real history of the case.

The main conduct of this affair lay in my father's hands. He consulted Conington at every important turn, while Vaughan, as I have said, was advised by his brother-in-law Arthur P. Stanley and by his old friend Hugh Pearson. Alfred Pretor naturally did not remain in ignorance of what was going on. He informed Charles Dalrymple and Robert Jamieson, both of whom highly disapproved of the course which I had taken. In their eyes nothing could justify the disclosure of Pretor's letter, upon which the whole case rested. They did not take into account the danger which Vaughan himself incurred so long as he remained at Harrow, although they were aware that Pretor was in the habit of confiding the story with incredible levity and imprudence to anyone he thought it would impress. They were in fact irreconcilable upon the point of honour. All three broke off communications with me, and I have had nothing to do with them since that summer of 1859.

It was inevitable that this view taken of my action by my three most intimate Harrow friends—each of whom I visited in their homes the year before—should cause me grave disquietude. My father, Conington, Stanley and Pearson approved what I had done emphatically. But the approval of these elder men and the thanks expressed by Vaughan's advisors for what they considered my discharge of a public duty and a private service, were not sufficient to relieve me from painful heart-searchings. Conscience, it is true, supported me. I felt that the course I had followed was right. But I could not shake off the sense that I appeared disloyal to my friends. I still think that I ought to have informed them of the step I meant to take—in fact that there were other³⁸ ways of dealing with the problem. Until I told

Conington at Oxford what I knew, I had not planned a formal disclosure. Having told him, it was evident that the matter could not rest there. It virtually passed out of my hands. His advice that I should deliver it over to my father was sound. They both held that the importance of the affair for Harrow, for English society and the Established Church annihilated all considerations of confidence between two boys *in statu pupillari*.³⁹ They were undoubtedly right; and I do not know how I could have acted otherwise than I did in the summer of 1859, after I had made my first impulsive communication to Conington. Nevertheless, I suffered deeply both in spirits and in health from the long exhausting correspondence with Pretor and Jamieson and Dalrymple, crossing and confusing the correspondence carried on by my father with Conington and Vaughan and Stanley. My brain and moral consciousness—the one worn with worrying thought, the other racked by casuistical doubts—never quite recovered from the weariness of those unprofitable weeks.⁴⁰

One thing which rendered the charge of broken confidence ridiculous, was the comparative levity with which Pretor himself and his other confidants had whispered Vaughan's story about. Several irresponsible lads were acquainted with it; and precautions had to be taken lest they should still further divulge the secret.

Hugh Pearson, with whom I became intimately befriended, told me a singular anecdote, which illustrates the delicacy of the situation. The Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce,⁴¹ came to him one day at Sonning on the Thames and said: 'I am certain that Vaughan had some grave reason for leaving Harrow and refusing two mitres. An ugly story must lie behind. You had better make a friend of me. If I discover the truth, I shall be an enemy.' Pearson replied: 'Even if I knew something, it would be my duty to withhold it. But you have no right to suppose that I do.' 'Very well,' said the bishop: 'I shall find out. And I have warned you.' Some while afterwards he came again, and told Pearson that he had learned the whole secret. 'How and where?' asked Pearson. 'At a dinner-party from a lady next whom I was sitting,' answered the bishop. 'And what have you done?' 'Oh, I've told the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Prime Minister.'

It is singular that a secret possessed by several people should not have transpired while curiosity was still alive. So many years have now elapsed that its disclosure would neither startle nor shock. Vaughan still lives; and I have not heard that Pretor is dead. My father, Conington, Stanley and Pearson have passed away. What became of Jamieson I do not know. Charles Dalrymple is an active Conservative Scotch Member of

Parliament. The documents relating to the affair were enclosed in a sealed packet by my father. This I have never opened. It lies among my private papers endorsed for destruction by my executors.⁴²

It was not to be expected that Stanley should feel cordially toward me. He asked me to his rooms at Christ Church and afterwards to the Deanery at Westminster. I used to go there because my father wished that appearances should be kept up, and, in case of a public exposure, that my recognition by the Dean should be a matter of notoriety. But I always felt extremely uncomfortable in his society, and could neither act nor talk with freedom.

Vaughan I never saw again. This was owing partly to accident and partly to my steady avoidance of Speech Day at Harrow. When his nephew T.H. Green married my sister, I had to inform Green, in order that a possible collision might be obviated. It is curious, I think, that we have never met at the Athenaeum.⁴³ But I go there very little even when I am in London.

Pearson, as I said, became my friend. I owed much to his companionship. He was a man of the most cordial character—sweet, gentle, wise and sociable and charming. To an extensive knowledge of good literature he added genial humour and considerable insight into character. A sound churchman, of liberal and tolerant views, he made Sonning a model parish by his human sympathy and tolerance. No one in distress of difficulty sought assistance from him in vain. He belonged to an ecclesiastical family—Pearson of the Creed was an ancestor, and his father had been Dean of Salisbury.⁴⁴ His intimate friends lay among the higher ranks of the clergy. With their connections and his own indisputable ability he might have aspired to preferment. But impaired health, after a bad fall from his horse, which inflicted permanent internal injury, diminished his active energy; and he resolved to enjoy the moderate sphere of work and the congenial leisure which Sonning afforded to a bachelor. The Queen made him Canon of Windsor. And when Stanley died, offered him the Deanery of Westminster. I have this fact on his own information in a letter written to me just after he thought fit to decline the honour. Her Majesty, like all the rest of his friends, always called him H.P.⁴⁵

III

It was a severe strain upon my nervous and moral strength—this probing of Vaughan's case, this separation from old friends on a question of casuistry, this forced envisagement of my own emotional attitude. I do not

think that I have ever quite recovered tone and equilibrium after the tension of those weeks; in the course of which I learned much about human nature and the world's opinion, without sacrificing a point of my volition or reconciling the discords of my individuality in any compromise.

The chief good which emerged from so much evil for me, was that I grew to be an intimate friend of my father. No veil remained between us. He understood my character; I felt his sympathy and relied upon his wisdom. We joined hearts, not only as son and parent, but also as men of diverse temperaments and ages aspiring to the higher life in common.

When my father learned the truth about my romantic affection for Willie Dyer, he thought it right to recommend a cautious withdrawal from the intimacy. The arguments he used were conclusive. Considering the very delicate position in which I stood with regard to Vaughan, the possibility of Vaughan's story becoming public, and the doubtful nature of my own emotion, prudence pointed to a gradual diminution or cooling-off of friendship.

At that important moment of my life, I could not understand, and I've never been able to understand, why people belonging to different strata in society—if they love each other—should not enter into comradeship. But my father made me see that, under the existing conditions of English manners, an ardent friendship between me (a young man, gently born, bred at Harrow, advancing to the highest academical honours at Balliol) and Willie (a Bristol chorister, the son of a Dissenting tailor), would injure not my prospects only but his reputation. The instincts of my blood, the conventionalities under which I had been trained, the sympathy I felt for sisters and for brothers-in-law, the ties which bound me to the class of gentlemen, brought me to⁴⁶ look upon myself, as an aberrant being who was being tutored by my father's higher sense of what is right in conduct. Furthermore, I recognized that in my own affection⁴⁷ for Willie there was something similar to the passion which had ruined Vaughan. I foresaw the possibility, if I persisted in my love for him, of being brought into open rupture with my family, and would involve my friend thereby in what would hamper his career by casting the stigma of illicit passion on our intercourse.

Under this pressure of arguments from without, of sense of weakness within, and of conventional traditions which had made me what I was, I yielded. I gave up Willie Dyer as my avowed⁴⁸ heart's friend and comrade. I submitted to the desirability⁴⁹ of not acknowledging the boy I loved in public. But I was not strong enough to break the bonds which linked us, or to extirpate the living love I felt for him. I carried on our

intimacy in clandestine ways, and fed my temperament on sweet emotion in secret. This deceit, and the encouragement of what I then recognized as an immoral impulse, brought me cruel wrong.

A privately printed series of poems, entitled 'Dead Love', and the 'Tale of Theodore', portray the state of my mind at that epoch better than I can now describe it. If these Memoirs see the light of publication, I hope that the poems I have indicated will be printed in an appendix. They were written from day to day under the stress and storm of the moral influences which controlled me. No autobiographical resumption of facts after the lapse of twenty-five years is equal in veracity to such contemporary records.⁵⁰

Had Willie been a boy of my own rank, our friendship need not have been broken; or had English institutions favoured equality, like those I admire in Switzerland, he might have been admitted to my father's home. As it was, I continued for some years to keep up an awkward and uncomfortable intercourse with him, corresponding by letters, meeting him in churches where he played the organ, and going with him now and then to concerts. I paid the organist of Bristol Cathedral fifty guineas as premium for Willie's musical education, and thus was responsible for starting him in a career he wished to follow.

IV

In the autumn of 1859 there came a young man from Rugby to Oxford, who was destined to exercise a good deal of influence over my life. His name was C.G.H. Shorting.⁵¹ After trying for the Balliol scholarship without success, he obtained one at Corpus. We soon became intimate, and I discovered that he shared my Arcadian tastes. He was rather good-looking, with a mass of curly shining yellow hair. For scholarship in the technical sense of the word he showed considerable ability; but he had little or no gifts for the severer studies of the university. There was something attractive about him, in spite of a difficult temper and an obstinate perverse will. The men of my set—Conington, Edwin Palmer, C.C. Puller, A.O. Rutson, Francis Otter, Robinson Ellis—took a fancy to him. We became intimate friends, until his conduct with regard to boys, especially the choristers at Magdalen, brought him into serious trouble. Reading through the diaries which I then kept, I see that Shorting occupied far too much of my time, and that my whole nature was harassed by the quarrels, reconcilements, jealousies, suspicions, which diversified our singular sort of comradeship.

There is little of importance to relate about the ordinary life of an Oxford undergraduate. I do not mean to say that the truthful records of such a life would not possess extraordinary value for the historian of culture, society, and economy during this century. But, in order to make them really valuable, they would have to be minute. I cannot afford to make my records of Oxford properly minute; the aim I have in writing *Memoirs* at all, being psychological, not historical or social. It would over-balance the composition of my picture, were I to turn aside here and present (as I could easily do) a detailed sketch of undergraduate existence at Oxford between 1858 and 1863. I shared all phases of that student life, and mixed with all members of academical society—from our M.P.s, our Vice Chancellors, our heads of houses, our Professors, our Tutors, our unclassified Dons, our budding Fellows, our boating men and cricketers, our steady scholars, our beardless and attractive freshmen, down to our scouts⁵² and college servants of all sorts, our grooms in stables, our lasses in country inns we went to, our watermen upon the river, and the boys who cleaned our boots, the cabmen who drove our Hansoms.

Some day or other perhaps, I shall indulge an aging exile's garrulity⁵³ with the attempt to photograph this charming, many-coloured, youthful life, having by me ample materials, as well as a⁵⁴ tenacious memory, at my service for the faithful performance of the task.

It has been said, however, that the predominant purpose of these *Memoirs* is to supply veracious data for the psychical history of one individual. To digress upon the broader fields of reminiscence and experience, would be to violate the intellectual order of the theme proposed. I am condemned by my plan to a close and irksome egotism. But it is also my business to supply, by short jottings and indirect notations of fact, some notion of the circumambient atmosphere⁵⁵ in which that individual grew and came to his maturity.⁵⁶

Omitting photographic details and larger surveys over Oxford life, I have, therefore, to describe in outline the way in which I spent my remaining years at Balliol.

In the summer term of 1860, if I mistake not, I⁵⁷ won the Newdigate Prize for an English poem on 'The Escorial'.⁵⁸ My dear old friend Conington (who did not believe, and very rightly perhaps did not believe in my gifts as a poet) was curiously perplexed by this occurrence. He had twice competed for the Newdigate, without success. Gifted with an extraordinary memory, he declaimed to me, on one interminable evening, his two unsuccessful poems, together with the two which won the prizes.

Four Newdigates in all: two inedited, and two in print. It was a colossal, a pyramidal, occasion—called forth by the unexpected good luck of my littleness. When I came to recite my poem in the rostrum,⁵⁹ Matthew Arnold,⁶⁰ then our Professor of Poetry, informed me very kindly, and in the spirit of sound criticism, that he had voted for me—not because of my stylistic qualities, but because I intellectually grasped the subject, and used its motives better and more rationally than my competitors. This sincere expression of a distinctive judgement was very helpful to me. It gave me insight into my own faculty, and preserved me from self-delusion as to its extent. I do believe that I then possessed, and have never lost, the candour which precludes a false estimate of mental powers.

In the same term, unless I am confusing dates, not having a calendar at hand, I obtained a first class in Moderations; and so was immediately started upon my work for the Final Schools in *Literae Humaniores*—philosophy, logic, history.⁶¹

Conington formed a second reading party. He and Green and Rutson and Puller and myself went to live in a farm-house upon the lake of Coniston, facing the shore which Ruskin⁶² has since made classical. Shorting came to see me there, and brought his peculiar atmosphere of boy-love⁶³ into my neighbourhood. This signified little; for the deep seas of my soul, so sorely troubled by Vaughan's⁶⁴ affairs last year, were now subsiding.⁶⁵

Green coached me privately in Plato. I do not think I got much from him. His own views were turbid at that period. He had just begun to grapple with Hegel; and he never possessed, even to his last days, a complete grasp of his own philosophical ideas. In the summer of 1860, being in a phase of mental storm and stress, he was not a very lucid leader of the blind.

A trifling incident occurred at Coniston, which I shall relate, because it is more powerfully imprinted on my memory than all the other details of those weeks. I had been talking to Shorting⁶⁶ upon a grey stone wall, tufted with *cystopteris* and *ruta muraria*—the ordinary fern-grown sort of wall which divides fields in the Lake District. When twilight fell, he went off to his lodging and his loves. I returned to the little room in the farm-house, where I pursued my studies. There I sat and read. Conington and Green were conversing in the paved kitchen, used by us as a dining room; and perhaps they were not conscious of my presence. There was only a door between the two chambers. Conington said: 'Barnes will not get his first.' (They called me Barnes then, and I liked the name, because they

chose it.) ‘No,’ said Green, ‘I do not think he has any chance of doing so.’ They then proceeded to speak about my aesthetical and literary qualities, and the languor of my temperament. I scraped my feet upon the floor, and stirred the table I was sitting at. Their conversation dropped. But the sting of it remained in me; and though I cared little enough for first classes, in comparison with lads’ love,⁶⁷ I then and there resolved that I would win⁶⁸ the best first of my year.

This kind of grit in me has to be notified. Nothing roused it so much as a seeming slight, exciting my rebellious manhood. It was the same spur, as when Rendall wrote home of me ‘wanting in vigour both of body and mind’, and Conington once more in the course of a long Clifton walk remarked upon my ‘languor’, and Jowett told me I had ‘no iron to rely upon’, and Fred Myers⁶⁹ said I had ‘worked myself out in premature culture’, and an M.P. at Mr North’s⁷⁰ indulgently complimented me on ‘writing for the Magazines.’ All these excellent people meant little by what they said and assuredly forgot soon what fell so lightly from their lips. But they stimulated my latent force⁷¹ by rousing antagonism. I knew that my right hand was useless—firmly clenched in the grip of an unconquerable Love, the love of comrades. But they stung me into using my left hand for work, in order to contradict their prognostications.

The autumn of this year, 1860, before I returned to⁷² Balliol, was spent in a Belgian tour with Charles Cave,⁷³ my sister Edith, his wife, and my sister Charlotte—and upon the top of that a rapid scamper with my father through Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Salzburg, Munich. {We saw churches, picture galleries, castles, palaces, hospitals, all day, and travelled all night.} The diary of these travels I possess; and it shows how hard I worked at art and nature.

[I do not think that I have yet said that my sister Maribella (the second) was married in my last year at Harrow to Sir Edward Strachey of Sutton Court, Somersetshire, Bt; and my sister Edith (the eldest) in my first year at Oxford to Charles Daniel Cave Esq., now of Sidbury Manor, Cleve Hill, and the Old Bank Bristol. With my father and my aunt Miss Sykes, my third sister Charlotte and I remained the only members of the Clifton Hill House family.

The winter of 1860–61 brought me into relations with Jowett and other acquaintances of a distinguished sort at Oxford. I also began to visit at Lord Lansdowne’s country seat of Bowood, where I met Dean Milman, Mrs Higford Burr,⁷⁴ and the lions of the period. Throughout these distractions of society and study, the thread of love, love for boys, love of

comrades⁷⁵, absorbing personal preoccupations of the passions, was carried with ever increasing intensity. I expanded in mere intellect. But the real man developed secretly through an emotional experience, which was morbidly acute, because it had no proper outlet. Shorting too, the troublesome friend, who had chosen the broad way of self-indulgence, plagued me by his influence—by the sympathy I felt for him, my horror of his course, the love I nourished in my bosom for a man I could not respect.]⁷⁶

In the summer of 1861 my father took me on an all-delightful tour to Chamonix, where we explored the glaciers of Mont Blanc under old Auguste Balmat's guidance,⁷⁷ and thence to Lombardy. For the first time, I crossed the Simplon and the Gotthard, and saw the city of Milan and the Italian Lakes.

Meanwhile, work for the Final Schools was going diligently forward. The MS books, which contain my diary of study, show an average of six hours a day spent in reading—how many hours expended on 'Seelensehnsucht'⁷⁸ and vain struggling to escape from love, is not recorded. During the spring of 1862, I was alone with W.R.W. Stephens at Malvern. Then I went up to Oxford, and got a first class in *Literae Humaniores*—the best first of my year, as I was told, and as I had promised myself at Coniston. But I was physically exhausted. The strain of so much head-work, so much society, so much travel, and such perpetual conflict with emotion, left me weak.

[I shall soon resume the record of my external]⁷⁹ existence. But here I must interpolate an episode which is more important for my soul's life than any list of prizes, honours, journeys, or the like.

The quest of ideal beauty, incarnated in breathing male beings, or eternalized in everduring works of art, was leading me to a precipice, from which no exit seemed possible except in suicide or what I then considered sin. This phase of spiritual experience is expressed at large in the ode I then wrote to 'The Genius of the Vatican'.⁸⁰ The leading stanza of that poem, composed on horseback near Marston in the Marsh one evening while I was being examined for my degree, runs as follows:⁸¹

I will arise and come to thee. The juice
 Of gravest herbs, poppy and pale henbane,
 Shall bead my forehead and confuse my brain
 With fierce intoxication, life's long truce.
 Too true there is no road from hence but Death—
 And that perchance to Nothing: yet blank nought
 Were better than the anguish of such thought
 As we drew daily with our deepest breath.

I know not what compels me; but thy form
 Still beckons; and I hear a voice that says—
 ‘Pass forth; for ever flow the lengthening days,
 For ever swells the elemental storm;
 And thou art nothing; lay thee on the knees
 Of Doom, and take thine everlasting ease.’

NOTES

1. Symonds tries ‘did I lose’ and ‘was I losing’ (both marked for deletion) before settling on ‘was I abandoning’ (MS 169).
2. Edwyn Arkwright (1839–1922) would become Chaplain at Hampton Court Palace. In later life he moved to Algeria and became a keen horticulturalist, establishing a garden at Teltmly (near Algiers).

Robert Webber Monro (1838–1908) would embark upon a career in law and politics, becoming a barrister and Chief Clerk in the Parliament Office, House of Lords. He played cricket for Harrow and the University of Oxford.

3. Edward William Urquhart (1839–1916) would become Vicar of King’s Sutton, Northamptonshire. At Oxford, Urquhart was a close friend of the poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Robert Haldane-Duncan, 3rd Earl of Camperdown (1841–1918), would embark upon a career in politics, sitting in the House of Lords.

W.R.W. Stephens (1839–1902) would become Dean of Winchester in 1895.

William Rolle Malcolm (1840–1923) would embark upon a career in law and politics, becoming a barrister and Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. He became a partner at Coutts and Company in 1877.

Cecil Bosanquet (1838–1920) would enter the church following his studies at Exeter College, Oxford.

Christopher Cholmeley Puller (1840–1902) would embark upon a career in law. He was a member of the Giles-Puller family of Youngsbury, Hertfordshire.

Robert Samuel Wright (1839–1904) was an exceptional classical scholar while at Balliol, winning several prizes. He later became a judge in the Queen’s Bench Division.

Edward Lyulph Stanley, 4th Baron Sheffield, 4th Baron Stanley of Alderley, and 3rd Baron Eddisbury (1839–1925), would become a politician and advocate for education reform. He was the author of *Our National Education* (1899) and various articles in the periodical press.

4. Edwin Palmer (1824–95) was a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. He would become Corpus Professor of Latin in 1870 and Archdeacon of Oxford in 1878.

Robinson Ellis (1834–1913) was a Fellow (and later Vice-President) of Trinity College, Oxford. He would become Corpus Professor of Latin in 1893.

John Conington (1825–69) was a Fellow of University College, Oxford, and in 1854 he became the first Corpus Professor of Latin. Symonds would edit the posthumous *Miscellaneous Writings of Conington* (1872).

5. Goldwin Smith (1823–1910) was a Fellow of University College, Oxford, and Regius Professor of Modern History between 1858 and 1866.

Charles Parker (1829–1910) was a Fellow of University College, Oxford. He was elected M.P. for Perthshire in 1868.

Charles Henry Pearson (1830–94) was a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. He lectured in modern history at London and Cambridge before emigrating to Australia. Pearson returned to England in 1892, shortly before his death.

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815–81) was appointed Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford in 1856, a position that accompanied his instalment as Canon of Christ Church College. He became Dean of Westminster in 1864.

Albert Venn Dicey (1835–1922) was a Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, until he married in 1872. In 1882 he was appointed Vinerian Professor of English Law and became a Fellow of All Souls College.

Thomas Hill Green (1836–82) was a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, and Whyte's Professor of Moral Philosophy from 1878. In 1871 he married Symonds's sister, Charlotte.

Mark Pattison (1813–84) was a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and its Rector from 1861 until his death.

Francis ('Frank') Otter (1832–95) was an alumnus of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He would embark upon a career in law and politics, and was elected M.P. for Louth, Lincolnshire, in 1885.

- Albert Osloff Rutson (1836–90) was a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. He would embark upon a career in law, and was elected to the London School Board in 1888.
6. Following ‘He had’, deletes ‘silly’ (MS 170).
 7. Passage marked for deletion. Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from ‘Francis Otter, A.O. Rutson’ (MS 170) to ‘The association with Conington’ (MS 171). His account interpolates material from letters written to Symonds’s sister, Charlotte, between these sections. See Brown, I, pp. 102–4.
 8. *Ionica* (1858) by William Johnson (Cory). Johnson was an assistant master at Eton between 1845 and 1872, and he dedicated *Ionica* to a pupil, Charles Wood, 2nd Viscount Halifax. Though no reason was publicly given, it is generally agreed that his resignation from Eton was forced on account of his intimate relationships with the boys.
 9. Deletes ‘tormented the ulcer of’, substitutes ‘went straight to’ (MS 171).
 10. Marginal note: ‘1859’ (MS 173).
 11. James Thomas Houssemayne Du Boulay (1832–1915) was a Fellow and Tutor of Exeter College, Oxford. He left in 1862 to become a house master at Winchester College.
 12. Trans.: testimony or witness. ‘In University use: A certificate from the examiners that a candidate has satisfied them.’ (*OED*)
 13. Partially legible marginal note: ‘add[?] from Mrs G’s[?] letters’ (MS 174). Brown interpolates letters to Symonds’s sister, Charlotte (‘Mrs Green’ after her marriage in 1871), at this point in his biography. See Brown, I, pp. 102–16.
 14. Ploughed is University slang for a failed examination or degree.
 15. Charles Isaac Elton (1839–1900) would embark upon a career in law, being awarded Queen’s Counsel status in 1885. He was also a writer and antiquary.
 16. The Newdigate Prize was established in 1806 in memory of Roger Newdigate, 5th Baronet (1719–1806), alumnus of University College and M.P. for Oxford University between 1751 and 1780. It is awarded to the best poem (of no more than 300 lines) responding to a set theme or topic.
 17. Moderations, or ‘Mods’, were the second of three traditional examinations for a BA degree at the University of Oxford (i.e. Responsions, Moderations and the Final Schools).
 18. Deletes ‘obligation to’, substitutes ‘duty in’ (MS 174).

19. Trans.: that is all, nothing more. This material (MS 175) also appears in the margin of MS 174, written in pencil. This appears to be Brown's hand, but he does not reproduce the material in his biography. See Brown, I, p. 105.
20. Trans.: For Arkadia you ask me; a great thing you ask of me; nor will I give [it] to you. From Herodotus's *Histories*, Book I (Chapter 66, 'The Delphic Oracle').
21. Trans.: you have inherited Sparta, equip her appropriately. Phyllis Grosskurth identifies this Latin translation of a Greek saying: it appears variously in Euripides's *Telephus*, Cicero's *Epistulae ad Atticum*, and Plutarch's 'On Exile' (in his *Moralia*).
22. Deletes 'made', substitutes 'forced' (MS 175).
23. Trans.: a furious storm or tempest.
24. *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet: An Autobiography* (1850) by Charles Kingsley.
25. Deletes 'publication', substitutes 'communication' (MS 178).
26. Deletes 'crush the infamy', substitutes 'overcome the malady' (MS 178).
27. Deletes 'evil', substitutes 'mischief' (MS 178).
28. Deletes 'I played the simple part of a candid and irrefragable witness', substitutes 'The evidence was plain and irrefragable' (MS 178).
29. Deletes 'to conceal the facts', substitutes 'not to make a public exposure' (MS 178).
30. Deletes 'story', substitutes 'facts' (MS 179).
31. Deletes 'would be published in *The Times*', substitutes 'would have to be divulged' (MS 179).
32. Catherine Maria Stanley (d. 1899), sister of Vaughan's Rugby schoolfellow and friend, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, and daughter of Edward Stanley, Bishop of Norwich.
33. Deletes 'poor woman, also came to Clifton', substitutes 'followed after' (MS 179).
34. Hugh Pearson (1817–82), was Vicar and Rural Dean of Sonning, Berkshire. He would become Chaplain to the Bishop of Manchester in 1870, Canon of Windsor in 1876, and he would refuse the Deanship of Westminster following the death of Arthur Penrhyn Stanley in 1881.
35. Henry Montagu Butler (1833–1918), head master of Harrow (1858–85). Butler left Harrow to become Dean of Gloucester

- in 1885, but soon returned as Master to his alma mater, Trinity College, Cambridge.
36. Deletes ‘a grateful country thrust’, substitutes ‘the ministers of the Crown wished to force’ (MS 180).
 37. Rhadamanthys was the son of Zeus and Europa. He was a Cretan law maker famed for his strict punishment of wrong-doing, and was later appointed a Judge of the Dead.
 38. Following ‘were other’, deletes ‘and better’ (MS 180).
 39. Trans.: in the state of being a pupil. ‘As a pupil or ward; under scholastic discipline; at the universities, designating all who have not the degree of Master.’ (*OED*)
 40. This paragraph is followed by another marked for deletion and accompanied by a marginal note (‘Omit’):

The chief good that emerged from all this was the establishment of far more intimate relations with my father. We became friends in the truest sense of the word, and he obtained an insight into my emotional and moral difficulties—too late indeed to give me any permanent direction, if that had at any time been possible—but yet of value in impressing me with a strong sense of danger. (MS 183)

- A similar passage recurs later in the chapter—see p. 177.
41. Samuel Wilberforce (1805–73) was appointed Bishop of Oxford in 1845 and Bishop of Winchester in 1869. Wilberforce’s outspokenness in national and political debates earned him the nickname ‘Soapy Sam’ (according to popular accounts, Disraeli described him as ‘saponaceous’).
 42. Marginal note: ‘NB: Note this as a proof that J.a.s. could not have intended his autobiography to be published *in extenso*. H.F.B., St. Margherita Ligure, Feb 28 1903’ (MS 185). A second edition of Brown’s biography was published in 1903.
 43. The Athenaeum is a private members’ club founded in 1824 by John Wilson Croker. The clubhouse is situated at the corner of Pall Mall and Waterloo Place, London. According to the club’s rules, its members were gentlemen who had ‘published some literary or professional work.’
 44. John Pearson (1613–86) published *An Exposition of the Creed* in 1659. In 1672 he was appointed Bishop of Chester.
Hugh Nicholas Pearson (1776–1856) was appointed Dean of Salisbury in 1823.

45. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 187 blank (17 cms of clear space).
46. Deletes ‘for all the class to which I was addicted; made me’, substitutes ‘the ties which bound me to the class of gentlefolk, brought me to’ (MS 189).
47. Deletes ‘emotion’, substitutes ‘affection’ (MS 189).
48. Deletes ‘true’, substitutes ‘avowed’ (MS 189).
49. Deletes ‘necessity’, substitutes ‘desirability’ (MS 189).
50. See Introduction. This paragraph is followed by a further two marked for deletion and accompanied by a marginal note (‘Omit’):

Here I feel inclined to lay my pen down in weariness. Why should I go on to tell the story of my life? The back of my life was broken when I yielded to convention, and became untrue in soul to Willie.

But what is human life other than successive states of untruth and conforming to customs? We are, all of us, composite beings, made up, heaven knows how, out of the compromises we have effected between our impulses and instincts and the social laws which gird us round. (MS 190)

Following these paragraphs, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 190 blank (5 cms of clear space).

51. Charles George Horatio Shorting (1840–97) was the son of a Suffolk clergyman. He went up to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1859 but lost his scholarship in 1862 (see Chapter 8). He would marry Constance Mary Anne Cotton in 1881 (the ceremony taking place at Her Majesty’s Legation in Bern, Switzerland).
52. Scout is Oxford slang for someone employed to clean student rooms.
53. Deletes ‘genius’, substitutes ‘garrulity’ (MS 192).
54. A note at the bottom of MS 192 completes this sentence by adapting and curtailing Symonds’s own words from MS 193: ‘tenacious memory at my service’ (MS 192). This appears to be Brown’s hand, but he does not reproduce the material (due, perhaps, to the interpolation of extracts from letters and diaries in his biography that contradict Symonds’s statement about the strength of his memory)—see note 56.
55. Following ‘circumambient atmosphere’, deletes ‘of life’ (MS 193).
56. Paragraph marked for deletion and accompanied by a marginal note: ‘Omit’ (MS 193). Brown does not reproduce this material;

his account of Symonds's time at Oxford is drawn largely from letters and diaries, but he does adapt and reproduce a limited selection of extracts from the *Memoirs* (including an account of the Oxford system of education, and the influence of Conington and Jowett, taken out of sequence from Chapter 14). See Brown, I, pp. 116–17, 218–28.

57. Following 'not, I', deletes 'was elected to an Open Exhibition at Balliol, which proved that the college wanted to keep me as a promising *alumnus*. In the same term I' (MS 193).
58. The Escorial is a palace in San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Spain, commissioned by Philip II and completed in 1584. It was designed to be a royal residence, a monastery, and a burial place for Philip's father, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.
59. Symonds recited his Newdigate-winning poem, 'The Escorial', in The Theatre, Oxford, on 20 June 1860.
60. Matthew Arnold (1822–88) was a poet, literary critic and social commentator. He was Professor of Poetry at the University of Oxford between 1857 and 1867.
61. *Literae Humaniores* (trans.: literally, more humane letters) is the name given to the study of Classics, particularly at the University of Oxford.

The Final Schools were the third of three traditional examinations for a BA degree at the University of Oxford (i.e. Responsions, Moderations and the Final Schools).

62. John Ruskin (1819–1900) was a writer on various subjects, including art, architecture and political economy. He was a champion of the work of J.M.W. Turner, and was appointed the first Slade Professor of Fine Art at the University of Oxford (1870–78). He purchased Brantwood, his house by Coniston Water, in 1871.
63. The phrase 'boy-love' has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 194).
64. The name 'Vaughan' has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 194).
65. Paragraph marked for deletion (MS 194–5). Brown offers an edited paraphrase of this material: 'For the summer vacation Conington formed a reading party, which included Symonds and Green. They went to live in a farmhouse upon the Lake of Coniston, facing the shore which Ruskin has made famous' (I, p. 118).
66. The name 'Shorting' has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 195).

67. The phrase 'lads' love' has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 196).
68. Deletes 'get', substitutes 'win' (MS 196).
69. Frederic William Henry Myers (1843–1901), poet and founding member of the Society for Psychical Research. He was the eldest son of '[Frederic] Myers of Keswick', friend of Symonds's father and visitor to Clifton Hill House (see Chapter 3).
70. Frederick North (1800–69), M.P. for Hastings between 1831–37, 1854–65 and 1868–69. Symonds married his daughter, Janet Catherine North, in 1864.
71. Deletes 'helped me', substitutes 'stimulated my latent force' (MS 196).
72. A pencil line connects 'before I returned to' (the final words on MS 196) to the left-hand margin, where the following material (adapted from MS 197) is written:

Balliol, was spent in a Belgian tour with Ch C, my sister E, his wife, and my sister Ch—and upon the top of this, a rapid scamper with my father through Berlin, Prag, Vienna, Salzburg, Munich. The diary of these travels I possess and it shows how hard I worked at art and nature. (MS 196)

This appears to be Brown's hand—cf. Brown, I, pp. 120–1.

73. Charles Daniel Cave, 1st Baronet (1832–1922), J.P. for Gloucestershire and Devon, appointed High Sheriff for Bristol in 1863 and High Sheriff of Devon in 1898. He married Symonds's sister, Edith, in 1859.
74. Henry Hart Milman (1791–1868) was appointed Dean of St Paul's in 1842. He was a poet and author of several studies of the history of Christianity. He was Oxford Professor of Poetry between 1821 and 1831.
 Anne-Margaretta Burr (1817–92) was a watercolour artist best known for works inspired by her travels through Egypt and Turkey. She married Daniel Higford Davall Burr, M.P. for Hereford (1837–41), in 1839.
75. The phrase 'love for boys, love of comrades' has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 197).

76. Passage marked for deletion (MS 197–8). On MS 197 there is a partially legible marginal note in what appears to be Brown’s hand: ‘[?] from opposite page and [?]’ (MS 197). Brown does not reproduce this material.
77. Auguste Balmat (1808–62) was a mountain guide at Chamonix. During his career he climbed with James David Forbes, the Scottish glaciologist, and with Alfred Wills, founder of the Alpine Club. In 2004 his memory was honoured by the Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix.
78. Trans.: soul-yearning, nostalgia. Brown glosses this phrase in his biography, quoting Symonds’s diaries to describe it as ‘a Cliftonian state of yearning.’ See Brown, I, p. 94.
79. Passage marked for deletion (MS 198). Brown does not reproduce this material.
80. Marginal note: ‘*Many Moods*, p. 20’ (MS 199).
81. Symonds transcribes the sixth stanza of ‘The Genius of the Vatican’. This poem was included in the privately printed pamphlet, ‘Pantarkes’, and published in *Many Moods: A Volume of Verse* (1878).

Chapter 7: An Important Episode in My Oxford Life. Alfred Brooke

Working thus and living in a very varied society at Oxford, I maintained the dual life—emotional and intellectual—esoteric and external—which had been habitual.

It was a period of great activity. At Balliol I devoted my time mainly to writing essays and making the necessary studies for them. But I worked even harder at Clifton. All the morning was given up to the books I had to prepare for examination. In the afternoon I walked or rode alone, consuming my heart with vain longing, and writing the lyrics which are called ‘Dead Love’.¹ I usually read again from 5 p.m. till 6.30 p.m.; dined almost always in company, at my father’s house or abroad with friends; sat up talking till a late hour with my father in his library, and then snatched a short unrefreshing sleep. I dreamed very vividly, and suffered from seminal losses.

Mental growth was rapid in this round of occupations. I devoured literature of all sorts with activity; and when I was tired of history, philosophy, and the classics, I composed in verse and prose for my own amusement, or else read poetry and studied pictures.

In the midst of this home life I fell violently in love with a cathedral chorister called Alfred Brooke.² The passion I conceived for him differed considerably from my affection for Willie Dyer. It was more intense, unreasonable, poignant—at one and the same time more sensual and more ideal. I still think that this boy had the most beautiful face I ever saw and the most fascinating voice I ever heard.

The days and nights were horrible sometimes. It was a sustained conflict between desire and conscience, in which the will exercised a steady empire over action, while dreams and visions inflamed the fancy and irritated the whole nervous constitution—a maddening³ mixture of Thucydides and Livy, Aristotle and Mill,⁴ with burning memories, feverish reveries, brain-thrilling songs, the tempting of the inner voice: ‘Stretch forth thy hand and pluck and eat!’⁵ And all this had to be controlled and covered up under my masked manner of self-presentment to my father and his friends.

Truly I wrote out of my own heart’s experience when I thus described the Genius of Greek Love poring upon a⁶ magic beryl, and tracing there the doom of anguish and disappointment and useless longing which awaits him in our modern age:⁷

How his lips quivered as with eyes of fear
 And fascination o’er the filmy sphere
 He pored, and read his own deep thoughts thereon—
 Fables and symbolled shapes of joys forgone
 And longings strangled! All the sterile years,
 The vain expense of salt soul-draining tears,
 The keen divisions of quick thoughts, the void
 Of outstretched arms, the subtle suicide,
 The pale recurrences of palsying dreams,
 The broodings and the ecstasies, the schemes
 That never can be counted, the despair
 Of hope or health or comfort anywhere,
 The yea and nay twinned in a single breast,
 The feverish pillow and the blank unrest
 Of solitary midnight—all were there,
 Limned on the sphere as by a painter’s care.
 Then could I see how to his side there came
 Twin forms, the one with eyes of eager shame,
 The other with quenched orbs, children of Hell,
 Named Vain Desire and Everlasting Farewell.

I looked and loved him, for he is the Lord
 Who on his knees hath nursed me, who hath stored
 My soul with tenderness and slumbering fire,
 Who with his earnest eyes hath quelled desire
 Or fanned it flaming, who hath set my feet
 Upon the barren path, where bitter-sweet

Grow the love-apples ruddy to the core,
Whereof who tasteth slumbers nevermore,
But knows the secret of forbidden things,
And thirsts with thirst unslaked by any springs.⁸

The state of my mind during this preponderance of an ever-recurrent ever-repressed longing for Alfred Brooke will be shown by the following prose dithyramb I find among my papers.⁹ It was written down, I think, in the year 1865 when the tyranny had been overlived but still vibrated in memory.

*Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum*¹⁰

i

Of Alfred Brooke: of the face that ceases not to haunt me—the body, voluptuous and stalwart, that deprives me of my natural rest.

Light hair; bright purple-blue eyes; pale delicately-flushed complexion; firm bold level gaze; square white forehead; large red humid mouth; vibrating voice; athletic throat and well-formed breast; broad hard hands; poise of trunk upon massive hips; thick and sinewy thighs; prominent and lusty testicles; brawny calves; strong well-planted feet.

Womanly whiteness and fullness in spite of all this; softness mingled with audacity; lasciviousness beneath the virile bosom; love-languor in the large bold steady eyes; invitation in the ringing voice; readiness to grant favours; knowledge and appreciation of sensual delight.¹¹

I roll on my bed in the night-watches; I clench my fists and beat my brow. The flesh rises within me, and the soul is faint through longing. I thirst for him as the hart panteth after waterbrooks. I cry after him from whom I turn aside. I scorn myself when I remember what he offered and I refused.

ii

Before my study-window he passed one morning.¹² I raised my head from the desk where Plato lay. He looked from the pavement, nodded and smiled. Even now I can see him with the frank and open face, the face of invitation, the body that exhaled delight, the glance that said ‘I wait for you.’

I let the lad pass, held my breath tight, and caught at the window-curtain. He was gone. Down into the street I rushed; dared not cry out nor follow; flung myself upon the grass and dead leaves of the garden; groaned aloud for him, and wrestled.

I knew that he was waiting to assuage my soul's thirst. Yet I refrained.

iii

To my bedroom at another time he came.¹³ His voice was husky, and his lips seemed drowsy for kisses.

I was in my dressing-gown. My bed stood in a corner of the room.

I spoke to him reservedly—sent him away without one kiss. He met my father on the staircase.

I lay awake all that night, kissing the bed on which he sat, watering the coverlid with tears, praying and cursing in one breath.

In the morning my father said: 'Son, you have a fever.' That day I left home, and returned not for many weeks.

iv

Shall I speak of a third time? —Late in the evening of a dull October day the hunger to see Alfred came upon me. I walked to his house, three miles away. I found him with his father and his brothers; he was in his shirt-sleeves, copying attorney's parchments. Down to the hall-door he came, athletic, radiant, the sweetest and the strangest sight to see.

I took him with me. Out into the night we went, the Clifton night, the night of moist west winds and flaring gas-lamps. We stood at gusty corners, looked at each other's faces by the quivering light. The magnetism of his hand was on my arm; the fascination of his voice and breathing drowsed me.

We drove together; up and down in the dark night we drove. He knew what I desired. I felt what he was willing to grant.¹⁴ Yet the shyness of my heart raised a barrier between us. Our words fell like straw-flakes down a deep well.

At midnight I released him. Of my money he took good store. He walked away, careless, scornful, disappointed. There was that he loved better

than gold, and I had not offered¹⁵ that. Yet he liked gold too, and what gold bought, wine, good cheer, pleasure.

He called me a simpleton no doubt. Yet he feared and respected me. Verily I think he loved me.

But I, when I was left without him, balked, ashamed, regretful, thrilling—and how shall I¹⁶ describe the tension of the aching brain and overwrought nerves, the blushing cheek and burning head, the parched throat, the self-scorning and deeply-degraded soul, the thirst and stretching out of wistful arms, empty, never to be filled, the desire, despair, prostration, godlessness, the tyranny of the flesh,¹⁷ the aspiration of the spirit?

They called my ensuing illness the result of over-work and religious perplexity.

v

Shall I speak of a fourth time? —George Riseley¹⁸ and Alfred Brooke were sauntering in College Green. It was a May morning; their arms were interwoven.

George Riseley's arm lay on Alfred's neck, and Alfred's arm rested on George Riseley's waist. Lovingly, like comrades, they sauntered on the pavement.

Lime-leaves trembled in the branches over them; the cathedral wall behind their sun-lit faces¹⁹ made a grey and shadowy background.

Then I knew what jealousy the heart can feel—the jealousy of things we may not share.

To have been a third between them, I would have sold my scholarship, my prizes, my first classes, my fellowship.

vi

Shall I speak of a last time? —I stood alone on the bare Durdham Down. By three boundary stones, at the edge of the gully which goes down to the Avon stream, I stood. Alfred passed, smiled, beckoned with his eyes, bade me leave the stones and be with him. But I moved not.

I saw him go; that white face offered to my mouth for kisses, the red lips paling with passion, the splendid eyes and throat athletic and magnificent curve of broad square shoulders, and imperial poise of sinewy trunk upon well-knitted hips and thighs.

His dress concealed him not. With my soul's eyes I grasped his body in all its parts. He knew this; and therefore he smiled, beckoned, invited, promised, wooed. For he too was lascivious; my soul was not more lascivious than he; and he had many lovers.

Still I suffered him to pass. Wherefore? O Soul, thou canst tell. Thou knowest, O my soul, when with faithful and infallible eye thou didst search the secrets of his flesh, that then thy cry was one of bitterest disappointment. The flesh could not content thee, nor assuage the hunger which it stirred. In the moment of longing and lust, in that gaze of devouring curiosity and desire, thou didst perceive that he could only yield thee shame and want and hunger re-born after short satiety.

Thereupon the three boundary stones became for me a symbol; as it were a triple Hermes; a Hermes of Uranian Erôs, Priapus and Persephone.²⁰ Uranian Erôs, thwarting his next neighbour appetite. Persephone darkening both with fate and death and the anguish of rebelliousness.

That day, the day on which I set up those three memorial symbol stones upon the edge of the grey valley, was in some sort a day of victory. But the victory was even such a one in which the captain falls and the victorious hosts are smitten to the earth.

I cease not to be troubled by Alfred Brooke. In my visions he perturbs me. Oftentimes the beast within roars angrily for that its hunger²¹ was not satiated.

Who knows, who knows how long the victory shall last? Peradventure, Alfred Brooke, if not himself, yet in spirit, shall return and conquer—standard-bearer of legions stronger than the soul which triumphed at that moment²²—general of armies which shall overwhelm resistance:²³

A year or two afterwards I turned this prose into blank verse. This I will also record here, since it shows how deeply the experience had taken hold upon me.

ALFRED BROOKE

Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum

Light hair and deep blue eyes; bold level gaze;
 Square forehead, pale beneath the wealth of curls;
 Red mouth, sonorous voice, athletic throat;
 The swelling breast, the trunk upon the hips

Massively poised, the thick and sinewy thighs,
 The strong well-planted feet, the brawny calves,
 The broad hard hands; and yet, in spite of these,
 Effeminate fullness, whiteness, sweetness, grace—
 Persuasion mingled with audacity,
 Soft invitations in the thrilling voice,
 Acquaintance with all lovely²⁴ things of sense
 Nay, self-abandonment perchance to²⁵ sin.

Upon my bed I turn in the night-watches:
 I clench my fist, and beat my brow; the flesh
 Throbs in revolt, and my faint soul is faltering.
 I thirst for him as thirsts the hunted hart
 For water-brooks: I weep and wail for him,
 For him from whom I turned aside, for him
 On whom I trampled. Yea, I loathe my longing.

Before my study-window once he passed:
 The *Phaedrus* fell from my unheeding hands.
 He smiled and beckoned, with frank open face
 Wafting fair messages of fruitful joy.
 I would not answer, hardly looked at him,
 Holding my breath and at the curtain clutching
 Till he was gone. Then down into the road
 Rushed, followed him, restrained my racing feet,
 Fell on the garden grass and leaves, and wrestled.²⁶

Up to my bedroom on another day
 He came; to give²⁷ himself to me he came:
 His voice was husky, and his lips for mine
 Seemed thirsting. In one corner of my room
 There stood my bed, and I was half unclad.
 Coldly I spoke; but at my heart was fire,
 Without a kiss I sent that joy away.
 All night I lay and tossed, with lips aflame
 Kissing the bed on which he sat, with tears
 Watering the barren bed, praying and cursing.
 Next morning said my father: 'Son, you're ill!'

Shall I speak of a third time? —Alfred Brooke
 Walked sauntering with George Riseley on the green:
 It was a May-day; on George Riseley's waist
 Lay Alfred's arm; round younger Alfred's neck
 Twined his friend's arm; so lovingly they sauntered.
 To be a third between them and to feel
 Their intermingling arms and breathing breasts
 I would have bartered²⁸ youth,²⁹ wealth, fame and honours.

Shall I speak of a fourth time? —Late at eve
 The hunger to see Alfred fell upon me.
 Down to his house I ran; three miles I ran;
 I found his father and his brothers; he
 Stood in his shirt-sleeves; then to the hall-door
 Straight-limbed he came, athletic, radiant,
 The strangest and the sweetest sight to see.
 I took him with me, out into the night,
 Into the mad moist night of autumn winds
 And glaring gas lamps. At the gusty corners
 We loitered, by the pale uncertain glimmer
 Gazed at each other. There I touched his flesh:
 The magnetism of his heavy hand
 Lay on my arm; the magic of his eyes,
 The hoarse tone of his voice, his breathing deep,
 Subdued me. Up and down in the dark night
 We drove, and silence fell between us twain.
 I felt that he would grant;³⁰ and what I sought
 He knew: but ever as we closer clung,
 The shyness of my heart built up a barrier,
 And our vague words fell like vain fluttering straw-flakes
 Down a deep well. At midnight I released him.
 Of gold he took good store: yet there was that
 He loved better than gold; and that sweet thing
 I would not ask for: —nay gold too had worth,
 For it meant wine and pleasure and good cheer

Shall I speak of a last time? —On the down
 I stood; the wind was piping from the sea.
 O'er the dry fern came Alfred, fairer far
 Than aught of face or form I've elsewhere seen.

By the three boundary stones above the vale
 I stood; and as he passed, he smiled at me;
 Smiled, blushed, seemed beckoning, saying 'Leave the stones,
 Leave the dull senseless stones, and come³¹ with me!
 Yet by the stones I stayed, and watched him go;
 Gazed on the white face offering mine a kiss,
 The great mouth passion-pale and humid eyes,
 The slender sinewy waist, and what between
 The waist and slowly moving thighs lay³² hidden.
 No part of all that form escaped my gaze.
 This the lad knew, and therefore did he smile;
 Therefore he beckoned, wooed, allured³³ and promised;
 For he was wanton and had many lovers.—
 Oh Soul, my soul, why didst thou quail and shudder?
 In that long gaze of lust, that searching glance³⁴
 Of flesh-devouring curiosity,
 Didst thou cast up the sum of loss and profit,
 Reckon shame,³⁵ fever, thirst,³⁶ satiety? —
 So then the three stones, standing to this day,
 By the bleak vale, near Avon's barren shore
 Are in my memory, three³⁷ signs of³⁸ battle,
 Three monumental stelai. Thus of old,
 Under thick leaves of myrtle fig and vine,
 Persephone Priapus and pure Eros,
 Twined in a triple symbol, taught the soul
 Through love, through death, life's triumph over lust.—
 I triumphed over lust, perchance, that day,
 Though love's victorious armies fled the field,
 Though my heart faltered, though life's sleepy stream
 Red with love's sacrifice rolled to the sea.

It is indubitable that this passion for Alfred Brooke was a very real thing. It runs like a scarlet thread through the diaries of several years. It was the chief preoccupation of my mind during the period when I gained the Magdalen Fellowship and began to write regularly for the *Saturday Review*. Yet, looking backward from the vantage ground of middle life, I feel unable to explain the³⁹ disastrous hold it took upon my nature. I cannot comprehend how I trifled with it in the way I did. Unjust to myself and him, I sought no proper opportunity of fusing this vehement craving⁴⁰ in a natural comradeship. Experience teaches me that had I done so, I should perhaps have sinned, perhaps have involved myself in some

scrape. But I should have emerged from the close unwholesome labyrinth of tyrannous desires and morbid thoughts in which I wandered. A respectable regard for my father, an ideal of purity in conduct, a dread of the world's opinion forced upon me by Vaughan's and Shorting's histories, combined to make me shrink from action. Still I could not suppress⁴¹ my inborn unconquerable yearnings. I went on accumulating fuel for my own damnation.

Sins of the body are less pernicious than sins of the imagination. Vicious act is not so baleful to the soul⁴² as vitiated fancy. Many a man who never stooped to any carnal deed,⁴³ has wallowed in the grossest sensuality of thought. Inside the sphere of their desires⁴⁴ such men are agent and patient, double-sexed, immersed in epicene voluptuousness, for ever longing, for ever picturing delights, for ever unassuaged. In waking and sleeping dreams they run the whole round of desire, beginning with reveries that hardly raise a blush, advancing toward pruriency, dallying with the sensual ware, at last wading in chin-deep, deeper and deeper in, until no bottom is untried, and no part or portion of the deflowered soul is pure. A day comes when they would rather bear the remembrance of brothels than carry about with them the incubi and succubi⁴⁵ of their own creation—incestuous broods, defiling the spirit which begat them, despotic,⁴⁶ insatiable, that may no longer be denied.

I do not for a moment doubt that Alfred Brooke lived a far more natural life than I did. I am sure that whatever he may have felt and acted, he remained a healthier man. My conception of him, contaminated by my own unwholesome fancy, would have vanished like a vision at the first touch of physical and moral contact. But this I shrank from for a score of unpractically prudent reasons. And I believe that the picture I have drawn of him as the dream object of my permanent desire is a gross libel upon the⁴⁷ flesh-and-blood being he was.

Once again, at a later date than that of the last poem, I find a reminiscence of Alfred Brooke among my papers. It records a chance meeting in Bristol Cathedral:

Pale, silent face, cold as sepulchral stone,
With weeds of alien memories o'er-grown;
From what incalculable wastes of years,
Watered with what salt founts of barren tears,
Come'st thou so desolate and grand again
To stir the palsied nerves of ancient pain?

As in a dream from seas of surging forms,
 Vacant, unheeded, neath the stress of storms
 Raised by the soul's strong trouble, there doth rise
 One pallid brow⁴⁸ with anguish in its eyes,
 That shakes the shackles of our sleep and chills
 The startled brain with unimagined ills—
 So from the senseless crowd which filled that place
 Emerged the magic of thy long-loved face;
 The gloomy arches o'er us thrilled with song,
 The dim lamps quivered on the moving throng;
 Music and gloom and light and murmur made
 One atmosphere in aisle and colonnade,
 Wherethrough, as through rent clouds and windy dew
 With ghastly sickle and uncertain hue
 The waning moon drifts, thy marmoreal brows
 Shone for a moment sharp imperious.
 How blanched thou art! It is with love at length,
 Or pain, or sorrow, or the subtler strength
 Of old effeminate luxurious hours
 Passed in youth's bloom neath poisonous passion-flowers?
 The guilt is mine, lad;⁴⁹ I transfer to thee
 All that I longed for, all that might for me
 Have been deliverance. Thou, a natural man,
 Hast lived thy life and liv'st. I dare not scan
 Those heights and depths; I only know I lost
 Thee when I loved thee, know and pay the cost

With these verses I take farewell of the purely ideal being whom I have called Alfred Brooke. I cannot call him by another name; for a real boy growing into superb adolescence and the beauty of young manhood under my fascinated eyes evoked this figment⁵⁰ of my fancy. This boy owned the name of Alfred Brooke. {But the real Alfred Brooke was probably quite different from the creature who attracted me. Let} no one imagine that the man who bore or peradventure still bears this name, corresponded in any essential particular to the dream around which my unhealthily repressed desires crystallized. Would to God that I had fraternized with him! {Would to God that I had sought and he had suffered that carnal union, which the world calls sin, but which leads, as I know well, in frequent cases to brotherhood and mutual good services through life.} Then I should certainly not have penned these pages, which may, in spite of all

I assert to the contrary, cast a shadow of unmerited blame upon him from my own dark and brooding self.

I had been taught that the sort of love I felt for Alfred Brooke was wicked. I had seen that it was regarded with reprobation by modern society. At the same time I knew it to be constitutional, and felt it to be ineradicable.⁵¹ What I attempted to do in these circumstances was to stifle it so far as outward action⁵² went. I could not repress it internally any more than I could stop the recurrence of dreams in sleep or annihilate my native instinct for the beauty of the world. Nothing remained but to relegate it to the sphere of the imagination. The result was what I have above described.

NOTES

1. These poems are included in Symonds's privately printed pamphlet, 'Dead Love. A Leider Kreis in Minor Keys with The Tale of Theodore'.
2. Henry Alfred Brooke (b. 1846), is recorded on the 1861 census as a visitor to John C. Rose at Bishop Street, Bristol; his occupation is listed as 'Pupil (Musician)'. Brooke did not, however, pursue a career in music. He is listed in the 1871 census as a bank clerk, but his family at Gloucester Terrace, Bristol, remained musical: his father, John, is a 'Professor of Music', his sister a 'Teacher of Music' and his brother a 'Musician'.
3. Deletes 'what a strange', substitutes 'a maddening' (MS 201).
4. Thucydides (c.460-c.404 BCE), Greek historian and author of the unfinished *History of the Peloponnesian War*.
Livy (c.64 BCE-c.17 CE), Roman historian and author of the *History of Rome*.
Aristotle (384-22 BCE), Greek philosopher whose surviving works comprise the *Corpus Aristotelicum*. This body of work includes his *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*.
John Stuart Mill (1806-73), writer, philosopher and economist. Mill had published works on political economy in the 1840s, and his *On Liberty* appeared in 1859.
5. Marginal note: '*Vagabunduli Libellus* pp. 136, 137: sonnets written about Alfred Brooke. See also p. 138 and 129, both sonnets written under his influence' (MS 201). Symonds directs his readers to 'Renunciation', 'The Fall of the Soul' and 'At Waking', poems from the 'Juvenilia' section of *Vagabunduli Libellus* (1884).

‘Stretch forth thy hand and pluck and eat!’ is an allusion to Eve’s fall in Genesis 3, but Symonds may intend a more specific referent: *Paradise Lost* (1667) by John Milton: ‘So saying, her rash hand in evil hour | Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck’d, she eat’ (Book 9, ll. 780-1). Symonds also appropriates the story of Eve in his poem, ‘Renunciation’ (where the speaker occupies the position of the serpent): ‘Wilt thou not take and eat and rest at length?’ (II, l. 4).

6. Deletes ‘in modern times reading, as in a’, substitutes ‘poring upon a’ (MS 201).
7. Symonds transcribes an extract from ‘Genius Amoris Amari Visio’, a long poem that he privately printed as a pamphlet. Next to these lines in a copy of the pamphlet held in Bristol University Library Special Collections, Symonds has written: ‘This is true—*experto crede*’ (A401b).
8. Following this poetry extract, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 202 blank (15 cms of clear space).
9. Marginal note: ‘Oxford’ (MS 203).
10. In Latin, the first line of Psalm 42, ‘As the hart panteth after water brooks’. Symonds also associates Willie Dyer with a musical setting of this psalm—see Chapter 5, note 91.
11. Deletes ‘of all sensuality’, substitutes ‘of sensual delight’ (MS 203).
12. Marginal note: ‘This incident happened on Monday Oct 7 1861. I find two sonnets written immediately after Alfred had passed by, in my diary under that date. They have since been printed in *Vagabunduli Libellus* under the title of ‘Renunciation’, pp. 136. 137. Only *she* has been substituted for *he*!’ (MS 203^v).
13. Here a sentence is deleted: ‘To offer himself he came’ (MS 204). A corresponding line (‘to give himself to me he came’) survives in the blank verse transposition—see p. 199.
14. Deletes ‘give’, substitutes ‘grant’ (MS 205).
15. Deletes ‘given’, substitutes ‘offered’ (MS 206).
16. Deletes ‘if it is not in the power of language to’, substitutes ‘and how shall I’ (MS 206).
17. Deletes ‘senses’, substitutes ‘flesh’ (MS 206).
18. George Riseley (1845-1932) became a chorister at Bristol Cathedral in 1852 when he was just seven years old. He was later apprenticed to the cathedral organist, John Davis Corfe. He was appointed organist of Bristol Cathedral upon Corfe’s death in

- 1876, and was the subject of a biographical essay published in the *Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* (1 February 1899).
19. Deletes ‘them’, substitutes ‘their sun-lit faces’ (MS 207).
 20. In Greek mythology, Hermes was a god and messenger. The message or ‘symbol’ of the boundary stones is formed by the combination of Erôs, god of love (identified with sexual passion), Priapus, minor god of gardening depicted with enlarged male genitals, and Persephone, daughter of Zeus and Demeter, who was abducted and taken into the underworld. *Erôs ouranios* is a form of heavenly desire or passion described by Pausanias in Plato’s *Symposium*—see Chapter 5, note 67. In its anglicised form, Uranian emerged as a term for same-sex desire during the nineteenth century.
 21. Deletes ‘he’, substitutes ‘its hunger’ (MS 209).
 22. Following ‘that moment’, deletes ‘only to fall crushed and impotent upon the earth’ (MS 209).
 23. Deletes ‘me’, substitutes ‘resistance’ (MS 209).
 24. Deletes ‘secret’, substitutes ‘lovely’ (MS 210).
 25. Deletes ‘to sexless sin’, substitutes ‘perchance to’ (MS 210).
 26. Deletes ‘struggled’, substitutes ‘wrestled’ (MS 210).
 27. Deletes ‘yield’, substitutes ‘give’ (MS 210).
 28. Deletes ‘sold’, substitutes ‘bartered’ (MS 211)
 29. Following ‘bartered youth’, deletes ‘health’ (MS 211).
 30. Deletes ‘give’, substitutes ‘grant’ (MS 212).
 31. Deletes ‘be’, substitutes ‘come’ (MS 212).
 32. Deletes ‘lurked’, substitutes ‘lay’ (MS 212).
 33. Deletes ‘caressed’, substitutes ‘allured’ (MS 213).
 34. Deletes ‘those searching eyes’, substitutes ‘that searching glance’ (MS 213).
 35. Deletes ‘O Shame’, substitutes ‘Reckon shame’ (MS 213)
 36. Following ‘fever, thirst’, Symonds tries ‘following’ and ‘bred from’ (both marked for deletion) (MS 213).
 37. Symonds tries ‘Are for my soul three signs’ and ‘Stood in my memory as three signs’ before settling on ‘Are in my memory, three signs’ (MS 213).
 38. Following ‘signs of’, deletes ‘bloody’ (MS 213).
 39. Following ‘explain the’, deletes ‘deeply’ (MS 214).
 40. Deletes ‘strong hunger’, substitutes ‘vehement craving’ (MS 214).
 41. Deletes ‘stifle’, substitutes ‘suppress’ (MS 214).
 42. Deletes ‘man’, substitutes ‘soul’ (MS 214).

43. Deletes 'lust', substitutes 'deed' (MS 214).
44. Deletes 'their souls', substitutes 'the sphere of their desires' (MS 214).
45. In folklore, demons that seduce and engage in sexual activity with humans. Incubi assume a male form, while succubi assume a female form.
46. Deletes 'tyrannous', substitutes 'despotic' (MS 215).
47. Following 'upon the', deletes 'real and nobler' (MS 215).
48. Deletes 'face', substitutes 'brow' (MS 216).
49. Deletes 'love', substitutes 'lad' (MS 216).
50. Deletes 'the creature', substitutes 'this figment' (MS 217).
51. Following 'be ineradicable', deletes 'in myself' (MS 217).
52. Deletes 'expression', substitutes 'action' (MS 217).

Chapter 8: End of My Oxford Life. Wanderings in Switzerland. Rosa Engel and Catherine North. Italy

Such was my state of mind and feeling toward the end of my Oxford career. An unhealthy, painful state enough. And yet I was continually striving to repress instinct, and to put aside the tyrannous appeals of sense.

I took a first class in *Literae Humaniores* during the summer of 1862. Immediately after this, my father, my sister Charlotte and I travelled through Munich and Innsbruck and the Finstermünz to Venice. For the first time I touched the city of the lagoons. We occupied the first floor of the Hotel d'Europa. The days spent there were enchantment. The magic of the place enthralled me; and it has never wholly lost that early fascination, although now I have lived into it. Returning by the Simplon, I fell ill at Visp in the Rhône Valley: —some violent fever in which the brain was involved. My father treated me heroically; and I recovered slowly, but painfully, upon the journey home.

In the autumn I was elected to an open Fellowship at Magdalen College. I had long wished to enter that¹ establishment on the foundation²—attracted by its medieval beauty, its solemn chapel and the choiring voices of the singing boys. These were not perhaps the best reasons for seeking a Fellowship at Magdalen; but beyond the vulgar ambition to win a coveted prize, and to beat Lyulph Stanley, Chavasse, Marshall,³ and twenty more competitors of distinction, I had no better.

Here are some passages from my diary, written during the examination. It took place in the Hall, which is only separated from the chapel by a wall; so that I could hear the ground reverberations of the organ and the lyric cry of the boys' voices, clamouring in antiphones or riding on the wings of fugues, while I was writing papers on philosophy and history:

October 25. Yesterday in the afternoon I found, while I was doing verse composition, that a little greenfinch had flown into the Hall, and was unable to get out. The bird's feet were entangled with cobwebs from the ceiling, and it clung blindly to the wires of the oriel window on the dais which looks out upon the cloister quad. The poor thing was tame and exhausted. I took it in my hands and removed the cobwebs. Then I opened the window and let it fly out into the clear autumnal air, fresh with sunlight after rain. The finch sat dazed upon a battlement, then hopped to another, pecked a little moss, at last felt its freedom, chirruped, and was away toward the woods. So would that someone might release me!

On Thursday I heard 'Let the bright Seraphim' sung divinely by Goolden (a chorister).⁴ Oh, how I long to enter here! *Quam dilecta sunt templa Magdalenae! Numquam aliquid aliis adeo desideravi.*⁵ Still I recognize that it might be a blessing in disguise to be rejected.

I was unanimously elected Fellow, and dined that evening (October 25) at high table for the first time, as stranger and visitor to my friend A.O. Rutson.

It was the festival of the Restoration of the Fellows (temp: James II),⁶ and after Hall the whole college, on and off the foundation, drank out of a great cup, standing and repeating *Jus suum cuique.*⁷ In Common Room Knight⁸ made me a short speech, which I returned with a very few words. The bells rung out a peal for my election, and I gave the ringers a guinea. The windows were thrown open, so that the golden sound floated in and overspread our table.

October 27. At 11 a.m. I was admitted Probationary Fellow of Magdalen, after taking the usual oaths to the House of Hanover and kneeling before the President⁹ among the Fellows in the Hall.

It would have been indeed for me a blessing in disguise if I had been rejected at Magdalen. One name occurs frequently in my diary of those days—the name of C.G.H. Shorting. I had promised to coach him in philosophy; and when he found that I was elected Fellow of Magdalen,

he hoped to use his opportunities as my pupil for gaining access to the college and carrying on flirtations with the choristers. After I entered into residence, occupying rooms in the cloister quad nearly opposite the state apartments, I perceived that it would not be loyal or convenient for me to introduce Shorting into Magdalen. He was regarded by the Dons and the men with aversion and suspicion, having already intrigued tactlessly and pertinaciously with one of their choristers, Goolden. Accordingly, I told him that I felt obliged to coach him in his lodgings. But this provoked an angry letter of expostulation.

Meanwhile I began to make friends with the tutors and Fellows of Magdalen, and endeavoured to get work in the college as a lecturer. I made the acquaintance of Richard Congreve,¹⁰ which afterwards developed into a close intimacy. I received an invitation through the Hon. and Rev. W. Fremantle to go as tutor to Lord Pembroke,¹¹ then a boy of fifteen, which I sagely refused. And so it happened at this juncture that Gustavus Bosanquet wrote to me from Cambridge, informing me that A. Pretor had been blabbing to him about Vaughan's troubles. This information I copied out, and sent through Conington to Arthur Stanley.

Shorting, on his side, was planning mischief:

November 20. I went to an Italian lesson at C.D. Cobham's,¹² and stayed afterwards to talk. He told me that Shorting had been dining at University, and said that he was going to take his revenge on me; Cobham would soon know what it was. Urged with the baseness of such conduct, he replied that he did not expect his friends to 'cut him', and that 'he could do me great harm, though he could not suffer anything himself.' I felt that what Shorting said was only too true. He might damage me at Magdalen. Before going to bed, I saw Conington who reassured me, and I read in the green book of texts belonging to my mother these verses for the day: 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you', and 'Blessed be God who comforteth us in all our tribulation.'¹³

Small comfort was I to have for many days and weeks and months—nay years. But such comfort as I got came from God in solitude, and from the image of God, the love of friends.

I was in London, staying with A.O. Rutson at 7 Half Moon Street, when the storm broke on Monday November 24th. A letter from Cobham brought me news that Shorting had sent a document defamatory of myself, and containing extracts from my private correspondence and my

poems, to six of the Magdalen Fellows. His object was to prove that I had supported him in his pursuit of the chorister Goolden, that I shared his habits, and was bent on the same path. All my letters of expostulation and reasoning with him he had destroyed, and had cut out and pieced together little hints and fragments which gave a plausible colour to his charges.

Fortunately for me, my conscience was absolutely clear. I knew that I had done nothing that was wrong, and that the whole tenor of my action with regard to Shorting—perfectly well known to Conington, F. Otter, Edwin Palmer, A.O. Rutson, and a score of other friends—had been salutary and dissuasive. Yet I had to stand my trial, and Magdalen at that time was so antagonistic to the liberalism of Balliol and so averse to the system of open Fellowships forced upon it by the last commission,¹⁴ that things were not unlikely to go hard with me. At the same moment I was grieved by hearing that Lyulph Stanley, whom I beat at Magdalen, was elected Fellow of Balliol. I would sooner have gained the Balliol Fellowship; but a modest estimate of my own capacity, in relation to certain competitors, especially G.A. Simcox,¹⁵ had made me resolve to try for the first that came.¹⁶ And so I won Magdalen—not without aesthetic gratification:

November 30. Green breakfasted with me, and said they had elected Stanley at Balliol. Simcox turned out a feeble delusion. They were sorry I had slipped through their fingers. Thus the unlucky resolve to stand for Fellowships in order, Conington's exaggerated opinion of Simcox, the peculiarities of Magdalen society, my feeling of delicacy about coaching Shorting here, his unparalleled treachery, have all worked to one end. My name is soiled with an unbearable suspicion; my usefulness in the college is destroyed, and Oxford is made an impossibility. All has come by folly. Of guilt I feel none, and only wonder. The Dons wish me to go down tomorrow and to prepare some defence.

I did go down, and received letters of support from some of the most distinguished men in Oxford and in England—numbers of them—which were placed in the President of Magdalen's hands, together with my own statement, which I wrote at Earley Court near Reading (the home of my friend Stephens) with a burning head, sore eyes, and heavy heart in indignation. After some time, upon the 18th of December, a General Meeting of the College of Magdalen acquitted me of the charges brought by Shorting. I have a copy by me of the note which was inserted in the President's book,

and which Dr Fisher,¹⁷ one of the oldest Fellows, described as ‘a complete acquittal, the terms not quite as I should wish.’ In fact, two of the letters in my handwriting which Shorting sent in were ‘strongly condemned.’ My father regarded the verdict of the college as ‘an act of meagre justice’; and certainly if Shorting had exploded the same hand grenade against me in the Balliol Common Room, it would have merely stirred the air. But Magdalen, as I have already said, was hostile to Jowett’s pupils and suspicious of the clever young liberals whom their new statutes forced them to receive.

Of Shorting, I need not say that I have heard and seen nothing since that time. He left Oxford in disgrace, and has lived a life of obscurity.¹⁸

My diary shows that I bore up bravely through these troubles. But the long month’s strain—‘the month of weary vexation and deep regret’, as I described it—told upon me only the more powerfully, I think, because the effects were not felt at once. I went up again to Magdalen, resided there in my former rooms, coached pupils in philosophy, and was well, though not over-cordially, received by the Fellows. I do not think I should ever have got on with the Magdalen Fellows of that epoch; and now I was so sorely wounded in my soul, so sensitive and shy, that I could not dream of admitting one of them to my intimacy. I only stayed up at Oxford in order to please my father, who judged this prudent, and until I could decide on some practical course of action. Also, as Probationer Fellow, I was bound to reside a full year. Moving about among those people, whom I intellectually and morally despised, I was forced to remember that they had read two of my foolish letters to Shorting—one of which was certainly written in execrable taste, since it trifled with the vulgar aspects of what is either respectable or highly commendable as emotion. At the same time, my sense of humour made me chuckle to think that the wooden-headed President, Dr Bulley, had read aloud to the full conclave of mediocrities some stanzas of mine addressed by Hesperus to the Shepherd Hymenæus. A few years later I set these stanzas in a blank verse narrative, and published the whole poem, for the fun of the thing, in my collection of verse called *New and Old*.¹⁹

At the end of December, 1862, W.R.W. Stephens and I set off for a visit to Belgium in bitter winter weather. Our steamer broke down off Calais pier. A rowing boat put out, in a tremendously high sea, to take over the mails; and we insisted upon getting into it. The consequence was that we nearly lost our lives; for tide and wind drove us beyond the harbour piers, and the sailors had the utmost difficulty to row us round again. People

were standing on the pier with life-preservers, ready to throw down, when we should be dashed by the breakers up against the wooden stakes. For about two hours the labour lasted; of course we were drenched to the skin, and our luggage was soaked with sea water, which began to freeze upon us when we got on shore. We slept at Tournay, and woke up with severe chills and rheumatism, which did not quit us on the rest of that dismal journey. I was reading books on the Renaissance, having in contemplation the writing of an English Essay on that subject for the Chancellor's Prize.²⁰

On our return from this Belgian escapade, I went with my father for the usual winter visit to Bowood.²¹ The party consisted of Bob Lowe, Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock,²² Mr and Mrs Higford Burr, a charming Mr Bunbury,²³ and some foreign notabilities. It was not very memorable, except for Lowe's rough, brilliant and somewhat cynical conversation.

I began the next term with six pupils in philosophy. But after three weeks my health failed suddenly; and I have never been a strong man since. Shorting indeed had his revenge. He was of so strange a nature than even could he have foreseen all the trouble he was bringing on me, and the ruin of my health, I believe he would not have desisted from his dastardly action. Peace be with him all the same!

My illness declared itself one night in the form of a horrible dream²⁴; the motive of which was that I saw a weak old man being gradually bruised²⁵ to death with clubs. The anguish of his eyes pierced my soul; and even now, after the lapse of twenty-seven years I can see them. Next morning I rose with the certainty that something serious had happened to my brain. Nor was I mistaken. During the next three years I hardly used my head or eyes at all for intellectual work and it was fully ten years before they recovered anything like their natural vigour; while, as I shall have to relate, I had, in the interval, begun to be consumptive. I do not doubt that the larger part of this physical distress was the result of what I suffered at Magdalen, coming after the labour of reading for my degree and the obscure fever I had at Visp.

The weeks dragged wearily along through those months of ungenial late winter and delaying spring at Oxford. I was like a creature which had been racked, and felt pain in every nerve and sinew. Of bodily suffering I had enough and to spare in the aching eyes and dull pain-shotten brain—never forgetful, that pain-burdened brain, waking or sleeping, of its deep unaccountable malady.²⁶ The slumber of health became a boon remembered. Nature relentlessly denied it now. Night brought frightful visions; and waking was the act of slow uncoiling from the serpent coils

of an oppressive incubus. But the mental suffering was worse. If my body throbbed with dumb persistent aches like a beast that has been racked or vivisected, my spirit burned in flames of shame and indignation and rebellion against faith. Scorpion-like it turned round in a circle of fire,²⁷ and stabbed its vitals with the sting it carried. I bred no bitterness against mankind, and I did not curse God. {I wanted eagerly to love my brothers and to reconcile myself with God. But I was weak and outcast in a wilderness of inarticulate anguish;} bruised and pounded and reduced to earth—benumbed by²⁸ the agony of all these things, and nourishing a blind corporeal resistance, combined with the awful sense of time that must be spent and wasted on the effort to revive. Shorting's blow had fallen, more cruelly than the poor fellow, whom I had loved too weakly and not well, perhaps intended.²⁹

The foregoing paragraph may read a little laboured and too high-flown in rhetoric. If it is laboured, that comes from the impossible task of describing a sentient being so plagued at every point of consciousness. If it is high-flown, that must be conceded to the difficulty of expressing by any means of style³⁰ the labyrinth of a young soul, lost, and seeking light in darkness.

I had recourse to the one thing which has sustained me through the troubles of this life. I went to Malvern with my sister Charlotte, and wrote an essay on the Renaissance. Wearing blue spectacles and a green shade, because I could no longer distinguish the pupils of my eyes in their red sea of inflammation, I put my thoughts on paper. The manuscript was sent to Oxford, and won the Chancellor's Prize.³¹ Poor academical success: only valuable, because in those weeks of blindness I determined to resist, did something, and laid unconsciously the foundations for future work.

I did not care about the prize. The entry in my diary is this:

June 24. Since I last wrote here, I got my English Essay. My father and my sister heard me recite part of it before the Prince and Princess of Wales.

If I valued it at all, it was because I had made some amends to my³² father for what he had suffered through my folly in that dreadful month of the preceding year.

I have never recovered from this attitude toward literature and success in the world. Such things have always seemed to me insignificant and out of all proportion to the suffering and the pleasure of life. And what

cheered me most just then was the making of a new friendship with a fresh young man, L.G. Mylne,³³ who has since become Colonial Bishop, I believe.

So the stubborn inner self forged itself upon the anvil of circumstance and doom. To outward appearances, the man enclosing that live steel of personality seemed a thin failing thread.

Long before the crisis which Shorting made in my life, I felt the necessity of growing into a natural man. That is, I think, how the problem presented itself to my innocence. I thought that, by honest endeavour, I could divert my passions from the burning channel in which they flowed for Alfred Brooke, and lead them gently to follow a normal course toward women. I neglected the fact that poetry and power of expression and the visionary pomp of dreams awoke in me only beneath the touch of the male genius. I wanted to do right. To be as one of those I loved and honoured, the nobler men I knew around me. Therefore in all simplicity and sober diligence I addressed myself to the task of stimulating a romantic feeling for women.

Mrs Josephine Butler³⁴ exercised her unhealthy spiritual fascination (a mixture of religious fervour and flirtation) and her really brilliant physical influence, upon me in vain. I was worried by the agitation into which she threw me mentally—appealing to my sentimental instincts under the dubious aspects³⁵ of theological³⁶ and personal emotion. My senses responded but dumbly to her feminine charms, though I recognized their aesthetic value. In both ways she failed to win me, albeit she did her best to do so, risking what might have been perilous to herself, if I had been normally constituted. I remained grateful to her, all the same; for I thought then, and still think, that she felt a call to save souls. At that period, she occupied herself with the souls of young men. Latterly she found a fitter³⁷ vocation in attending to the souls of³⁸ fallen sisters, and has proved her force by impeding what some people³⁹ regard as a measure beneficial to the health and physical well-being of society⁴⁰—the Contagious Diseases Acts.⁴¹

Mme Goldschmidt (Jenny Lind),⁴² in my opinion a very far superior woman to Mrs Butler, did really take hold upon my nature. But here there was no question of sexual or sentimental influence. I admired her as a power in art. I respected her as a world-experienced personality, who had kept herself unspotted and unspoiled. I went to her for counsel and converse as though to⁴³ a Diotima or Egeria.⁴⁴ She never knelt down before her God, as Mrs Butler was wont to do, front to front with a looking-glass,

calling some young man in to view the process and become enamoured of her God through her attractiveness. Mme Goldschmidt told me that in those vast theatres she trod, among the shouting crowds, she always sang to God, and let the wreaths and plaudits fall. I admired her as a comrade, revered her as a disciple, learned from her to expect greatness from woman. It was Mme Goldschmidt who prepared me for my wife.

These two ladies, Mrs Josephine Butler and Mme Goldschmidt, affected⁴⁵ my character at the time when I was resolved to warp the congenital⁴⁶ bias of my sexual instinct.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, neither of them did more than to awake in me an aesthetic sense for feminine beauty and an admiration for female genius and force of character.

For the main purposes of life, it might have been better if I had got me to a brothel, and tried all its inmates by turns. What I needed was the excitation of the sexual sense for women, and the awakening to their sexual desirableness, combined with the manifold sympathies, half brutal and half tender, which physical congress⁴⁸ evokes.

In a dumb blundering way I knew that the egotistical enthusiasms of Mrs Butler and the grand art of Mme Goldschmidt were not respondent to my needs. I saw through the former, as one sees mere fact through coloured glass. The other evoked my sentiments of comradeship and loyal devotion.⁴⁹ Both roused my intellectual curiosity about women. Neither of them touched my sex.

In April 1863, having nothing to do at Clifton, I cast eyes upon a young lady called Letitia.⁵⁰ She was our near neighbour at Clifton. The diary, which I am following as a faithful guide in these reminiscences, describes a cool romantic episode connected with this maiden. Her parents would have liked me for a son-in-law. My father threw his weight into the scale against my lukewarm passion. This circumstance fanned the sluggish coals of my emotion. I dreamed for four weeks that I should like—might like—could probably come to like, to marry her. The accent of the diary is, nevertheless, quite different in all that concerns her from its pregnant uncouth confidences about Alfred Brooke. I, the good boy, was then undoubtedly endeavouring to fall in love with a girl, and very proud of myself when I thought I had achieved that object. Here is a self-revealing sentence: 'It is much to feel that a woman is my ideal.'

A real woman-lover could not have written that sentence. It shows the honest intention of an abnormal but highly moralized young man. I never wrote such words about Willie Dyer or Alfred Brooke. Passion, in their case, and love, leapt out in simple unreflective utterances.

Suddenly, upon the 4th of May, Letitia disappears from the diary. I left Clifton for London and Oxford, apparently without a regret for her, and certainly without a single word recorded of any after-memory concerning her. [Poor pale shadow of a coaxed-up emotion!⁵¹ The impulse to love Letitia, in my soul, was honest enough; but it was also selfish and untrue. I hope that I caused the girl no pain. I think I must have disappointed her parents. But although I may perchance have stirred her maiden fancies by my conversation and persistent dogging of her paths, I am blameless of having cast a single spark of a real man's passion into Letitia's heart.]⁵²

Difficult and abused is the way of a young man, who wilfully is forced to warp his inclination. I have related this⁵³ passage in my life, because it throws light upon the psychological problem which I have undertaken to reveal. A right-willing and right-thinking young man, in the clutches of abnormal sexual desire, convinced by experience of the dangers and the inexpediency of his native⁵⁴ bent, makes a cold dead effort to love the only sort of girl he thinks he can love (chiefly because she looks rather like a boy), and leaves Letitia with a sense of satisfaction when he goes to London. There is not a trace of true sexual emotion⁵⁵ in the whole affair.

[The matrix for the real love of a woman had been now prepared in me. It remained to be seen whether I could bring a diamond or ruby forth from it.]⁵⁶

My health continuing miserable, I left Clifton, at my father's bidding, and much against my own will, for Switzerland on the 25th of June 1863. At that time, though I had enjoyed the valley of Chamonix and the glaciers of Mont Blanc, I did not care for alpine scenery. The prospect of dragging my pain and weariness and aching eyes among a crowd of tourists through Swiss inns disgusted me.

In Cecil Bosanquet, brother of my Harrow friend Gustavus, I had a kind and amusing travelling companion. He knew I was ill, and must have seen that I had something weighing on my mind. But I did not confide to him my Magdalen troubles. I had done so to no one, who was not brought into the affair by necessity, not even to W.R.W. Stephens, at whose house I composed my defence before the college. Cecil's freely given sympathy and funny ways were a great solace to me at the commencement of a tedious journey.

This summer in Switzerland turned out so decisive for my future that I shall dwell at length upon its incidents, drawing from the diary I still kept pretty regularly:

Friday 26. We came from Dover today to Beauvais. The cathedral is only a choir and transept carried to the most audacious height, ornamented externally on every square inch, but plain inside. The impression of strength which it conveys is purely intellectual. The brute materials of stone and iron are compelled by human energy into assuming functions alien to their nature. The lightest and most graceful structure, which seems to be spun from cobwebs or made of lace, is built up, stone by stone, and cramp by cramp, in obedience to the daydream of some unknown architect. This illusion disappears when you walk outside, and see the heavy buttresses, leaning one upon the other far into the road, and all required to give the slight effeminate semi-circle of the apse stability. The *tour de force* of construction here proves architecture to be a purely ideal art, not imitating nature, but transcending nature, using her rough and gross materials to shadow forth the substance of imaginations light as air. We sat in the church till it was quite dark. The simplicity and might of the building grew in impressiveness, as we sat down and the twilight deepened.

Next day we came to Rheims, and here I wrote much about the cathedral, which delighted me by its:

great and solemn effect of harmonious unity, the splendour of its painted glass. This fills the western rose with flames of red and violet and green, and lines the whole length of the clerestory above a triforium hung with faded tapestries.

Sunday following we decided to stay:

At 10 a.m. we went to hear High Mass. They have the rage here for austere Gregorian music, which I believe to be now prevalent in France. At first the service seemed to break the harmony of art which flowed from branching arches and embowered capitals, from lofty organs carved with angels windy-winged and spreading hair afloat upon the breeze of sound, from distant altars and candles flickering in daylight through the incense clouds. The music was severe and cold. But as the consecration of the elements drew nigh, I could perceive that the whole effect of the service was reserved for that chief mystery. Then the great organ awoke from slumber, softly and silverly, prelude with simple modulations from key to key and stop to stop, without aim it seemed, but most mellifluous, in long luxurious cadences. And now one solitary treble voice began an air of sad pathetic pleading, as though it were beseeching Christ to descend and manifest himself to his beloved. The organ reserved its sweetest stops for an accompaniment, using the tremolo, and altering them from tone to tone of deeper pathos

as the voice swelled up or died away in its entreaty. At first the instrument subserved the song, but soon it rose in rivalry, and toward the end it gained complete ascendancy, thrilling in solitude through the whole silent church, as though its mighty heart felt the down-coming of the deity. The multitudes of men and women bowed in adoration. A bell rang. The music ceased. The priest lifted wafer and cup. And through the incense, above the altar, to the eyes of ardent worshippers there swam the vision of Christ crucified. 'Fac me plagis vulnerari, cruce hac inebriari, ob amorem filii.'⁵⁷ But mute devotion is not enough. We must welcome God incarnate and triumph with songs and trumpets and the cry of exultation. So the choir strikes up a resonant fugue. 'Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.'⁵⁸ Such was the aesthetic import of the Mass for me.

The 30th of June we spent at Strasbourg, and I was determined to ascend the spire after spending some hours reading Plato's *Symposium* in the cathedral. It was necessary to obtain a special permission from the Mayor:

Cecil only climbed a short way above the platform, and there became giddy. I persevered by an act of will, remembering Goethe.⁵⁹ The guide preceding me, we rose through a spiral cage, very narrow, with open sides, down which we looked into the streets of the town. A false step might easily have sent one flying thither. This staircase narrowed at each of eight stages; and just at the top, in order to enter the crowning canopy, one had to stand in empty air upon the foliated apex of a pinnacle, and thence to take a spring, clutching at a bar above, and swinging up to a little stone platform. This gymnastic was trying to the head, especially on the return, when the whole descent, forested with spires, was seen naked beneath us.

In the state of my health at that time, with the brain so troubled, this ascent of the Strasbourg spire taxed nerve and energy too much. But I was glad to have made it at the expense of some headache.

Basel, Lucerne, Pilatus, nine days in the pinewoods of Seelisberg, six days at Engelberg, Rosenlauri, Interlaken, such was our route. These lines, written at Engelberg, describe my inner mood:⁶⁰

Ill and alone on alien shores,
 At noontide when the hot sun fires
 With blinding light the silver spires
 Of ice-tops, when the sick stream pours
 His everlasting torrent down
 The tumbled wreck of splintered stone,

And black impending pines alone
 Assuage the mountain's horrid frown,
 'Tis sad to sit and dream of thee,
 Dear England, deep in greenery.

I did much walking every day, however, and found real pleasure both in the alpine scenery and glorious alpine flowers.⁶¹ The thought of Hesperus and Hymenæus, combining with Goethe's 'Über allen Gipfeln Ist Ruh',⁶² haunted me at Engelberg, at Meiringen, at Interlaken. The evening star was strong and beautiful in that warm summertime; and I wrote three 'prose-sonatas' on the theme of Hesper for each of these places. I will translate the last of them.

July 22. The day has been dull and sultry. Clouds have draped the mountain, and the sun has never shone, and in the air is coming thunder. An hour after sunset we stroll forth between two lakes, and leaving one behind us follow the stream which joins them, to the western shore. Shortly before it finds the lake of Thun, there is a bridge on which we rested. Before us stretched the leaden plain of water, bounded by shadowy hills. The torrent rushed beneath, and all its tawny flood was livid with the yellow glare reflected from a chasm in the clouds. Between this sullen splendour and the calm grey hills there ran a narrow tongue of land on which no gleam was thrown. Dismal and black it lay in the midst of two waters, the turbid torrent and the distant lake. Low trees of heavy shape and common aspect rose from its unfruitful soil; and the shores that stretched beside were barren, wasteful and neglected. We stayed there long, watching the light upon the changeful stream, and growing almost in love with death. Surely this was the place to tempt a suicide. Cool plashing water, dark and impenetrable, surface-gilt with glare of sunset dismal as decaying life, kept ever murmuring in the sultry air: saying 'the land is desolate, the skies are dull and hot as a consuming furnace; but I am ever fresh and dewy and forgetful; I am Lethe;⁶³ come to me, bring nothing of the world, and you shall find your rest.' So I pondered, and made the torrent speak; for in my heart were thoughts too deep for tears and woes too keen for utterance. Then far above our heads, above the core of buried sunlight, broke the clouds, and Hesper swam forth, clear and hopeful, in his liquid spaces of aerial gold. Pure were the heavens around him, and their crystal chasms seemed cooler, happier than the leaden waves. As I gazed into their brightness, it was as though I saw the choir of heaven's cathedral, wherein sat angels innumerable, harping on their harps and singing songs above the reach of words. Though I could not understand the burden of those songs, the spiritual melody went to my heart, and there

translated its sweet message into mortal consolation. 'Seek not the tomb', my heart responded, 'dote not on the wormy grave. Live your life as God shall give it. Trust in Him, and try to be of better cheer. After the dull day comes glory and peace.' The dissolving saffron of the sunset glowed and faded to the tone of Mendelssohn's music: 'If with all your hearts ye truly seek Him.'⁶⁴

Next day we walked up to Mürren from Lauterbrunnen, where I was destined to abide, with one brief interval, until the 31st of August: a memorable period for me.

In those days there was only one little wooden inn at Mürren, the Silberhorn, kept by Herr Sterchi and his family. Life was very primitive; few people staying in the house beside ourselves; troops of tourists coming up from Interlaken to lunch and going noisily away again. The George de Bunsens⁶⁵ were our companions for some while; and while they were still there, an English family arrived. I can remember looking out of Cecil's window, and spying their advent, one bright afternoon in early August. It annoyed us to think that the hotel would now be fuller. 'They were Mr Frederick North, M.P. for Hastings, and his two daughters.' (So runs the diary:)

Both the young ladies were devoted to sketching. The eldest was blonde, tall, stout, good-humoured, and a little satirical. The second was dark and thin and slight, nervous and full of fun and intellectual acumen. The one seemed manager and mother, the other dreamer and thinker. Neither was remarkable for beauty; but the earnest vivacity of the younger grew upon me, and I could soon have fallen in love with her. Her name was Catherine. Mr North is kind and easy-going. They seemed to have travelled in most parts of Europe.⁶⁶

Such is the entry in my precious priggish diary about the woman whom I was destined to marry.⁶⁷ I carried the thought of Catherine North, like a sleeping seed, in my mind through the next ten months, sought her out in London then, and did what will be afterwards related. The Norths stayed only a week, I think, at Mürren; but that was time enough to form a tolerably just conception of them. Alpine inns are favourable places for hatching acquaintance and gaining insight into character.

At Mürren I learned to love the Alps with a strong passion, which, though it has sobered in the course of years, still vibrates and endures. I also came to appreciate the Swiss people, and to admire the simple dignity

and wholesome habits of the peasantry. My health revived daily; in spite of frequent drawbacks and persistent trouble in the brain, I grew stronger and lighter-hearted. The promise of Hesper made at Interlaken seemed part likely to be realised. [And what was more hopeful, I began spontaneously to love a woman—not Catherine North as yet—but Rosa Engel:]⁶⁸

Early in August: All the people of the inn at Mürren are charming. Herr Sterchi comes from Wilderswil near Interlaken, where he spends the winter. He was a cavalry soldier in the Swiss army, and is a tall, handsome man, polite in manners. On Sundays he goes out for a ride upon his black horse along the terraced path above the Staubbach. His wife is a neat little body, rather shy. They have several children, all young. The waiting in the inn is done principally by a good-natured girl hired as a servant. She has a chubby round face, and wears a coloured kerchief over her head tied beneath the chin. Like most girls in Swiss mountain inns she seems to have a chronic toothache. I christened her ‘the motherly maid’, because she was good and unruffled in her temper. Then there is a little chambermaid with a mousy face, something like a very pretty Esquimaux girl, dark and black-eyed, but snub-nosed and pouting. She wears a fichu and the headkerchief always. But the most attractive damsels are two whom I saw at once to be no hired servants. I told Cecil, what turned out to be fact, that they had come up here to learn housekeeping and take a summer holiday. They took turn and turn about to wait at table and to help in the kitchen; a week to each duty. One of them I named ‘the pretty maid’, the other ‘the pseudo-pretty maid’. (I was carrying on, apparently, old reading-party habits.) From the former I gained this information respecting the house; and she won my heart. She is called Rosa Engel, and is not that a pretty name? She comes from Thun, where, as she told me with some pride, her father is the only owner of the name of Engel. They bear coat-armour, ‘azure an angel or’, I think, and spring from an old Bernese gentle stock from the Emmental. But of their *Stanmat*⁶⁹ I am not quite certain. She and the other girl, a native of Grindelwald, are house-friends of Herr Sterchi, and have come to spend the summer at Mürren, for change of air and instruction in housewifely arts. She is the prettiest girl I ever saw, since I had eyes to see. Tall and slender, her chief defect is a certain thinness and angularity of build. Her hair is light, but by no means golden or glossy, rather a *blond cendré*.⁷⁰ Her eyes are large, dark, liquid, piercing; the brows and lashes black. Her nose is long, but so too is her upper lip, which gives some flatness to her face. Her mouth is large and mobile, opening constantly in smiles upon a splendid row of teeth. Her neck, like her whole gracious body, is long and slight and lithe. So are her hands and arms; but they are tanned with sun and work, nobly, delightfully. About her every movement there is the charm of grace, agility, and lightness—in her eyes a

sparkle—in her carriage a trustfulness like that of a tame wild creature—and all her limbs move to the music of such gladsome youth that my gaze always follows them.

After this there comes a detailed description of her Bernese costume and the heavy silver chains she wore. I did not then know that she was the daughter of the chief jeweller in Thun, a man renowned now for his old-world silver gear:

I grew to love her by mere looking, then began to talk, shyly at first, afterwards more freely on the balconies at night, when the housework was over for the day. We spoke in French.

August 9. Cecil was going home to England, and I to Zürich to meet T.H. Green. I asked Rosa to accept some wild roses I had gathered for her on the hills. She said she would keep and dry them in remembrance of my visit to Mürren. We wished each other goodbye; and as we shook hands, I stole a kiss. The feeling of her lips on mine is still fresh. It was the first time I had ever kissed a woman. Then she left us blushing, and went below, and sat on the balcony singing with the other maids. These songs from the girls, on warm evenings, after the day's work is finished, in the midst of their simple lives, in front of the great crags and glaciers and stars, has a strange, soothing, irritating melancholy. They drive me in upon myself. Next morning we were up at five. I took another kiss from Fraülein Engel, as we left the house, and one too from the motherly maid.

Cecil left me at Olten on the 10th of August, and I found T.H. Green, after a long search through all the hotels of Zürich. Green and I next day walked up to Üetliberg, and set ourselves down there in a little wooden tavern for a week. He had just come from Heidelberg, and was full of German philosophy, politics, and the higher poetry. I think he had it in his head then to translate a book of Baur's upon the first century of Christianity.⁷¹ We both worked during the day, sitting at wooden beer-tables under the thick beech trees, which, here and there, were cut into vistas over the illimitable landscape. I chose a gap from which the Bernese Oberland was visible; and while I penned an essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets (it has not been published, but I possess the MS still, and do not think amiss of it) I used to send many thoughts on airy wings to the Jungfrau, Eiger, Mönch, and humbler Breithorn—I could see them all distinctly, when the vapour-veil allowed, and could mark exactly the spot of Mürren. Even the

Schilthorn allowed itself to be observed upon the flank of that vast snowy panorama. In the evenings we used to take long walks among the glow-worms, beneath the stars, watching the lamps of Zürich burn like earthly stars low down beside by the lake. It was a monotonous but pleasant life, and I learned much from Green. Here it was, I think, that he first showed me Goethe's Proemium to 'Gott und Welt',⁷² a poem which took deep hold upon me, and began to build my creed.

But a great longing came over me for Mürren. I remembered its unrivalled purity of air—those walks upon the Schilthorn, in the Sefinenthal, towards Trachsellaenen. I heard the aerial echoes of the alpenhorn ascending from Lauterbrunnen or floating from the Wengernalp, and gaining melody upon the way. I longed for the immediate presence of the giant mountains with their glaciers. And the simple folk kept calling to me. And Rosa Engel was the soul and centre of these things.

Green wanted us to go to Gais in Appenzell. But I over-persuaded him. I must return to Mürren, and he must come with me. We agreed on these terms. He was to take the route by Rapperswil, Einsiedeln, Schwyz. I hurried straight by Thun. There I visited Rosa's home, and made acquaintance with her mother, who seemed a little suspicious of me. She had probably some right to be so; for I doubt not that, in my simplicity, I let her infer that I was going back to Mürren for her daughter's sake.

I walked up to Mürren on 18th of August in drenching rain. And it rained and snowed incessantly for three days after I arrived. Rosa, who knew that I had come again to see her, and who did not understand what all this meant, kept severely aloof, avoiding me on purpose:

[Twice I have passed the window where she was sitting. Once I saw her writing; and I thought that she was watching me. I walked past, fondling the great white dog. She bent over her letter, and only the friend who was with her could see my anxious glances. The next time it was worse. She sat sewing, and I smiled as I passed. But she stared stonily, and then looked down. So I have never given her the greeting of her mother, which I hoped would be a way to reach her heart; although I told Madeleine, the maid, about the visit to Herr Engel's shop in Thun. I have never given her the book of German poems which I bought for her in Zürich—or the German verses which I wrote on my return to Mürren. These I set down on paper under the direction of her friend, Herr Sterchi's cousin, and gave them to the friend, hoping she would show them to Rosa.]⁷³

The verses are as follows:

Ich liebe; das ist mir genüg;
 Das lässt sich leise zeigen:
 Und wenn ich spreche auch kein wort,
 Muss Hand, muss Auge schweigen?

Die Worte, Liebe, die du sprichst,
 Sind Seutzer, Handschläg, Küssen;
 Frag' oder Antwort braüchen wir,
 Wenn Brust zu Brust wir grüssen?

Du bist der König ganzer Welt,
 Kennst keinen fremden Strand:
 Denn wo man liebt ein schönes Kind,
 Ist da dein Vaterland.⁷⁴

The other girls in the house, it is certain, kept Rosa well informed about me; and they probably showed her my German poem, which was as outspoken a declaration of love as its bad grammar permitted. At any rate, she told me two years ago (in 1887) that she was perfectly well aware of my affection for her, but considered that no good could come of such a flirtation between an English gentleman and a Swiss girl.⁷⁵ She liked me and felt drawn toward me. But prudence made her assume that attitude of cold reserve. It may also be supposed that the Sterchis, under whose charge she was, opened their eyes when I returned, and gave her wholesome counsel.

However this may have been, Green's appearance on the 21st of August made a change. Perhaps he inspired confidence. Perhaps, now that I was not quite alone, she could not resist the pleasure of a little courting:

August 22. Green came yesterday; and at nine this morning the sun shone out. We walked together in the deep snow, which lay thick upon those late summer flowers. They, poor things, revived immediately beneath the genial warmth, and lifted their pretty heads from wells of melting snow-wreaths. The whole world seemed to feel returning spring. Birds floated in dense squadrons overhead, whirling and wheeling on the edges of the clouds, which kept rising and dispersing in the eager air above our valley. Far away the mists rolled, like sad thoughts that dissolve in tears.⁷⁶

Later in the day we sat upon those rocks, the crests of precipices fifteen hundred feet in height, whence the eye plunges so giddily to the Lütschinen torrent, and where it is so pleasant to rest among the tufted stone-pinks (*Stein-Nelken*) in the cool of afternoon. *Descendunt montibus umbrae.*⁷⁷ The shadow of the Schilthorn spreads itself above the hamlet. Yodelling goat-herds prepare to leave the upland meadows. Peace spreads abroad, while the row of dazzling giants, from the Eiger to the Blüemlisalp, still face the westering sun and shine until they too fade into amber, orange, rose.

[Well: while I was seated on the rocks, I noticed that Frau Sterchi and Rosa had left the inn, and were sorting linen in the chalet opposite. They had placed a table and chairs before the house-door, under the projecting eaves. So I left the rocks and Green upon them, meditating the pages of his Baur. Very shyly, I determined to walk by the chalet, and see what happened. As soon as Rosa caught sight of me, her eyes went down, veiled in their soft dark lashes. But soon she lifted them again, and gave me a⁷⁸ smile of recognition. I left the path and crossed the palings of the chalet-garden. She held her hand out. I took it, and conveyed her mother's greetings, and spoke about my visit to her house in Thun. Frau Sterchi, busied with her linen, perplexed and curious and shy, not understanding what we said in French, cast anxious glances. The point is gained, however, the ice broken; and like the alpine flowers beneath the melting snow, my thoughts and hopes of love revive.

How much of real feeling was there in all this? To what extent was I living out an idyll and amusing my imagination—with that incorrigible habit of 'poetizing the facts of existence', which Flaubert sneers at in women?⁷⁹ How far was affection for Rosa teaching me to love the Alps; or was she only the central figure in a landscape which took hold upon my aesthetic sensibilities through the revival of health and strength in a congenial milieu? It is difficult to answer these questions. I only know for certain that the image of Rosa remained for a long while after I left Mürren imprinted on my memory, and that I have never been drawn so spontaneously toward any other woman. Yet I doubt whether I was governed by the genuine sexual desire. Only physical possession could have tested this factor in the emotion she inspired. And that of course I never had:

August 25. I discover that Rosa is only 15, the same age as Juliet, Virginia, Gretchen.⁸⁰ She is a woman in the eyes of love, but the grace and bloom of childhood linger round her still.

Last night she ran out with Madeleine upon the balcony—to see the stars, she said. I followed, and found them leaning over the parapet and

listening to Nathalie who was singing by the kitchen door. I knelt upon the [seat at Rosa's side, and made her ask Nathalie to sing the song of 'Röslein, Röslein, Röslein rot, Röslein auf der Haiden.'⁸¹ The melody was often broken by the laughter of the girls. —Oh, the fair moon, the silver stars, the dim tresses of the cataracts! The tall mountains stood grey, discrowned of their snows. The depth of the valley was grey, and very grey the bald bare rocks of the black Monk. The moonlight seemed made for us alone and for the music. It fell on Rosa's face, and I could follow the working of her fingers by its light. I softly touched her arm, and once I dared to play with her hands and the rings she wore. I made her put on mine.]⁸²

So the diary goes on its way, minutely detailing the tiny incidents of this slight idyll. I picked bunches of fresh flowers every morning for Rosa, climbing daily higher up the mountains as the summer flowers retreated, until at last there were few left but lilac crocuses and deep blue harebells. Innumerable sonnets too were written.⁸³

What flowers for thee, dearest, what flowers for thee?
 Red roses for my Rose, and azure eyes
 Of gentian steadfast as thy constancy?
 Pearl-cupped anemones, and silver sighs
 Of fragile lilies breathed by faint wind?—
 All these are flown: swift summer spreads her wing,
 And bears the south-ward, bearing nought behind
 But sober crocuses that mock the spring
 With lilac modesty; how pale and prim
 By those gay flaunting chalices of gold
 Which the voluptuous prime with fire did brim!—
 Yet, since love deems no duteous service cold,
 These will I pluck and bind them for her brow,
 Saying, 'their hues are meek and chaste as thou.'

I caught at every opportunity of meeting her and speaking with her. These were many, but not of a very satisfactory kind. We were living in a hotel, where every movement is watched, and none of the people of the house were ignorant of my wooing:

August 26. After breakfast Green and I walked to Interlaken, had lunch there, and walked back—a fair day's work. We whiled the time away, toiling up the valley of Lauterbrunnen, by repeating as many sonnets of Shakespeare as we could remember. Between us, I think we managed to produce about half of the whole number. I need not say that I knew more than he did.

At Interlaken I bought a little ring with a deep-coloured red stone in it, a jacinth I think, as a present for Rosa; and I also picked an oleander flower. These I brought back with me. In the evening she and her friend were sitting in the grass by the cabbage plot beneath the inn. I joined them. The friend was in her working dress, cutting up lettuces for salad. Rosa, as usual, was neatly dressed: a black velvet chaplet round her head, and the violet kerchief falling down her back and giving brilliance to her blonde hair. I gave her my oleander flower, which she took with a blush almost as deep as the colour of the blossom. Afterwards I noticed that she had placed it in the bunch of wild flowers, which I bring her. After some desultory conversation, she got up, dropped a curtsy, and ran into the house with her pretty farewell words of ‘*Merci Monsieur!*’

During this episode we were watched by all the English people on the balcony, and the guides and porters round the door. It amused me when I went inside to hear from Green that old brazen-faced Sir Andrew Aguecheek⁸⁴ (a man called Harris staying in the inn) had remarked upon the scene with his stolid drawl: ‘*Quite pastoral!*’

Later on, the moon had risen high above the Mittagshorn, and Rosa was out upon the balcony, reading a written paper by its light. I went, and asked her if she would accept the little ring which I had brought for her, and took her hand to place it on her finger. Then she stood up straight, and turned her face to the sky, and said: ‘*Je suis si jeune. Je n’ai jamais pris une bague d’un monsieur.*’⁸⁵ I still pressed her to take it; but again she said, turning to [the] calm still moon, and making heaven her witness: ‘*Je suis si jeune.*’ I cannot analyse the tone with which she spoke these words. There was a sadness in it, a melancholy, and apprehension for the future. ‘*Leave me alone*’, she seemed to be feeling: ‘*Why stir in me the pleasures and the pains of love? They will come, but the time is not yet. I am here alone, without father or mother. Do not take advantage of my youth.*’⁸⁶ The moon kept shining on her face, and she was sad. I saw that she did not blame me, only felt that she could not accept my token.

How selfish it is to be pining because I cannot get a girl’s heart for one week—because I may not play with her, and kiss her, and then leave her. She stays here and has the same life; we go elsewhere, and carry her kisses and her hand-touch in our memory as talismans for evoking the sweetness of the past.

It was no scoundrel who penned the last paragraph: only my raw, sophisticated, literary, life-idealizing self. I did not love Rosa with sufficient masculinity of passion either to want to seduce her or to want to marry her. I might, except for her right feeling, have fallen into the former difficulty; and, except for her just perception of the situation, have blundered into

the latter. I owe to her my deliverance from two situations, one of which would have involved a crime, the other a mistake:

August 27. We have been to the Schmadribach and over the Steinberg. I do not wonder at the name of Lauterbrunnen. Streams, cascades, cataracts innumerable pour from every ledge of rock and divide the pinewoods, some like silver threads and some like seething cauldrons, some vanishing in spray half down the fall and gathering again to water at its base, others forming a continuous sheet of foam, some dashed in zig-zags between horrid rocks, some scarce perceived among the murmurous leaves through which they run. Everywhere and over and above all is sound: one mighty voice is in the valley; and the myriad cries from which it swells, strike on the ear at turnings of the road or partings of the pine-clad precipice.

Rosa has become part of me, as no woman, no one else perhaps before was. She has stirred true feeling, and has made Switzerland my soul's home. The memory of Mürren will endure like a great symphony, multitudinous with thoughts and motives—storm, sun, and mist and snow; unfathomable moonlight nights; calm mellow evenings and cold sunrises; the greenery of the pine-crowned Alps, the glaciers and the precipices, the wrecks of avalanche and raving winds; all combined, controlled and brought into harmony by the thought of Rosa.

This was true enough; and yet I do not detect the right accent of passion in all my romantic⁸⁷ broodings on the thought of Rosa. She did not compel me tyrannously, as Alfred Brooke had done. In the very middle of my lures⁸⁸ about her, I foresaw the moment when I should leave her by an act of my own will, and she would be to me a gracious memory. Still I recognized the essential distinction between this love for a girl and the love I felt for Alfred Brooke—its superior naturalness and coolness:

I receive the thought of Rosa into the inmost places of my heart; but how different is it from the thoughts of passion which have nestled there before! Her image is healthy, fresh, life-giving, bestowing something which I had not earlier, and could not have obtained except through her. Those other dreams were self-created, self-sustained, enshrined in self, fed from self.

That paragraph of the diary indicates my perception of a radical and specific difference between desire excited by a girl and the desires I had previously indulged for boys or visionary beings in male forms of beauty. Still the desire lacked something of directness and intensity. It remained involved in⁸⁹ aestheticism, and was subconsciously recognized as having

no proper relation to fact. Rosa had replaced Letitia, and was not going to be forgotten like Letitia; far otherwise, she exercised a real influence over my imagination for many months to come. But the diamond or ruby of genius love for woman had not emerged in flawless adamantine crystal from the matrix of my vague emotion. Perhaps a crime or a folly, the sin of seduction or the mistake of marriage, might have evoked it.

The last day I spent at Mürren was a Sunday. Herr Feuz, who then sold alpenstocks and little wooden models of Swiss cottages, who was afterwards made postmaster at Mürren, and soon became a man of substance, asked me to stand godfather to a little girl of his, just born. Rosa and her friend Katrina were to be godmothers. So of course I acceded willingly to his request; and when I informed Rosa, her eyes lighted up, and she exclaimed: 'Ah! cela sera joli!'⁹⁰

The preparations for the christening party had been going on for some days previously. This Sunday we were to descend to Lauterbrunnen—Feuz, Rosa, Katrina and myself.

I cannot refrain from copying out the record of my diary about this Sunday. Readers who do not care for minute details, will find no difficulty in skipping the pages:

August 30. We rose early, and breakfasted together, Rosa in her violet merino skirt, Katrina her brown alpaca. The two girls wore their Bernese bodices and chains and bouquets. Rosa presented me with a nosegay, made up of a white rose, a twig of myrtle, some heliotrope, and mignonette. While we were drinking coffee, Green joined us, and I persuaded him not to leave Mürren that day. —Our godchild had been sent on before; and about seven, we were ready to start. The tourists came out to see us off, and some inquisitive English spinsters seemed to think it was a wedding. The two girls mounted horses; Rosa, for the first time in her life. Herr Feuz took charge of Katrina's, and I led Rosa by the bridle. When we reached the steep descent to Lauterbrunnen, the ladies dismounted, Rosa in my arms, Katrina in the arms of Herr Feuz. They were placed on seats in a long narrow sledge on runners, which was dragged by Herr Feuz, who placed himself between the shafts in front and guided with his legs. I mounted behind, keeping my feet upon the runners, and leaning over between the girls. Down we went. With shrieks and squeakings from the sledge, abrupt swayings to one side or the other, grindings upon stones, and sudden lurches over unexpected obstacles, accompanied by a continual chatter from our gossip in the shafts. It was a swift and singular *degringolade*⁹¹ (a foretaste of tobogganing, as I afterwards discovered). When we reached Lauterbrunnen, the two girls took a

glass of wine with Feuz and me, arranged their toilettes for the ceremony, stuck white artificial flowers in their hair, and marched off under my escort and the admiring eyes of Lauterbrunnen *Bürschen*⁹² with the baby to the church. We entered the church; and the minister, attired in a great white ruff and long black bedgown, performed his office. During the service and the sermon, which was preached upon a text from the 10th chapter of St John's Gospel, Rosa behaved coquettishly. She enjoyed the honour and glory of holding the baby at the font, attracting all eyes by her singular beauty, and feeling my eyes fixed upon her. Then we had lunch at the Capricorn. A round table was laid out for us in a window of the public room; and numerous midday tourists wondered to see an Englishman quaffing champagne between two of the prettiest Swiss girls you could imagine. Rosa and Katrina behaved with perfect dignity and simple grace. There was no angularity of movement, no giggling, staring round, putting their hands to their mouths, or nudging of each other. (This struck me because I had not then learned to know the unaffected naturalness of Swiss people in all circumstances, however unusual or embarrassing.) We drank very moderately of the wine; and I was amused, when we returned to Mürren, to hear from Green that Sir Andrew Aguecheek had remarked to him: 'You had better not wait for dinner; Symonds is standing champagne, and taking it out in kisses.' Green himself, it seems, had feared a Wilhelm Meister conclusion to our innocent festivities.⁹³ But I was no Casanova,⁹⁴ and I did not wish to be one. I wanted to enjoy⁹⁵ my sweet Swiss idyll, and the manners of the girls made anything of any coarser sort impossible to think for a gentleman.

[Into the middle of the idyll fell a Clifton acquaintance of my own, a person of some mark in science—Dr William Budd,⁹⁶ with his great black whiskers and self-important stare. His stomach protruded, and his mouth grinned, as nature made them. I went up and spoke to him, and to his travelling-companion, a Mr May.⁹⁷ He was inquisitive: —'Staying at Mürren, hay?' —'With a Swiss family perhaps?' —'No?' —'Come down as godfather to a guide's child?' —'How pleasant! Charming girls!' —'Do you hear, May, Mr Symonds has come down to be a godfather and christen a guide's child!' —So spoke Dr Budd in response to the information I was giving him. I returned to the idyll, to my dignified and gracious Swiss friends. The daughter of the host joined us, and we sat a while, as Swiss folk do, slowly talking and drinking wine by sips.

When it was time to go, a horse and *chaise-à-porteurs*⁹⁸ met us. Dr Budd came up again and said: 'Now I see you are an entire man—no dried-up literary fellow, hay? I read your Essay on the Renaissance: masterly, I thought. I shall tell your father in what good company I found you!' So, with a wink and a leer, he bade farewell; and the spirit of the world, pervasive Mephistophiles,⁹⁹ departed—leaving me to my idyll, with thoughts troubled

and desires inflamed. I could not, did not, want to act the part of Casanova. Yet he made me hanker after it. ‘An entire man’, forsooth! What does that mean?

Katrina mounted the horse. Rosa preferred to walk, and let me press her hand, for she was leaning on my arm. But she withdrew it when the lad who drove the horse came near. Soon she got into the chaise; and then the two girls amused themselves by changing from the horse to the chaise and back again, as fancy moved them. Rosa developed a great affection for the black mare, and laughed when the beast tried to eat my bouquet—I vigorously defending it, and protesting that I would keep it all my life. (I did keep the remnants many years, and the last leaves of it were lost out of my diary here in Davos.) I gathered strawberries for the girls on the way up. Katrina put hers into her bosom. Rosa threw those away which I had gathered. I was quick enough to perceive that my wooing of Rosa had worked, by ricochet, upon Katrina’s heart, and that I might have hers for the asking. But I was not Casanova; else, through Katrina, I might perhaps, by paths of jealousy and slighted *amour propre*,¹⁰⁰ have struck at Rosa. But the poem¹⁰¹ was an idyll; and the mood of the idyll could not be changed.

Very slowly we ascended the steep way to Mürren. Green met us, and dined with us and Feuz in a bedroom at the inn. We drank to Rosina, the christened baby’s health. Herr and Frau Sterchi came in at times, and looked on in a genial protective way. The events of the day were discussed, and I found many causes of complaint against Rosa. She is born to be a coquette. Green’s democratic instincts and sympathy with youth were satisfied.

I need not go on copying out the diary. Its record shows that the long evening which ensued was sufficiently *gemütlich*.¹⁰² I have spent many of the same sort since. But this was my first initiation into real Swiss life. It seems that I enjoyed abundance of proximity to Rosa, sitting on the sofa by her and putting my arm round her waist, and breathing burning words into her ears which brought a quick flush to her face. But she knew how to manage me, flung away, and returned again, half distracted by the situation. I attributed too much to circumstances, which now I know to be permissible and right in such Swiss holidays, though they often lead to serious results. And after one of her brief absences, she returned frowning. ‘M. Arrice (the name of Sir Andrew Aguecheek was Robert Harris) had laughed sardonically at her as she went down-stairs, and she vented her spleen against the “méchant vilain homme”.’¹⁰³ The Sir Andrew Aguecheeks of this world make and mar much. Perhaps he spoiled a night of love and preserved the idyll:

Thus we stayed talking and toying, and all the maids were with us singing in the room. Green had left long ago; but he returned when it was now quite dark, and reminded me that I must pack for tomorrow's journey. I kissed the girls: Rosa shrank, but Katrina took my kiss demurely. Then I had to leave them. Green and I walked out upon the hills once more in glorious moonlight—air and earth clean and liquid in the overflow of silver—stars shining with unusual lustre—Mürren beautiful as a naked bride beneath the heavens. While we walked, we heard the torrents calling, and the girls still laughing, singing, in the room which we had left.

So ended the idyll. It is a story without an end, too stupid and insipid to be set down at such length. And yet Rosa was a woman, as I have since learned to know, of no vulgar mould. She came and stayed with my wife and me here at Davos two years ago. She is still unmarried, still brilliant and beautiful, still perchance a little hard, forcible in character and intellectual precision. A girl of softer substance, as Katrina was, would not have resisted me; and Rosa was not unwilling to yield. But good sense and keen acumen kept the balance on her part; and I was nonplussed. I did not desire so passionately, love so unreservedly, as to throw myself upon her mercy with my heart and hand for life.

She has told me her own history, and it is not for me to reveal it. I know what prevented her from making a happy marriage with a young man whom she came to love. I know why she remained single; and I appreciate the kindness she has still preserved for me, her first impetuous wooer.

Of myself I may speak. When I was ill and weary in London, during the early summer of the next year, as I shall have to relate, I cast my thoughts out toward Mürren again, toward the beloved Alps, and sent my soul to Rosa. There is a little printed poem, in my published works, which describes that state of feeling.¹⁰⁴ But I will produce here some verses of deeper import, which were written when the thought of Rosa and the Alps (inseparable elements of my idyll) found simpler personal utterance. My love for her, whether it was the proper love of man for woman, or whether it might have become so under right conditions, was something real. Sense of relations and the intellectual light, glaringly cast upon romance, withered the only sexual love which I have felt for any being not of my own sex:

AFTER ONE YEAR¹⁰⁵

Were you, my dear, by me, I would lay
My hand upon your hand and say:
'I love you better day by day!

'Without you love I cannot live;
The world may chide, friends fret and grieve;
Your love they shall not make me leave.

'There was a time, not long ago,
I had not learned to love you so;
I sighed: —My love she shall know

'I will but see her and pass by;
She shall not even hear me cry,
Not mark the trouble of mine eye;

'But she shall haunt me like a gleam
Of sunlight on an alpine stream,
A glorious oft-recurring dream;

'Leading me up the long ravine,
Above the cataracts, between
Dark aisles of immemorial green—

'Oh, dearest, little then I knew
How love around my spirit drew
His toils, and linked my life to you!

'I could not leave you if I would;
I would not leave you if I could;
You are my own, my only good.

'What does it matter you are young,
A girl of no high lineage sprung,
Unlearned to speak my mother-tongue?

'True love in difference best endures;
Each fault with patient skill he cures;
Your life is mine, and mine is yours.

'So near we stand, so little space
Is left for doubt or fear to place
Division in our close embrace.

'Nay we will grow, soul unto soul,
 Into one fair and perfect whole,
 Moulded by mutual control.

'Be our life here beside thy lake,
 Or in my England, Love can make
 One home for both time shall not shake.'

These words if I had said last June,
 Among the hills, beneath the moon,
 Looking toward the towers of Thun;

And you had answered, —well I know
 How sweet had been that answer low;
 This thought it is that plagues me so—

Should we, dear, have been happier now?
 I think I see you, your calm brow,
 Dark eyes, soft hair, neck white as snow,

Standing beside the open door,
 When the day's summer heat is o'er,
 Hearing the restless torrent roar,

As once we heard it! while I lie
 Sick, weary, with a vacant eye
 And hungry heart that will not die,

In London, where all night there's bowed
 A fiery canopy of cloud
 Above the streets that bellow loud

Till dawn, with sin's perpetual motion
 Heaving and surging like an ocean
 To man's untamed uncurbed emotion:

Again, should we have happier been?
 I am almost wretched. You, my queen,
 I hope are peaceful, bright, serene.

Woe upon woe we might have brought
 By love unequal: yet this thought
 Plagues me—without thee I am naught.

June 1864

It had been settled between Green and myself that we should go straight to Munich. But I could not tear myself away by one wrench from Switzerland. There had been some vague hope of finding a photograph of Rosa at Wintherthur. Thither then I made the long-suffering Green shape his journey, dreaming dreams myself and writing sonnets.¹⁰⁶ Although I ransacked Wintherthur for photographers and photographs, of course I did not obtain what I wanted. Accordingly we travelled by Schaffhausen, Konstanz, Ulm, to Munich. No sooner were the mountains left behind than my physical maladies began to revive. The life of cities decidedly disagreed with me. Head and eyes grew worse. I could not sleep properly and suffered terribly from exhaustion on waking from painful or erotic dreams.

I studied a good deal and had, on this journey, the sense to perceive the essential tawdriness of modern Munich. This I expressed in an article which I sent to the *Saturday Review*.¹⁰⁷ By the way, it is worth mentioning that I frequently used to contribute to that periodical.

A.O. Rutson joined us at Munich. We travelled, all three together, by Reckenberg, Nuremberg, Bamberg, to Dresden, where we put up at Fraülein Kretschmar's Pension. Here I made the acquaintance of J.R. Mozley, Oscar Browning and Arthur Sidgwick.¹⁰⁸ Of the last I had heard a great deal from Rugby and Cambridge men—of his personal beauty, graceful manners and acute intelligence. I was not disappointed and formed a friendship which has lasted through my life, heightened for many years by a romantic admiration on my part. It was not quite wholesome for me at that crisis; for Arthur was enthusiastic about what I called 'Arcadia'; and this worked my feelings back again into the old channels.

Switzerland seemed far away during those weeks of concerts, picture seeing, metaphysics and emotions at Dresden. Then came the day for returning to England. Green and I went to the book fair at Leipzig. I remember sleeping in one room with him next to the bedroom of two drunken German Jews. They were discussing the Immortality of the Soul till far into the small hours, shouting from bed to bed. At last they reached a point at which the argument turned on 'my mother's soul and thy mother's soul.' Green could stand it no longer. He jumped up, knocked at the partition door, and humbly began to beg *die herren*¹⁰⁹ to consider their

sleepless neighbours. This caused an unexpected diversion. Both the Jews leaped out of bed and battered at the door, screaming the most obscene oaths, which contrasted ludicrously with their maudlin metaphysics and their mothers' souls. Luckily, the bolts of the door held fast; and after cooling their blood, the Jews grumblingly retired to bed again and slumber.

I travelled alone from Leipzig to Cologne in the same carriage with Goschen (now Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Salisbury's Government),¹¹⁰ whom I had known at Oxford. He was reading a new book, Renan's *Vie de Jésus*.¹¹¹

Arthur Sidgwick joined me at Cologne, and we went home together. I was received full Fellow at Magdalen, and spent a little time at Clifton with my father. Then, my head and eyes making any other occupation impossible, I set off again to travel. My father was so uneasy about my health that he made me take a courier as far as Genoa, where I met Rutson. Then I dismissed the man, who was an intolerable nuisance.

Rutson and I drove along the Riviera di Levante to Pisa, and thence to Florence, where we stayed until about the tenth of December...then travelled, mostly driving, through Siena, and Orvieto, Chiusi, Viterbo, and the Ciminian hills to Rome. Rutson was extremely kind, but plaguily argumentative; and I was too chronically fatigued to stand the strain of his restless aimless intellectuality. At Rome he informed me that he was in love with my sister Charlotte; but he wrapped up his emotion in so many qualifying clauses, hypotheses, and conditions of all kinds, that I did not much believe in its intensity. All my friends were falling in love with Charlotte. A.B. Webb (afterwards a Colonial Bishop) did.¹¹² H.G. Dakyns (of whom I shall have much to say) did.¹¹³ And Green, though he spoke nothing for some years, was already thinking of her as the only woman he could wish to marry.

We reached Rome on the 17th of December. Rutson left for England; and W.R.W. Stephens came to stay with me. We took lodgings at the very top of a house in the Corso, extremely cold but healthy. I was glad to get Stephens in exchange for Rutson:

Stephens can sympathize, but does not question. Without Rutson's information and his mental activity, he has far more real sensibility to things and juster perceptions. Now I hope I shall not be tormented with religious doubts and feverish unanswerable questions about the groundwork of existence. Now I may enjoy without reasoning, see what I will, and speak without proving what I have to say by arguments.

This passage sounds very ungrateful toward Rutson, who really loved me, and has been the soul of kindness. But I valued his friendship deep in my heart, as will be evident hereafter. His peculiar temperament rubbed like sand-paper on my wounded nerves.

Stephens and I stayed at Rome until the 27th of January, seeing few people except George Miller, Richard Congreve, Dr Bridges, and the sculptor Story.¹¹⁴ Then we moved down to Naples and Sorrento. February 11th, back to Rome. February 14th, by post to Narni, Todi, Perugia, and Assisi. February 15th, by Città della Pieve and Chiusi to Leghorn.¹¹⁵ Home by Genoa, Marseilles, and Paris.

I have a diary of this Italian journey; but the best part of my impressions was conveyed in a long series of letters to my father and sister. He wished to arrange and publish them. But the plan, wisely I think, fell through; and when I found them, after his death, I burned the whole bundle. Being unable to use my eyes for study, I read very little and learned no Italian. This was disadvantageous; and I shall remark, in the chapter on my 'Literary Development', upon the loss I suffered through ill health during the years which followed my degree at Oxford. On the other hand, I was able to walk as much as I liked, and could see everything which did not involve mental strain. Accordingly, with indefatigable curiosity, I drank in buildings, statues, pictures, nature—the whole of the wonderful Italian past presented in its monuments and landscape. I learned a great deal undoubtedly, which proved of use to me in after years. And the life I led was simple, reserved, free from emotional disturbances, pure as that of an anchorite.¹¹⁶

How I dragged my illness and my ennui through that wonderful world appears from some stanzas written at Sorrento on 5th February. They are printed in *New and Old* under the title 'Looking Back'.¹¹⁷ [It is noticeable, perhaps, that this poem, undoubtedly the pure spontaneous utterance of a prevalent mood, dwells upon Clifton and Willie, wholly omitting any mention of the Alps and Rosa.]¹¹⁸

One of the most sublime and psychologically pregnant passages in the great Lucretian epic is the description of Ennui:¹¹⁹

ut nunc plerumque videmus
quid sibi quisque velit, nescire, et quaerere semper
commutare locum, quasi onus deponere possit ...
hoc se quisque modo fugit, (at quem scilicet, ut fit,
effugere haud potis est, ingratiis haeret) et odit
propterea, morbi quia causam non tenet aeger.¹²⁰

Lucretius prescribes the study of the laws of nature as a cure for this disease of the soul. ‘Live in the τὰ αἰδία,¹²¹ the eternal thoughts and things’ he tells us. And in some way or other, this is the right, the only way, to escape.

I was deeply wounded in the heart and moral nature, deeply wounded in brain and nerves; and yet I was so young. On the 5th of February 1864, I reckoned just twenty-three years and four months. And like Alfred de Musset, in his ‘Nuit de Décembre’,¹²² I could speak of my wanderings thus:

Partout où, sous ces vastes cieux,
J’ai lassé mon cœur et mes yeux,
Saignant d’une éternelle plaie;
Partout où le boiteux Ennui,
Traînant ma fatigue après lui,
M’a promené sur une claie.¹²³

The physical illness—that obscure failure of nerve force, which probably caused a sub-acute and chronic congestion of small blood vessels in the brain, the eyes, the stomach perhaps, and other organs—was the first source of this Ennui. But there was another and deeper source behind it, and of which in fact it was but the corporeal symptom. I had not recovered from the long anxiety caused by Vaughan’s affair, from the blow of Shorting’s treacherous attack, from the dumb effort to warp and twist aright my innate and aberrant passions.¹²⁴ Then exercise, head work, superfluous agitation concerning religion and metaphysics—the necessary labour of an ambitious lad at college, and the unwholesome malady of thought engendered by a period of *Sturm und Drang*¹²⁵ in England,—depressed vitality, and blent the problems of theology with ethical and personal difficulties.

Such, I think, were the constituent factors of my Ennui. It grew daily more and more oppressive. As the clouds had rolled away in the congenial atmosphere of Mürren, so now in the great cities of Italy they gathered again. I returned to England weaker than I had left it.

At Clifton in the early spring I saw much of Henry Graham Dakyns. He had come to be an assistant master at the recently established college. He was a Rugby-Cambridge man, the friend of Arthur Sidgwick whom I knew, and of Henry Sidgwick,¹²⁶ whom I was destined to know. All these names will recur frequently in my Memoirs. Of Graham, I need only say

here that his perfervid temper of emotion, his unselfishness, his capacity for idealizing things and people, the shrewdness of his intellectual sense, and the humour of his utterance (style almost of Jean Paul Richter),¹²⁷ made their immediate impression on me. In philosophy he inclined to Comtism, chiefly because of its altruistic theories. He was physically robust, athletic at football, courageous and spirited, but withal very nervously excitable and irritable. Gentle exceedingly and sweet in converse—*ποθεινὸς τοῖς φίλοις*.¹²⁸ Masculine to the backbone.

NOTES

1. Following ‘enter that’, deletes ‘noble’ (MS 218).
2. Members ‘on the foundation’ receive some form of support or provision under the terms of college statutes; for example, the costs of clothing, accommodation or subsistence.
3. Albert Sidney Chavasse (1840–1930) went up to Balliol College, Oxford, in 1858. In 1864 he was elected a Fellow of University College, Oxford.
James McCall Marshall (1838–1926) entered Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1857. In 1863 he was elected a Fellow of Brasenose, the first appointed under the new terms of the Oxford University Act 1854 (none being elected between 1856 and 1862)—see note 14. Marshall would later become an assistant master at Clifton College (1865–69).
4. Walter Thomas Goolden (1849–1901) was the son of a London doctor. He entered Magdalen College, Oxford, as a chorister in 1858, and would later become a student at Merton College. He continued to sing in Magdalen’s choir during his studies in 1868–70.
‘Let the bright Seraphim’ is an aria from *Samson* (1743), an oratorio by George Frideric Handel.
5. Trans.: How lovely are the temples of Magdalen! Never have I desired anything so much. (Translation by Ian Storey in Phyllis Grosskurth’s edition.) An allusion to Psalm 84, ‘How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!’
6. Several Magdalen Fellows were dismissed or driven out in 1687–88 following their opposition to Roman Catholic candidates for President (James II having enforced the appointment of Samuel Park in 1687, and Bonaventure Giffard in 1688). The Fellows

were reinstated shortly before James II's abdication, and this event is celebrated annually on 25 October.

7. Trans.: And to him his own duty.
8. John Walker Knight (1827–1909) was a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, between 1849 and 1866. He would also serve as Librarian (1862–65), Vice President (1862–63), and Dean of Arts (1864–65).
9. Frederic Bulley (1810–85) was President of Magdalen College, Oxford, between 1855 and 1885. He was elected at a time of upheaval following the passing of the Oxford University Act 1854 and he was resistant to many of its reforms—see note 14.
10. Richard Congreve (1818–99), positivist philosopher and disciple of Auguste Comte. He was elected a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, in 1844 but resigned this position in 1854 (before his first acquaintance with Symonds).
11. William Henry Fremantle (1831–1913) was elected a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, in 1855. Following a protracted set of proceedings, Fremantle won a complaint against the college in 1864 on the grounds of its failure to implement open competition in Fellowship elections as required under the new statutes—see note 14. He was appointed Dean of Ripon in 1895.
George Robert Charles Herbert, 13th Earl of Pembroke (1850–95), succeeded his uncle to the title in 1862 when he was just eleven years old (not fifteen, as Symonds has him).
12. Claude Delaval Cobham (1842–1915) went up to University College, Oxford, in 1861. He would later become Commissioner of the District of Larnaca, Cyprus (1879–1907). See also Chapter 12.
13. Isaiah 66. 13 and II Corinthians 1. 3–4. These verses are listed under the entry for 20 November in *Daily Food for Christians; Being A Promise, And Another Scriptural Portion, For Every Day In The Year*—see Chapter 1, note 3.
14. In 1850 a Royal Commission was established to review governance procedures and practices at the University of Oxford. The resulting Oxford University Act was passed in 1854. This legislation introduced several measures—such as open Fellowships—designed to limit the autonomous powers and privileges of individual colleges.

15. George Augustus Simcox (1841–1905) was elected a Fellow of Queen’s College, Oxford, in 1863. He was a classicist and poet.
16. Three Oxford Fellowships were available in the autumn of 1862. Following Benjamin Jowett’s advice, Symonds determined to seek election to each in turn. He failed in his first bid at Queen’s College in October, but succeeded in his second bid at Magdalen. As such, he did not stand for election at Balliol. See Brown, I, p. 263.
17. John Fisher (1809–96) was elected a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1836. He was appointed Bursar in 1853 and resided at the college until his death.
18. Shorting lost his scholarship at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in February 1862. He had been courting the attention of Harry Goodman, a young chorister at nearby Christ Church College, writing him letters and sending gifts. Following the intervention of Goodman’s tutor, action was taken against Shorting.
19. ‘Hesperus and Hymenæus. Or, The Shepherd and the Star’ was published in *New and Old: A Volume of Verse* (1880). This poem also appears in the privately printed pamphlet, ‘Tales of Ancient Greece. No. 2’.
 In Greek mythology, Hesperus (or Hesper) was the evening star, while Hymenæus (or Hymen) was the god of marriage. Hymenæus was supposed to oversee all (good-fortuned) weddings, and he is often depicted wearing a garland of flowers. In Symonds’s poem, Hymenæus is the name of a shepherd ‘crowned with roses’; he climbs a mountain to be united with Hesperus in ‘mutual reverence and equal love.’
20. The Chancellor’s English Essay Prize was founded in 1768. It is awarded to the best essay written in English responding to a set theme or topic.
21. Bowood Park in Calne, Wiltshire, is the country seat of the Marquesses of Lansdowne.
22. Robert Lowe, 1st Viscount Sherbrooke (1811–92), was elected M.P. for Calne, Wiltshire, in 1859. He would later become Chancellor of the Exchequer (1868–73) and Home Secretary (1873–74).

John Rutherford Alcock (1809–97) was in England on leave between 1862 and 1864. Having previously served as Consul at Fuzhou, China, he was appointed the first Consul-General in

Japan in 1858. He would later become Minister-Plenipotentiary at Beijing, China.

Lucy Alcock, née Windsor (d. 1899), widow of John Lowder, a former Anglican Chaplain at Shanghai. Alcock was a keen horticulturalist and correspondent of Joseph Dalton Hooker at Kew Gardens. She became John Rutherford Alcock's second wife in 1862.

23. Presumably Edward Herbert Bunbury, 9th Baronet (1811–95). At the time of Symonds's visit to Bowood, Bunbury had not yet succeeded his brother, Charles James Fox Bunbury, to the baronetcy. He served as M.P. for Bury St Edmunds between 1847 and 1852, and is best known for his *History of Ancient Geography among the Greeks and Romans* (1879).
24. Deletes 'nightmare', substitutes 'dream' (MS 226).
25. Symonds tries 'beaten' and 'tortured' (both marked for deletion) before settling on 'bruised' (MS 226).
26. Deletes 'malaise', substitutes 'malady' (MS 227).
27. Popular superstitions hold that a scorpion will kill itself with its own sting if trapped within a circle of fire. Symonds's use of this image for 'shame and indignation' recalls its earlier use by Byron as a simile for guilt within *The Giaour* (1813): 'The Mind, that broods o'er guilty woes, | Is like the Scorpion girt by fire.'
28. Deletes 'confused with', substitutes 'benumbed by' (MS 227).
29. Next to this paragraph, upside-down on the verso side of the previous page, Symonds writes the following aborted passage:

Autobiographies written with a purpose are likely to want atmosphere. A man when he sits down to give an account of his own life from the point of view of art or of passion, or of a particular action, is apt to make it appear as though he were nothing but an artist, nothing but a lover, or that the action he seeks to explain were the principal event in his existence.

In order to avoid this distortion of the truth, it is needful for me (MS 266^v)

Symonds returns to the problem of '[a]utobiographies written with a purpose' in Chapter 16.

30. Following 'of style', deletes 'in language' (MS 228).
31. Symonds recited his winning essay, 'The Renaissance', in *The Theatre*, Oxford, on 17 June 1863.

32. Following 'to my', deletes 'dear' (MS 228).
33. Louis George Mylne (1843–1921) entered Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1862. He would serve as Bishop of Bombay (now Mumbai) between 1876 and 1897.
34. Josephine Elizabeth Butler (1828–1906), social campaigner and advocate for women's rights. During her early acquaintance with Symonds she lived at Cheltenham where her husband was Vice Principal of Cheltenham College.
35. Deletes 'twin force', substitutes 'dubious aspects' (MS 229).
36. Deletes 'divine', substitutes 'theological' (MS 229).
37. Deletes 'better', substitutes 'fitter' (MS 230).
38. Following 'souls of', deletes 'her' (MS 230).
39. Deletes 'I', substitutes 'some people' (MS 230).
40. Deletes 'philanthropic measure of government', substitutes 'measure beneficial to the health and physical well-being of society' (MS 230).
41. The Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869 were intended to curb the spread of venereal disease. They empowered local authorities to arrest women suspected of prostitution and to subject them to medical examination. This legislation initially covered ports and garrison towns, but there were calls to extend its jurisdiction. Virulent campaigns were fought on both sides, and in 1869 Josephine Butler was a founding member of the Ladies National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. The Acts were repealed in 1886.
42. Johanna Maria Lind-Goldschmidt, known as Jenny Lind (1820–87), was a famous opera singer. She was a friend of Symonds's father and would sometimes stay at Clifton Hill House and perform in the drawing-room. Lind first found fame in 1838 following her role as Agathe in *Der Freischütz* (1821) by Carl Maria von Weber. In 1852 she married her accompanist, Otto Goldschmidt.
43. Deletes 'She showed herself to my mind as', substitutes 'I went to her for counsel and converse as though to' (MS 230).
44. Diotima is a figure from Plato's *Symposium*—see Chapter 5, note 52. She is a priestess who instructs Socrates in his youth.

In Roman mythology, Egeria was a nymph associated with wise counsel. She is said to have guided the rule of Numa Pompilius, second king of Rome.

45. Deletes 'moulded', substitutes 'affected' (MS 230).
46. Deletes 'evil', substitutes 'congenital' (MS 230).
47. Deletes 'nature', substitutes 'sexual instinct' (MS 230).
48. Deletes 'all the tender sympathies which physical communion', substitutes 'the manifold sympathies, half brutal and half tender, which physical congress' (MS 231).
49. Deletes 'adoration', substitutes 'devotion' (MS 231).
50. Letitia Morrison Malthus (c.1845–99) was born at Dartmouth, Devon. By the early 1860s her family resided at 2 Bellevue (a row of terraced houses running parallel to the bottom of Clifton Hill House garden). Malthus's name occurs several times in Symonds's letters to his sister, Charlotte—see *Letters*, I, pp. 390, 393, 396.
51. Deletes 'love', substitutes 'emotion' (MS 232).
52. Symonds originally composed this passage as an address to Malthus, either copying from a primary source (such as a diary or letter) or using his *Memoirs* to rehearse an apology. Before revision, the passage reads:

Poor pale shadow of a coaxed-up love! The impulse to love thee Letitia, in my heart, was honest enough; but it was also selfish and untrue. I hope that I caused thee no pain. I think I must have disappointed thy parents. But however I occupied thy pure maiden fancies with my conversation and persistent dogging of thy paths, I am blameless of having cast a single spark of a real man's passion into thy heart. (MS 232)

53. Following 'related this', deletes 'insignificant' (MS 232).
54. Deletes 'natural', substitutes 'native' (MS 232).
55. Deletes 'spark of passion', substitutes 'trace of true sexual emotion' (MS 232).
56. Material in parentheses and marked for deletion (MS 233). Brown does not reproduce this material, omitting Symonds's account of Letitia Malthus in its entirety.

Above this material, written across the header of the page, is a note in Brown's hand. It has been erased but remains legible: 'New chap. The search for health. Marriage.' Brown begins his chapter 'Manhood. Fellowship to Marriage' (I, pp. 275–313) with the paragraph beginning 'My heath continuing miserable' (MS 233).

57. Trans.: Cause me to be injured by blows, to be intoxicated by this cross, on account of the love of the son. From the hymn *Stabat Mater* (c. 13th century).
58. Trans.: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the Sanctus, said or sung as part of the Eucharistic prayer.
59. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), German Romantic writer. He was the author of many works, encompassing novels, poetry, drama, travel writing and autobiography, philosophy and science. He is best known for *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795–96), and his play *Faust* (1808 and 1832).
60. Symonds transcribes the poem, 'At Engelberg', published in *Many Moods: A Volume of Verse* (1878). This poem also appears in the privately printed pamphlet, 'Old and New. Second Series'.
61. Partially legible marginal note: 'This letter to [?] outer mood' (MS 236). This corresponds to Brown's commentary in the biography. After the poem Brown interpolates a letter written by Symonds to his sister, Charlotte; he offers the following preface: '[And this letter to his sister describes his outer mood.]' See Brown, I, p. 279.
62. Trans.: 'Above all summits | There is peace.' From the second constituent poem of Goethe's 'Wandrer's Nachtlid' (1780). Goethe is believed to have composed this poem by writing it upon the wall of a wooden cabin on the Kickelhahn mountain.
63. In Greek mythology, Lethe is the river of forgetfulness that runs through the underworld.
64. From *Elijah* (1846), an oratorio by Felix Mendelssohn.
65. Georg Freidrich von Bunsen (1824–96) was the son of Christian Karl Josias von Bunsen, a German diplomat, and was himself a politician. In 1854 he married Emma Birkbeck.
66. Marianne ('Pop') North (1830–90) was an artist and traveller who specialised in botanical painting. She arranged for the building of a gallery at Kew Gardens to display her work. (The Marianne North Gallery opened to the public in 1882.)
Janet Catherine North (1837–1913) would marry John Addington Symonds in 1864 (see Chapter 9). Following her sister's death in 1890, she edited and published *Recollections of a Happy Life, being the Autobiography of Marianne North* (1892)

- and *Some Further Recollections of a Happy Life, selected from the Journals of Marianne North* (1893).
67. Partially legible marginal note: '[?]' meeting [?] letter [?] sister' (MS 240). This corresponds to Brown's interpolation of a letter written by Symonds to his sister, Charlotte, describing Rosa Engel. See Brown, I pp. 284–6.
 68. Passage marked for deletion (MS 240). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from 'insight into character' (MS 240) to 'Green and I next day' (MS 243). See Brown, I, pp. 284, 286. Brown chooses to introduce the figure of Rosa Engel through a letter written by Symonds to his sister, Charlotte, in preference to the diary—see note 67, and Brown, I, pp. 284–6. This episode becomes 'the idyll of R__ E__' (Brown, I, p. 292), and Rosa remains anonymous throughout.
 69. This is bad German: Symonds likely intends 'abstammung' (trans.: descent).
 70. Trans.: ashen blond; light brown.
 71. Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860) was the author of several works on Christian theology and ecclesiastical history. His five volume *Kirchengeschichte* was published between 1853 and 1863.
 72. Goethe first collected poems under the rubric 'Gott und Welt' in *Gott, Gemüt und Welt* (1815). This grouping was subsequently revised and expanded. Symonds published a translation of the Proemium in *The Spectator* (24 September 1870).
 73. Passage marked for deletion (MS 244). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from 'avoiding me on purpose' (MS 244) to 'Green came yesterday' (MS 246). See Brown, I, p. 288.
 74. Trans.: I love, that is enough for me:
 It shows itself quietly:
 Even when I do not speak a word,
 Should my hand, my eye be silent?
 The words, love, that you speak,
 Are sighs, handshakes, kisses;
 Do we need questions or answers
 When we greet one another breast to breast?
 You are the king of the whole world,
 Know no foreign shore:

For where one loves a beautiful girl
There is your fatherland.

75. In her memoir, *Out of the Past* (1925), Symonds's daughter, Madge, records a visit made by Rosa Engel to the family home at Davos, Switzerland.
76. Following 'dissolve in tears', deletes 'In the afternoon we sat upon the rocks which give deep shrill awful glimpses of the valley, and are so good to rest on in the summer heat' (MS 246).
77. Trans.: Shadows descend from the mountains. Possible allusion to Virgil's *Eclogues* 1 (l. 83).
78. Passage marked for deletion (MS 246). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from 'amber, orange, rose' (MS 246) to 'So the diary goes on' (MS 248). See Brown, I, p. 289.
79. Possible allusion to *Madame Bovary* (1856) by Gustave Flaubert. The first English translation by Eleanor Marx Aveling was published in 1886, and Symonds may have Chapter 9 (Part 1) in mind. Here the narrator accuses Emma Bovary of losing touch with the reality of life in Paris by indulging in fantasies.
80. Three tragic female figures: the eponymous heroine of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (c.1596); Gretchen, a character appearing in Goethe's *Faust* (1808 and 1832); and Verginia, or Virginia, who was killed by her father to protect her from abduction and rape (Livy's *History of Rome*, Book 3).
81. Trans.: 'Little rose, little rose, little red rose, | Little rose on the heath.' The refrain in 'Heidenröslein' (1799), a poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.
82. Passage marked for deletion (MS 248). Brown does not reproduce this material—see note 78.
83. Symonds transcribes the first constituent poem of 'At Mürren', a pair of sonnets included in the privately printed pamphlet 'Crocuses And Soldanellas'.
84. A cowardly and often drunken character from *Twelfth Night* (1601) by William Shakespeare.
85. Trans.: I am so young, I have never taken a ring from a gentleman.
86. Marginal note: 'These sentences I worked up two days afterwards into the sonnet 'Je suis trop jeune', published in *Vagabunduli*

- Libellus*, p. 151' (MS 250). This sonnet was also included in the privately printed pamphlet, 'Studies in Terza Rima, Etc'.
87. Following 'romantic', deletes 'aesthetic' (MS 251).
 88. 'Fits of frenzy or lunacy; mad freaks or tantrums.' (*OED*)
 89. Following 'involved in', deletes 'vague' (MS 252).
 90. Trans.: Oh, this will be lovely!
 91. Trans.: plunge; from the verb, *dégringoler*, meaning falling down.
 92. Trans.: fellows, chaps.
 93. An allusion to *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795–96) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.
 94. Giacomo Casanova (1725–98), Venetian traveller and writer best known for his posthumous autobiography, *Histoire De Ma Vie* (1822–29). Though only available in abridged and censored editions until the mid-twentieth century, this work transformed Casanova's name into a byword for seduction.
 95. Deletes 'drink', substitutes 'enjoy' (MS 254).
 96. Passage marked for deletion (MS 254). The name 'Dr William Budd' has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original. Brown does not reproduce this material; he recounts the story of the Swiss christening through a letter written by Symonds to his sister, Charlotte, in preference to the diary. See Brown, I, pp. 289–92.
 William Budd (1811–80) was a physician at the Bristol Royal Infirmary and an advocate of sanitary reform. He published studies of the spread and prevention of disease, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1871.
 97. Herbert Schueller and Robert Peters identify this 'traveling companion' as John May, a 'Bristol shoe and boot manufacturer.' See *Letters*, p. 419n.
 98. A small carriage carried by two people. (NB: the horse is surprising in this context.)
 99. Mephistophiles is a demon associated with the legend of Johann Georg Faust. He is a central character in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1594) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust* (1808 and 1832).
 100. Trans.: self-esteem or self-worth. This term is particularly associated with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Second Discourse (*Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men*, 1755), where it is defined as a form of self-love dependent upon the opinion of

others (in contrast to *amour de soi*, self-love dependent upon selfishness).

101. Deletes 'It', substitutes 'But the poem' (MS 256).
102. Trans.: comfortable, homely, jovial.
103. Trans.: mean or naughty man.
104. Marginal note: "Sehnsucht", *Many Moods*, p. 42' (MS 258).
105. The printed text of 'After One Year' is pasted into the manuscript and annotated by hand (MS 259): punctuation is altered, a typographical error is corrected, and the reading order of stanzas is indicated. The poem is taken from Symonds's privately printed *Miscellanies* (1885).
106. Marginal note: 'Among them "In Absence", printed in *Vagabunduli Libellus*, p. 125' (MS 260). Symonds misattributes this sonnet sequence: the 'In Absence' cluster was published in *New and Old: A Volume of Verse* (1880). They were also included in the privately printed pamphlet, 'Crocuses and Soldanellas'.
107. Marginal note: 'It appeared Oct. 24, 1863' (MS 260). Symonds is referring to his essay, 'Modern German Art at Munich'.
108. John Rickards Mozley (1840–1931) was a mathematician and Fellow of King's College, Cambridge (1861–69). He would serve as assistant master at Clifton College in 1864–65, and was later appointed Professor of Pure Mathematics at Owen's College, Manchester (1865–85).
 Oscar Browning (1837–1923) was a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and assistant master at Eton College between 1860 and 1875. He wrote several works on education and helped to establish the Cambridge University Day Training College with Henry Sidgwick.
 Arthur Sidgwick (1840–1920) studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was later elected a Fellow (1864–69). He served as assistant master at Rugby School between 1864 and 1879, and would later collaborate with his sister-in-law, Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick, on a biography of his brother, *Henry Sidgwick: A Memoir* (1906).
109. Trans.: the gentlemen.
110. George Joachim Goschen, 1st Viscount Goschen (1831–1907), studied at Oriel College, Oxford. He served as Director at the Bank of England (1858–65) and was elected M.P. for the City of

London in 1863. Goschen later accepted the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer in January 1887.

111. *Vie de Jésus* (1863) by Ernest Renan. Renan's controversial yet popular account of the historical Jesus was translated into English by Charles Edwin Willbour in 1863.
112. Allan Becher Webb (1839–1907) was elected a Fellow of University College, Oxford, in 1863. He would enter the church, becoming Bishop of Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State, South Africa, in 1870, and Bishop of Grahamstown in 1883. Webb left South Africa in 1898 and was appointed Dean of Salisbury in 1901.
113. Henry Graham Dakyns (1845–1911) studied at Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1860–61 he was tutor to the sons of Alfred Tennyson, and he served as assistant master at Clifton College between 1862 and 1889.
114. George Miller (1833–1909) studied at Exeter College, Oxford. He would serve as Examiner in the Education Office (1865–84), later becoming Assistant Secretary in 1884.

Robert Bridges (1844–1930) studied at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, before pursuing a first career in medicine. He trained at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, where he later served as a physician. In the 1880s Bridges retired from medicine on account of his health and began to pursue a second career in literature. He was a poet and while at Oxford had been a close friend of Gerard Manley Hopkins, whose work he edited and prepared for posthumous publication. Symonds would not live to see the culmination of his friend's second career: the Poet Laureateship in 1913.

William Whetmore Story (1819–95) was an American sculptor and writer who lived in Rome from the early 1850s. Symonds's letters record conversations with Story regarding the relationship between sculpture and music, and he gifted Story a copy of his father's 'Principles of Beauty' (1856). See *Letters*, I, pp. 436–8.

115. English name for the city of Livorno.
116. Partially legible marginal note: 'The following passage from the Diary shows how he [?] Castellamare' (MS 263). This corresponds to Brown's commentary in the biography: 'The following passage from the Diary shows how Symonds felt at Castellamare'

- (I, p. 301). He then interpolates a diary entry from 1 February 1864 (I, pp. 301–3).
117. This poem also appears under the title ‘At Sorrento’ in the privately printed pamphlet, ‘Crocuses and Soldanellas’.
118. Material in parentheses and marked for deletion (MS 263). The name ‘Willie’ has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original. Brown, however, reproduces the majority of this passage but omits all mention of Willie and Rosa. See Brown, I, p. 304.
119. Marginal note: ‘*De Rerum Natura*. iii. 1063–1075’ (MS 264). Symonds misattributes these lines from Lucretius: they are, in fact, lines 1057–9 and 1068–70 in Book 3.
120. Trans.: So that now we commonly see
 Everyone fails to understand what he wants for himself, and
 always seeks
 To change his place, as if he could put down his burden ...
 Everyone in this way flees from himself, (and that which indeed,
 as it may be,
 He is not able to flee, clings even more to him) and he hates
 himself
 On that account, because the ill man doesn’t know the cause of
 the illness.
121. Trans.: eternal.
122. Alfred de Musset (1810–57) was a French writer and poet. His relationship with George Sand is fictionalised in the autobiographical novel, *La Confession d’un Enfant du Siècle* (1836). His poem ‘Nuit de Décembre’ is taken from a sequence known as *Les Nuits* (1835–37).
123. Trans.: Wherever, under this vast sky,
 I tired my heart and my eyes,
 Bleeding from an eternal wound;
 Wherever the limping Boredom
 Dragging my weariness behind him,
 Walked me around on a wire-rack.
124. The names ‘Vaughan’ and ‘Shorting’ have been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 265). Brown omits all mention of Vaughan, but does reproduce Symonds’s allusion to ‘the long anxiety caused by __’s treacherous attack’ (I, p. 305). Brown offers a brief account of

the Shorting affair, referring to ‘[a] quondam friend [who] sought, by means of garbled letters, to damage Symonds’s character at Magdalen’ (I, p. 270).

125. Trans.: storm and stress. This phrase is often used to describe the early years of German Romanticism, c.1770–82.
126. Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900) studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was later elected a Fellow (1859–69). He and his brother, Arthur, resigned their Fellowships in 1869 as an act of opposition to the religious tests required to hold positions within the university. He played a founding role in the establishment of Newnham College, Cambridge, in 1871, and is best known for *The Methods of Ethics* (1874).
127. Jean Paul Richter, or Jean Paul (1763–1825), was a German novelist. He was an influence on Thomas Carlyle, whose *Sartor Resartus* (1833–34) draws upon Richter’s humorous and digressive style.
128. Trans.: longed for by his friends. Phyllis Grosskurth identifies this allusion to Aristophanes’ *Frogs* 84, where the phrase is used to refer to Agathon, the poet.

Chapter 9: Life in London. Marriage. First Attack of Lung Disease

Rutson rented the second floor of a furnished house, 7 Half Moon Street, Piccadilly.¹ The first floor was vacant, and I enjoyed it for the year at, I think, one hundred guineas, or a trifle over. Thither I went to live in April, to eat dinners at Lincoln's Inn,² and to make a pretence of studying law. My club was the Union, in Trafalgar Square,³ where, at that time, we had a very good kitchen, an excellent cellar of wine, and a society of country squires and city men. This club suited my tastes down to the ground; and when, by chance, I dined by invitation at a literary or academical club, I thanked my stars that I did not belong to one. It has always been my whim to keep my own⁴ affairs of the spirit as far as possible apart from the commerce of daily life: —to pursue literature as a private pastime: —to seek society and friendship among folk of different sorts, and while readily fraternizing with scholars and students, to avoid the boredom and bad taste and vitiated mental atmosphere of cliques, artistic circles, coteries. This, I know, has stamped my work with amateurishness. But I am well content to have achieved imperfect things in literature, and to have obtained a partial hearing from the public; because, through doing so, I have preserved intact my personal elasticity and freedom, my disengagement from professional and pecuniary

considerations, my absolute incapacity for posing as a rival or competitor with any man, my privilege of being little talked about in circles of the craft of authors, {my contemptuous indifference to criticism,} and my commanding sense of the superiority of life to culture. Life was what I always wanted; and of life I never had enough. Literature might go to the dogs, for me. As Sir Thomas Browne said of the terrestrial globe, I ‘turned it round for my recreation.’⁵ I liked it for its own sake; I loved it as my daily solace. But life stretched beyond, and life was what no art could seize, except (as Whitman says) ‘by indirections.’⁶

Thus, in the early summer of 1864, I found myself set up in London. There was much, as I have hinted, in the situation favourable to my temperament. But the climactic and social conditions were adverse. My nervous malady, felt mostly in the brain and eyes, but also⁷ expressed by a terrible disturbance of the reproductive organs, developed with painful rapidity. I sat for hours with closed eyes listening to hired readers. I put myself under Bowman,⁸ and paid him a guinea a day for dropping deleterious caustic under my nether eyelids. I went to Acton,⁹ and allowed him to cauterize me through the urethra. I did everything, in short, except what nature prompted. Nature bade me indulge my sexual instincts; but these were so divided that I shrank alike from the brothel and the soldier. Nature whispered: go again to Switzerland. I cast longing eyes to Rosa and to Mürren, as the poems already indicated in a previous section show. I wrote for the *Saturday Review*: but now for the most part unsuccessfully; and for this reason, that I began to put myself into my articles, and these were, week by week, deleted by the editor. {To write originally, not in the tone and form prescribed for the weekly, was a violation of the rule of the game. This I soon felt, and desisted. Then} I set my thoughts about theology on paper in a commentary upon Goethe’s Proemium to ‘Gott und Welt’.¹⁰ I peered in purblind fashion at the minor Elizabethan Dramatists. I read and thought and wrote at random in the club. I rode in the Park, rowed on the Serpentine, and went sculling up the river with a waterman of Surbiton. {Characteristically enough, I began to fall in love with this young fellow.} And all this while, when it was possible, I accepted the invitations to dinner-parties and balls which my father’s numerous relations with good society amply afforded me. The opera houses, and the concerts at St James’s Hall, were also a resource. With closed eyes I sat listening to the divine melodies of Mozart, the symphonies of Beethoven, to Gounod, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi;¹¹ to Rubinstein’s impassioned piano-

forte playing, and Piatti's violoncello, Joachim's violin;¹² to the voices of Trebelli and Titiens, of Giuglini, and Patti, and Pauline Lucca.¹³ Dear Mme Goldschmidt was very kind to me, when I went down on Saturdays to stay with her at Wimbledon; and Mrs Clough, at Combe Hurst;¹⁴ and my cousin, Sir Thomas Neville Abdy, at Harrow.¹⁵

The turbid chemical amalgam of my life had reached a point at which some sort of crystallization was inevitable. It only wanted a wire of resistance and support to be thrust into it. And this was speedily found.

My father, dissatisfied with Bowman and Acton, sent me to Sir Spencer Wells.¹⁶ That excellent surgeon, with sound common sense, gave me a simple remedy for my eyes—vinegar and water for a lotion, and the prospect of recovery through time and perseverance. For my constitution, he recommended cohabitation with a hired mistress, or, what was better, matrimony. He impressed upon me the theory that marriage ought not to be regarded as a matter of idealized passion, but as the sober meeting together of man and woman for¹⁷ mutual needs of sex, for fellow service, and loyal devotion to the duties of social and domestic life in common.

{This was a view in many ways distasteful to my nature both as man and artist. I felt that if I hired a mistress, or took a wife on calculation, I should be running counter to my deepest and most powerful instincts; shutting myself out from passion and ideal love, neither of which had been indulged, although my whole being panted for them. An older man, who had tried life, might do this safely, I reasoned. I, at the age of twenty-three, was far too young and too unformed for compromises. And I could not assume my good physician's plain practical standing-ground with regard to the relations of sex. Illicit connections with a woman were out of the question. If instinct had to be followed, I must have found its satisfaction in male friendship. But this was just what I had resolved to suppress and overcome. His argument, therefore, made a strong appeal to my reason, when I considered the possibility of a suitable marriage. It seemed to be the one exit from my difficulties; and I found myself supported by my father and Sir Edward Strachey, when I talked the matter over with them. The temptation became powerful, to try.}

Then, as by inspiration, the memory of Catherine North returned to me. She was connected with the best and happiest period of my past confused existence. To her I felt that I must turn. I was well aware what I was seeking from her, and what a poor self I had to offer. At least I could be frank and true with her. At least I might discover whether she would

accept me, as I was, and enter upon life with me according to my modest views of matrimony.

The plan¹⁸ once formed, I put it into execution with characteristic impetuosity and single-sightedness. I did not stop to think or hesitate. I felt myself led and directed. To idealize the situation was for me only too easy, and to concentrate my energies upon it was but obeying the impulse of my character.

I called at 3 Victoria Street, where Mr North lived. He and his daughters received me hospitably, not forgetful of Mürren. They asked me to dinner. I hunted up common friends, especially Miss Mary Ewart.¹⁹ All the social threads which connected me with the Norths, slender and distant, yet capable of being used, I put in requisition. And so I gradually made myself, during the later weeks of the London season, a house guest of the Norths. Catherine and I saw much of each other at operas and concerts. These were the places where we came to know each other best—and also in visits to her own house. The more I saw of her, the more I felt for certain that she was the woman whom I ought to marry—for my own sake. I did not foresee the complications of life in such a marriage. I deeply²⁰ felt my own unworthiness of her. But at the same time, I saw no reason why I should not present myself as fairly as I could. In social position and birth I was hardly her equal. I carried an ugly surname. But I was well enough off in property and expectations. And I knew that, although my health had placed me under disadvantages, I was a man above the average in acquirements and ability.

It seemed to me, during the course of these July days, that she was not indifferent to me. The Norths told me they were going to Pontresina. I asked her elder sister, Miss Marianne North, whether I might be allowed to follow them thither, letting it be known that I should come for Catherine's sake. The answer was neutral, but such that I felt justified in joining them if I thought proper.

I went to Clifton and told my father what my plans were. He approved. I went to Norwich, for some forgotten purpose, and stayed with a clergyman of our acquaintance.²¹ I must have been in a sexually electrical condition; for his young wife nearly led me into an adulterous *amour* with her. Had it not been for my constitutional repugnance for mere casual acts with women whom I did not love emotionally, there is no doubt that I should have possessed her. The force of passion was in me, and the will to yield in her. And if she had been a male, some act would have been performed. As it was, the erethism caused by her presence and voluptuous

incitements only disturbed my²² nervous system and repelled me with a disgust for her person. It is necessary to write this down; for it paints, better than any analysis, the division at that time between sexual appetite in me (which was not natural and carnal, like Tom Jones's,²³ for a female), and emotional sympathies and aspirations leading me to seek a woman for my life comrade. For a long time previously, I had treated the purely sexual appetite (that which drew me fatally to the male) as a beast to be suppressed and curbed, and latterly to be down-trampled by the help of surgeons and their cautery of sexual organs.

I kept a diary—one of those self-conscious, self-analytical, self-descriptive records, to which I was addicted—concerning all the daily details in this courtship of Miss Catherine North. But a sense of respect for my wife made me destroy it, while I preserved others of like import, which did not affect her personally. This is the reason why I am giving only a summary of my main life drama. I shall be able to produce a history, from her own pen, of our romance. That document will do me more honour, if less hard justice, than my own report would do. For once, in these pages, I shall drop the hateful *I* and *me*, and let the reader see me, not as I saw or see myself, but as a far superior, happier and diviner being—a pure, beautiful and steadfast woman—saw me, when she deigned to love me.

Well: I set off alone, early in August, 1864, to overtake the Norths. I was going on the quest of Catherine. And I felt so uncertain of the issue that I carried with me a heap of books, chiefly Elizabethan Dramatists, to work at in some corner of the Alps, if my errand should prove vain. Paris, Basel, Zürich, Chur: I do not well remember how I did the journey. I only remember crossing the Lenzerheide and the Julier in the *banquette* of the *diligence*,²⁴ and feeling the aridity of Graubünden in painful contrast to what I had so fresh in memory of Mürren. With what different emotions I regard that journey now, known as the long road is in all its aspects of heat, dust and storm, of winter snow, of starlight and of daylight. I slept at Samedan, where I found Frank [Francis] Otter, and told him of my quest. He too was going to Pontresina; and I wanted to be alone with the Norths. On the morning of the 10th of August, I found myself at the Hotel Krone (then a very modest inn, which Lorenz Gredig, now the millionaire, and his wife and children worked with their own hands). Loitering in the entrance before lunch, I met Catherine; and our life together began. No words, like idyll, must be used about it. This was earnest business on my part, charged with misgivings, not of her, but of myself, full of serious and prayerful anticipations of the best. We walked out together with a party of friends to the

little lake upon the way to St Moritz. And every day, we walked together—Marianne, or Pop, as she was called, allowing it. There is a bridge above the stream at Pontresina; and this became our meeting-place; and here, one afternoon, I think, when snow was falling in thin flakes, I asked her to be my wife. Two days afterwards, we got permission from Mr and Mrs North to climb the Piz Languard together without a guide, our two selves alone. There we sat alone, undisturbed by tourists or by company, beneath the cloudless heavens, with all the alpine world outspread us—even to the distant Jungfrau, Mönch and Eiger, under whose snowy crags we met last year. And there we exchanged rings—I taking the one of lapis lazuli, inscribed with her initials J.C.N. which I carry on the little finger of my left hand now. That was a day of days. Few young people have been privileged to exchange vows, to plight troth, to solemnize their future life in common, upon such an eyrie. I will not anticipate the pure and perfect speech of Catherine, which will soon be heard, by any weaker words of mine.

*Surgit amari aliquid.*²⁵ All was so sweet and unexpected, so unbelievable by me in this great happiness, that some bitterness must needs arrive. The best would have been to have died there on the top of the Piz Languard—except that Catherine must have gone down alone and terrified. I had secured the great good of any man's life, a good too great for my imperfect nature, the love and troth of a woman gracious²⁶ in her womanhood. Was I fit for her? I doubted not my power to serve her, and support her, and to care for her in every circumstance. I loved her ardently, and felt the thrill of something wonderful and new intruding into my existence. But was it not too pure, too spiritual, too etherialized, this exquisite emotion? It would endure till death, I knew. But I missed something in the music—the coarse and hard vibrations of sex, those exquisite agonies of contact, by which the God in man subsumes into himself the beast and makes that god-like. These vibrations I had felt in dreams for male beings, and in intercourse with Willie. {Not discovering them now, some qualms came over me. Was my love perfect for her, such a holocaust of self as she had a right to expect? The doubt troubled me. But I} turned my thoughts to Dante and his Beatrice,²⁷ and told my heart it did not signify. Better was it to love as I felt capable of loving her. Nevertheless, a word, dropped in my ear just before we left Pontresina, troubled this security. My old friend Charles Knight,²⁸ the painter, happened to be there. He knew, as all the English people knew, of our engagement. Penetratively and reflectively he

said: 'The one thing in marriage is passion; without passion no man has the right to make a woman his wife.' Just the same words said a Davos peasant-lad to me last night, 'Die Beiden sollten lieben, heftig lieben.'²⁹ Sexual passion, at the commencement of nuptial love, is not demanded of a woman; but it is demanded of a man. And while I had everything else, and have always had everything else to give Catherine—if needful, I would die for her willingly—I could not so conquer the original bent of my instincts as to feel for her the brutal unmistakable appetite of physical desire.³⁰ It must be added that I doubt whether this appetite ever entered into her affection for me. Only to this extent has our union been imperfect. But all the difficulties of my subsequent life, and a large part of hers, have come from our not having originally started with a strong sexual attraction on either side.³¹

We passed the Bernina Pass together to Poschiavo; and there these casuistical questionings occupied my mind to such an extent that I wrote a self-analytical letter to Rutson. *Cacoethes scribendi!*³² I forget exactly what the letter contained; but the substance was my doubt about the coarser element of love in me for Catherine. Afterwards, this letter led to much unprofitable and disagreeable correspondence between him and me. Else it need not have been mentioned. I want in every detail of my inner life to be as exactly truthful as a mortal man can be.

Such clouds of thought were lightly puffed away. We crossed the Stelvio and went on our way to Venice. Thence to the Italian Lakes, and Turin. Homeward so to England. Mr North told me frequently upon this journey that Catherine had a terrible temper. I was not frightened, because I knew that I had moral deficiencies which would counterbalance her bad temper. Indeed I have often had to suffer from it, as she has had to suffer from my faults.³³ But age has mellowed her one defect, while it has developed all her noble virtues. Would to God that I could say the same of myself!

I think we were equally, and, on the whole, well matched. At any rate, for better and for worse, we were married at Hastings on the 10th of November, 1864. It was a brilliant wedding; for Mr North, as Member, was much beloved; and irrespective of the town, the whole countryside, including the Duke of Cleveland,³⁴ came to do us honour.

At this point Catherine herself shall speak:³⁵

CATHERINE'S ACCOUNT OF OUR ENGAGEMENT WRITTEN AT
CLIFTON A YEAR AFTER

Janet Catherine Symonds
Clifton Hill House August 1865

Just a year ago we were at Pontresina, and my new life was just beginning; now it seems very old, and as if I had been living in it all my life. So it is in a way, for these twelve months have contained all my life that was really worth living to me, and the time before, dim and distant now, contains little³⁶ that I look back to with regret. —The memory of those summer days in the Alps last year is very fresh to me now; before it fades I should like to put down a record of them as they rise up before me day by day, for no time in my life can ever have such thrilling memories. It is well to have such a beginning to one's life, to look back to in the grey commonplaces of everyday living, for nothing then was commonplace, and the feeling of the solemn Alps, woven in and out with all that is most dear to me, can never die out. It is a setting to one's love, such as few people can have had, and the two can never now be separated in my mind. It was in the last week of July that we left England, the prospect of the journey giving me little pleasure, for I had been schooling myself to believe that the feelings of the past weeks in London were all a dream, a foolish dream which for my own happiness ought to be rooted up. I knew that Johnnie was gone northwards, and that in all probability I should not see him again for months, during which time I should have plenty of leisure to teach myself that he did not care for me a bit, that all those meetings in London had been pure coincidences, and that it was my duty to myself and to those I lived with, to drive the folly out of my head; what right had I to care for him? —a mere stranger of whom I knew nothing really, younger than myself, that I felt he was; with a high ideal of womanhood, to which I knew I could not attain; dreamy and artistic, while I was commonplace in all things, how should he care for me! —I hated myself for having let this weakness creep into my head, hated Ughtred³⁷ for having innocently laughed at my conquest as he called it, little guessing how near the mark his banter was, hated the weakness which had made me write Sarah³⁸ about it all, when I felt that I must have an outlet somewhere, and wrote her another conscientious letter, to prove that I cared nothing about it, and with this conscientious lie off my mind, embarked at Newhaven, with a stern resolution to live it down if I might. —And all through that dreary, hot railway journey from Paris to Basel the thing was in my mind, argued round and round to the same point, had he cared for me, as I now found I had been caring for him, and was he trampling it out now, as I was trying my best to do? —If he did not care, why had he let me look into himself, giving

me an insight into the better things than I knew of, why was he so different to any man I had ever talked to before, better, purer, with a kind of feeling of unexpressed 'sehn-sucht', calling out a return feeling in me such as I had never felt before? —And why had I, on that last Sunday evening, when we walked back from the Abbey together not been able to say a word to him, commonplace or otherwise, making him think, if he thought of me at all, that I cared no more about that miserable word goodbye, than if he had been a day's acquaintance whom I was to meet again tomorrow? And so the same torturing questions went round and round, and the railway throbbings, and the roar of the Rhine falls at Schaffhausen, and then the torrent stream at Pfeffers, all seemed to set themselves to the same monotonous torturing tune, till I hated the journey, and myself, and above all the future. For it seemed so blank, after this six weeks' dream of better things that might have been, to go on living day by day, all through the years to come, the same monotonous absorbed life within myself, which had once seemed more than enough for me. —Did the others guess my secret? I often wondered, and in myself resolved nothing should make me let them if I could help it, and so lived on more shut up in myself than ever. —It was on a Friday, the 5th of August that we crossed the Julier, and came down upon Samedan in the upper Engadin. It seemed a bleak dreary valley, no foliage but cembra pines and larches, dreariest of trees, and this year more dismal than ever, for all through the Engadin valleys, they were smitten with a disease, which tuned their leaves brown and left whole hill-sides leafless. —Two little green lakes filled the valley, which was shut in by bare snow-streaked mountains, not sufficiently covered to be beautiful. I was out of tune I suppose, for the others thought it beautiful, and I could see no beauty, except in the storm smitten cembras, with their grim rugged branches all draped and bearded with grey moss, solemn survivors of the great forest which had perished in the avalanches. —Samedan had not even these, a grey stone village standing among bare pastures. —However we were to stay there a night, and so in the evening Papa and I walked up to Pontresina to order rooms for the morrow, which we did at the Krone, and get our letters. I had three, which I read, sitting in the shade by the village pump; with that noble view up the Roseg valley to the snow-fields, spread in front of me, and it began to dawn upon me why people said the Engadin was beautiful. How I learnt to love that view afterwards. One of my letters was from Ughtred, one from Bessie Macarthur,³⁹ they were sailing for Australia next month, and the whole breadth of the world going to be put between me and one of the friendships I had prized most, that was a sad thought when I was counting up the things I had left. —The last letter was from Sarah, —an answer to mine, full of *the* subject which I would gladly have banished, yet which I read over and over, weakly glad to find that somebody took a more sanguine view of the matter than I chose to do. —She advised me, very sensibly, not

to expect to meet him at Pontresina, —had I done so? —I believe in my folly I half did, and had been speculating over the chances of it all the way over the Julier. He had talked of that among many other plans, and there was nothing so very unreasonable in it; it was a part of a Switzerland all the world was flocking to just then. —Her letter did me good, so did the splendid mountain air, I resolved to drive the folly out of my head, with its morbid thoughts, and to make myself enjoy life as it came.—On Saturday we moved our things up to Pontresina, and ensconced ourselves, I already began to like the place, and with great contentment saw Pop begin to drive nails into the wooden walls of our room to hang her clothes on, a symptom that she at least intended staying some time. On Sunday Papa and I walked up to the Morteratsch glacier, a glorious day, and a perfect walk. —Those snow-fields of the Engadin are fine, finer than anything I know in the Alps, except Macugnaga. —And the air is so keen and bracing, giving one double strength. There was a large English party at the Krone, alpine climbers most of them, and very merry. —Two were old child-friends of mine, Carrey Digby and her sister, this latter much younger than I, has been married four years and has three babies at home. I had not seen her since we were almost children ourselves, and could not realize the idea, it made one feel old somehow. —Then there were Mr. Tuckett and his sister, Professor Tyndall,⁴⁰ Mr. Harry Jones, a great bearded London parson, of the Muscular Christian type, we have met him twice before in the Alps; —a very charming Mrs Lawrence, with five children, and many other English; —Germans of course, in swarms, but one did not see much of them, and their voices only were jarringly prominent at supper time. —How everyone packed I don't know, for the Krone was not very large, Germans always double up into fabulously small quarters; —the room that Pop and I had was of the smallest, and we had to go to bed in detachments, and keep the window open all night. —The view from that window however was enough to make any room beautiful. How I learnt to love it in those succeeding weeks, among the changes that swept over it, of sunset, storm, and moonlight. It was on the Tuesday morning, that Pop came in from the post office, with some letters in her hand, and said, quite casually: 'I have been looking over all the English letters, and there are two waiting for Mr Symonds.' I could not help the start I gave, but when I asked her if she thought he was coming there, she said carelessly, 'How could she tell, had he not talked about it to me in London?' —then she went away with her letters, how I wondered if she guessed, and how could I tell that she had two *from* Johnnie in her pocket all the time. —I think they ought to have told me a little, but perhaps it was best. —Next day, the 10th, going down to dinner by myself, I found him, standing in the middle of the room, talking to Pop, in a grey coat, with that sunny look in his face that had captivated me long ago. —What a start it was! —Somehow it came upon me then, that he did care for me, that he had been

cares for me all along, and that it was not unmaidenly to let my feeling grow. —I know that when I shook hands with him, a thrill grew over me, as I thought that after all I was not uncared for, that he had come half across Europe to this remote mountain valley for my sake, and that life was again worth living. —He sat next us at dinner, we did not say much, but somehow I felt that the room and all in it had changed for me, and that weight of dreariness, which had been on everything since that Sunday evening in Victoria St. was lifted up by magic. —I wondered if other people noticed it, hoped they did not, but somehow felt there in that free alpine valley, appearances did not matter so much as they did in London. —That afternoon, we all went for a walk, a large party of us, Papa and Mr Waterhouse pretended to fish, in a little lake on the road to St Moritz, they had a cane rod about twelve feet long, and tried to bait their line with grasshoppers; of course they caught no fish, but we all enjoyed the lazy strolling walk among the cembras, and the fishing soon came to an end. —Johnnie kept by me, though I tried once or twice in all conscientiousness to make him talk to other people; —he told me more of himself and his old life than I yet knew, for how little I really knew about him. —It was a strangely happy time, and I gave way to the luxury of happiness, and did not fight against it. —That night I lay awake long, pondering if these things were to be, if I were worthy of it, and if he would not begin to find out by degrees how ignorant and unworthy I was, and go away quite out of my life once more. —And after all I did not know that he loved me, and it might turn out to be all a dream, and leave me to the old life, with its freshness taken out. —For I could no longer pretend to myself that I did not care about him, that long fortnight's thinking had taught me so much, and life could never be again what it had been. —I believe I prayed earnestly that night, as I had never prayed before, to be made worthy of him, or if not that I might have strength to bear a total parting. And as I thought over the very little I had known of him after all, it seemed more and more strange; —my woman's instinct fighting against my pride, and the longing for the luxury of love, a high ennobling love, making me better, and the world more beautiful. —On Thursday it snowed hard, nearly all day, though it was the 11th of August, to warm ourselves we walked down to Samedan to look for letters and do some shopping, Johnnie went with us. —He and I were together, in Samedan at 'the shop'—we came full tilt upon Miss Stonestreet, loud and strong minded as usual, she jarred upon one, and I felt St Leonards would be told of us; —did not care much, though I hated her for the insolent manner of delighted gossip she put on. —Friday and Saturday were fine, and I went on with the sketch of the Morteratsch glacier I had begun last week, the first day Johnnie came and sat beside me, spoiling my sketch, and catching neuralgia from the icy draught of the glacier stream, he told me calmly in the evening that he had known he was doing so, but that he had balanced the pleasure against the

pain, his calmness puzzled me, and I wondered what he meant; on Saturday I would not let him stay by me, and drew better in consequence, he went for a stroll by himself up the mountain, and came down with a queer bunch of flowers, wild roses and house leeks mixed, having tied them up with some care and brought them to me, he threw them away, saying they had fulfilled their purpose, I picked them up and carried them home, secretly wondering if he noticed it, he told me of two friends of his who had been coming to join him, but to whom he had written to say he would rather be alone, this puzzled me also. —That afternoon I stayed quiet in my room, sketching from my window; the rest was wholesome, and I wanted to be alone. I reasoned much with myself; this state of things ought not to go on, it was doing me harm, keeping me awake long nights, and always in a fever when he was not in my sight. —If Johnnie stayed at Pontresina, I must force myself to see less of him, must keep at a distance from him if I could, I had no right to let myself drift into a love which might be all on my side, and which might leave me shipwrecked high and dry some day. —Yet if he did not care for me, why was he always seeking me out, and why did Papa and Marianne take things so quietly, and seem to throw us together on purpose? —I went down into the wood, where the two glacier streams meet, among a tangle of willow herbs and wild flowers; —my mind was in a fever, I could not rest. Papa and Pop were sitting on a wall, watching me quizzically I thought, yet said nothing; I longed for someone to talk to, but would have killed myself sooner than have spoken first to Pop. —Why did they always seem to avoid the subject knowing as I did that between themselves they talked continually. —I felt injured, most unreasonably, for there had never been any confidence between me and Pop, and how should it begin now? —On the bridge I met Johnnie, he too was wandering restlessly, and we had no words to say. —I felt that my resolutions of that afternoon must be acted up to somehow but how! —That bridge had a fascination for me, I could never pass over it without stopping, and he had this feeling too. —We both leaned long over the parapet, watching a bit of stick caught in an eddy whirling helplessly, stopping sometimes for a minute or two, then making a rush forward for escape, but always caught and brought back to its place. —This lasted long, it seemed to fit my mood, it was like my own mind just then, I wondered if he felt it too. If that poor bit of stick had got free, and gone down the torrent in triumph, I too should have sung a hymn of triumph, feeling somehow bound up in it, but it didn't, and we had to leave it in durance and walk home to tea. I wonder if it has gone down the Danube to the Bosphorus by now! —We made Pop sing the Ravens to us,⁴¹ as she did every evening, she never sings it now, but that song has a strange fascination to me. It is bound up with those Pontresina evenings when we two used to lean out of that salon window, watching the changes over the magical view,

from the yellow flush of sunset on the snow-field, to the moonrise behind the range, and then the setting of one particular planet behind the huge black mass of the alp above St Moritz. —I watched that star for many weeks⁴² afterwards, till from my own window at Hastings, as it got lower, it confused itself with the gas lights on the hill; but it always brought Pontresina evenings back to me, and the grim face of the Capucin, grinning over the Roseg glacier. —I remember the evening we both of us discovered that giant face among the rocks on the snow-field, and how we made it our property, and resented the notion that it had been discovered and named years before our time. —On Sunday morning we walked over to church at St Moritz, a beautiful walk, with a long dull service in a little room crowded beyond measure; —yet the service was a relief and a rest to me; and I tried to fix my thoughts, and turn the old tune out of my head for a while. —After church, Papa and Pop went and had a bath, Johnnie and I wandered about by ourselves for half an hour, he was preoccupied, and talked unlike himself. —He told me how unsettled his life and all his ideas had been for long, how if it had not been for his father, he must have gone all wrong. I wondered he should take me into his confidence on things so near himself, and listened silently. Once he asked me suddenly if after the life of change I had led so many years, I could ever bring myself to live contentedly a quiet one in one place, without excitement; then he turned off and talked of himself. I felt restless and unhappy, wondering what that life would be, if I carried out my resolution, and cast the thought of him out of it. —Then we went in and met the others at dinner, a dreary long business, in a huge room full of strangers. We walked home afterwards a different way, through the forest, here all horrid and witch-like, the trees draped in long beards of shaggy grey moss, looking a fit setting for a tale of horror. —And he talked strangely, told me of a terror of his childhood, walking through a wood like this, that his companion should suddenly change into a wolf or some bad beast, and devour him. —I said with an involuntary shudder: ‘don’t do it just now please, for I couldn’t bear it,’ half feeling as if the thing were possible. For myself, I could not talk, but let him go on, I was very miserable, it seemed a great weight like thunder was upon me, and I knew this strain could not go on much longer. I wondered did he feel it too, and why did he go on letting me know so much of his own inner life which he had never done before, I a stranger as I was; —I longed to comfort him, to tell him I cared for him, for shams and conventionalities seemed just there as if they could not be kept up. —He puzzled me by suddenly asking me about Miss Dodd, and that miserable last year of my girlhood, and the illness that put an end to it all, and he seemed to know so much about it all, that I was bewildered more and more. —Snow began to fall, and we had to hasten, yet could not help stopping as usual to linger on the bridge, *our bridge*, as it seems to me

now. —The stick was gone out of its eddy, free at last, the chasm, with its foaming torrent, darker, sterner than ever. —Bits of exquisite green seem in vain to try to relieve the gloom of those purple streaking rocks. —Two points stretching across the torrent, seem to be for ever on the point of meeting, yet held back by some invisible power; through all the years they must have been at that point, so they will remain. A strange wistfulness of longing always seemed to me to be in those two rocks, and the impassable gulf of a few inches that they could not reach across. —I asked Johnnie if it had struck him as it did me; then a queer sense of analogy to our own case came upon me, and I tried to go off from the subject, it was too close. —We talked about friendships, I told him about Hilary B.C.,⁴³ and how her friendship had made this last year better and brighter to me; how it had touched me that one so much older, better, more gifted, should have thought me worth petting and making a friend of: he said suddenly that he had thought at one time that was one of the flaws in my character, and that I should resent being petted; —I told him somewhat bitterly how the coldness of manner I had been used to from childhood in my own home, had made me yearn for it in friendship, how I had tried to steel myself into thinking it was a thing that could be done without, and how as I grew older, I seemed to grow weaker in my own strength. I was talking more than I meant, and saw it, the snowflakes were falling, I turned to go home, feeling I had said too much; —suddenly he stopped me. —He said: ‘You *must* know what brought me out here. Could you bring yourself to care for me, and to let me love you, I don’t ask you to do it all at once, for I would rather you thought about it seriously, could you bring yourself to live the rest of your life with me, in a very quiet home, perhaps with no excitement at all, and to let yourself be petted always?’ His words came out so slowly, calmly, as if he were talking in a dream; I was in a dream too, and felt suddenly giddy, it had come then, the reality of my life to me, what I had hoped and feared. I could not answer calmly, but I could not sham; —I said it would not be very difficult I thought, for that I had been struggling not to care for him through all these weeks, and the struggle had been almost more than I could bear, yet that I ought not to let him give up his life to me, for that I was much too old for him. It was hard to say that, just then when youth and life seemed so precious yet it seemed a duty. —I felt so humble then, and could have knelt down and been his servant evermore, just then when he was putting me on his own level, making me feel so proud. —He thought me worthy of him then, when I was wondering if it were not my duty to tear myself away, and root up this dream of happiness too good for me. —He said little more, only put his hand on my arm, and said: Let us go in now, don’t talk any more just yet, we will go on together into Italy by and bye, and be no more separated. —I did not much care where we went just then, but longed for quiet and solitude to think. I went up into my room, and thought very earnestly over

all these things; prayed too, with my heart and so humbly. —Pop came in, I had to tell her about it, and Papa too, but they both knew of it long before and were prepared, Pop said she had been longing for this, yet never could be sure if I cared for him or not, and was prepared for my refusing him, strange that those who are nearest to us should know so little of our inner life! —then she told me how good she thought him, and what a relief it was to think that I was going to marry a good man, and not an empty-headed dancing partner, she had always been prepared for my running away with some flirting fool! It is a pity that those one lives with do not submit to trust one more, it would be happier for us all: of this want of confidence in me I had always been conscious, ever since, and long before those miserable weeks in Rome, four years ago, when the tiresome attentions of D.M.⁴⁴ had caused me to be sent to Coventry for a whole winter,⁴⁵ just because Pop had not the moral courage to speak out to me of her suspicions, but chose instead to hatch up an imaginary plot to Papa and sundry outsiders, making me miserable without telling me the reason why. —If a little more openness had been shown to me, I could have made it all so clear! —It is a lesson to me on beginning a new life, in the future possibility too of having children of my own to bring up, never to let the beginnings of want of confidence spring up between us. —Pop was very kind on this occasion however; Papa also, it was a great comfort that they both liked Johnnie so thoroughly, though if they would only have believed it, I have never had any real deep friendship for people whom they did not also like. —It was strange meeting Johnnie at tea that night, the old relations overturned between us, the new ones not established, I was horribly shy of him, and would have given worlds to run away and hide myself, it was queer too in the evening, having to talk commonplaces to acquaintances in the hotel, about the day's work, just as if one had not got a big new matter weighing on one's mind which *must* come out sooner or later, and which made all the rest seem absurd. At last the supper bell rang, and we were left alone. —Then he told me how long he had been thinking about this, ever since this time last year at Mürren, when I saw him first, and lived in the same house with him for a week, scarcely speaking to him, but rather thinking he thought me a fool! He had never cared for any woman till then he said, but had a Greek contempt for the whole race, it was the remnant of this that I had seen in his manner taking it as personal to myself, and when we left the place he made an entry into his journal that he had seen the woman whom he could have married had he seen more of her! —Strange all this, for if the idea had been put to me then I should have simply laughed at its absurdity; yet all the months since that first chance meeting in the Alps had been bringing us nearer to this, and all those curious coincidences that made us meet so often in London last season had been most subtle plots of his. —I remember asking him once in London in pure joke if he kept a balloon or a broomstick at his bidding, he was

always crossing our path; and it seemed to me almost like it then; when he came to Pontresina he said his broomstick was doubled up and put away in his pocket, as he did not want it now, —and I drew my own meaning from the words, and then wondered at my boldness; but my conclusions were correct, and no more plots were wanted now. —I went to bed that night feeling very rich, yet most humble, could I ever be worthy of him? —then, —would his father whom he revered so, and his sisters at home whom I knew barely by name, ever think me good enough? —It was something to try for at any rate, something to elevate one's life, and *he* thought me worthy, —which made me very proud. —On Monday we went an expedition to the Roseg Glacier, Pop sat and sketched, Papa wandered his own way, while Johnnie and I and Mr Phillips, a bald-headed fox-hunting old gentleman found our own way over the crevasses to a distant rock island in the ice, where purple auriculas and other snow flowers were still lingering. —It was a glorious expedition, and made us feel at home together in that grand free nature, we distanced Mr Phillips, and raced over the ice blocks till recalled by a view-halloo,⁴⁶ and turned back to find him piteously wiping his bald pink head on the top of a moraine, fuming a little at the responsibility of taking care of two young people on a glacier. —Then Professor Tyndall came up, like the conventional 'gnus' that the guides talk of, in the way he skipped over the rocking stones of the moraine, he was in charge of a large party, but they all had stopped at the foot, by and by we all went back together, and returned down the valley, some in cars, but Johnnie and I walked down the forest road, and sat long together under the pines, while I told him conscientiously the Door-Mat story, and was relieved to find he only laughed at it. —I was not afraid of him now. —Next day, Tuesday was *the* day of the journey. When we got leave to go up the Piz Languard all by ourselves, without a guide, with our luncheon in our pockets. —It was a day of days, cloudless and hot, yet the air on the mountain top unutterably pure, fresh, life-giving, *the* most perfect day of our lives, as it seems to us both now. —We had the mountain-top to ourselves, all but a brown Bergamasque shepherd, who sat near us upon a rock, his conical hat picked out against the blue, so motionless and harmonious that he seemed part of the mountain. —No wind, patches of snow still lingering under the rocks, bright little cushions of gentian mocking the sky, the valley at our feet with its green lakes panting in the August sun that at our height we scarcely felt, —and all around the solemn Alps with their inexpressible Sunday morning solemnity, seeming so very near us, beginning with the great Bernina opposite, stretching away into distance till my dear old Monte Rosa and the Alps of Oberland just showed themselves like summer clouds in the highest horizon near a hundred miles away. Goethe's lines: 'Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh, In allen Wipfeln Spürest Du, Kaum einnen hauch, Warte nur, balde findest du

Ruh.⁴⁷ Johnnie taught them to me that day, and they always come back to me with the thought of it, so perfectly do they express the feeling of the mountain top that solemn summer morning. —A few such days as that make our life beautiful, perhaps it is well they do not come too often. —We stayed up there three hours, it felt like our best, purest wedding day, and I like to date back to it as the place where Johnnie first put his great signet ring on my finger which made me his for ever. He told me much about himself that day, about his old inner life and its troubles, and I felt that if my love could give him some peace and calm in the future, my life would have had a purpose in it hitherto undreamt. —A noisy tribe of Germans invaded us at last, we felt half as if the mountain top were our own dominion, and resented them, but left them in possession of the field, with all their plaids, luncheon and Baedeker.⁴⁸ —Poor things, they had not the good things which made that mountain top holy ground, and they were not to be blamed. —We came down very slowly, stopping frequently to sit down and hunt for flowers, Edelweiss we looked for in vain, got down to Pontresina by seven, having taken three hours to climb the mountain and all day to come down again. —On Wednesday it rained, and I sat quietly in my room alone all the morning, making some studies of the blue gentians, and tiny pink flowers from the Piz; Johnnie was writing in his room too. —We had agreed to keep some hours in each day alone that we might not make each other's society too cheap. —That afternoon we walked down to Samedan through the rain, and coming home Johnnie contrived jumping over a gate to lose a packet of my photographs, which he carried loose in his coat pocket, a provoking accident. So next day we went out over the same ground to look for them, but without success, they had been picked up by a native, or floated down the stream towards the Danube by this time. We had bad days, alternate rain and snow, all the end of this week, and were kept in the house a good deal, still there was always enough to do. We had both many letters to write, and I had my two little flower pictures to finish. On Sunday we two walked over to St Moritz to church, and dined there, the walk was happier and calmer than last Sunday's. —Coming in in the evening, we found an arrival of friends, Mary Ewart and all the Gaskells;⁴⁹ —exceedingly pleasant for us. —Dear Mary has been so mixed up with all our history that her presence was the most welcome one could have, Mrs Gaskell too, who is so beautiful and motherly. She was working very hard at *Wives and Daughters*,⁵⁰ and wanted quieter quarters than the Krone, so got a quiet room to herself at the Gletscher where she did her writing in the mornings. The evenings were pleasant in the little salon, Pop and Marianne Gaskell used to sing to us by turns, and it was like a large family party: —I did not see much of them in the day, Johnnie and I were generally left to ourselves, I had a sketch going on underneath the bridge, not done so well or so rap-

idly as it would have been, had he not sat beside me all the time, reading scraps of his old diaries, or bits of Browning and Tennyson.⁵¹ I had hardly heard of Browning till then, and only gradually I learnt to like his queer crabbed style. —On Tuesday we had a splendid expedition over the Morteratsch glacier, which looked all the finer for gathering storm, after a grand day upon the ice we had the benefit of it coming back, but luckily upon level road, where it did not matter. Our last day at Pontresina was wet and dreary, we had to amuse ourselves in the salon all the morning, Charles Knight, an artist friend of Johnnie's undertook to put my poor bridge picture into shape, which it sorely wanted, for rain, and fog, and Johnnie's conversation, had sorely interfered with its completion, and I wanted to have a good picture of it for association's sake. —It hangs in my room now, such as it is, and no-one knows how dear that sketch is to me. —Goodbye to Pontresina, was a sore word to say, will any place ever be so dear a name to me? —We are both agreed not to go there again for many many years, till we toddle down to the bridge perhaps as quite old people, and think of the love which began there and has been growing ever since into perfect life. It was hard saying goodbye to our friends left there, to dear motherly Mrs Gaskell, who gave me a real mother's blessing as we went, to pretty Mrs Lawrence, and our poor bewildered landlord, whose hair was always on end like a bantam cock from worry and fuss, and his pretty little girls who used to bring me flowers every day, and talk about my *brüder*⁵²—when shall I see them all again? Mary Ewart went with us over the Julier to Poschiavo, where she stayed a day with us and then returned, she is the best and truest of friends, and Johnnie and I have a right to love her dearly, for she did us much good. —I am not going to give a day by day catalogue of this journey, which would be tiresome, a few beautiful things stand out in it. —The Sunday morning that we went over the Stelvio was one, mountain rest in perfection was in the day. —Johnnie had been ill overnight and in the morning was little up to the journey, however he sat placidly in the car and was dragged up most of the ascent, while we walked. Towards the top he got out and walked with me, a little wayside church stood near the top of the pass among the mountain pastures, it was twelve o'clock, and we two went in, and both spontaneously thinking of those at home in our English churches, knelt down and prayed with them after our fashion in that deserted little Catholic church. It was a solemn happy feeling, and we shall both remember it. —The descent of the Stelvio upon the Tyrolese side, and the view from the top are splendid, I made a great snowball and thoughtlessly pelted Johnnie with it, which made him cross for the first and only time in our two lives I believe, but I did not mean the cold snow to creep down his back as it did, and he was ill; my penitence touched him I hope. —Icicles overhung the road for a long way down the road, an endless ladder of zigzags which

we drove down full tilt. —The great mass of the Ortler opposite all the way, makes this one of the finest passes in the Alps. —Down the Finstermünz to Merano, such a contrast, a hot dusty valley full of walnuts and vines, the last half hour of the drive magnificent. Merano deserves its fame for beauty, but it is too hot, it is rare luxury though sitting with a book under long trellised vines where the grapes hung in black clusters, and gives one a feeling more Italian than Italy itself. —Three tiresome days at Bolzano, hot and stifling, with the clang of a savage church bell, over one's head at nights, while the watchman droned out the hours from the steeple; —three days almost too beautiful, at Venice, to make up for the others, days full of lazy languid enjoyment, with sunsets at their close such as one sees nowhere else; the last one the most memorable, when we rowed back from Torcello over the lagoons all glorious with reflected purple and crimson while the sky over head was speckled with downy rosy clouds, over the calm blue, and the stars came out one by one as the orange tints died out behind the purple black towers of distant Venice. The moon, half full, was sailing high in the night, as we rowed back up the Grand Canal, all flickering and shimmering under the grim old palaces. —Shall I ever see Venice again? I have been there four times, the last the fairest and most memorable, now life is changed, and I wish I could stifle the restless longing that comes over me now, for these things of beauty. Next morning, our last, most beautiful, a pearly sunrise, and the fruit boats all coming in, in bright procession, laden to the water's edge, with tight pyramids of grapes, peaches, figs—great watermelons besides, all repeated and multiplied in the shimmering reflections beneath. —This picture I carry away with me, the last. After this homewards, by Brescia, Cadenabbia, Baveno, all known before, all more beautiful now, when it is perhaps the last time I shall see them. Three days at Baveno, but I did not enjoy them, for Johnnie was waiting for us at Turin, and I felt strangely lonely and restless. Has all my individuality gone out of me in these few weeks, I thought, and can I never again enjoy alone what used to give me the intensest enjoyment. Strange almost mortifying, it was, proving how a woman's nature yearns for companionship and sympathy, and how fruitless are years of training to teach her to stand alone in real contentment. Will years bring it back again, if the necessity comes, for I cannot always expect his strong man's intellect to bring itself down to my poor level, as it has been doing lately, and I must one day learn the lesson that there are times when we both though together, must be alone, it comes to me now a little sometimes, and I cannot resent it, or be dissatisfied. We met him again at Turin, which is not memorable for beauty or interest, only for big peaches and for the monotony of composition in its streets, next day over the Mont Cenis, half the drive in darkness and cold, but it was enjoyment to me, we were alone together on the courier's box, and he talked to me as he some-

times does now, gravely in his measured way, about my character, and my faults, shall I ever be worthy of the place I am to fill? —Two nights in Paris, a stormy crossing and we parted at Dover, for many weeks, somehow on English soil I did not feel so much alone, and was content to live my life without him for a while, there was even rest in it, time to think quietly of the future, but his letters coming every day, letters which were better than talk, for they gave me confidence and were full of love which he rarely expressed face to face. —Someday I shall copy them into this book, they are very precious to me now, when a year's experience has taught me that he is better than his words. —My God, grant me faith! —I am very weak, and doubting sometimes. I wish my love for him were less of a passionate idolatry, and time does not make it calmer; it would be happier for both of us if it were more so. —On the 10th of November, 1864, we were married, at Hastings, at old St Clements, I am glad it was there, and the day is bright to look back to, full of sunshine, a rare summer day for November. Sarah and Margaret, Janet Shuttleworth, Maria Herschel, my sister Charlotte and four other girls were my bridesmaids.⁵³ Uncle Hopper married us, Ughtred of course was there, and Charlie,⁵⁴ and I had to be introduced to Johnnie's father and his relations, which was a nervous ceremony, but they have been unremittingly kind to me ever since, and have made me one of themselves. I love them all very dearly, and am very happy here.

After our wedding my wife and I were driven to Brighton by a Norfolk coachman, who had been in Mr North's service many years.

It requires all the romance and passion of Romeo and Juliet to make a double bedroom in an English town hotel appear poetical. Marriage begins ill which begins with a prosaic tour through inns. The first joys of nuptial intercourse ought not to be remembered in connection with places so common, so sordid and so trivial.

I shall not forget the repulsion stirred in me by that Brighton bedroom or the disillusion caused by my first night of marriage. Disagreeable as it is, I cannot omit to tell the truth about these things, since they are all-important for the object I have in writing my Memoirs.

I had never had anything at all to do with any woman in the way of sex. I had only a vague notion about the structure of the female body. I had never performed any sexual act with anyone, and I did not know how to go about it. I firmly expected that some extraordinary and ecstatic enthusiasm would awake in me at the mere contact of a woman's body in bed, although I was aware that the presence of women did not disturb my senses in the ballroom or a carriage. I also anticipated that nature would take care of herself when it came to the consummation of marriage.

To my surprise and annoyance, I felt myself rather uncomfortable than otherwise by the side of my wife, oppressed with shyness, and not at all carried away by passionate enthusiasm. Dearly as I loved her, and ardently as I desired through marriage to enter into the state of normal manhood, I perceived that this thing which we had to do together was not what either of us imperatively required. I felt no repugnance at first, but no magnetic thrill of attraction. A deep sense of disappointment came over me when I found that the

Corps féminin, qui tant est tendre,
Poly, souef, si précieux⁵⁵

did not exercise its hoped-for magic. What was worse, nature refused to show me how the act should be accomplished. This was due to no defect in me. The organ of sex was vigorous enough and ready to perform its work. My own ineptitude prevented me for several nights from completing the marital function,⁵⁶ and at last I found the way by accident—after having teased and hurt both my wife and myself, besides suffering dismally from the humiliating absurdity of the situation. She afterwards told me that such manifest proofs of my virginity were agreeable to her. But all the romance and rapture of sexual intercourse, on which I had so fondly counted, were destroyed by this sordid⁵⁷ experience. I also discovered that the physical contact of a woman, though it did not actually disgust me, left me very cold. There was something in it nauseous, and cohabitation in my case meant only the mechanical relief of nature.

Truly we civilized people of the nineteenth century are more backward than the African savages in all that concerns this most important fact of human life. We allow young men and women to contract permanent relations, involving sex, designed for procreation, without instructing them in the elementary science of sexual physiology. We do all that lies in us to keep them chaste, to develop and refine their sense of shame, while we leave them to imagine what they like about the nuptial connection. Then we fling them naked into bed together, modest, alike ignorant, mutually embarrassed by the awkward situation, trusting that they will blunder upon the truth by instinct. We forget that this is a dangerous test of their affection and their self-respect; all the more dangerous in proportion as they are highly cultivated, refined, and sensitive. Instead of the supreme embrace occurring, as it ought to do, and does in properly instructed people, as an episode, inevitable, consummative of the long chord of passion,

it has to be stupidly sought out amid circumstances of abasement which generate repugnance.⁵⁸

I have known cases of marriage spoiled from the commencement by this idiotic system of let-alone education.

But enough of the subject. My marriage was not spoiled in any essential detail. After the removal of that preliminary obstacle, it remained what it had been before—an union of feeling and of fellow service, rather than one of passion or of *heftige Liebe*.⁵⁹ The serious fault⁶⁰ in it on my side has always existed, and could not be eliminated, because it belonged to the very ground-work⁶¹ of my nature. I was born with strong but slowly matured sexual appetites; and these were incapable of finding their satisfaction with a woman. Nuptial intercourse developed them by the exercise of the reproductive organs. It did not and could not divert them from their natural bias toward the male.⁶²

In the winter of 1865 we settled in lodgings, choosing Albion Street, Paddington, on account of its closeness to Hyde Park. I studied a little law, ate dinners at Lincoln's Inn, and did what private reading my weak eyes allowed. We then bought a house in Norfolk Square, No. 47, chiefly induced by the quiet of the situation. Our friends, George Miller and his young wife, following our lead, bought the next house but one to ours. It was an unfortunate step; for the situation proved gloomy, and not by any means favourable to our health.

The greater part of the summer was spent at Clifton, where Thomas Woolner⁶³ made a marble bust of my father. I do not remember a more persistently rainy July than this. From certain symptoms in the left side which I remember, I probably laid the seeds of pulmonary disease during this month.

When we returned to London, it was to settle down at 47 Norfolk Square. For some time a strange state of affairs had been growing up between Rutson and myself. He was under the delusion (amounting to sheer hallucination) that he had himself cared for my wife, had retired in my favour, and that I had wooed and won her with full knowledge of his sacrifice. I shall introduce a succinct account of this extremely disagreeable episode, which was written when all the facts were fresh in my memory, and an open rupture between Rutson and ourselves had happened.⁶⁴ It is only necessary to mention the matter here, because it had a serious influence on my health. Rutson used to talk and argue upon these painful topics, like a veritable madman, for four or five hours together. He would waylay me on those autumn evenings on my way home from the Temple,

and keep me sitting on benches in the Parks, listening to the eternally repeated story of his wrongs. I felt such a debt of gratitude to him, and was really so sorry about his state of mind, that I bore in every way I could with these crazy humours; and caught a very bad cold, which settled on my lungs.

Meanwhile, on the 22nd of October, our eldest daughter Janet was born.⁶⁵ More than ever, after this, I neglected my health. The wet nurse warned me one day that my incessant cough was what she bluntly called 'a churchyard cough.'

My wife had suffered, during the summer months before Janet's birth, from great depression of spirits and nervous disturbance. These symptoms, during her recovery from childbirth, became really alarming; and already now, after less than a year's experience of marriage, we both felt that it might be better for the happiness of each if we could avoid the necessity of adding to our family.

As soon as she could travel, a little before Christmas, we went down to stay at Clifton. There my father examined me one day, and pronounced that there was mischief of a very serious kind at work in the apex of the left lung. All thought of an active professional life had to be abandoned. I was subjected to energetic treatment and confined to the house for some weeks, at the end of which period my wife and I went to Menton.

Before carrying the record of our doings further I will insert the last fragment of my wife's diary, which joins on to the piece already quoted.⁶⁶

January 30th 1866. Six months later. Clifton.—

We are here again, and we have a child, our little Janet, just three months old. She was born in London, last October, the 22nd, costing her mother much pain, but that is over now, and the little creature is very precious. — But I am older, much older since I last wrote. Married life is not all romance and glitter, there is much in it that is, that *must* be painful, wearying; — much, in cases where true love is, —that is infinitely holy and beautiful. And in mine I have found this, love always perfect and enduring, making that good which otherwise would be scarcely endurable. —If girls knew all that marriage means, there would be less 'marrying in the abstract' less of that foolish longing for the temporary glitter and variety of the things, possibly for the romance also, which has so often disgusted me in my contemporaries. I go back over the history of the past fifteen months, and I find just four that have been perfectly bright and enjoyable, the rest mostly full of sickness, heaviness and weariness (of body purely, by which the mind suffers and gets depressed against its better reason). I would gladly have a

rest now, if only of a few months, but that it seems not to be, and I must only wait, and hope patiently, through another year. Perhaps it may not be so bad this time, but the pain and weakness of this last year have left me only half myself as I was at Pontresina, and I did long very much for a rest now. —Is marriage worth all this? I think it is, where love so precious is given abundantly, but it is a point to be considered thoughtfully by those who are thinking of it. Our first three weeks, we spent in the Isle of Wight, then came here for Christmas. Here we went through a course of dinner-parties and entertainments from strangers whose very names were unknown to me, we were lions for a season, now we are old people again. Then we went to Hastings for Maggie's wedding,⁶⁷ then to London, where we made a temporary home for our two selves in lodgings in Albion Street. Those were *very* happy months, the best since we married, we had no cares, and lived in two tiny rooms, which were thoroughly comfortable, but wanted circumspection in walking about. I wish we could have stayed there always. But we had the prospect of a child, and it was thought advisable for us to get a house of our own, so we bought a house in Norfolk Square, and furnished it and went into it last June, and there our baby was born last November.⁶⁸ —Will that be our home always? I wish I could bring myself to look upon it contentedly as that, but I do not. —We have lived in it so little, perhaps there has not been time to strike root in it yet. —Those dreary two months of early winter after our baby was born, gave me a repugnance to the house, which I cannot shake off now though at a distance, perhaps it was our own weakness and physical depression that made it seem so big and gloomy; but its size and darkness, and chilliness seemed to haunt me then, and I cannot rub off the impression now. —A thousand times I have wished myself back in our sunny little rooms in Albion Street, but we have made our own lot and must abide by it. —Perhaps when we go back to it, it may seem brighter. In summer it certainly did so, a July sun, blazing through the north-west windows, which all through the winter never catch his rays. —I did not know till now how much winter sunlight had to do with raising or depressing one's spirits, at Hastings we had enough of it and to spare, in the flat also, and I never thought about it, or reflected on it. Here when it shines upon our window in the morning, gilding the leafless trees, and grey old city, I rejoice in it, like an alpine grasshopper; it seems life-giving, better than tonics. Am I growing hypochondriacal, fanciful? But for weeks after Janet was born, I never felt warm, always shivery, since Christmas when we came here, I have been a new creature, putting out feelers, and gathering strength abundantly. —And now all the weary weary time is coming over again, after one short month of rest; my God! grant me strength, and faith, that I may look forward to the time when my children shall be a pleasure to me. All women do not mind this so, am I unreasonable? —But it is hard that

these first months of our married life should have so much of their brightness taken off by physical suffering. —All this is egotistical, I speak nothing of Johnnie. —He too has been ill, a bad cough of two months' standing, how caught I know not, partly sitting in a draught in his own study at home, partly in law chambers; it made us anxious, but his father has cured it, as it seems entirely. Now our life and plans are very uncertain, he is to give up law reading, and not to return to London for two months, the house is to be let, if possible, and we are to go abroad. I do not mind, a week ago I rejoiced in the plan, I do not love our house, and travelling is pure enjoyment, now my joy is damped, for if all the sickness and weakness of last summer are to go on again, travelling will not be the enjoyment it used to be, but perhaps this time may not be so bad. —And it will be good for Johnnie, and we two shall be alone together again, among beautiful scenes, which we both love, and without the hateful household cares.

February 9. Keeping a diary is in some respects a bad thing. It gives one a one-sided view of one's life, and *that* the morbid side. —For when one is happy one does not write. All this last I wrote at twelve o'clock the other night, because I couldn't sleep and was miserable, and Johnnie was away in London, and my distempered thought *would* find vent somewhere. —And I did myself no good by it, only went shivering to bed towards one o'clock, more wide awake and miserable than ever. —And after all my worst dread was imaginary. For the weakness and sickness which I then thought was coming upon me again is not to be, I hope, at least for a season, and I shall have rest in myself. This is comfort. —If we can let our house for a few months, and so get rid of care, and go abroad for a season, how happy we ought to be. —But I wish I could cultivate the home-feeling towards our house in Norfolk Square, instead of longing so intemperately to get rid of it, it would be wiser, more womanly. —Wandering about is very well for a season, but our life has to be lived somewhere, and the home we have chosen to bring up our children in ought to have a different feeling to me from this that I have towards it. —I almost wish I could be forced to live in it for a whole year, never quitting it, so as to be made to feel it inevitable that I should live there always, instead of this endless speculative retrospect, as to what *might* have been. And Johnnie is so good and patient to me always, and I am no comfort to him, only trouble. How weak I am, when I began life with such real honest earnest determination to be strong and a support to him, and now I am weak, querulous, cowardly, shirking my duties, and hating what ought to be such a happy life. —How unfit I am to be a wife! —and then a mother's duties are coming too, bye and bye, and those are graver still. How little fitted I am to mould and form my little Janet's character, if my own is so weak and tottering. Had I never realized

the seriousness of life in the old time, that now it is come, I am to break under it, and be useless. —There are so many people, that I used to dislike or despise, who I see now, are better, truer, wiser women in their lives than I. Oh my God, make me better, I cry, I struggle to be strong, and it comes not, I pray to thee, but it is blindly, faithlessly. And all my life is full of good, full of blessing, if I could but get rid of this gnawing, sordid dread of expense and responsibility. I try to hide it from Johnnie, for he hates it, and it is unworthy, but hiding it only makes it worse. —He wrote me two letters from London, that ought to be printed in letters of gold, they are so good, so wise. —If I could get up to his level, and so look down upon these petty cares of everyday life, how I should rejoice. But I am small, weak, not worthy to be taken up by two of his fingers.

This fragment from her pen sufficiently explains the situation, and will be of use in the interpretation of much which I shall afterwards relate.

We went to join my sister Lady Strachey at Menton. Here began the long series of journeys to the Riviera in search of health, and also a new phase in my Italian experience.⁶⁹ My wife's sister, Lady Kay-Shuttleworth, had a villa at San Remo. The cure which my father had accomplished at Clifton, was here confirmed. But it could not be radical. From the Riviera, we passed to Florence, Ravenna, Macugnaga, Valle d'Aosta, Mürren, and returned to Clifton in July. Then again to 47 Norfolk Square; but this was soon abandoned, and the winter of 1866-67 was spent at Hastings with the Norths. Here I wrote an essay on the Greek Idyllists and several studies of Elizabethan Dramatists.⁷⁰

NOTES

1. Following the chapter title, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 266 blank (28 cms of clear space).
2. Inn of Court dating back to the fourteenth century, providing training and accommodation for lawyers. Bar examinations were introduced in 1852.
3. The Union was a private members' club founded in 1822. Its clubhouse in Trafalgar Square (shared with the Royal College of Physicians) was designed by Robert Smirke and is now known as Canada House.
4. Deletes 'literary', substitutes 'my own' (MS 267).
5. From *Religio Medici* (1643) by Thomas Browne: 'The world that I regard is my selfe, it is the Microcosme of mine owne frame, that

I cast mine eye on; for the other, I use it but like my Globe, and turne it round sometimes for my recreation' (Part 2, Section 12).

6. From the 'Calamus' cluster in *Leaves of Grass* (1860–61 edition) by Walt Whitman: 'I meant that you should discover me so, by my faint | indirections.' Later editions title this poem 'Among the Multitude'.
- Richard F. Giles has identified marginalia in Symonds's personal copy of the 1860–61 *Leaves of Grass*. Next to this line Symonds writes: 'This is the true method wh I have failed in.' See 'Symonds's Annotations in the 1860 *Leaves of Grass*', *Walt Whitman Review*, supplement 'Leaves of Grass at 125' (1980), 21–36.
7. Deletes 'externally', substitutes 'but also' (MS 268).
8. William Bowman, 1st Baronet (1816–92), ophthalmic surgeon. In 1841 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society at just twenty-five years of age.
9. William Acton (1814–72), genito-urinary surgeon. He was the author of *A Practical Treatise on Diseases of the Urinary and Generative Organs* (1841) and *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Orders in Youth, in Adult Age, and in Advanced Life* (1857).
10. Marginal note: 'Printed in my private *Miscellanies*, pp. 1–36' (MS 268).
11. Symonds lists famous European composers from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91), Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), Charles Gounod (1818–93), Vincenzo Bellini (1801–35), Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848), and Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901).
12. Symonds lists famous nineteenth-century musicians: Anton Gregor Rubenstein (1829–94), Russian pianist and composer; Carlo Alfredo Piatti (1822–1901), Italian cellist; and Joseph Joachim (1831–1907), Hungarian violinist and composer.
13. Symonds lists famous nineteenth-century singers and performers: Trebelli, stage name of Zelia Trebelli-Bettini (1838–92), French mezzo-soprano; Therese Titiens (1831–77), German-Hungarian soprano; Antonio Guigliini (1825–65), Italian tenor; Adelina Patti (1843–1919), Spanish soprano; and Pauline Luca (1841–1908), Austrian soprano.
14. Blanche Clough, née Shore Smith (1828–1904), was the widow of the poet Arthur Hugh Clough. Her father's home was Combe Hurst in Surrey, and Symonds would assist her in the editing and

- publication of *The Poems and Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough* (1869).
15. Thomas Neville Abdy, 1st Baronet (1810–77), M.P. for Lyme Regis (1847–52).
 16. Spencer Wells, 1st Baronet (1818–97), was a pioneering gynaecological surgeon. He served Queen Victoria’s household between 1863 and 1896.
 17. Deletes ‘union for’, substitutes ‘the sober meeting together of man and woman for’ (MS 269).
 18. Deletes ‘thought’, substitutes ‘plan’ (MS 270).
 19. Mary Ewart (1830–1911) was an advocate for women’s education and governor of Newnham College, Cambridge, Somerville College, Oxford, and Bedford College, London. Her aunt, Harriet Lee, lived in Clifton near the Symonds.
 20. Deletes ‘only’, substitutes ‘deeply’ (MS 270).
 21. Deletes ‘my uncle Henry Symonds’, substitutes ‘a clergyman of our acquaintance’ (MS 271).
 22. Deletes ‘talk only excited my’, substitutes ‘incitements only disturbed my’ (MS 271).
 23. Eponymous protagonist of *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749) by Henry Fielding.
 24. A horse-drawn stagecoach.
 25. Trans.: Something bitter arises. From Lucretius’s *De Rerum Natura* 4 (l. 1134).
 26. Deletes ‘perfect’, substitutes ‘gracious’ (MS 274).
 27. Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) was an Italian philosopher and writer. He is best known for his *Vita Nuova* (c.1293) and *The Divine Comedy* (c.1308–21). Dante dedicated much of his poetry to a figure named Beatrice, commonly identified with Beatrice Portinari (a member of the Florentine nobility).
 28. Third son of Symonds’s childhood tutor, Rev. William Knight. He was a ‘marine and landscape painter’ (see Chapter 3).
 29. Trans.: These two should love, should love passionately.
 30. Deletes ‘possession’, substitutes ‘desire’ (MS 274).
 31. Deletes ‘to her on my part’, substitutes ‘on either side’ (MS 275).
 32. Trans.: a bad habit of writing. From Juvenal’s *Satires* 7 (l. 51).
 33. Deletes ‘defects’, substitutes ‘faults’ (MS 275).
 34. Harry George Powlett, 4th Duke of Cleveland (1803–91), served as M.P. for South Durham between 1841 and 1859, and as M.P.

for Hastings alongside Frederick North between 1859 and his accession to the dukedom in September 1864.

35. Catherine's diary account, written in her own hand, is inserted into the manuscript (MS 276–276q). It comprises two booklets with lined recto pages. The heading is provided by Symonds on the cover of the first booklet.
36. Catherine deletes 'nothing', substituting 'little' (MS 276a).
37. Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, 1st Baron Shuttleworth (1844–1939), was Catherine's nephew: he was the son of her half-sister, Lady Janet Kay-Shuttleworth. He would later embark upon career in politics, serving as M.P. for Hastings (1869–80) and the Clitheroe division of Lancashire (1885–1902).
38. Sarah North (b. 1839) was Catherine's cousin: she was the daughter of her paternal uncle, Dudley North. Sarah was a bridesmaid at Catherine's wedding, and she later married William Tomkinson of Willington Hall, Cheshire, in 1866.
39. Elizabeth Macarthur (b. 1840) was the only daughter of James Macarthur, an Australian politician. The family were in England during the early 1860s following James's withdrawal from public life, but they returned to Australia in 1864. Elizabeth married Captain Arthur Onslow in 1867.
40. Francis Fox Tuckett (1834–1913) was a leather merchant from Bristol and a keen mountaineer. He was a member of the Alpine Club and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.
Elizabeth Fox Fowler, neé Tuckett (1837–72), was a keen traveller and talented artist. She produced illustrated volumes of travel writing, including *How We Spent the Summer, or A Voyage en Zigzag* (1864) and *Pictures in Tyrol and Elsewhere, From A Family Sketch-Book* (1867).
John Tyndall (1820–93) was a physicist and keen mountaineer. He was a member of the Alpine Club and a Fellow of the Royal Society. Tyndall's research interests included radiant heat and the motion of glaciers.
41. Presumably 'The Three Ravens', a traditional English folk ballad. An early version was published under the rubric 'Country Pastimes' in *Melismata, Musically Phansies* (1611) by Thomas Ravenscroft.
42. Catherine deletes 'months', substituting 'weeks' (MS 276g).
43. Joanna Hilary Bonham-Carter (1821–65) was an artist. She was the cousin of Florence Nightingale and a friend to several promi-

nent Victorian women, including Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Harriet Martineau.

44. Initials for 'Door-Mat', a nickname given to Catherine's suitor.
45. To be sent to Coventry is to be ignored, excluded or ostracised.
46. 'The shout given by a huntsman on seeing a fox break cover.'
(*OED*)
47. Misremembered lines from the second constituent poem of Goethe's 'Wandrer's Nachtlied' (1780):

Über allen Gipfeln	Above all summits
Ist Ruh,	There is peace
In allen Wipfeln	In all the tree-tops
Spürest du	You feel
Kaum einen Hauch;	Scarcely a breath;
Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde,	The birds in the forest are silent,
Warte nur, balde	Just wait, soon
Ruhest du auch.	You too will rest.

See Chapter 8, note 62.

48. German publisher of travel guides. A Baedeker guide to Switzerland (in English) was published in 1863.
49. Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810–65) was the author of many short stories, several novels and a biography of Charlotte Brontë. She was a contributor to Charles Dickens's *Household Words* and *All The Year Round*. Her husband, William Gaskell (1805–84), was a Unitarian minister at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester. The Gaskells had two daughters: Marianne (1834–1920) and Margaret Emily, known as Meta (1837–1913). They were traveling in the Alps during the summer of 1864 on account of Meta's health.
50. *Wives and Daughters* began its serialisation in the *Cornhill Magazine* in August 1864. Gaskell died in November 1865 before completing the novel. The *Cornhill's* editor, John Greenwood, supplied a concluding postscript to the final instalment (January 1866).
51. Robert Browning (1812–89), poet regarded a pioneer of the dramatic monologue. Alongside his poetry, he is best known for the literary and romantic correspondence with his wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Alfred Tennyson (1809–92), poet. His works include *The Princess* (1847), *In Memoriam, A.H.H.* (1850), and the *Idylls of the King* (1859–85). He was Poet Laureate from 1850 until his death.

52. Trans.: young men or fellows; literally, brothers.
53. Helen Margaret North (1842–1912) was Catherine’s cousin: she was the daughter of her paternal uncle, Dudley North.
Janet Elizabeth Kay-Shuttleworth (1843–1914) was Catherine’s niece: she was the daughter of her half-sister, Lady Janet Kay-Shuttleworth.
Maria Sophia Hardcastle, née Herschel (1839–1929), was the daughter of the famous astronomer and mathematician, John Herschel.
- Symonds’s sister, Charlotte, also acted as bridesmaid alongside ‘four other girls’: Florence Papillon, Nina Parish, Annie Hopper and Edith Marsh. Their names were recorded in a notice of the wedding in *The Hastings and St Leonards News* (11 November 1864).
54. The marriage service was conducted by Augustus Hopper, Rector of Starston, Norfolk.
Charles North (1828–1906) was Catherine’s brother. He married Augusta Keppel in 1859, and would become a magistrate and Justice of the Peace.
55. Trans.: ‘Feminine body, which is so tender, | Smooth, soft, so precious.’ From the prefatory poem of *Le Testament* (1461) by Francois Villon.
56. Deletes ‘consummating the marriage’, substitutes ‘completing the marital function’ (MS 278). Symonds also tries ‘performing’ instead of ‘completing’, but deletes this alternative.
57. Deletes ‘rude’, substitutes ‘sordid’ (MS 278).
58. Deletes ‘disgust’, substitutes ‘repugnance’ (MS 279).
59. Trans.: passionate love.
60. Deletes ‘defect’, substitutes ‘fault’ (MS 279).
61. Deletes ‘roots’, substitutes ‘ground-work’ (MS 279).
62. Deletes ‘bent to men’, substitutes ‘bias towards the male’ (MS 279). Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 279 blank (14 cms of clear space).
63. Thomas Woolner (1825–92) was a poet, sculptor, and member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Symonds records an evening spent at Woolner’s house in Welbeck Street, London, in the company of his father, William Gladstone and Alfred Tennyson. His account was sent as a letter to various recipients in December 1865 and first published in the *Letters and Papers of John Addington Symonds* (1923) edited by Horatio Brown.

64. See Appendices.
65. Janet Harriet Symonds (1865–87) was the eldest of Symonds’s four daughters. She died of consumption in April 1887, and in the aftermath of her death, Symonds wrote a series of touching mourning letters to his other daughters and an account of Janet’s funeral. See *Letters*, III, pp. 223–4, 226–31, 234–7.
66. As before, Symonds inserts Catherine’s diary account into the manuscript (MS 282–282c). This entry is formed of a single booklet—cf. note 35.
67. Catherine’s cousin, Helen Margaret North, married Henry Turtliff Boger in January 1865.
68. Catherine mistakes the month: Janet Harriet Symonds was born on 22 October 1865.
69. Marginal note: ‘The year 1865–66 was important for my literary development. I did a great deal of careful, yet instinctive writing, which helped to form my style, and much of which remains among my published works’ (MS 283).
70. Chapter 9 concludes with an aborted paragraph marked for deletion and accompanied by a marginal note (‘Rewrite and introduce Norman notes. Normandy’, MS 283):

In March at Clifton I caught a fresh cold. But we went back to 47 Norfolk Square. This time I could not shake the mischief off, and got worse and worse through all the hot months panting to be in Switzerland. Henry Sidgwick, whose acquaintance I had recently made, was staying in London, philosophising, going to ghost-séances, and trying to support life (for an experiment) on a minimum of daily expenditure. Our acquaintance ripened rapidly into a deep and close friendship, which has been to me since of inestimable value—owing to the lovely noble nature, the wisdom, the extraordinary mental originality and acuteness, and the inexhaustible kindness, of this unique man. (MS 283)

This material is revised to form the opening paragraph of Chapter 10—see p. 287.

Chapter 10: Early Years of Marriage. A Tour in Normandy. Peregrinations of All Sorts. Interrupted Literary Labour

In March, 1867, at Clifton, I caught a bad cold, from which I did not recover easily. Nevertheless we went back to 47 Norfolk Square. My father was so anxious about my state of health—I was suffering from the chronic trouble in my head, a permanent malaise and nervous sensibility, which made me incapable of steady work, together with a subacute pneumonia in the left lung—that he thought it best to send me off upon a journey at the end of May. My wife was unable to travel, expecting her second confinement in a few months. So my sister Charlotte, now Mrs Thomas Hill Green, kindly volunteered to bear me company; and very good company she was during our ramblings in Normandy.

I find a collection of letters written to my wife upon this tour, parts of which she copied out into a MS book. They clearly indicate the state of mind and emotion at that epoch:¹

May 28. Dieppe. This place is built, like Hastings, in a gully between two hills. But the ravine is broader: the sea runs up into the town, which is larger and more stately, flanked by a grander castle, and crowned by more beautiful churches. Why are foreign towns so much more picturesque than those of England? Perhaps it is some affectation which makes me think them so.

The red roofs and gables of the houses of Dieppe, seen from the castle, are fantastically peaked and clumped together; the old gateways and parapets upon the streets are thickly grown with lilac stock and wallflowers.

Each gargoyle or foliated pinnacle of the church is carved with winged dragons and snarling dogs, running down between the leaves and crockets, humping up their crooked thorny spines. Great wooden belfries surmount the steeples; and the castle is put together of odd conical turrets and huge flanking walls—moss-grown and shed-like roofs covered with green and yellow lichens. Then every angle of these picturesque buildings stands out sharply-cut by the strong clear light: probably accidental to the day: yet the quaintest corners of Hastings or of Bristol could not in any light appear so dignified. We plaster over everything to make it look tidy; flatten our house fronts and depress our roofs; cut the chimney-pots after one fashion, root out the weeds and paint the parapets; cut, scrape and pare, till little |or| nothing is left but a noble church like St Mary Redcliffe, finely situated, saved by its native beauty from the commonplace, but wrought into a picture only by the unspoilable accidents of shipping and water in the foreground.

The sun has now gone down below his bank of clouds: a broken wall above England, between saffron sky and silver sea.

May 29. Rouen. We travelled slowly through the orchards and meadows this morning, by the side of the shallow transparent rivers golden with iris on their banks. It is a pretty rural landscape; but the village houses are tiled with a very black slate, which spoils them.

Services were going on in all the churches here. The sound of the organs, mingling with the sunlight and the gloom and the colours of the fiery painted glass and the fretwork of the masonry, tempered² the soul to dreamy meditation. I never really enjoy a cathedral without music. It seems to set the mute³ hymns of the arches and the clustered piers to melody, to interpret the stories of the blazoned windows, and to fill the spaces of the aisles with invisible presences. Without this living accompaniment and commentary, architecture seems to me cold and dead. Are the harmonic ratios of form and sound really so sympathetic as mutually to elucidate each other? Or is it a matter of association: the religious purpose and solemn character of organ music tuning our mind to the proper key for comprehending sacred architecture?

The church of St Ouen might be almost called provokingly perfect: a full-sized, elaborately designed Gothic cathedral, finished on one plan down to its minutest details. Some of the romance of old church-building is lost by this completeness. The precise way in which it has been isolated from surrounding houses and planted at one end with pleasant trees, destroys the pathos of the picturesque. Nothing is left to the imagination. But for gaining an insight into the working of the medieval brains which planned

these structures, St Ouen is invaluable. Here the veriest child can see that the spirit of Gothic art is not anarchy, but symmetry and order. Only the parts here forced into correspondence are almost infinite; not, as in the case of Greek work, select and few.

The interior of St Ouen resembles that of our St Mary Redcliffe, on a vaster scale. It has the same proportion of height to breadth, the same relation of the side aisles to the main body, the same prodigality of glazing. The differences are those of French and English architecture at the same period. The French, with its waving lines and extravagance of fancy, is more attractive than English perpendicular rigidity and stereotyped ornamentation.

Inside, the church is barren of detail; but it contains one interesting object—a chapel with the tombs of the three chief architects. Their full-length figures are rudely carved in outline on slabs of white stone. The designer of the building, Roussel,⁴ has a notably grave face, with square jaws and deep-sunk eyes under a square breadth of forehead. The others are two men;⁵ the one older, the other younger; not remarkable in physical character; pointing with compasses at designs for two of the rose windows in the church. According to a legend current here, the master killed the pupil because his rose was judged the more ingenious of the two.

All these Rouen churches are of late Gothic varying from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. They all have central towers, built in the form of lanterns, and deep porches carved with Last Judgments, saints, angels, devils, souls emerging from their sepulchres. I do not find in any of them the peculiar charm that lingers round Italian churches—the marbles gilded and glorified with the sunlight of centuries—the multitude of carefully wrought monuments—the polychrome wall-decoration sobered by time. French architecture expresses the genius of the nation: logical, order-loving, *spiritual*, fertile in resource, sensitive to grace and to beauty of the most refined, but not of the deepest, sublimest, most passionate order.

St Maclou is a miracle of minute decoration: the whole chiselled into lace-work, so that one's sight is lost in a fairy labyrinth of elegancies. Only the French mind could have produced anything so subtle, so cheerful, so spirited, and so sustained upon the note of capriciousness.

While I am writing, the curfew is tolling over the town; a fine, deep, melancholy bell; and the towers of Notre Dame, just now so rosy, are fading like the Alps at sunset into a dead greyness. Like the Alps! It does not do to think too much about them. Alas, I know that health is awaiting me there, if I could get to them. It is pitiful to be so much feebler than I was at this time last year. Where were we then? At Macugnaga, reading Saint-Beuve's *Causeries du Lundi*⁶ under the scarcely fledged beech boughs, within sight of melting avalanches fringed by crocuses and soldanelles.⁷

May 30. Rouen. This grey town does not fascinate me. Its picturesque qualities are obvious. Such languid antiquarian interest as survives in me, is gratified. But I do not find much that is really great here, except the proportions of St Ouen. The people seem uglier than any I have seen—more pale, flat-faced, sordid, mean, ignorantly vicious than ever the population of a Bristol slum. We saw a crowd of them together at a fair held in the suburb of St Sever.

This morning (Feast of the Ascension) we heard service in three churches. There seems to be a renaissance of old dry ecclesiastical music in France, as elsewhere. It fills me with infinite sadness to stand in one of these naves, and to hear these reiterated adorations and supplications, and to think of the hundreds and thousands of colossal temples of the past—Egypt and furthest Ind, the deserts of Palmyra and Ba'albek, Persia and China and the tangled forests of Mexico—not to speak of Judea and Phoenicia and Greece and Carthage and Italy, not of all the regions of the North—fruitless altars and vain prayer stations, raised to the inscrutable unapproachable God, the sphinx of Being called by a myriad names. Those rites have vanished; the voices of the priests and chanting choirs are silent; the barbaric bands are mute; the prayers are forgotten; the ceremonies have ceased. Only our form of worship still exists for us, for us 'the foremost nations of the world',⁸ for us who think ourselves so wise and dream our creed the final one. Our particular small faith still lives, reduced to formalism and vulgarity by the attrition of a few centuries, destined ere long to be merged in other equally important attempts to reach the source of aspirations.

I do not sleep much. Below my fourth-floor window, are roofs of all colours, jumbled up in all ways, flowers growing on the sills of dormer windows, cats asleep, above all the cathedral and its booming bell.

May 31. Caen. Yesterday, while we were walking in the flower market at Rouen, something brought you vividly to my mind. I saw five or six pots in one stall, holding what plant do you think? Our great saxifrage! Yes, there it was, with its plume of flowers and cushion of green leaves. But the wonderful wild thing had been tamed by cultivation. The leaves were more numerous, and sprawled asunder; the blossoms were whiter and less fantastically thick upon the sprays; the stalk itself had a duller greener hue. To complete the poor plant's slavery, it was trained upright along a stick, which the woman who sold it called a 'tuteur'.⁹ Horrid pedagogic name! I tried to tell her of the black gorges and riverbanks and windy waterfalls where we had seen it last year. Curiously enough there were several large tiger lilies in bloom by the side of the saxifrages; so that all Varallo and the Valle Anzasca seemed to have been tamed and travestied together in that prosy Rouen flower-stall.

The journey today was a pretty long one, through fair lands. For some while we followed the Seine; a lovely stream, flanked by buttressed hills of hard white limestone sparsely wooded. Then we broke into a forest country of hills wonderfully rich in wild flowers. The spring-blossoms are all gone; and in their place have come foxgloves, ox-eyed daisies, valerian, geraniums, pyramidal orchises, cornflowers, salvias, columbines: in fact the wealth of early summer. Next we left the woods and entered a great plain—orchards, cornfields, wavy tracts of saintfoal and clover.

If I had to choose a flower, I think I should take the columbine. It is so wonderfully finished in all its details both of leaves and blossom, so graceful in carriage, so varied in colour, so perfect in drawing. Then the associations I have with it are many. Luini's picture at Milan, the foreground of Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* in our Gallery,¹⁰ the dark brown garnet-coloured beauties of San Salvatore, the white ones of the Colma, the lilac flowers in Leigh Woods, out of which I once wore a crown for the dearly loved friend of my adolescence, Willie.

The columbine has started me on sad reflections. If there were but only one strong and perfect thing in me, I should feel worthier; I might perhaps let youth ebb away, and weakness get the upper hand, more contentedly. But when I regard my past life, I find so many broken arcs and no full circle: so much ignoble selfishness and the folly of sentimental idealism: at the same time such vulgarity of soul, cunning, and want of faith in the highest things: that I am ready to sit down and cry for my futility. I am brought very low indeed now, stretching out my hands and praying that this perpetual weakness of the body and this weary mental suffering may not quench my best chance of rising to nobler things through life.

June 1. Caen. This is a pretty little place, more homely and friendly than Rouen, with several interesting churches. Caen stone is of a pure rich white; in tone and colour like our Bath-stone, but harder in grain. It takes a pleasant mellowing with age, so that the houses are not so dead grey as those of Bath. The town too is planted with avenues of limes just coming into flower, which clasp the grim, Norman turrets in greenery and fragrance.

St Étienne, La St Trinité, and St Pierre surpass our Norman churches, so far as I know them: possibly because these are grouped together in one neighbourhood, and executed with one inspiration.

St Étienne was finished by William the Conqueror of England. La St Trinité was founded by his wife. St Pierre is of a later date.¹¹

It seems almost incredible that the Normans, the Germans and the Italians—to omit other nations, Flemish, Spanish, etc.—should have started from Romanesque as their common point, and have run a parallel course, upon the same lines, to similar conclusions, during the same period of time.

What we call the Gothic style, emerging from the Romanesque, seems to have been developed independently by each people, obeying one law of growth, and to have passed through the same successive stages, in each case exhibiting the specific genius of the race together with the general characteristic of the type. It would be interesting to analyse this matter in detail, and to discover (if that were possible) what caused this simultaneous progress from the early pointed to the decorative manner, and from the decorative to the decadent, until perhaps the style was thoroughly worked out. Perhaps the last stage in the evolution of Gothic would be the most instructive {in its bearing upon national character}. We might select the formal cross-bars and perpendicular lines of St Mary Redcliffe or the flattened roof of King's College Chapel, the sinuous and flame-like traceries of the façade of Notre Dame at Rouen, the exquisitely graceful classic foliage of Siena, the thorny intricacies of the Nuremberg Lorenz-Kirche, the vicious scrolls and writhing lines of the town halls at Ghent and Leuven. I am sure that the last chapter in the history of Gothic architecture, arrived at in each case upon a line of parallel progression, in each inevitable and determined by the previous stages of the art, reveals a deeply-rooted national quality of genius. English prosiness and common-sense; French subtlety and plasticity; German grotesqueness and idealizing symbolism; Belgian *bourgeoisie* and prosperous comfort. But this would involve long studies, technical acquirements, philosophical analysis. I cannot hope to undertake it. I must content myself with throwing out an *aperçu*.¹²

I do not feel as though I knew enough about the Normans, or had enough sympathy with what I do know, properly to appreciate the rude vigour and pride of strength in their great churches here. The forms of Romanesque in Italy; Lombard façades, Tuscan pilastered rows of shallow galleries ascending to a peak, slumberous memories of decadent Pagan and rudimentary Christian culture blent upon the Adriatic coast, mosaics and marble panelling; these seem to be nearer than these spruce, perfectly correct, humanly repellent structures, which in an odd sort of way remind me of the Prussian government.

St Étienne is very simple. Its bare towers are so grand, the interior is so impressive, that I am subdued by the exhibition of pure mental force and character. Charm has not to be demanded. The external frontage of the building is like that of a barn or factory, pierced with thin windows and narrow doors. The Norman is silent here, vouchsafing nothing but squared blocks of stone, in lieu of the tentative rhetoric, the clumsy appeals to fancy, which people of the South would have attempted. There is not a leaf or flower or human face throughout the decoration of the building. Lozenges, geometrical figures of considerable grace, battlemented borders, twisted ropes, blunt knobs; all these ornaments suggest intellectual power, muscular

strength, no suavity, no play of the free spirit. We feel that the sons of the old Norsemen knew not the Graces,¹³ or else that they refused to pay them homage. The tale of the Nibelungs, the story of Gudrun, survive in these churches.¹⁴ Humanity is left to freeze and suffer, or to expand according as it can—but mostly in a tragic way—among such art-surroundings; just as it does amid bleak unsympathetic nature.

When one arrives at floral decoration, at a later period in this Norman architecture, the flowers are rude knobby things. The beasts are lions, eagles, serpents, fighting and twining in inextricable coils. The human faces, when they merge at length, are sinister with anger, or suggestive of coarse repellent humour.

What most attracted me at St Étienne was the structure of the towers: tall fearless square towers, surmounted by beautifully shaped pyramids, and flanked with smaller turrets of the same spiry form. This ground-idea, which is feebly carried out in our Oxford Cathedral, serves for a distinctive mark of the Caen churches. Later on, the type modified into a milder and more graceful sort of spire. St Pierre, a century and more after St Étienne, exhibits this new type in its perfection. Here the long narrow pointed arch has succeeded to the squat broad round one; some mouldings have been introduced; and the monotony of the stone pyramids has been relieved by quatrefoils cut into their sides. There, in St Pierre, the type reached its ideal. It soon declined. St Sauvenir shows it vulgarized by too much decoration and a bulky *embonpoint*.¹⁵

The octagon towers of Rouen, no less characteristic for their epoch than these aerial pyramids of Caen for theirs, run a like course.

So, I suppose, do the spires of English architecture; attaining their perfection in Salisbury Cathedral, they crown great Gothic buildings with the most of imaginative nobility and aspiration.

Of German spires I only know one which fully satisfies my sense, that of Freiburg im Breisgau.

Poking about the town, we found a little cemetery high up, near an old church, which has now, like many about here, been turned into a granary. The quaint roof of the building, over which ivy had been allowed to creep, the sound of men working in the granary, of doves and pigeons on the parapets, and the sight of the towers and spires of Caen below, gave a pleasant feeling to the place. Stonecrops and snapdragons sprouted from the crumbly grey walls, and the tombs were bright with roses.

June 2. Bayeux. We came here to see the tapestry¹⁶ and the cathedral. We have seen them. One cathedral does not differ much from another, except to the antiquary. I hope I shall never come to say that one mountain does not differ much from another, except to the geologist. Nature increases, art diminishes, as we grow older.

I cannot guess what so subtle poison¹⁷ it is that has passed imperceptibly into me, and sucks out all my force. It is terrible to face the prospect of a languid inadequate life of enforced idleness. You speak about my becoming after all a strong man. That may be. It may even be that I shall strangle ambition in myself, give up the desire to do and be something, acquiesce in letting the years slip by in peace until the peace of death comes. At present I am plagued by the constant desire to use my brains for work, to store up knowledge for future writings—baffled by the terrible incapacity of a naturally weak constitution, and health broken by mismanagement. I am twenty-six years of age this summer; I have for all intents and purposes been idle during the last three years, those years in which I ought to have acquired stores of useful knowledge; and my enforced idleness has been an idleness of pain and illness. Am I, like Sterling, to end in being ‘beautifullest sheet-lighting, not to be condensed into thunderbolts’? Are we to look forward to endless ‘peregrinities’,¹⁸ the lingering death of me after some few years more of flitting to and fro consumptively?¹⁹

June 3. Saint-Lô. I did not do Bayeux justice. On a second visit to the cathedral, by dint of staying there in quiet thought for two hours, I harmonized my mind to its severe and heaven-aspiring beauty. This church has the bloom and freshness of adolescence; the strength of the old Norman with the delicacy and luxuriant loveliness of early Gothic. The huge round arches of the nave are adorned with diapers and traceries, not yet formed into flowers or foliage, but rich like figured brocades. The transept and the choir expand into the beauty of clustered columns, soaring to a vast height and feathering with fantastic leafage, while the long pointed windows of clerestory and chapel hold wheels, cut into hexagons and quatrefoils by pure crisp cusps, the very models of expanded summer blossoms.

Unfortunately, France, like England, is possessed with the mania of restoration. Picturesqueness is everywhere being sacrificed to neatness, and historical interest to archaeological pedantry. The walls of churches are scraped, their fittings remodelled to one date, the broken glass replaced by crude modern work; and wherever you go, you find varnish instead of dust rust and patina, the mason’s thumb-mark instead of ‘the unimaginable touch of time.’²⁰

This mania for the restoration of churches reminds me of the parable about the man’s soul swept and garnished, for the seven devils to enter in.²¹ On the eve of a great religious revolution, perhaps an ecclesiastical cataclysm, here are the buildings, the mere cups and platters of Christianity, being brightened up, while the spirit that alone quickeneth seems dying.²²

Saint-Lô does not encourage these dismal reflections. It has a funny irregular decrepit cathedral, fronting the open square, upon the top of the

hill above the river Vire. Each side of the building differs from the rest; the chapels sprawl at oblique angles; the towers are ingeniously constructed to combine similarity and dissonance. The whole workmanship is dishevelled, loose, mongrel. Moreover the hand of the restorer has not passed over it; and the archaeological contemns its imperfections.

Yet the church has beautiful old windows; labyrinths of grey glass, like spider's webs, enclosing figures bright as gems with green and blue and fiery crimson. Outside there is a little stone pulpit (like the one in Magdalen courtyard at Oxford): open to the air, with a Gothic canopy above it; from which you can fancy monks preaching or pardoners displaying their indulgences to countryfolk in Lent.

Of all the places I have seen this journey, Saint-Lô appears to me most capable of picturesque description. It stands on a hill of solid grey rock overhanging the Vire—a stream not unlike our Avon, which winds through wooded slopes of dark red iron stone and limestone, curving a gentle course toward the open plains and the not far distant sea. The valley, the river, the woods, the gardens on the hill-slopes, and the richly meadowed land beyond, can all be surveyed from the cathedral square.

This Val de Vire was one of the most favoured regions in old Normandy. Here a local poetry flourished, not altogether unlike that of the Provençals, a lyric poetry of spring and love and flowers, with interludes of martial clangour. For England was close at hand. You hear plenty about the English in the songs of Val de Vire:

Ces godons, panches à pois...
Dieu le Père si les mauldye!²³

I have bought a collection of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century songs of this country, the Cotentin and Val de Vire. If after reading them, I find they have sufficient substance, I may write something about the town and its poets.²⁴ Edward Strachey's St Loes²⁵ came from here; and St Sever is not far distant, whence the founder of the English family of Fitz Symond, my reputed ancestor, is said to have followed Duke William across the sea to Senlac field.²⁶ Indeed, every village in this district suggests some English name. Roussel and Husey are common still. So is Cave, I believe.

June 3. Coutances. We had such a blustering drive this morning in a high-built sort of gig, half-covered in—a *patache*²⁷ is it? The day was cold, but we wrapped up warmly. The country between Saint-Lô and Coutances has a look of Devonshire or Somerset: grassland and orchards, intersected by deep

lanes, feathery with ferns and foxgloves. The foxglove spires shoot into sunlight from coverts of tender half-unfolded fern fronds, or cluster in strong crimson groups beside a rustic stile, like handsome young soldiers in new uniforms. So far as I can understand, they call them *clochettes*,²⁸ here; or perhaps it may be *claquettes*,²⁹ from the sound their blossoms make when blown and clapped upon the hand. The former is more poetical; the latter more probable; peasants rarely look to poetry in the names they find for plants.

In Coutances I have at last received a true and profound impression from architecture. The cathedral is superb: moreover it is not swept and garnished, but still remains in its time-honoured state of cobwebs, dust and green mildew. The windows are labyrinths of blue and crimson; not tapestried in gigantic pictures like the clerestories of Rheims, but broken into jewellery and sparks of passionate dyed flame. This is the kind of glass I love. There is some of the same sort at Strasbourg. It is finer even than the glowing paradise of Florentine rose windows—the one at St Maria Novella, you remember.

Like all the best Norman churches, Coutances Cathedral has two massive western towers rising into spires, and a central lantern. This type prevails everywhere and through all periods, from St Étienne at Caen to St Ouen at Rouen. The nave and transepts are much shorter than is common in our English churches, but much higher, so that the proportions are entirely different. The whole is terminated by a chevet, or double apse, divided into chapels radiating from the semicircle. These fundamental forms seem to be universal in Normandy; but each church shows some particular features of construction. At Bayeux it was perhaps the chaste beauty of the later Romanesque style and the majesty of four great columns that support the central tower. Here the predominant effect is gained by the lantern, which from inside resembles a second church suspended in mid-air. The clumsy attempt at Siena to raise a dome above a Gothic building, has been here realized so skilfully as to combine external and internal beauty without sacrificing the least detail of architectural coherence. From every point of view this lantern, with its bold groining and glorious line of pointed windows, adds loftiness and grandeur to the church. But the finest effect is that which it produces in combination with the transept and the choir, as one walks slowly up the nave, and the height and space grow momentarily upon the eyes till they are satisfied by the sight of the crowning coping-stone, at an infinite distance overhead, binding the whole structure into unity. I could have wished for greater breadth in the side aisles, a bay or two more in the nave; but this would have suited the spirit of English, not of French building.

Coutances might be compared to Lincoln. Both towns stand on the tops of hills, crowned with three noble church towers. But Coutances is surrounded by a country prettily wooded and undulating, not by the bare impressive Lincolnshire flat.

A citizen of Coutances gave a large garden on the hill-slope to his town-folk. It is laid out in terraces and walks. Before we found it out, we met two old women sitting on the steps of a church and gazing across the house roofs to the lands below. They had a young man with them, slender and graceful, with a wistful look in his grey eyes, as though they were sweeping the horizon in search of something sweet and far away³⁰ he had not yet discovered.³¹ Charlotte asked them where the public garden was. They rose at once to show us the way; and the young man sauntered at their side, half bold, half shy, darting his love-laden soul³² out in furtive glances from heavy silky eye lashes. A singularly magnetic youth, with a force³³ in him 'eligible to burst forth',³⁴ and only too ready to do so. The simplicity of the two old dames in their prim white caps and blue check gowns formed a curious contrast to the passionate suppression of the boy, alert for adventures and eager³⁵ to taste of love's³⁶ forbidden fruit. I hummed to myself 'Non so più cosa son, cosa faccio.'³⁷ They grinned from ear to ear, going off into ecstasies of admiration over the cathedral and the beauties of the garden which they promised us. He, their son and nephew, as it turned out, kept appealing to me with his eyes, and asking mutely whether I too did not want something more than this. It was pleasant to see so much enjoyment of the simplest things in the old women, such gaiety and good humour, such kindly artless manners. Yet I fancy that they have their troubles. The mother told me she had only come to live in Coutances since *le dernier St Michel*.³⁸ Her husband was an old man of seventy five; and her son had a fancy for the town—he was a young man, a *fils unique*,³⁹ and this was his pleasure. Her sister still lived in the country. She became so sad at this point, and the lad lowered so disdainfully, that I changed the subject. However, I should have liked to know more about him. He must have a story; for his manners were excellent, and he knew some English, and his intelligence in seizing the nuance of what one said was perfect. And all the while his liquid eloquent eyes were asking me: 'do you want nothing? Is there nothing to give, nothing to get?' In a sort of way I corresponded; for these meetings with passing strangers, these magnetisms of one indifferent person by another are among the strangest things in life. I remember, for example, today, as though it had been yesterday, how several years ago a young man in a shirt and trousers, stretched upon a parapet below the Ponte di Paradiso at Venice, gazed into my eyes as I rowed past him, lifted his head, then rose upon his elbows, and followed me till I was out of sight with a fixed look which I shall remember if we meet in the next world.⁴⁰ Well: when the conversation flagged between Charlotte and me and the old women, one of them would say: 'Ah, quelle heureuse rencontre! Nous étions là assises sur les marches de l'église. Nous nous attendions à rien. Et voilà que vous êtes venus! N'est ce pas François?'⁴¹ And François only smiled a little sadly, and looked at me

with a trifle more of meaning in his deep grey eyes. I, for my part, felt how idiotically human life is made. Charlotte delighted in the kindly, hale, hearty, sweet-tempered, plain-featured, innocent, hospitable, elderly ladies. They liked the amusement of walking with two English tourists. But the young man and I, we wanted to be comrades, if only for a day or two in passing; he to hear of my life, I of his; to embrace and exchange experiences; to leave a mark upon each other's memory; to part at last as friends with something added, each by each to each. And things are so arranged that this may not⁴² be, perhaps ought not to be, though I cannot, for the soul of me, see why they should not be. I have forgotten all about the public garden, and the *limaçon*⁴³ which was its great attraction in the eyes of the old women. I only remember thinking that the said *limaçon* with its tortuous windings up an artificial mound furnished a good illustration of Dante's Purgatory,⁴⁴ and that the Terrestrial Paradise ought to have been reached at the top of the tedious thing alone with François. Which it was not. We said goodbye to aunt, mother, magnetic young man, and went on our way to the hotel.⁴⁵

June 4. Avranches. We have had a day of *diligences*. This morning we left Coutances in the *intérieure*⁴⁶ of a fusty old omnibus, which jolted us to Granville. A curious port, built upon a mass of black granite projecting into the sea. Like a formless Monaco, but with so much more of suggestion in the northern sea. The Channel Islands are visible from the terrace of the town, and long stretches of arid dunes stretching away northwards, salt, barren, uninviting. The homes are of grey granite and black slate, sometimes whitened. That is all I remember of Granville. Yet I carried another memory away, a thought rather than a recollection. It was a dreamy fancy of many young men, who had set forth from this port for distant voyages, for the fisheries, for Iceland perhaps, leaving their mothers and their sweethearts behind them, and some of them returning never, their beautiful strong bodies and white faces tossed to sleep on unfamiliar waves—the vast waterways of the monstrous world, which Granville surveys unmoved from her station on the sea-commanding promontory.

There we mounted the *coupé* of another ramshackle *diligence*, which brought us in comfort through a pastoral land of meadows and heaths and orchards and copsewoods of beech and avenues of poplar and sweet chestnut to Avranches.

The town stands, like an Italian city, on the top of a high hill, seen from afar, approached by zigzags. The view of it from a distance, with Mont Saint-Michel, solitary, away there by the sea-shore, was glorified for us by sunlight flooding the whole landscape and gilding the blue mists of the plain.

I hope that this travelling does me good. I have more of animal spirits than I had. But I am very susceptible to cold. It is sad to remember a time when one enjoyed instead of shrinking from the freshness of morning and of evening. Nerves too continue to be irritable. The least noise keeps me awake, and we live in the midst of *diligences*. These paltry country places are more full of foolish bustle than London or Paris. Perhaps one attends to it more here. Perhaps it would be better for me if I could fraternize with the people, drink with them, and go to bed narcotized. The life of a mere brain-being is bad. I do not touch, or else shrink from the coarse human nature⁴⁷ round me. Yet I cannot say how I long to meet with a man, a comrade, the first face and hands responsive to my own. Why? I do not know. I hate the sophistications of my existence, the being penned up in a cage of archaeology and literary picture-making. All this has nothing to do with the ties, inviolably sacred, which bind me to my home, and make me feel my centre there is you.

June 5. Avranches. I am sorry from your letter of last Saturday to see that you are out of spirits. With all my heart I hope that the burden of this childbirth may be the last you'll have to bear. You forecast the future far too much. For all the great occurrences of life I am strong enough; it is for the little things, the daily ennui of my tired brain and eyes, the helplessness and inability engendered by my state of health, that I feel myself feeble. We ought not to sit down like the German girl in the cellar, watching the hatchet which might someday fall on her, forgetting the ale that kept running from the cask.⁴⁸

No one is happy who has not a deep firm faith in some ideal far beyond this world, in some law of majesty, beauty, goodness, harmony superior to the apparent meanness, ugliness, evil, discord of the present dispensation. How difficult it is to live the life of the spirit thoroughly, to be permanently interested in the eternal things, the durable relations! This is why so many of us are not happy. I have a great deal of faith in my soul, vague, not reduced to a creed. But what I have, sustains me in the obscurity of my energies. To this I owe my happy moments—to the support I draw from nature, books and art—the imperishable thoughts of man, the everlasting mysteries and glories of the world—finally from that, whatever that is, which underlies all this and is the real reality, the truth and unity of the whole. Those who are not 'tenoned and mortised'⁴⁹ upon something indestructible, must be rendered wretched by the changefulness and barrenness of daily life. They may not know exactly that they are poor and miserable. Or they feel it vaguely, like the sullen Roman nobles, so magnificently painted for us by Lucretius, hurrying from one palace to another to escape the gloom of boredom.⁵⁰ It is wonderful that we are at all contented with the transitory interests and

trivial occupations which fill up the inexorable years—each year leading us, at so short a distance, to the bourne of death, and after death, if anything, then either endless change or continuity of eternal being. In either case the soul needs a refuge from the things that pass like a show, to some reality above them and beneath them.⁵¹ This I feel with all the force I have. The all but mortal blow which prostrated me three years ago, since when I have been like a clock suddenly stopped, marking the time with moving fingers no more, has taught me so much.

It is a commonplace to call this world a vale of tears,⁵² and man born to sorrow as the sparks fly upward.⁵³ But this is only a commonplace because of its profound and everyday truth. We try to ignore it; in youth we dream of embellishing our own life at least. But we cannot. Cares, ill health, ennui assert their way, even if there be no greater evil. To remedy their misery, men make religions—imagine a new heaven and a new earth. There, somewhere in the future, the wrong will surely be made right. The tired eyes which cannot rest while fixed on a near object, are free and at ease when directed to some distant tower or purple mountain. So the soul, fretted by life, looks always onward, far away, to the blue hills of heaven and the fair turrets of the New Jerusalem.⁵⁴

The misery of scepticism, or intellectual doubt, of worldliness, of mental indolence and moral inactivity, consists in this—that men have to suffer cares, ill health, ennui, and often the greater evils of life, without that calming prospect, without any hope that the wrong will be made right, the broken pieces joined into a perfect whole hereafter. I verily believe that a robust vice, an energetic state of sinning, if it inspires confidence in some reality, is better than the condition of negation. If the world is to live without faith, and to become conscious of the vanity of things—that is, if men take to seriously thinking upon the facts of this life without a religious trust in God—a simultaneous suicide might almost be expected. What people call pessimism (the philosophy of Schopenhauer⁵⁵ for example) implies and virtually professes this conclusion.

Is it the misfortune or the fault of folk in this age that they are so often denuded of belief in God—I mean of the personal and vividly felt God of Christianity? No one can really doubt that some God animates the world. *Quis Deus incertum: est Deus.*⁵⁶ I have no living God in constant relation to myself, no father, no future host and friend and master in the immortal houses. At times this very disbelief appears to me as an illumination and a martyrdom, because I know that it has not been brought upon me by the desire to elude the law of God, and because it is actually painful. At other times I cannot maintain that attitude, when I consider how mean my interests are, how poor the purpose of my life, what difficulty I find in rising above vulgar, gross, trivial thoughts and passions. The ideal seems so far

away from me. {Compared with other people,} I may not appear as sordid as I feel; but every man ought to compare himself with what he might be, with his own best self, before he thinks of applying the standard of other people.

In these difficulties I fall back upon a kind of Stoic mysticism—on the prayer of Cleanthes,⁵⁷ the Proem of Goethe's 'Gott und Welt', the phrase of Faust 'entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren',⁵⁸ the almost brutal optimism of Walt Whitman.⁵⁹ I cry to the cosmos, though thou slay me yet will I trust in thee! Can a religion be constructed out of these elements? Not a tangible one, perhaps, nothing communicable to another heart.⁶⁰ But a religious mood of mind may be engendered sufficient for the purpose of living not ignobly.

I have no will to sprawl contentedly or the reverse like the common herd and children. You shall see me die or become idiotic through ennui or soul-sickness first. It is not good for men to sprawl. Let us say:

Je souffre; il est trop tard; le monde s'est fait vieux:
Une immense espérance a traversé la terre;
Malgré nous vers le ciel il faut lever les yeux.⁶¹

Let us say this and make the best of it we can.

You and I together must be strong in this world; be it what it is to be for us—or if we are weak, we are still together. I clench my fists, and refuse to be beaten. I gather strength in myself, when flung down to the lowest, and find wings in the futility and infamy of my nature. So should you. Pain, grief, despair raise men above the condition of dumb creatures and infants. There is a dignity in endurance.

Do not imagine that I am writing all this like a sermon on common-places. I am feeling it very intensely. For today has disappointed me much. I thought I was getting stronger. But two hours of real interest and keen attention at the Mont Saint-Michel brought back my worst brain symptoms. Like Mr Sydney Dobell,⁶² I have, it seems, still to avoid what gives me true mental pleasure. I sat for half an hour on the steps of the monastery, quite stunned with mere nervous annihilation, staring at the stonecrops, hyssops and lichens; and the drive back to Avranches was very doleful. I cannot write, today at least, about the place. I think it is the most interesting thing I have seen upon this tour; and until I broke down, I allowed myself to be absorbed in learning it. Then followed the prostration of utter helplessness. Grievous to have the very main-spring of all sensations and thoughts broken! My chest is perhaps stronger; but my head is good for nothing.

June 6. Avranches. It was well that we went to Mont Saint-Michel yesterday. Today the rain descends in deluges, and I shall employ my time in writing

an account of one of the most impressive places I have ever visited. I am afraid that I cannot do justice to my own impressions. The wretchedness of yesterday still lasts, though it has abated more quickly than I could have hoped for in London.

Mont Saint-Michel, at first sight, is one of those places which you seem to know by heart, and scarcely want to look at. The conical hill of granite rising from a flat expanse of sand and salt water; the buildings crowned with Gothic pinnacles and turrets; the bastions descending to the sea by zigzags; all this has been often painted. No less familiar are the houses of the township, attached like swallows' nests to ledges of bare rock, nestling beneath the massive masonry of the monastic strong-hold like the mud dwellings of those building bees you see on ancient monuments. To complete the sensation of being in a picture, as we approached the Mount across the Grève, an appropriate group of fishermen and fishwives with bare legs and blue jackets had gathered just outside the town gate, bargaining about the sale of whelks and cockles. They made the necessary foreground. Breezy clouds and stormy strips of light with wheeling gulls gave value to the distance.

The gate is one upon which a rhetorician of the modern school of art criticism might write an eloquent chapter. Rudely carved from the granite of the island, and enclosing a portcullis, it bears upon its ample front a long deep undulatory slab of sculpture, imaging the waves of the sea, wherein are fashioned fishes diving. The symbolism of the steadfast granite, the shifting tides and treacherous sands, the prey of men upon those waters, might be elucidated at greater length than I can spare. Such as it is, this portal forms, as it were, a frontispiece to the whole Mount. For that is consecrated to St Michael in the Peril of the Sea, to religion and to knighthood, to the ark and strong rock of the spirit in the midst of even more destructive waves than Neptune's.⁶³

The sea has played its part of havoc on the dreary Grèves around Saint-Michel. At one time a forest stretched from the mainland to the Channel Islands, surrounding the Mount and its sister islet of Tombelaine. But in the year 709 AD the sea rose, swollen by tempestuous winds, and swept through the forest at high tide, converting its bed into a swamp, which since that time has remained waste, partly the sport of salt water, and partly an unfruitful flat of sand. The cause of this submersion seems to be unknown. Some depression of the region may have taken place. But this was not sufficient to yield the whole tract up to ocean. A large portion, called the Grève, is only visited by the highest tides, which come rushing past the Mount with a crested wave, like the Eagle of the Severn,⁶⁴ washing against those adamantine basements, loosening the waste into dangerous quicksands, and spreading a shallow of sea-water over the whole bay.

Mont Saint-Michel is a primeval haunt of human worship. Who shall say how many gods have dwelt there? The Druids consecrated the Mount as a high place of their forest cult. The Christians gave it to St Michael—Michael, the prince of the legions of the air, the conqueror of Lucifer, the destined chainer of the Dragon, the successor of Bel and Heracles,⁶⁵ the tutelary deity of elevated, sea commanding, lightning smitten sites. The adoration paid to this archangel, who is also the minister of judgment at the last day, has elements of peculiar charm for our imagination. In England the highest churches are dedicated to him. Dundry is an instance. He inhabits the hill-tops, round which winds battle and the clouds chase, which commune with the stars and give resting-place to the feet of celestial couriers, which invite the lightning, and stand like watch-towers for the armaments of heaven to overlook the outspread land and see what wars may there be waged against the evil one.

The fate of Mont Saint-Michel has been singular. Castle and shrine have always subsisted together on its cone. Druids, Romans, Christian monks and knights, made it in succession their stronghold and their altar. During the last half-century it became a prison: pilgrims and warriors and hermits⁶⁶ chased away. Now it is a museum of the past, and a church—an empty miracle, whose pilgrims are travellers in search of the picturesque, whose guardians are archaeologists possessed with the mania of restoration. Superstitious veneration and utility have vanished, leaving memorials behind them for prying minds. Thus the genius of the nineteenth century submits all monuments of antiquity to historical and artistic curiosity, making them objects for learned interest. We have stripped the Palatine, and are ready to dig into Delphi.⁶⁷

The exterior of the feudal and monastic buildings of Saint-Michel cannot easily be spoiled. Their Romanesque and Gothic masonry is overgrown with yellow lichens, stoneworks, white hyssop, wild pinks, and red valerian. The archaeologist will not scrape these off, as he has torn the flowering shrubs and creeping tapestries from the Colosseum and the Baths of Caracalla.⁶⁸ It is not worth his while here. Sea-winds have eaten the solid blocks of granite, red and grey, into honeycombs; or where the stonework resists their effort, have painted it with weather stains. The colour therefore of the whole structure is very delicate and varied.

You enter by a dark and massive tower, pierced with a gigantic opening, guarded by double battlements and a portcullis. It is the gate of a castle and a prison; for Mont Saint-Michel has been both, as well as a monastery. This door leads into what seems utter darkness, until the eye becomes accustomed to the little light that falls from the northern windows and lancets of a vast hall. The guide led us through two noble halls. In one of these the monks distributed alms and entertained pilgrims. For more than two

centuries it has been called the *salle de Montgomery*, because it was here that nearly a hundred soldiers of the Huguenot chief were slaughtered, one by one, as they climbed at night into the convent fortress.⁶⁹ They expected to carry death and treason with them; but they found these waiting for them; and were destroyed, each by himself, without the knowledge of his doomed successors. The next is called *les Écuries*. It is a vaulted Romanesque chamber of immense height and length, in which the Knights of the Order of St Michael stabled their horses. A postern gate at the extreme end, from which one can see the shore and tufted rocks below, gave entrance to the chargers. Standing there in gloom, gazing out into the bright light upon the broken cliffs, I pictured to myself these horses scrambling up the rocky path, led by the squires, panting, armed, and bleeding perhaps from combats waged upon the sandy tracts around the Mount.

Above these two halls are another pair, of equal size, and greater architectural beauty: the *salle des Chevaliers*, where the thirty-six knights founded by Louis XII held their chapters;⁷⁰ and the old Refectory. The one is a piece of late Norman work, severe, simple, yet elegant; the other is a very refined chamber of pointed Gothic. Both have been defaced during the period when the Mount was a prison—walls pierced for windows, pillars sawn through, carved work broken down. Still the general effect remains.

Above there is yet a third tier of building; the dormitory of the monks, and their cloister. It would be impossible to imagine a more exquisite specimen of Gothic than these cloisters are. Their narrow lancets, slender shafts and graceful foliage belong to the best period, while their windows command a view across the bay, the Grèves, the distant ocean. The wind howls terrifically at this altitude; for the cloisters stand 400 feet above the sea. This prevents their being any galleries open to the outer world, after the fashion of Italian *loggie*.⁷¹ The central court, however, is quite free to the air, and not roofed over. Among the foliated capitals and spandrels I noticed one figure of Christ upon the cross, turned westward, facing the sunset and the sea, opposite the largest of the windows. Some saints were grouped on each side of the cross. I thought there was something pathetic, a fine touch of poetry, in setting this crucifix to front the ocean with its infinitude and the sunset with its illimitable yearnings.

All the buildings I have described together make up that has been called *la Merveille*. They deserve the name because of their marvellous position on a narrow ledge of cliff, which has been strengthened and enlarged by buttresses and substructures of immense power, yet light and airy in appearance. This is the triumph of the Gothic style—to be both strong and graceful, like young Galahad and Percival,⁷² armed *cap à pie*⁷³ in heavy steel, but at the same time fair and beardless and desirable. The name of Merveille might have been given for a different reason, since the building is a miracle

of human perseverance. This rock, at the verge of the ocean, in the midst of a great plain, surmounted by spires and pinnacles, was continually attracting the lightning, and being burned down and rebuilt. The belfries were reduced to ashes, the peals of bells molten, the woodwork consumed, the masonry riven by the two-edged sharpness of the levin-fork.⁷⁴ Yet quietly and obstinately the monks renewed their habitations, without taking it amiss that St Michael, general of the hosts of heaven, should be unable to divert from this own house roof the fiery darts of the fiend.

The buildings of La Merveille show in a more striking way than any other portion of the Mount its double purpose, chivalrous and monastic. The Knights, the monks, the pilgrims, the war-chargers, were all contained beneath this spacious roof. Here councils of war were held, and abbots elected. Monks meditated in quiet cloisters lifted high between the heavens and ocean. Pious travellers from every land of Europe, some of them children from far distant German forests led by priests, here rested after their long journey and heard unfamiliar speech.

Another part of the old buildings, hollowed from solid rock, introduces us to dungeons, *oubliettes*,⁷⁵ *in pace* cells.⁷⁶ A hideous region. Here is the *cachot du Diable*,⁷⁷ a square hole in the granite, without any aperture by which the sun can enter. Here too was hung the cage which a young Duc de Chartres demolished, as is told by Madame de Genlis.⁷⁸ I went into one of these sad places, dark, very dark, with a round hole far, far away above one's head, through which the daylight filters. Who could help thinking of the prisoners who languished there—some of them perhaps till death: how they watched cloud-fleeces flit across the narrow chimney, surmising from the greyness or the blueness of the chink whether it was fair or foul in the dear world outside; how they welcomed a bird which perched and plumed itself perchance upon that edge; how thoughtful they were when a bright particular star moved slowly across the little space, or a flake of snow or a hailstone fluttered down, blown to them by the sea-wind? At certain seasons of the year, a direct sunbeam or moonbeam must surely have pierced the funnel for a moment. It passed on, gladdening the open earth. But they abode in darkness, shut off from their fellow men, secluded in the scorn and horror of their sins. Are there any sins, I thought, black enough to condemn a man to this? If you must punish, were it not better to kill at once? But Cellini, with a broken leg and all the rest of it, lived through the miseries of just such a dungeon in Rome, and emerged at last to flaunt in silks about the court of Fontainebleau and to set his Perseus in the sun of Florence.⁷⁹ So it is better, perhaps, not to kill people outright. There is nothing like being actually in such a place, if only for a few minutes, to make one realize its meaning.

I cannot describe all the portions of this singular edifice, the product of so many centuries, the work of so many divers hands. But here are some

loose jottings; indications of what we rapidly surveyed. The covered ambulatory, where monks walked; sullen vaults, sparsely illuminated by niggard windows; haunts of melancholy conscience. The crypts in which the bones of those same monks were laid, with book bell and song at midnight, while the wind howled and the sea birds screamed outside in winter. The enormous columns fashioned from live granite to support the church; pillars of mighty girth, feathering into arches spurred with cusps as sharply carven as the points of a bat's wing. The staircases winding in and out and up and down: the covered galleries; the giddy turrets; the open courts and parapets, where here a soldier had escaped, and there another had committed suicide:—all cut out of the native granite, paved and walled and roofed with imperishable granite, hard and grey and cruel and sharp as the seaside granite; beaten round about with restless winds, lashed by the recurrent tides, salt with the sprinklings of sea-spray.

The church, however, must not be passed over so in silence. Its nave is of the finest Norman, belonging to a late period, when loftiness was studied, and the capitals of the round columns were adorned with beasts and foliage. The choir is of latest most aerial Gothic, in the light and soaring style of the fifteenth century. The nave prepares the soul for meditation; the choir lifts it aloft in ecstasy. The one bids us to kneel and stretch our arms abroad in supplication, to plan great deeds and vow life-lasting vows of self-devotion. The other invites us to assume the wings of music and spring lark-like singing to heaven's gate, raise joyful eyes and hands, and feel the inspiration of heroic fervour. The nave is the fit entrance to a shrine where prayers must be made; the choir, its fit completion, where prayers shall be answered. The whole is built of reddish granite, now scraped with over-zealous care, and mortared with some white cement. The glass of the windows has disappeared. It is as blank and bare as the cathedrals of Basel and Bern. The prisoners of late years were employed to rub it down. Some of them too adorned the choir with beautiful stalls and candelabra in wood-carving. One man, who must have had a real genius for this work, was imprisoned for a theft. They gave him his freedom as a reward for four magnificent candlesticks he made. But he loved thieving for its own sake, and is now in the gaol at Caen. Thieves, soldiers, and political prisoners were confined here. They used to live, each batch together, separated from the rest. I wonder how the soldiers amused themselves in their hours of recreation. The *détenus politiques*⁸⁰ had pleasant rooms, with a glorious view and plenty of air. They might have written volumes, if pen and paper were placed at their disposal.

This letter has been the work of a long wet day. Tired as I am, I feel the better for writing myself out. And yet I have produced nothing but a sort of misty guide-book. Had I not written, the details of the Mount would have vanished from my memory after some years. Nothing would have

remained but the moment of pain, when I sat exhausted on those granite steps, and stared at the stonecrops, after trying to comprehend and feel too much for my weak nature. What I have done by writing, has only this value—that I have been talking to you, and resisting my besetting weakness. We must make the machine of the brain go. It does not do to let it stop. Whatever happens, energize; even if the result be only like a diluted page of Murray's handbook.⁸¹ This, by the way, I have not with me; and what I have said about Mont Saint-Michel is probably wrong in a multitude of details. *Mir ist's gleich*,⁸² as the Germans say. Clumsily, heavily, I have recorded my impression, and put pressure on myself.

June 8. Le Mans. We had a long day yesterday, driving through a beautifully wooded country from Avranches to Dol, and there taking the train for Laval, where we slept. Distant glimpses of the sea and Mont Saint-Michel, now flashing with sunlight, now overcast with storm-clouds, lent charm to the woodland by their hints of an immensity beyond, and suggestions of that feudal past I dwelt on in my last letter.

Laval has a picturesque castle, flanked by round black towers, hooded with high cones and pierced with tiny windows. It overhangs the river, and frowns forbiddingly above the sprightly little town. The streets go up and down hill, converging on a cathedral square and an old gateway—bush-grown battlements and pointed arches. The houses are built of wood, storey by storey projecting over narrow alleys. Their fronts are carved with grotesque figures, monsters, scroll-work of foliage, and the inevitable Adam and Eve. It is curious what a respect medieval carvers had for Adam and Eve. I suppose, although they dealt so quaintly with nude, they liked the opportunity of handling it without reproach.

The inn was full of *commis voyageurs*.⁸³ They had debased and brutalised the service, bullied the landlord into idiocy, and turned the whole house upside down. At dinner they growled and grunted over their food like hogs, screaming for what they wanted, abusing the dishes and driving the servants wild. A fat fellow with a napkin twisted round his red bull-throat who sat next me, said to the waiter as a dish came round: 'Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça?' 'Porc frais, monsieur!' 'Vieux tu que je sois trichiné?'⁸⁴ This laconic dialogue, with its gruesome last word, is a sample of the conversation. Nobody attended to the beds except a hairy Orson,⁸⁵ who could not understand what we said to him. He was probably a Breton.

Le Mans has a very fine cathedral: nave Norman, choir Gothic: both in the richest style—the Norman running into acanthus foliage and all kinds of leafy traceries, the Gothic soaring into points and spires and arches of incalculable height. I might repeat what I wrote about the church of Mont Saint-Michel. But the choir of Le Mans is ablaze with painted glass,

surpassing all the jewelleries and tapestries and flowery meadows of the world in glow, comparable only to imprisoned sunset flames. In addition to its height, purity of design and brilliancy of colour, this choir is remarkable for a chevet of double aisles and chapels, so that three stages in the altitude are visible at one glance, leading the eye up to the crowning coping-stone.

June 9. Chartres. It is a blessing to be fond of books. They are a resource and a relief when all else fails. I wish you understood what it is to make a friend of such a book as the *Divine Comedy*. Nature is more refreshing; but you cannot always have recourse to her consolations. I repeat what I said before, that nature becomes more to me, and art less. This is the secret of Walt Whitman's influence over my mind. I do not quite know what you mean by art requiring an effort. All great things make demands upon our sympathies and our intelligence: none more than grand landscape, which, I believe, requires a long and patient apprenticeship for its comprehension. So do great characters, great statues, great buildings, great symphonies, great pictures. I suppose it was the effort you speak about, which broke me down at Mont Saint-Michel!

Le Mans and Chartres have the most splendid painted glass that I have seen anywhere, except perhaps at Rheims.

We sat in the choir of Le Mans yesterday while the sun was shining on its clerestories. The blue lent richness to the crimson, the crimson and the gold were interchanged and glorified, the green and amber were mutually sublimed and toned to chrysoprase. The sunlight penetrates those thick and solid panes, but does not pass through. It rests imprisoned there, turned into the rubies, sapphires, emeralds and topazes of heaven. These windows in the great churches are like the flowers upon alpine pastures, the sunrise and sunset in the world. They are the lightest and most joyous efflorescence of the poetry which animates the whole—that poetry which is solemn in the pillars and gigantic buttresses, aspiring in the vaults and arches, mysterious in the gloom of chapels and side aisles, audacious in the airy space enclosed, sprightly in the carved work of the capitals. They are the melody of this vast architectural symphony—the voice and soul and singing of its beauty. If while the sun illuminates their brightness, organs are playing underneath, and the 'sphery soul'⁸⁶ of music on aerial plumes flies through the space invisibly, interpreting, animating, humanizing all with the accent of our adoration, passion, or triumphant joy, *then* the meaning of the windows is made evident, the sister harmonies of sound and colour are combined, there is no feeling left but ecstasy.

How incomprehensible is the mind of those people who think white light, plain stone walls, and litanies not sung but said, more religious, more appropriate to the God of nature—to Him who wrought 'the awful rose

of dawn',⁸⁷ and hung the canopies of many-coloured clouds, and built the mountains with their fretted spires, and joined the flowers in sparkling jewellery, and tuned the voices of multitudinous birds and human beings—that those vast houses of prayer and praise, in which the poetries of all senses join, and heaven is realized on earth by ministry of art.

The essentials of a perfect cathedral, to my mind, are height immensely overpowering the dimensions of breadth and thickness, gorgeous glass, the highly pointed Gothic style, and audacity of design. In all these respects the best French churches surpass the English and the Italian. If Beauvais had been completed, it would have fulfilled my ideal.

Our long low buildings with square ends and Calvinized⁸⁸ interiors fall short of the ideal. In one detail, the superior richness of their vaulting, they are superior to the French. The Italian are too broad and sombre, too dull in design, too rich in merely decorative elements, too rectangular and square. The Gothic genius was not at home in Italy. And German Gothic, with its stiff geometrical regularity, always left me frigid.

I do not feel that Chartres quite realizes what I have attempted to describe. It was built at an early period, when the windows were rudely pierced and narrow, the lancet still obtuse, and the roof not bold enough in aspiration. It is colossal, but the huge dimensions are not easily seized by the eye. Nothing can be more beautiful than the world-famous rose windows and deep porches encrusted with solemn sculpture.

A very venerable gloom pervades the aisles, which would be austere, but for the glowing splendour of the glass which causes it. We sat there for two hours this morning, while the organ was preluding sweetly—its melodies seemed like the love thoughts of a young man, very delicate and pure and tender, caressing the air with exhaled passion, attuning the soul to wistful calm. Mass went on, and the church was full of people. I saw many of the old women whom you talk about, come to find God in his own house. Patient faces under clean white caps; sad faces puckered with age, withered with care; dry skinny hands and bent backs. On the chapel steps, on the granite basements of the columns, they sat immovable, majestic in their simplicity. We want a generation of painters like Millet⁸⁹ to interpret the poetry of their life, their monumental pathos. The vast roof spread above them; the clasp of angel wings was in the arches; the pomp of kings and popes and knights and saints shone in the jewelled windows; the organ surged and sang its 'young man's heart's complaint';⁹⁰ the priests made and worshipped God upon the altar. How small the human beings seemed, in the presence of those vast thoughts petrified in stone which girt us round—in the presence of those mightier ideas which prompted the founders and builders of the church, sustained the martyrs pictured on the windows, and which dignify the mystic drama of the mass today! And yet, these quiet patient old women, in their

ginghams and cottons of blue and red, the joy of whose life is gone, whose knees are feeble, for whom the night soon cometh,⁹¹ enshrine within their hearts the truest and best realities of the religion out of which this art and splendour came. For them the magnificent houses of God were made. For them the real and only sacrifice of the Mass is always taking place.

June 9. Chartres. Whit Sunday evening. Since I wrote and sent off my last letter this afternoon, I have spent more time in the cathedral. I only came to understand its greatness under the influences of the evening light. Sunbeams poured through the giant windows with a flood of level gold, casting slant shadows on them from the flying buttresses outside, so that one part was alive with flame, the other part subdued—like gems unpolished and uncut.

How long it takes to comprehend real greatness! The simplicity of the sublime is more baffling than the intricacy of elegance. I only discovered by long attention and concentration of thought that the height and space of this church surpass anything I have seen since leaving England—that the pillars are colossal, and the severity of the windows, row on row, has something more majestic than the aerial audacity which charmed me at Le Mans.

You would have enjoyed the subterranean church, the low, broad, beautifully arched vaults of which, extend apparently as far as the cathedral. Through the medium of the sonorous stone floors and ceilings, muffled sounds came from the aisles above. We heard the shrill cry of a treble voice, quavering out one of the vesper psalms, the dull boom of the diapasons, and a rattling of feet upon flags. Absolute silence reigned in the vaults themselves—silence, and darkness, only tempered by oil lamps suspended at intervals down the long corridors. The vistas of these aisles of the dead impressed me almost painfully. I stood alone at one point by an altar, and watched Charlotte with the guide lessening down the dim perspective—fading like memories which gradually sink back into the twilight of dreamy years.

When we ascended to the upper church, we found the choir at vespers. A hymn was being sung—Rossini's music—not his 'Carità',⁹² but probably one of the same series—a tenor solo, sustained by a full chorus. This kind of music was not inappropriate to the place. At Chartres I found its meaning high up in the rich hues of the windows. None of Rossini's cadences are more melting than their violets, none of his crescendos more passionate than their reds, and the *sehnsucht* of his melody seemed to be written in glowing characters of green and gold and blue.

I wish some kind fairy would give me rest. I have no rest in my head. It goes on worrying me. And what am I to do? I do nothing in particular to fatigue it. We must, if I come to Hastings, try to sit together by the sea and be quiet.

Upon this note the extracts from these letters cease. It is not difficult to see why my head was tired. The hyperaesthesia indicated upon every page is only too apparent. As I find written in one of the passages I did not care to transcribe: 'During all this journey I have been more excitable than dead.'

On the whole, I returned to England worse than I went. Such a fortnight was enough to fatigue anyone. Not only did I try to feel and understand everything I saw; but I scrutinized my own soul at every spare moment. And then how much I wrote! The letters were not intended for publication. Still they were composed with literary style and a large amount of compressed emotion. I have not made use of more than parts of them, selecting what seemed to illustrate my mood of thought and feeling under several aspects. Much that was strictly private had to be omitted.

After a short visit to Hastings, where we seem to have stayed until June 23rd, we returned to London, and lived at 27⁹³ Norfolk Square. I could not shake the lung mischief or the brain weariness off; but grew worse and worse during the hot weeks, panting continually to be in Switzerland.

Henry Sidgwick, whose acquaintance I had recently made, was also staying in London—philosophizing, going to spiritualistic séances, and trying to support himself (for an experiment) on the minimum of daily outlay. Our acquaintance ripened rapidly into a deep and close friendship, which has been of inestimable value during the last twenty two years. It would be difficult to say how much I owe to the rarely noble character, the wisdom, the extraordinary mental originality, the inexhaustible sympathy and kindness of this most remarkable man.

This summer and the year which followed were of such importance in my life that I must relate the incidents in some detail, and illustrate them by extracts from notebooks and letters in my possession.

I began writing poetry again during the hot summer weather; and all my poems were composed upon the subject of masculine love. The second half of 'John Mordan', 'Diego', 'Love and Music', 'The Headmaster',⁹⁴ together with a great number of dithyrambic pieces in the style of Walt Whitman, belong to those months. Yet I find myself constantly doubting my own literary faculty:

Art is very long. I have not yet vigour of nerve enough to give to composition that patient and incessant application which results in form. I have the molten fluid in my soul; but the strength to fashion the mould for it is wanting.

Whether I am a poet or not, I am haunted by certain situations and moral tragedies which demand expression from me. I suppose that this arises from what I have myself suffered in the past—emotional distress that has indelibly impressed my nature, and which reproduces itself in the shape of dreams or dreamlike images. Long ago I crushed the tendency to write these situations into poetry, as being injurious to my health of mind and body. Besides, I had no belief in my artistic faculty. Yet, for all this, the tendency to do so remains and gathers force; the ideas have never left my mind, but have acquired distinctness and durability with my growth.

There is a passive and an active imagination. The one creates, the other sympathizes. The one makes new things for the world, the other appropriates whatever has been made, informing the past with something of fresh life. To men as are not in a true sense artists, it is a solace thus to retrace the history of the world. Like Dürer's *Melancholy*,⁹⁵ they sit brooding, their minds a mirror, their wings down-drooping, their arms sinewless, their back unbraced.

[It appears to me now that I entirely misunderstood my own case. What was really happening was that I was pining away through the forcible repression of my natural inclination for the male sex.⁹⁶ I could not keep]⁹⁷ my thoughts from running on this subject; I could not prevent myself from dreaming at night about it; I could not refrain from poetizing the passion in a hundred forms. What would have cured me, would have been to indulge it. Every thing short of that, I seem to have allowed myself, because I could not help it. But this conduct resulted in a dangerous nervous erethism, especially since I was living as a bachelor in marriage. My wife, before the birth of her second child, suffered from a strong feeling of repugnance for the marriage bed;⁹⁸ and after her delivery, we did our utmost to avoid another pregnancy. The third which ensued came by accident during the next spring, when the wretched conditions of this sort of life⁹⁹ forced us to resume cohabitation. The precautions which we then used, failed on one occasion; and it was in an old room of a Ferrard inn that Madge was begotten.

The circumstances here described aggravated my nervous and pulmonary maladies. I was in a perpetual fever.¹⁰⁰ Early in the morning I used to rise from a sleepless bed, walk across the Park, and feed my eyes upon the naked men and boys bathing in the Serpentine. The homeliest of them would have satisfied me; and I wrote my feeling out in a prose poem which will be reported in its proper place.¹⁰¹ Sometimes the literary expression of my incurable malaise assumed an almost hysterical form:

I have in my heart's ear a couplet of Theognis:

ὄλβιος ὅστις ἐρῶν γυμνάζεται, οἰκαδε δ' ἐλθῶν
εὔδει σὺν καλῷ παιδί πανημέριος.¹⁰²

This is thine, O man,¹⁰³ to do! to supple strong limbs in not ignoble toil, to take fair limbs in amorous embrace, to sleep half-waking through long afternoons with beauty lulled upon thy bosom, thinking no wrong the while, and doing none, but cherishing thy youth with sweetness. Have I not seen it, felt it, lived it all? In dreams, in dreams, Iago!¹⁰⁴ I who am a poet, in my barren fancy, embrace¹⁰⁵ pleasure in dead dreams. Yes, this afternoon I held Lycidas upon the down of beds of dreaming, ἐστρωται τὸ λέχος,¹⁰⁶ embroidered silk, with eider-down for underprop of delicate flesh. Fair is the form ὀκτωκαδεκέτους παιδὸς ἔτ' ἐν γλαμύδι.¹⁰⁷ Him I clasped slumbering very sweetly in the gates of dreams. From his closed eyelids I kissed the bloom of dreams, and from his parted lips I drank the balm of slumber. I was Hypnos gazing on Endymion in the cave of Latmos.¹⁰⁸ Golden hair, and white neck, and breasts brighter than twin stars, and belly softer than the down of doves, and dewy thighs, and awful beauty of love's minister beneath the tuft of crispy curls, and slender swelling legs, and rosy feet, and long lithe languid arms. I had them all pressed to my body there, flank to flank—kissed every part and member of the lad—with wandering hand tasted them one by one, and felt the fervour of smooth buttocks glowing and divine. In a daydream: O Jupiter!¹⁰⁹

Four young men are bathing in the pond by the embankment. I pass; the engine screams and hurries me away. But the engine has no power to take my soul. That stays, and is the pond in which the bathers swim, the air in which they shout, the grass on which they run and dress themselves, the hand that touches them unfelt, the lips that kiss them and they know it not.

A dream of perfection. A face not necessarily of faultless beauty, but sympathetic to my taste, more amiable than all faces ever seen. It approaches. I gaze steadfastly. The face brightens, smiles with ineffable tenderness. We have surely known and loved each other in old times. We have waited very long, and now we shall not be separated again. Behold! already he has told me many things, and I have given to him of my treasures. Oh, what joy; oh, what a kiss! *Da mihi centum, deinde mille!*¹¹⁰ O friend, for thee, for thee, lost and loved in the atmosphere of thee! —I wake permeated by the sense of having communed in mind soul and body with the most beautiful and loveable being; not an atom of myself but has been touched and transfigured

by his contact. For the time I have no vain longings, no blush, no painful corrosion of the flesh by aching wishes. I am new born.

I sat in a lecture room, and listened to a rhetorician droning out dull periods with a deadened voice upon the familiar topic of the Dramatists I love so well. Yet the hour was not all barren of delight; for you, dear unknown boy, sat beside me, delicately made, with crisp hair curling round your forehead. Laughter dwelt in your eyes, and you looked as though you longed to be merry. —We touched each other. Little by little I used him to the feeling of my hand upon his thigh and knee. The tremors of his body ran magnetically through my right arm. I was penetrated with the streams of electricity that flowed from him. We exchanged no words. I do not even know the boy's name.

Give me love, love; to taste love, such as I imagine it, at length. Let me no longer hollow out my eyes and shrink my limbs with watchful longing. Let me not waste my days in wanderings, my nights in fevered visions of impossible delights. —Dreams soft and sweet as summer rain; dreams tremulous as music, tranquil as moonbeams; dreams restful as the grave, beautiful as Hesper, terrible as tidal storms of symphonies; dreams gloomy as Egyptian darkness, mournful as midsummer noontide, passionate as fading flowers.

To steady my brains in this hectic fever, and to distract my thoughts from unwholesome poetry-making, I now began, at Jowett's request, to translate Zeller's volumes upon Aristotle.¹¹¹ The task was extremely uncongenial and irksome. I worked at it with difficulty, and failed to produce anything worth looking at. Meanwhile the close attention I had to pay to small German and Greek type, and the constant recurrence to dictionaries, brought the chronic inflammation of my eyes again into an acute stage. I went doggedly on at intervals, until I had finished the whole text—not the notes—and then I flung the MS aside for ever.

No wonder I grew weaker and more ill. Four photographs taken of me by Elliot and Fry¹¹² in the month of July 1867 might serve as illustrations to a book on the physiognomy of phthisis. It was my one craving to be off to Switzerland. Instinct told me I should regain health there; for since those weeks I passed at Mürren in the year 1863, I had never failed to feel a peculiar well-being among mountains. Subsequent experience has proved [that my constitution is specially adapted to alpine air.]¹¹³ This craving expressed itself in dithyrambic incoherent prose:

In London, when I rise in the morning and go to bed at night, walking the streets and squares, deafened by their roar and dazzled by their movement,

when I pace the hot hard flags or sit beneath the blackened branches of the trees, when the bricks at night give out their stifling odours and the breathless dawn goes forth through overburdened air, when the passing crowds confuse me and wretched faces under wet lamps make me sick, when the canopy of tawny smoke is stretched all night above the noise and sin and worry of the houseroofs, but mostly while I lie awake and listen to my laboured breathing—the thunder of the town is heard outside, the gaslight slants sideways through the window chink, there is quarrelling and singing in a public house hard by, but before daybreak all is still, and the leaden-hearted morning, sick and sorry, climbs the jaded sky—then, mostly then, do I fly away on wings of thought to Switzerland. In my yearning I exclaim: ‘Now creeps the rose of dawning down the snows of Monte Rosa. A solitary watchman rings the dawn bell in the church tower. Light mist lies along the flowers and streams—the glacier rills have not begun to flow. Silently the glory of the sunrise floods into the snow-fields. The blue behind them glows into violet; the rose-bloom rises to gold, and after gold the saffron and the white light of the morning come.’ I turn on my pillow, and clasp my hands, but shed no tears, and find no rest. Then I begin again my musings: ‘On the meadows there are silver lilies, fair and frail as cloud-flakes blown across the moon. Gabriel is plucking them for Mary Queen upon a hundred hills. By the chestnut bole droops White Narcissus, shy and pallid, spending himself in sweetness. In the fine grass springs columbine; and on the ledges of the rocks flame tiger lilies, fierce lover-cups of fiery wine. The wind’s darling, the snowy plumage of hoarse gusty chasms, the splendour flaunting over roaring waterfalls, our saxifrage waves mute, unplucked.’ It is of no use. I try to put these thoughts aside. But they come crowding back again, ‘In the majesty and simplicity of the high mountains there is peace. The mowers go to their labour over shadowy lawns. The goatherds and the cowherds, who have seen the stars fade through the roof chinks of their chalets, lead their flocks afield. The dews dry upon the flowers, the rills begin to trickle, from the valley rise up fleecy mists and melt into the air.’ Then I remind myself that the mountains are not always so idyllic, and that I have not always been happy or at rest among them. ‘Well am I reminded of these things. I have not forgotten the misery of Engelberg, the anguish of the Brünli, the self-abandonment of grief at the Unterseen. Pitiless are the everlasting hills in their unsympathetic sunlight and sarcastic splendour, their imperial immobility, inaccessibility, indifference to life, their cruelty and wastefulness and never-ending dying. Inexorable are they as nature’s laws; the stars at night are not more cold; the earth’s rotation is not less friendly.’ And so I vainly interpose a little censure of my own ideal. It is of no use. I love the mountains as I love the majesty of justice. I adore God through them, and feel near to Him among them. I cannot breathe in this city.

I very rightly connected my present discomfort with past experiences of sorrow and repression. But I did not know how to cure myself. Perhaps I could not just then have cured myself in any way except the way I wanted—change of scene, return to the vital alpine atmosphere. I find myself writing thus to Henry Sidgwick:

Now that you are gone, and I am not to see you again until we meet in the dim distance of the Riviera, I feel that much which I have told you about myself must seem painful. My past life has been painful in many ways, and I bear in my body the marks of what I have suffered. With you, with my wife, with friends like Arthur and Graham, or when I am writing verses, I can treat those troubles of memory with cheerfulness. But at times, when my nervous light burns low in solitude, when the fever of the brain and lung is on me, then the shadows of the past gather round, and I feel that life itself is darkened. Moreover, this great shadow, not of the past, whereof I spoke today, still threatens. (Probably, my sexual difficulties.) Oppressed thus, I am often numb and callous; all virtue seems to have gone out of me, the spring of life to have faded, its bloom to have been rudely rubbed away. I dread that art and poetry and nature are unable to do more for what Dante with terrible truth called *li mal protesi nervi*.¹¹⁴ These darkneses, which Arthur calls my depression fits, assail me in splendid scenery, among pictures and statues, wherever in fact I ought to enjoy most and be most alive. It is only the intercourse of friends which does me really any good.

Large portions of these diaries and notebooks from which I am now quoting, consist of criticisms, reflections upon art, religion, morals, proving that, despite so much physical and mental malaise, I was forming my own mind:

Im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen, resolut zu leben.¹¹⁵ *To me to live is Christ, and to die gain*.¹¹⁶ How much simpler is the latter phrase. It looks like a motto for children.¹¹⁷ But how much larger, really sounder, is the former. It is large as the world, a motto for adult souls. We cannot in this age believe that St Paul's utterance is the whole truth. We cannot burn our books like the Ephesians,¹¹⁸ we ought not probably to sell our goods and give to the poor. Those were impulses of incipient¹¹⁹ faith. We have now to coordinate ourselves to what is, and accept the teaching of the ages.

What is left for us modern men? We cannot be Greek now. Since the sixteenth century, what would Aphrodite Pandemos have been?¹²⁰ [The sculptors must have modelled her, white as leprosy, adorned with golden emeralds. And the Spartan laws of comradeship, the Socratic doctrine of

a noble life developed out of boy-love with philosophy, how would these show in the tents of Mrs Grundy?]¹²¹ The ages and the seasons of humanity do not repeat themselves. The cypress of knowledge springs, and withers when it comes in sight of Troy; the cypress of pleasure likewise, if it has not died already at the root of cankering Calvinism; the cypress of religion is tottering, the axe is laid close to its venerable stem. What is left? Science, for those who are scientific. Art, for artists, and all literary men are artists in a way. But science falls not to the lot of all. Art is hardly worth pursuing now, so bad are the times we live in for its exercise, so faulty our ideas, so far more excellent the clear bright atmosphere of antique Hellas. What then is left? Hasheesh, I think; hasheesh, of one sort or another. We can dull the pangs of the present by living the past again in reveries or learned studies, by illusions of the fancy and a life of self-indulgent dreaming. Take down the perfumed scrolls: open, unroll, peruse, digest, intoxicate your spirit with the flavour. Beyond, there is the Athens of Plato in your narcotic visions; Buddha and his anchorites appear; the raptures of St Francis and the fire-oblations of St Dominic;¹²² the phantasms of mythologies, the birth-throes of religions, the neuroticism of chivalry, the passion of the past poems; all pass before you in your Maya-world of hasheesh, which is criticism. And Music? Ah, that is the best anodyne of all. In music we emerge from opium fumes, and narcotize the soul into a hypnotism which is spiritual. But, alas, not even slumbers of the critic and dreams of the music-lover are unstirred, are undisturbed by anguish. The world weighs on us. Nature and conscience cry: 'work, while it is yet day; the night cometh when no man can work.'¹²³ Heaven goads us with infinity of secrets and torments of innumerable stars. The spirit thrills us with its chidings. Hasheesh is good for a season, *faute de mieux*.¹²⁴ But this is no solution of the problem. Criticism, study, history, artistic pleasure will not satisfy the soul. 'Therefore to whom turn I but to thee the ineffable name?'¹²⁵ Ever onward toward infinity I voyage, demanding only what is permanent imperishable in the world of reality.

Drudgery too is a kind of goddess, worthy of worship for the gifts she gives ungrudgingly. A Cinderella sister of Semnai Theai is she,¹²⁶ clad in homespun, occupied with saucepans, sweeping up man's habitation, a besom in her horny hands. She is accessible and always to be found. The anodyne of fatigue is in the greasy leather wallet at her girdle. All men should pay vows at her shrine. Else they will surely suffer.

I wonder what morality is; whether eternal justice exists, immutable right and wrong; or whether law and custom rule the world of humanity, evolved for social convenience from primal savagery. I am led in my actions by impulse, admiration, regard for the moments of happiness I have recognized as beautiful, dislike of what is vile, mistrust of low and impious men—but never by fixed principles. I do not know what these are, and I very

much doubt whether anyone is guided by them. I pardon a vice for its sister virtue's sake. I feel coldly toward a virtue, because of its stolid insipidity.

The curious thing is that I never once thought of answering my queries by a direct appeal to life. I did not perceive that the touchstone had in my case to be an acted passion. {This was natural perhaps; for I had so recently made the experiment of marriage that I could hardly acknowledge its failure. Certainly I knew already that what I sought in marriage would not all be found there; I felt sure that no real life could¹²⁷ be expected from} the hasheesh of my intellectual work, from drudgery, from moral conduct. I recognized the fact that I was not truly living or alive, nay that I was very seriously dying. But I had not arrived yet at the point when passionate experience could be freely inconsiderately attempted. When the moment came for inclination to assume her sway over my nature, then criticism, intellectual work, moral relations immediately regained the meaning of reality. They fell into their proper places. The man was restored to such health and energy as he could hope for after the exhausting errors of his earlier pilgrimage. But this clearing up of my subjective atmosphere had yet to wait. It was nearly three years before the clouds began to roll away under the keen breezes of what I still condemned as sin.

The following piece, written during the summer of 1867 in London, describes what I felt at that period to have been the most decisive points in my past experience:¹²⁸

A SONG OF CYCLADES¹²⁹

The burden of Cyclades, the burden of many islands, of islands on the sea of my own life. (There is firm ground beneath; I am not all islands and sea.)

The hours of weeping because I was not strong, and no companions sought me; nor beautiful, and women did not love me; nor great, and no poems were in me.

The hour of passionate weeping for the sin and shame upon me—the hour of wailing for the unkindness of friends—the hour of hot blushing for the thoughts of my own soul: solitary, self-centred, judgment and confession hours.

The hour of dryness when I walked down-hill at Harrow to my tutor's house for the first time: it was May and birds sang sweetly: I heard upon the gravel the grinding of the wheels of my departing friends.

The hour of constancy before the clouded future, of patience, of boyish prayers to be made strong and pure.

The day of the first seeing of a dearest face and of the first hearing of a dearest voice—the day of music, the day of spring—the day of sunlight on church windows, of swallows wheeling round cathedral towers—the day of April and first love.

The day of solitude in woods, of hush, of green leaves, of the marvellousness of myself, of the knowledge of my own beauty.

The day of solitude in woods, of sorrow and soul-questioning and fear, of loneliness, of empty eager outstretching of arms, of gnarled branches and snow upon the ground and dead brake.

The day of the dark ante-chapel, of the fountain of a solitary voice, of the trumpet-blast of a shrill voice, of the triumph of a pure boy's voice.

The day of hand-linking and of the first kiss—the day of dear friends, of June in the deep woods, of columbine and sunny hair, of lying in ivy beds, of linking arms and pressing lips beneath trembling boughs.

The night of the bitterness of treason, the lonely windy moonless night—the night of the close cloister and its turf, the viperous and murderous night, when he I loved betrayed me, when he on whom I leaned on sold me.

The night upon the mountains, of the moon upon snow-mountains—the night of women's voices—the night of a woman's hand, of a kissed woman's hand.

The evening of gazing at crawling waters and yearning for death.

The evening of kissing lips polluted upon London pavements, of laughing and shaking hands, of straining breast to breast, of thanking God for her.

The dawn of questioning after a sleepless night, the dawn of the forthgoing of gorgeous sunlight upon rolling cloud, the dawn of seeing God alone upon the hills, the dawn of no man in the city but myself.

The day of the dropping creeds—
 The day of the deeper insight—
 The day of the gaining of new friends—the day of the losing of old ones: the
 bright day and the grey day.

The morning of seeing young swimmers, of bursting my heart for love
 of them.

The morning of dew and violets, of treading fresh places, of lemon
 boughs and olive branches.

The hour of resolves and of the singing of poems.
 The hour of utter despair.
 The hour of a blank brain.
 The hours of dulled eyesight.

The day of triumphs and prizes—of standing in the theatre—of standing
 among a thousand. I saw the faces of my father and my sister and my friend.

The hour of sudden radiance—the hour of unreasonable gladness—the
 hour of the overflowing heart—the hour of falling and kissing the ground,
 of laughing and leaping and screaming for joy.

The night of nakedness and tumult, of lying naked on the bare boards.

The night of vacancy and dread, of sitting in the armchair and seeing the
 embers die with fixed eyes.

The night of the golden dream, of the stretching of vain arms after the
 flying dream.

The night of the bridegroom—the night of the father—the dawn of the
 birth of children—the eve of the marriage of the bride.

The minute of loving a passer-by—
 The minute of utter annihilation—
 The minute of ecstasy above the earth—
 The minute of kissing a friend's mouth—
 The minute of reading a black heart—
 The minute of understanding music—
 The minute of sealing souls—
 The minute of waiting for an answer—
 The minute of silence—heart and soul and head are still—
 The minute of prayer.

The day when I first blushed for the women who spoke lightly of children, and for the men who spoke lightly of childbirth, and for the men and women who spoke without reverence of love.

The weeks of a dream of love, of love for a Bernese maiden, of love for the girl who lived by the towers of fair-walled Thun, of love for her who is gone to serve on the sides of Ætna.

The weeks of loathing and pain in the clutch of a London surgeon.

The hour of longing to kiss the withered lips of a good man, of finding the value of a soul-kiss, of knowing human purity in me.

The hours of longing and weariness, of aching and yearning for death.

The dawn of the resurrection of old pain, the dawn of accustomed sorrows, of the shouldering of well-worn burdens.

The song of Cyclades and Sporades sown on the ocean of my life.

Fruitful with oil and wine—

Barren with broken rock—

Harbours here, here quicksands, and here inaccessible cliffs.

The song of laughing waters, the song of churning and chafing waves, the song of the blue mirror, the song of the screaming and maddened breakers.

NOTES

1. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 284 blank (13 cms of clear space). The first paragraph on MS 285 is marked for deletion; it repeats the above and includes material that will recur in revised form on MS 317:

The following notes are extracts from letters written to my wife in the early summer of 1867. I was suffering from the chronic trouble in my head, (a permanent malaise and nervous sensibility), which during those years rendered me incapable of steady work. And at the same time my lung had again given way, causing my father grave anxiety by the progress of a sub-acute pneumonia. He thought it best to send me off upon a journey with my sister Charlotte, now Mrs Thomas Hill Green. We went to ramble in Normandy. (MS 285)

2. Deletes 'tuned', substitutes 'tempered' (MS 286).
3. Deletes 'great', substitutes 'mute' (MS 286).
4. Jean Roussel (d. 1339) was elected Abbot of St Ouen in 1303. He oversaw the reconstruction of the abbey from 1318.
5. Alexandre de Berneval (c.1367–1441) and Colin de Berneval (fl. 1441), father and son, master and pupil. They are buried together at St Ouen where each served as architect. Their effigies trace designs for the church's rose windows, compasses in hand: Alexandre was responsible for the south rose, while Colin was responsible for the north. There does not seem to be any truth in the legend, reported by Symonds, that 'master killed [...] pupil.'
6. *Causeries du Lundi* (1851–62) by Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve. A multi-volume collection of literary and biographical essays.
7. 'Crocuses and Soldanellas' was the title given by Symonds to a privately printed pamphlet containing various poems composed during visits to the Alps in the 1860s.
8. Symonds adapts the phrasing of a prophecy commonly attributed to Adam Smith in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776): America 'will be one of the foremost nations of the world.'
9. Trans.: a plant support; from the French for tutor, trainer.
10. The Pinacoteca di Brera at Milan holds Bernardino Luini's *Madonna del Roseto* (1510), but the flowers in this painting are roses. Symonds might be confusing this work with Luini's *Virgin and Child with a Columbine* (c.1520–30), now in the Wallace Collection.
Bacchus and Ariadne (c.1520–23) by Titian was acquired by the National Gallery, London, in 1826.
11. The Abbey of Saint-Étienne in Caen was founded in 1063 by William, Duke of Normandy (c.1028–87), future King of England. The nearby Abbey of Sainte-Trinité was founded by Matilda of Flanders (c.1031–83), William's wife and future Queen of England. The former was known as the *Abbaye aux Hommes* and the latter was known as the *Abbaye aux Dames*.
 The church of Saint-Pierre in Caen dates back to the thirteenth century, but there are records of an earlier church building on this site.
12. Trans.: an overview or sketch.

13. In Greek mythology, the Graces were goddesses and counterparts to the Fates and Furies. They were associated with beauty and happiness, whereas the Fates were associated with destiny and death.
14. The Nibelungs were a royal line of Burgundian kings (fl. 5th century). According to Norse traditions, Gudrun was the sister of Gunnar and the wife of Sigurd. She appears in the epic poem, *Nibelungenlied* (c.1190–1205), as ‘Kriemhild’.
15. Trans.: superfluous (body) weight.
16. The Bayeux Tapestry records the Norman conquest of Britain and dates from the late eleventh century. During Symonds’s visit in 1867 it would have been on display at the Bibliothèque Publique in Bayeux.
17. Possible allusion to ‘Queen Mab’ (1813) by Percy Bysshe Shelley: ‘Like subtle poison through the bloodless veins | Of desolate society.’ (IV, ll. 106–7)
18. From *The Life of John Sterling* (1851) by Thomas Carlyle.
19. Marginal note: ‘This kind of life did in effect last until 1870, that is to say for another three years after the date of the above letter’ (MS 293).
20. From ‘Mutability’ in *Ecclesiastical Sketches* (1822) by William Wordsworth.
21. Cf. Matthew 12. 43–45 and Luke 11. 24–26.
22. Cf. John 6. 63.
23. Symonds translates these lines in his essay, ‘Old Norman Songs’ (see note 24): ‘These Goddams, guts of grease... | The Father’s curse on them be laid.’ He glosses ‘Goddam’ as ‘the traditional French appellation of an Englishman.’
24. Marginal note: ‘The result was a *Cornhill* article, entitled “Old Norman Songs”, containing many translations’ (MS 295). This article was published in December 1870.
25. Popular name in the Strachey family. Symonds’s brother-in-law was Edward St Loe Strachey and his nephew was John St Loe Strachey.
26. Symonds’s ‘Note on the English Family of Symonds’ was published as an appendix to Brown’s biography (II, pp. 365–86—see Introduction). He traces the family history back to Adam Fitz Simon of Norfolk, the second son of Simon, Lord of

- St Sever. Senlac Hill is the name often given to the site where King Harold II deployed his troops for the Battle of Hastings in 1066.
27. According to *Murray's Handbook for Travellers in France* (1843), a *patache* was 'a rustic cab, verging towards the taxed cart, without its easy motion. He who rides in a *patache*, must be prepared to be jolted to pieces.'
 28. Trans.: bluebells; from the French for small bells.
 29. Trans.: tap dance.
 30. Deletes 'a love', substitutes 'something sweet and far away' (MS 297).
 31. Deletes 'known', substitutes 'discovered' (MS 297).
 32. Deletes 'eyes', substitutes 'soul' (MS 297).
 33. Deletes 'something', substitutes 'a force' (MS 297).
 34. From the 'Calamus' cluster in *Leaves of Grass* (1860–61 edition) by Walt Whitman. Later editions title this poem 'Earth, My Likeness'.
 35. Deletes 'curious', substitutes 'eager' (MS 297).
 36. Deletes 'any', substitutes 'love's' (MS 297).
 37. An aria from *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786) by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.
 38. Trans.: last St Michael; i.e. last Michaelmas (29 September).
 39. Trans.: only son.
 40. Symonds records this encounter in a sonnet entitled 'Ponte Di Paradiso'. This poem was included in the privately printed pamphlet, 'Rhaetica', and first published in *New and Old: A Volume of Verse* (1880) as part of the 'In Italy' cluster. It was reprinted in *Animi Figura* (1882) as part of the 'Passing Stranger' cluster.
 41. Trans.: Oh, what a happy encounter! We were sitting there on the church steps. We were not expecting anything. And you came! Is that not so, François?
 42. Deletes 'cannot', substitutes 'may not' (MS 298).
 43. From the Old French for snail. The Jardin du Plantes at Coutances boasts a raised spiral maze that resembles a snail's shell.
 44. *The Divine Comedy* (c.1308–21) by Dante Alighieri is divided into three parts: Inferno, Purgatory and Paradise.
 45. Brown includes an abridged account of this meeting with François, the passing stranger. He omits Symonds's meditation upon François's 'liquid eloquent eyes', the digression concerning the Ponte di Paradiso at Venice, his desire to 'embrace and

- exchange experiences; to leave a mark upon each other's memory; to part at last as friends with something added, each by each to each', and the concluding remarks about the public garden and *limaçon*. Brown, I, pp. 398–400 (see Introduction).
46. Trans.: interior.
 47. Deletes 'free nature', substitutes 'coarse human nature' (MS 300).
 48. Allusion to 'The Three Noodles' or 'Three Sillies' (or other variant), a traditional comic folktale.
 49. From *Leaves of Grass* (1855) by Walt Whitman: 'My foothold is tenoned and mortised in granite.' Later editions title and re-title this poem: 'Poem of Walt Whitman, an American' (1856), 'Walt Whitman' (1860–61) and 'Song of Myself' (1891–92).
 50. See Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 3.
 51. Allusion to Plato's allegory of the cave in his *Republic*, Book 7.
 52. Cf. Psalm 84. 6 and the traditional hymn, 'Salve Regina'.
 53. Cf. Job 5. 7.
 54. Cf. Ezekial 40–48 and Revelation 21–22.
 55. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) was a German philosopher. His works include *The World as Will and Representation* (1818), *On the Will in Nature* (1836) and *On the Freedom of the Will* (1839).
 56. Trans.: Which god we do not know: but it is a god. An allusion to Seneca's *Epistles* 41.
 57. Cleanthes (c.331–232 BCE) was a Greek philosopher and head of the Stoic school (263–32 BCE). The best known of his surviving fragments is a prayer or hymn to Zeus.
 58. Trans.: thou shalt forego, shalt do without. From *Faust* (1808 and 1832) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.
 59. Walt Whitman (1819–92), American poet best known for *Leaves of Grass* (1855). This collection went through various editions, each possessing different arrangements, constituent poems and typographical features. Symonds records his first encounter with Whitman's poetry in Chapter 12.
 60. Deletes 'mind', substitutes 'heart' (MS 303).
 61. Trans.: I suffer: it is too late; the world has become old:
 An immense hope crossed the earth;
 In spite of ourselves, towards the heaven we must raise our eyes.

From 'L'espoir en Dieu' (1850) by Alfred de Musset.

62. Sydney Dobell (1824–74) belonged to the 'Spasmodic' school of poetry popular during the 1840s and 1850s. He is best known for the epic poem, *Balder* (1854).
63. St Michael in the Peril of the Sea was a popular alternative name for Mont Saint-Michel.
In Roman mythology, Neptune was the god of the sea (equivalent to Poseidon in Greek mythology).
64. Symonds misremembers his tidal rivers: the Aegir, or Eagre, travels up the River Trent, whereas the Bore travels up the River Severn.
65. According to the prophet Daniel, Michael was prophesied to be 'the great prince' and guardian of the people of Israel (Daniel 12. 1). In the New Testament, Michael appears as an archangel who defeats the Devil and Satan in the form of a dragon (Revelation 12. 7–9).

The story of Bel and the Dragon appears in a concluding section of the Book of Daniel accepted by Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions, but considered deuterocanonical by Protestants. Bel was an idol and the dragon was a false god: Daniel exposed the former and killed the latter.

In Greek mythology, Heracles was the son of Alcmena and Zeus, the progeny of god and mortal. He performed twelve labours while in the service of Eurystheus in the hope of being made immortal. The second of these labours was the slaying of the Lernaean Hydra, a monster possessing a dog-like body and several snake-like heads.

66. Deletes 'churchmen', substitutes 'hermits' (MS 306).
67. The Palatine is one of Rome's seven hills. In Roman mythology, here the she-wolf cared for Romulus and Remus.

Delphi is located on a spur of Mount Parnassus in Greece. It was the site of the Delphic oracle and Temple of Apollo.

68. The Colosseum is an amphitheatre in Rome (built c.72–80). Restoration work in the early nineteenth century was funded by Pope Pius VII.

The Baths of Caracalla were the second largest public baths in Rome (built c. 211–17). Guillaume-Abel Blouet published his pictorial reconstruction of the baths, *Restauration des Thermes*

d'Antonin Caracalla, à Rome, in 1828. Several site excavations were carried out during the nineteenth century.

69. The Huguenots were a denomination of French Protestants who followed the teachings of John Calvin. They fought against Catholics in the civil conflicts known as the French Wars of Religion (1562–98). On 29 September 1591, Huguenot forces under the command of the Comte de Montgomery attempted to seize the Merveille fortress at Mont Saint-Michel. Having accessed the cellar, each man was raised into the hall above by means of a wheel used to transport water. Here they were met and killed.

There are two halls on the lower floor of the Merveille fortress at Mont Saint-Michel: the cellar (also known the *salle de Montgomery*) and the almonry. Symonds misattributes the story of Montgomery and the Huguenots to the almonry.

70. Symonds misremembers his French monarchs: the Order of Saint-Michel was founded by Louis XI in 1469.
71. Trans.: lodges.
72. In Arthurian legend, Galahad and Percival were Knights of the Round Table who discovered the Holy Grail (alongside Bors). Galahad was famed for his purity and chastity.
73. Trans.: head to toe.
74. Archaic term for lightning.
75. Trans.: a dungeon or cell accessed through a trap-door or hatch in the ceiling (from *oublier*, to forget).
76. Trans.: literally, in peace. In monastic tradition, *vade in pace* was the practice of solitary and life-long confinement as a punishment for the contravention of vows.
77. Trans.: devil's dungeon.
78. Louis Philippe (1773–1850) acceded to the *duché* of Chartres in 1785 and the *duché* of Orléans in 1793. He served as King of France between 1830 and 1848. In July 1788 he ordered the *cage de fer* at Mont Saint-Michel be destroyed.

Stéphanie Félicité, Comtesse de Genlis (1746–1830), was a prolific writer and *gouverneur* in the Duc de Chartres's household. She records the destruction of the cage at Mont Saint-Michel in her *Mémoires inédits sur le XVIII^e siècle* (1825–28).

79. In 1537 Benvenuto Cellini was imprisoned in the Castle of Sant'Angelo, Rome, on charges of embezzlement. He recounts the

story of his arrest, imprisonment and escape (the cause of his broken leg) in the first book of his autobiography (Chapters 100–9).

The Château de Fontainebleau, near Paris, was the site of the French royal court from the early sixteenth century.

In Greek mythology, Perseus was the son of Danaë and Zeus, the progeny of god and mortal. Cellini's statue of *Perseus with the Head of Medusa* (1545–54) stands within the Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence.

80. Trans.: political prisoners.
81. The travel guide series, *Murray's Handbooks for Travellers*, began publication in 1836.
82. Trans.: To me it is the same.
83. Trans.: commercial travellers, salesmen.
84. Trans.: 'What is this?' 'Fresh pork, Sir!' 'Do you want me to be all infested with worms?'
85. An allusion to *Valentine and Orson*, a traditional French romance dating back to the late medieval period. The eponymous twin brothers are separated at birth: Valentine is raised in luxury, while Orson is raised by animals.
86. From *Westward Ho* (1607) by Thomas Dekker and John Webster.
87. From 'The Vision of Sin' in *Poems* (1842) by Alfred Tennyson.
88. Calvinism is the branch of Protestantism shaped by the teachings of John Calvin. Amongst their more distinctive doctrines is predestination.
89. Jean-François Millet (1814–75), French painter best known for his realist portrayals of rural working life, e.g. *The Gleaners* (1857).
90. From 'Walt Whitman' in *Leaves of Grass* (1867 edition) by Walt Whitman: 'I hear the violoncello, ('tis the young man's heart's | complaint;).' Earlier editions left this poem untitled (1855), or attached the longer 'Poem of Walt Whitman, an American' (1856); later editions re-title it 'Song of Myself' (1891–92).
91. Cf. John 9. 4.
92. Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868) was an Italian composer best known for his opera, *The Barber of Seville* (1816). 'La Carità' (or 'La charité') was the third constituent piece in his *Trois choeurs religieux* (published in Paris, 1844).
93. Symonds misremembers the number of his house: he lived at 47 Norfolk Square. Brown reproduces this mistake (I, p. 412).

94. Symonds's 'John Mordan' cycle was broken up and its titular poem lost, presumably destroyed. Composed between 1866 and 1875, it enjoyed a chequered career. Parts of the MS were locked away as early as 22 January 1866; in a letter to Henry Graham Dakyns, Symonds reports that 'a second part of John Mordan' was 'locked up beyond my reach [...] and Catherine holds the key' (*Letters*, I, p. 615). In March 1869, he confessed to his sister, Charlotte, that the key had been cast into the River Avon; he predicted the poems would remain hidden 'until I have force to burn them or until I am dead' (*Letters*, II, p. 47).
- 'Diego' is a titular poem in Symonds's privately printed pamphlet, 'The Lotos Garland of Antinous and Diego'.
- 'Love and Music' and 'The Headmaster' are also lost works. In a letter to Henry Graham Dakyns in July 1868, Symonds titled the latter poem 'Ser Brunetto, or The Headmaster' (*Letters*, I, p. 829). Brunetto Latini was Dante Alighieri's guardian and teacher; the pupil consigned his teacher to the seventh circle of hell in *The Divine Comedy*, Inferno Canto 15.
95. *Melancholia I* (1514), an engraving by Albrecht Dürer.
96. The phrase 'for the male sex' has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 318).
97. Passage marked for deletion. Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from 'their back unbraced' (MS 318) to 'No wonder I grew weaker and more ill' (MS 322). See Brown, I, p. 414.
98. Deletes 'a sort of disgust for coition', substitutes 'a strong feeling of repugnance for the marriage bed' (MS 319).
99. Deletes 'state of my sexual health', substitutes 'conditions of this sort of life' (MS 319).
100. Deletes 'erethism', substitutes 'fever' (MS 319).
101. See Chapter 12.
102. Trans.: Happy the one who exercises love-making (or, the lover who exercises), and returning home sleeps with a beautiful boy all day long. From Theognis's *Elegies* 2 (ll. 1335-6).
103. Deletes 'soul', substitutes 'man' (MS 319).
104. Allusion to *Othello* (1604) by William Shakespeare (cf. Iago's account of Cassio's dream in Act 3 Scene 3).
105. Deletes 'live', substitutes 'embrace' (MS 320).

106. Trans.: the bed is ready; literally, spread out. λέχος, bed or couch, is often employed euphemistically with reference to sex.
107. Trans.: [of] an eighteen[-year-old] boy still wearing the chlamys. From the *Greek Anthology* 12. 125 (Straton's *Musa Puerilis*, or 'Boy's Muse'), attributed to Meleager and recounting a sexual dream. A chlamys was a short cloak worn exclusively by men, pinned at one shoulder and sometimes used as an over-garment.
108. In Greek mythology, Hypnos was the god of sleep. Endymion was the son of Calyce, a nymph, and the god Zeus; he is often represented as a hunter or shepherd. It is Selene, goddess of the moon (and not Hypnos), who kissed Endymion's closed eyes as he slept within a cave on Mount Latmos.
109. In Roman mythology, Jupiter was the god of the sky (equivalent to Zeus in Greek mythology).
110. Trans.: Give me a hundred, then a thousand more! An allusion to (and inversion of) Catullus 5 (l. 7).
111. Marginal note: 'In the *Geschichte der Griechischen Philosophie*' (MS 322).
Eduard Zeller (1814–1908) was a German philosopher and historian. His multi-volume *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* began publication in the 1840s.
112. Joseph John Elliot (1835–1903) and Edmund Fry (1840–97) opened their photography studio at Baker Street, London, in 1863.
113. Passage marked for deletion (MS 323). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from 'well-being among mountains' (MS 322) to 'This craving expressed itself' (MS 323). See Brown, I, p. 414.
114. From Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Inferno Canto 15 (l. 114). Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1867 translation renders this 'sin-excited nerves.'
115. From 'Generalbeichte' in *Goethe's Werke* 1 (1815). Symonds's preferred translation is 'to live resolvedly in the Whole, the Good, the Beautiful.'
116. Philippians 1. 21.
117. Deletes 'all men', substitutes 'children' (MS 326).
118. Cf. Acts 19. 19.
119. Following 'of incipient', deletes 'infantile' (MS 326).

120. Aphrodite Pandemos was one of two manifestations of the Greek goddess of love. In this guise she embodied an uninhibited or vulgar love. In the guise of Aphrodite Urania she embodied a sanctified or heavenly love—see Chapter 5, note 67.
121. This passage has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 326). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from ‘We cannot be Greek now’ to ‘The ages and the seasons of humanity’ (MS 326). See Brown, I, p. 418.
- Mrs Grundy is a caricature from British popular culture; she represents conventionality, prudery and disapproval. She has her origins in *Speed the Plough* (1798) by Thomas Morton.
122. Symonds lists religious figures: Siddhartha Gautama, Buddha (fl. 5th century BCE), founding teacher of Buddhism; St Francis of Assisi (c.1181–1226), founder of the Franciscan Order; and St Dominic (c.1170–1221), founder of the Dominican Order, whose birth was heralded in a dream by a fire-breathing dog, and whose works were the subject of a miracle in which they would not burn when cast into a fire at Fanjeaux.
123. John 9. 4 (cf. note 91).
124. Trans.: for want of better.
125. From ‘Abt Vogler’ in *Dramatis Personae* (1864) by Robert Browning.
126. Euphemism for the Furies, Greek goddesses of vengeance whom it was unlucky to address by name. Counterparts to the Fates and Graces, their bodies were assembled from snakes, dogs and bats.
127. Deletes ‘energy for me could not’, substitutes ‘no real life could’ (MS 328).
128. This sentence replaces an original, marked for deletion: ‘I find the following piece among my manuscripts, which as it seems sufficient to describe in summary the chief points of my life, I here append’ (MS 329).
129. The printed text of ‘A Song of Cyclades’ is pasted into the manuscript and annotated by hand (MS 329–30): two missing words are inserted. The poem is taken from Symonds’s privately printed *Miscellanies* (1885).

The Cyclades are a group of Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. At their centre is Delos, the birthplace of Apollo.

Chapter 11: Peregrinations Continued.

Switzerland, Provence, the Riviera.

Settlement at Clifton in the Autumn of 1868

On the 30th of July in this year 1867 our second daughter Lotta was born;¹ and when my wife was fit to travel, we left London, never to return to 47 Norfolk Square for residence. That house has no pleasant memories for me, except, characteristically enough, the memory of a few days spent there alone with Norman² in the spring of 1869.

On the 4th of September, accompanied by Janet and her nurse and our manservant James, we crossed the Channel, and went to sleep at Melun. During the night there, being unable to rest, I wrote the great part of a poem on Beethoven, called 'A Violin Improvisation'.³ From Melun we proceeded to Dijon, and on the descent into the town:

I noticed just before sunset, what I have only once or twice seen before, prismatic colours very faint and delicately graduated on the cirrus clouds above the sun. Their light and twisted strata shone like pearl shells, while the clouds around were white upon a bright blue sky.

On the 7th we entered Switzerland:

Again we crossed the Jura: saw sunset fade in rose along the plains of Burgundy, felt the freshness of alpine meadows, and in the dusk heard tinkling alpine cow-bells; the moon went up above platoons of silver pines, white stemmed, solemn, bearded with thick moss; Jupiter sparkled among

their branches. Down the gorge we thundered; the valleys grey in moonlight, streams sparkling silverly, and mountains twice as tall and airy as in daytime; then suddenly, the plain, the lake, the lights of Neuchâtel: and Switzerland once more!

Next day was one of infinite peace. I passed the whole of it upon the terrace near the castle under the linden trees, watching all changes of the landscape; the hazy mirrors of the lake, the alpine ranges shimmering like films of greyness in blue noonday light; drinking this tranquil beauty in, and feeling the happiness of a healthful desire accomplished:

Late in the afternoon I brought Catherine to the castle rampart. Gradually the chain of the great Alps grew more distinct; from Mont Blanc to the extreme Schreckhorn, every peak disrobed of vapour; and when the sunset came, the whole line of serried peaks stood forth clear and cloudless. We were on the shores of the lake by this time, and never have I seen the spectacle of distant mountains more sublime—not even from Milan or Chivasso or Novara or the height of the Superga. There was much rosy light diffused across the sky; and the lake mirrors reflected every little cloud, so that in heaven above and on the water beneath a symphony of colours changed like the hues on a dove's neck, modulating from blue and violet to crimson. Meanwhile the summits burned more sharp and fiery. We could trace all the glaciers of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau, all the horns from the Silberhorn to the Gspaltenhorn and Blüemlisalp. We even saw the crest of the Schilthorn, and felt where Mürren lay behind it. The old longing to fly thither came over me; but I beat it back with the words of Goethe's lake song: 'Weg, du Traum! so Gold du bist; Hier auch Lieb und Leben ist.'⁴ Line by line, the mountains faded into greys and yellows, till at last Mont Blanc alone flamed in the purple mists of evening.

On the 11th we established ourselves at Glion, where we stayed until the 7th of October. It was a good time for tired brain, sore eyes and injured lungs. I wrote in my diary, when we were settled: 'Verily, *hier auch Lieb und Leben ist.*'

When at last we quitted Glion, I wrote some notes about our *pension* life there, which may be inserted here, if only to show that I was not incapable of healthy natural enjoyment:

We spent a very happy month on the whole. W.J. Courthope⁵ joined us, just as we were starting from the little Hotel de Montreux, and today

we have said goodbye to him at its door. He is a truly good and gentle friend, loyal and full of life, not giving himself too readily, but never giving more than he intends to hold by. His thorough happiness in living is a great enjoyment to me; and the conversations we have had about literature were always interesting. I cannot remember when we had more fun and amusement together; for Catherine appreciates him quite as much as I do. Arthur Sidgwick was with us for a week, and I contrived to make him read *Paradise Lost* and *Regained*⁶ for the first time, after which he confessed that Milton was in truth a mighty poet. Latterly, the Miss Bonham-Carters came, with a friend of theirs, Miss Shore.⁷ So we have never been without the company of our own intimates. Blumenthal and Mme Loeser and Mr Brabazon were also staying in the inn.⁸ I was glad to make their acquaintance, which is well worth having. These made up our inner circle. The rest of the company amused us, giving matter for mirth and speculation.

It is not easy to describe in words the general aspect of Glion, more like an Italian place than any I have seen in northern Switzerland, yet with a true alpine background in the magnificent slopes of Jaman and the Rochers de Naye—green pastures seeping upward to the skyline, robed with forests of gigantic silver firs, and cleft by silver streamlets. The inclination of the mountain flanks is very steep, so that the valleys are narrow, sometimes breaking into precipices and suggesting the idea of height greater than they really possess. The lake lies always blue and beautiful below, with Chillon⁹ sleeping on its shadow, and the long low line of Jura at the western end. There the sun sank in ever-varying pageantry of gold and crimson, flaming along the Savoy domes of the Dent d'Oche, and lingering, when all was grey, upon the Dent du Midi. At night, the shore by Vevey sparkles with lights; and when we had a moon, it bathed the landscape in full flooding silver, or trembled, a young crescent, in the water just above the shadow of the hills of Savoy. The fields round Glion are timbered, in park fashion, with walnuts, chestnuts, cherry-trees, and groves of young beech, through the hanging boughs of which the lake glows like solid jasper; and the thickets of foliage are haunted by innumerable jays, magpies, and all sorts of smaller birds. One of our favourite walks took us across a stream to the village of Chernex, embowered in orchards, just above the vineyards—a nest of brown chalets, hung with cobs of Indian corn in long golden rows beneath the rafters. Catherine and I were neither of us strong enough to climb far. Everything inclined to a lazy life, cigarette smoking and grape eating on the balconies of the hotel. I began to translate Zeller, and did 130 pages of the text—the whole of the Ethics, Politics and Rhetoric in fact. I found the work tolerably easy; for I had chosen the easiest part, and did not seek too much after style. At last severe cold set in. It snowed and froze for three

days, turning all the aspen and cherry trees into burning bushes of orange, amber and crimson. Now the pine forests are silvered over, and the hills look black beneath their capes of snow. We have only recollections left of sunlight, purple shadows, Jupiter in violet skies, and sitting out upon the autumn meadows.

Blumenthal is a most entertaining creature. Not to mention that he has better music inside him than what he has published, and that it is a real joy to hear him improvise, he says the funniest things, chaffing everybody, and talking several languages in irresistible confusion. His sharp fine-featured little face twinkles all over when he is full of humour. Mme Loeser, who accompanies him round the world and is in some mysterious way related to him, brings out his quality by contrast. She is exquisitely elegant, in a kind of way even beautiful: soft, slow grey eyes, looking out, like a wild creature's of some furry sort, beneath a mist of light grey hair; lips, half open, pouting prettily if rather sensuously above the finely modelled chin. She dresses to match her style of beauty. Mooned earrings, ropes of coral beads, broaches and ouches of Oriental work, Hungarian garnet and Frankfurt medleys of amethyst and turquoise seem made for her. Every bodice and shawl she wears is embroidered with silken arabesques and cut or folded in quaint fashions. She seems aspiring to become a living picture of the Hebrew-German type. But the most engaging thing about her is her voice and manner and pronunciation—the tender, lingering, pensive tone in which she lets her little thoughts trickle out. She is serious upon the smallest and most trivial matters. Dinners and the merits of *pensions* are more to her than politics or art. One day the company was talking about *paté de foie gras*. Mme Loeser kept silence with her sweet eyes fixed upon her plate. At last she said to herself meditatively, 'I can never eat *paté de foie gras*', as though she had often tried to do her duty by it, but had sorrowfully failed. Another time, she was describing a *pension* on the Lungarno¹⁰ at Florence: 'Oh! I could not tell you what it is like: the dinners are excellent, most excellent; first you have a soup, I cannot describe to you the soup; and then a fish, always a fish; and two meats, never less than two meats; and all most excellent; and the rooms are charming; and only four francs a day, *tout compris*':¹¹ with tears in her eyes, *rallentando*,¹² 'tout compris': then a little sigh, followed by a heavenly smile: 'it is a little paradise! Only go to it, only try it once, see if I do not say true; it is a little paradise, is it not, Blumenthal?' After a moment's reflection: 'you know they may not have their cook yet (still); everyone was trying to get the cook away; so if you go there, you must ask.' Proceeding to imagine my possible discomfort after settling down and finding another cook in the great master's place: 'Only just dine there once; see how the dinner is; and if the cook is yet there, you will go to her I am quite sure, to Mees Gray¹³ on the Lungarno.' This picturesque creature was always anxious to secure

a menu and foresee her dinner. She ate a good plateful of everything, and made little manoeuvres to secure the mustard and other accessories.

Among the *pensionnats* was a magnificent Russian countess, Sophia Tolstoi, with her colossal daughter,¹⁴ a developed young woman of twelve years, wearing a round moon-face and pigtails. The Countess, accustomed to St Petersburg refinements, wept for a week over the broken furniture and the mice in a chalet she inhabited. Finally she subsided into such comfort as the place afforded, her huge daughter growing visibly before her very eyes. This girl we christened Harriet—a reminiscence of *Struwwelpeter*¹⁵—and Courthope affected to be smitten with her charms. Harriet consumed mountains of cream-ice, whole kitchen gardens of green salad, droves of oxen, oceans of soup, myriads of macaroons. There was no end to her appetite. She would surreptitiously tilt the cake plate with her elbow, as it passed, until the golden shower transformed her into a Danaë.¹⁶ Then, collecting the spoil, she became a study for the manna gatherers in the wilderness.¹⁷ After dinner she flopped about the garden, during the process of digestion, heavily running, leaping and skipping like the little hills in the Psalm *In Exitu Israel*.¹⁸ Her mother tried to moderate her vivacity; but she moaned, ‘Maman, je meurs de faim.’¹⁹ So the heiress of the Tolstois ate her fill. Courthope took the whim to pass a night in an empty hay stall on the Rochers de Naye. There, very cold beneath the stars, couched in a single railway rug upon damp faggots, he composed an ode to Harriet, which we read aloud. Mme Loeser exclaimed: ‘Oh! eef she coold onlee know! to theenk of that girl inspiring such a poate with such a poame! How leetle she does know!’ Blumenthal went off and gravely told the countess that a young English gentleman had written a poem, smitten by her daughter’s charms. ‘Est ce vrai, M. Blumenthal?’ the pleased lady asked: ‘Est ce bien vrai qu’elle a produit de l’effet—qu’elle a inspirè une telle passion?’ —‘Je vous assure, Comtesse, qu’il raffole de votre fille: il est éperdument amoureux; il a écrit enfin une petite poésie ravissante, un vrai chef d’oeuvre.’ —‘Mais j’ai pensé quilqu’fois qu’elle pourrait produire un effet: mais on ne sait pas... les faiblesses d’une mère; vous savez, Monsieur, ça m’empêche de bien juger. Puis je n’ai rien obervé: je n’ai pas vu qu’un Monsieur anglais...’ —‘Oh! je vous assure, Madame, parole d’honneur, que le jeune poète qui est parti ce matin l’a suivi pendant deux semaines, avec une timidité vraiment insulaire. Il a cache ses emotions; mais il les a conservées dans une poésie charmante.’ —‘Je ne vous cacherai pas, Monsieur, que j’en suis ravie.’ —‘Oui, Madame, une poésie charmante, un vrai petit chef d’oeuvre. C’est dommage qu’il soit parti sans que vous puissiez la voir.’²⁰

A fierce and firm old lady, with bristling grey curls which looked like horse hair, frequented the society of Mme de Tolstoi. She commanded the table, terrible in presence: severe and stolid eye, eagle-beak of nose, dragoon

moustache, and hand that swooped and swept the board for biscuits far and near. After giving her the name of ‘Old Maccaroons’, we learned that this irreverence had been paid to no less a personage than Mme Stahr, née Lewald,²¹ a distinguished novelist, and wife of someone who was creditably known in Germany for his book called *Three Years in Italy*. Her costume broke out all over into bosses and bullas with Roma stamped upon them—reminiscences probably of the famous *Three Years*—plastered singularly on the dull drab German texture of her clothing. To the end of the time, she remained ‘Old Maccaroons’ in our discourse. Very stodgy, sturdily *haushälterisch*,²² did she appear, stumping up and down the terrace to procure an appetite, with umbrella firmly grasped and ported like a musket.

Then there were the two Dutchmen: one so tall and solemn that Struwelpeter christened him ‘Cornelius Agrippa’,²³ the tallest and the thinnest and the mildest man I ever saw; the other styled ‘Der fliegende Holländer’²⁴ in compliment to Arthur Sidgwick, whose friend he was, and who has a respect for Wagner’s music.

Of Americans we had a large and varied assortment: first, two amiable families, counting among them a very beautiful boy and girl. The rest of this nationality were more questionable: one poor lady we called ‘the Vampire’, because she had brilliant eyes, a fair plump florid skin, gleaming teeth, and grey hair parted over a very pink scalp—at all points terribly resembling a well-nourished ghoul. Her husband was dark, dyspeptic, ghastly. There was a singular female trio in black clothes; tall, gaunt, dry, like bits of lanky seaweed hung above a chimney piece to tell the weather. They had a remarkable young lady, called Miss Kemble, under their protection, who imagined herself a burning beauty, and thought that all males were prostrate at her feet. So far as I could see, the men chaffed her, were impudent, were rude, were brutal. Yet she remained firm in the illusion that she moved the cynosure of every eye. This Miss Kemble wore a very long curl, one interminable lovelock, dependent like a bell-rope from her right ear. Or false or real, who shall say? I used to wonder when Frau Stahl, with German bluntness, would go up and ask her: ‘Ist das echt?’²⁵ Her black stuff dress was made very tight above, and like a diving-bell beneath. Inside the centre of the diving-bell she stalked and stumped. Music was her passion; and her favourite exclamations were: ‘I am quite crazy! I like to be crazy! It is so pleasant!’ She flirted, nay, [fell upon the neck of everyone; but there was no harm in her, and we liked her better than a bosom friend of hers. This was an extraordinary specimen: a pale, dog-faced woman, with all her wispy light hair dragged up from her untidy neck into a sort of wretched turret on her peaky head.

The English were not in great force. Wavering, good-natured, weak, life-wasting Hercules Brabazon went dangling after Blumenthal, played

Chopin²⁶ with sentiment, sketched, glowed with mild and inconsecutive enthusiasms. A burly Scotchman, surrounded by a crowd of little Scots, like a mastiff among puppies, gravely strutted around. A wiry Lady... Manners,²⁷ with picturesque daughters and a picturesque son, sailed aloof from the less aristocratic fleet; silly herself, yet rather elegant.

And so forth, and so forth. The mere fact that I could have written so much conceited nonsense, proves that Swiss air was restoring my health and spirits.]²⁸ On the 10th we came to Geneva. Of the Rhône, where it joins the Avre, I find this written:

First the hurly burly of a mad torrent life, vineyards and cornland and homestead wasting; next the baptism of the still deep lake, a baptism, as of death, wherein the river's individual life is lost; then palingenesis, the new life of crystal clearness and ethereal heaven-hued azure; soon alas! to be stained, and after short struggle to be confounded with the muddy glacier stream; lastly, the jaws of the underground passage, the jaws of Avernus,²⁹ leading to open seaward wanderings through citted plains.

By Grenoble, Avignon, Nismes, Arles, we travelled slowly in wet autumn weather, seeing much and profiting by what we saw, till we came at last to Cannes upon the 24th of October. Here we stayed until the 30th of January in 1868; and, while it has been my lot to pass many miserable weeks in various places, I can truly say that I never passed any so wretched as those. It was not that we were lonely. On the contrary, we had plenty of friends: my sister Lady Strachey and her family, Edward Lear the painter, Montagu Butler, the Otto Goldschmidts, a Miss Helen Paget and Mrs Hawkes with whom my wife was very intimate.³⁰ Henry Sidgwick too came out from England, and paid us a long delightful visit. But, for some inscrutable reason, all my maladies became intense at Cannes. The nervous irritation amounted at times to insanity; and at last I sprained an ankle very severely, which made matters worse by preventing me from taking any exercise. There was no doctor at Cannes capable of treating a simple though bad sprain. Consequently, it assumed a chronic form. I had to go about on donkey-back, horseback, or in carriages, for the next seven months, and was only cured eventually by my father when I got to Clifton.

[It appears that I finished the translation of Zeller's text during these three months. But what is more important, I composed the first draught of an essay on Greek Love:³¹

I have been busy, and have greatly tired myself by]³² writing an essay on Platonic Love. To do so has been often in my mind, and some time ago I collected the materials for it, but had to lay the work aside. My object is to explain the feelings of the Greeks about passion, to show how *paidierastia* was connected with their sense of beauty, and how it affected their institutions. It is not by any means finished. I am once again compelled to lay my pen down breathless. The subject appeals too deeply to my sympathies, while its more repulsive aspects are painful. I stumbled on till I came to grief in my brain. You cannot understand how intolerable it is to be devoid of physical power—not to be able to use the eyes for assiduous study or the brain for prolonged processes of thought. I often think that if I had force enough to work over and over again at expression, I might produce more satisfactory results. This essay on Platonic Love, for instance, I knew to be defective. But I dare not attempt the labour. My brain will not stand it; I lose my sleep; my stomach refuses to act; and obscure aching pressure on the top and front of the head grinds me down; my eyes become inflamed and feel as though they were filled with sand.

This essay remained in MS for a long while. Part of it I used for my chapter, in *Studies of the Greek Poets*, on the Greek Spirit.³³ The rest I rewrote at Clifton in 1874, and privately printed under the title of *A Problem in Greek Ethics*.³⁴ It is clear that the preoccupation with the phenomena of sexual inversion, which had been in abeyance [at Glion, was now returning. I wrote some *paidierastic*³⁵ poems of a more or less emotional description, and slight indications in the diary show that I was being tantalized from time to time by passing strangers.]³⁶

All the evil humours which were fermenting in my petty state of man—poignant and depressing memories of past³⁷ troubles, physical maladies of nerve substance and of lung tissue, decompositions of habitual creeds, sentimental vapours, the disappointment of the sexual sense in matrimony,³⁸ doubts about the existence of a moral basis to human life, thwarted intellectual activity, ambitions rudely checked by impotence³⁹—all the miserable factors of a wretched inner life, masked by appearances, the worse for me for being treated by the outside world as mere accidents of illness in a well-to-do and idle citizen, boiled up in a kind of devil's cauldron during those last weeks at Cannes, and made existence hell. The crisis I passed through then, was decisive for my future career. But I did not foresee the point to which it was about to lead me. I only knew for certain that I must change my course, and that I would never repeat, come what might, that infernal experience of the Riviera.

Among my papers of that period, written after I had escaped from Cannes, is an incoherent document, from which I can quote certain passages to prove how terrible the crisis had been. In another nature, acting under other influences, the phenomenon of what is called ‘conversion’ might have been exhibited. With me it was different. I emerged at last into Stoical acceptance of my place in the world, combined with Epicurean indulgence of my ruling passion for the male.⁴⁰ Together, these two motives restored me to comparative health, gave me religion, and enabled me, in spite of broken nerves and diseased lungs, to do what I have done in literature. I am certain of this fact; and I regard the utter blackness of despair⁴¹ at Cannes as the midnight in which there lay a budding spiritual morrow.

I contemplated suicide. But:

Death is not acceptable; it offers no solution. I loathe myself, and turn in every direction to find strength. What I want is life; the source of life fails me. I try to rest upon my will and patience. Doing so, I faint; for there is no force in me to keep the resolves I form, and no content to make me acquiesce in present circumstances. When I attempt to drown my self-scorn in mental work, my nerves give way beneath me, and the last state is worse than the first.

Those who are dying of starvation, or have lost name and fame by some irrevocable crime, might think my troubles very light. They might envy me my well-filled platter, my fair repute, the love and the respect bestowed upon me. But, humbly thankful as I am for these good things, I cannot stifle the angry voice of conscience which accuses me of a void life, besotted in selfishness and slothful debility—they do not quench my internal thirst for peace and confidence and unity with the world.

Then came the goddess Drudgery I had invoked, and spoke to me, and I replied as follows:

It is my particular source of misery that I cannot labour; I am forced to be inactive by my health; I get mildewed with the melancholy of the impotent. If I could study for six or seven hours a day, the intervals might be devoted to a well-earned relaxation. But now the whole day has to be devoted to encouraging a cheerfulness and peace that rarely come. Relaxation is labour, and the untameable soul frets under its restrictions.

A little nervous strength might make all the difference—a loosing of the bands about my forehead, a soothing of the aching eyes, an opening of the clogged breathing tubes

Or some clear faith in things that are good and true and pure and eternal would make all the difference.

In my present state of entire negation I cannot get the faith without the strength, or the strength without the faith. Both remain outside my reach. I have ‘Moses and the prophets’ and the sign of Jonah’s gourd.⁴² But they avail naught. *Virtutem video intabescoque relicta.*⁴³

The last night I spent in Cannes was the worst of my whole life. I lay awake motionless, my soul stagnant, feeling what is meant by spiritual blackness and darkness. If it should last for ever! As I lay, a tightening approached my heart. It came nearer, the grasp grew firmer, I was cold and lifeless in the clutch of a great agony. If this were death? Catherine who kept hold of me, seemed far away. I was alone, so utterly desolate that I drank the very cup of the terror of the grave.⁴⁴ The Valley of the Shadow was opened,⁴⁵ and the shadow lies still upon my soul.

I used to think that I had no conscience and no sins to be repented of. Now I find that I am all conscience, and the whole of my past life was sin. Yet I do not repent. To whom should I carry my repentance? On what does the law rest, that I should obey it? Who is the Judge?

I have withdrawn myself from the influence of the ages, cut myself off from the heritage of mankind, dehumanized. [With impulses toward evil, I have worn the]⁴⁶ cloak⁴⁷ of good. I said to my soul: Compound, enjoy the idea of evil, act as though you love good. Thus you shall indulge your sin, and not be punished for it. Now I find that neither in heaven nor in hell is my portion. The perfect spew me forth, the damned will not receive me. I sought to save my soul, and I am losing it. I blew hot and cold; and now nor cold to brace nor heat to cherish, is my portion; lukewarm loathliness hath overspread me.

Then I turned to bewail my wretched state:

At dawn I start from waking dreams in which the present has been lost—old dreams of the impossible love. For a moment I know not what has roused me. Then suddenly I turn and see upon my shoulder seated the obscene vulture, Despair. It keeps its seat, and croaks there, through the day, until sleep comes again to wrap my consciousness in coils of dreaming fancies. It is terrible to be so ill and morally broken, senseless and thoughtless and desperate, amid this gracious nature, so dead beneath this generous and vital sun. I am in hell with Dante’s slothful:

Fitti nel limo dicon; tristi fummo
Ne l’aere dolce che dal sol s’allegra,
Portando dentro accidioso fummo.⁴⁸

But is this my fault, is it not my martyrdom?

Next I had recourse to old religious ideas. If I were to cry to God, he must surely help me:

But where is the Lord? The grave where they laid him is empty; the ages that believed in him have passed; like shadows they fade before a little streak of light. In the heavens I see innumerable worlds and incalculable interstellar spaces. On the earth I see atoms and recuperative cycles.

Then I turn to my soul, to find bread in the blank mind:

Asleep, dead, deaf, deeper than the deepest slime of the Atlantic, lies my soul.

Now I perceive, since the shadow of that night fell upon me, what is the solitude, the impotence, of the soul of men. What is it that we call a soul? If I have no soul, then let me die—for I cannot eat and drink; life has ceased to be more for me than the aching of my nerves. If I have a soul, I shall not rest till I have brought it into harmony with THE SOUL, the universe. I am in a dilemma, and all issues merge alike in this question of the soul.

I have not dealt as a coward in the game of life. Rejecting Christ, I rejected God, and took upon me the desolateness of atheism. In the sensuality of my imagination, I stopped at no point. I am as foul as one who has wallowed in carnal vices, albeit I refrained from acts. I have gone to the very bottom in my logic of audacity.

But abyss calls to abyss; and the abyss of misery has murmurings which harmonize with the abyss of joy. Until I found this hell, I had no notion of the voice of God. Will He speak to me, after all? Not indeed until I crawl back—how swiftly I flew down—but back to where? The solitudes of this despair assert Him. I am not alone.

Is it then possible that I have reached the last point of negation? Is there indifference ahead, and ahead of that again affirmation?

So I wrote, at Nice, just after I had left Cannes. The last question was prophetic. For I found indifference very shortly in the study of Marcus Aurelius, the *Imitatio Christi*,⁴⁹ and Walt Whitman. [Later on, I found the affirmation of religion and contentment in love—not the human kindly friendly love⁵⁰ which I had given liberally to my beloved wife and children, my father and my sister and my companions,⁵¹ but in the passionate sexual love⁵² of comrades.]⁵³ Through the whole of my malady and my discourses on it, I had omitted the word Love. That was because I judged my own

sort of love to be sin. But when, in the stage of indifference, I became careless about sinning, then, and not until then, I discovered love, the keystone of all the rest of my less tortured life.

It was at Monaco, at Bordighera, in Corsica, among the towns of northern Italy, afterwards at Seelisberg and Mürren, then later on at Clifton, all through the next eleven months of the year 1868, that I worked this part of my life problem out, and reached the state of indifference. My wife was always at my side, lovingly waiting on my irksome moods and illnesses, sustaining me with unwavering affection, knitting continually closer those holy ties which made and make our union a blessed thing. And for a good part of the time, we had again the cheering society of Courthope. Pursuing the system adopted in these chapters, I shall here interpolate, by way of natural relief, some more or less descriptive passages from my diaries. Large portions of those MSS I cannot utilize here, since they have gone to make my sketches of 'Ajaccio', 'Ravenna', 'Parma', and 'The Love of the Alps'.⁵⁴ And the more solid intellectual work of the period came to light in a study of 'Aristophanes', and in chapters upon Ariosto and Tasso written years after for my *Renaissance in Italy*.⁵⁵ Perplexed and foiled, the literary faculty never wholly failed me; and while I thought that I was doing nothing toilsomely—*operose nihil agendo*⁵⁶—I was really laying the foundations for a good deal of my future work.

We went to Monaco upon the 19th of February and stayed there with interruptions till the 7th of March, occupying some rooms in the old-fashioned inn upon the piazza of the old town, just opposite the palace of the prince.⁵⁷ There was a fairly good table kept at this hotel, to which some professional gamblers of the lower class came every day to dine. On the second evening after our arrival a man from Paris hanged himself upon the terrace of the Casino—'between the ash-grey mountains and the tireless tideless sea':

The next evening at dinner all our gamblers were discussing the event with animation. It was a fine study of character revealed by physiognomy and gesture. Seven men took their place at table, all ugly and debased in different fashions. One was old and toothless, and had but one eye—a puckered face of natural acumen, long exercised in bypaths of crime and petty sins. Next him sat a bull-necked overbearing veteran, nearly hairless, with vulgar stridency of voice and keen harsh eyes that seemed to strike you while he spoke. This fellow had seen the suicide's body, and could tell us exactly how it looked—where the cord had been adjusted, to what side the head leaned,

the mouth how opened, the eyes how starting from their orbits, the limp writhed limbs how huddled lump-like in their fall from the seat. It appears that the poor wretch had contrived to strangle himself with whipcord on one of the garden benches. Beside this bald narrator sat a thickset man of middle age and middle size, florid, fat and vinous. The twinkle of his eyes and wrinkle of his mouth indicated lust and blood, the bestiality that gloats on things cruel and unclean. He looked to me like one who would have enjoyed the sight of the *Noyades*,⁵⁸ or have stood picking his teeth at the door of the *glacière*.⁵⁹ It gave this person infinite amusement to hint at facetious episodes in the life of the departed—Parisian scandals of the boulevards and *bals masqués*.⁶⁰ Then there came a dry thin southern Frenchman, cool of nerve and hot of temper, bilious, calcined into consummate egotism and *sangfroid*.⁶¹ Opposite, were seated a pair of Portuguese: brainless youths besotted with wine and women; no skulls to speak of; thick lips and languishing large eyes and sallow cheeks and black beards brushing scarlet silk neckerchiefs. A woman accompanied the one-eyed man. Part of the entertainment consisted in rehearsing the suicide, which they did by hanging on to one another's necks, laughing loudly. Then who had seen the very last of him? One gamester had given him a cigar light during the evening. Another had shaken hands with him ten minutes before the deed. 'La dernière poignée de main.' 'J'espère que cela vous portera bonheur: mais'⁶² ...screams of laughter broke the sentence short. So the talk went round. Like obscene birds upon a gibbet spattering the corpse with filth, they sat there. Scurf and scum of the earth, how they befouled the poor dead man, who last night lay so solemnly between the mountains and the sea! How could they rise from dinner and this chatter to revisit the green tables, and not fear to meet his ghost there?

It is good being here—the best and quietest hotel in the whole country and the most beautiful spot on the Riviera. Except for the gamblers who come to dine, we have this paradise to ourselves. I am as idle as a jelly-fish. I hobble into the garden on the cliff, smoke cigarettes, watch the swallowtail butterflies on flight among geranium and iris flowers, the sea-gulls poised above the solid blue waves beneath. Marcus Aurelius, Walt Whitman and Balzac⁶³ are my companions. I dream and muse over the apparition of Corsica, a pink white film of snow-fields and finely pencilled *arêtes*,⁶⁴ sleeping on the sky-line. Catherine climbs the neighbouring heights with me, perched upon my donkey. Then we lean from precipices, high suspended over olive groves and lemon orchards, gazing at gem-like Monaco set in its lapis lazuli. Or we listen to the Casino orchestra—waifs of Meyerbeer and Strauss with snatches of Bach and Beethoven.⁶⁵

The prospect from the signal-house below the Terta di Cane resumes all the elements of Cornice beauty. The crags here are cruel: abrupt; of

limestone so hard that you cannot split or dent it; grey-blue and orange-red in colour, rounded in contour, breaking away into abrupt precipices, tufted with euphorbia and lentisk, rosemary and butcher's broom. Westward stretch all the headlands of the coast— Villefranche, Antibes, Esterels, and the low hills of Toulon. Full to south, at an aerial distance, hovers the phantom of Corsica. Immediately below, lies the rock of Monaco, with its picturesque mound of decayed houses, the square piazza and the gimcrack palace. One might surely hit that sentinel on guard, though he looks like a tin soldier, with this pebble! The little cove is marbled green and purple, where rocks and a pebbly bottom alternate beneath the pure blue water. Reflections of all colours break and float upon its surface from the cliffs. Eastward stretches the bay of Menton to Bordighera, crowned by the Berceau and Bignore, with one flake of inland alpine snow-field. Towns and villages sparkle among the olives, and the white Cornice road goes winding down the hills, along the sea-line. Great carob trees with their dark and heavy foliage rise from the garden groves beneath our eyrie. The whole scene throbs with light and varied brilliancy of hue—rich tints of violet distance, transparent azure shadows, patches of rare greenery, local stains and tinctures of the rock. A shepherd with his flock of goats sits perched upon a crag, crooning some world-old melancholy *Volkslied*.⁶⁶ Dwarf Levant pines tuft yon headland; and against the glimmering quadrant of the silver sea, grey cloudy olive boughs stretch peacefully.

Beneath the rampart walls of Monaco, the sea beats at a depth of full two hundred feet, the tireless tideless sea, pushing persistently upon those mossy stones—sea-mossed with purple, green and gold, honeycombed with overhanging caverns, with points and pendants of wave-wrought canopies. Red, grey and weather-stained are these rude cliffs. Blue light and emerald dances on them from the dancing water. Aloe stems lean from their brows; and down their side flat prickly battle doors of cactus mingle with lilac stock and scarlet geranium and tufted euphorbia, filling the curves and crannies of the precipice. Cypresses stand motionless, like funeral flames, upon the brackets of jutting rock, with feathery pines in which a wind goes murmuring like a bee.

Lying here all day, I often dream of Clifton rocks, the white hard mountain limestone, the abundant ivy, the yellow wallflowers in spring, the wheeling jackdaws, the soft misty dreamy English light.

But oh, the exquisite white blooms of apricot, the pink of peach and almond, flung silvery and pure, or faintly flushed, from the sombreness of fir branches up into the hard blue sky! The lustre and laughter of the sea, the broad waterway of sunshine, the myriad smiles to right and left of its intolerable shield! The sea-gulls on the wing or folded on the waves, catching a blue or emerald reflection from the water, which the birds repay with the whiteness of their own breasts given to the deep! Oh, the vast aerial distance, rosy as almandine or pearly grey upon the line of kissing sea and sky!

Spring is coming. There are frail lilac anemone flowers like tears, hyacinth and narcissus swordlets, iris blades and crocus buds, about the hill sides and waste places.

On the 7th of April we set off from Nice for Ajaccio in the company of Courthope and Edward Lear. So far as I was concerned this visit to Corsica was spoiled by my lameness. Yet the neighbourhood of Ajaccio, and a drive across the island through Corte to Bastia gave many interesting sights and experiences. The rest of the month, and the whole of May, June, and part of July, were spent in slowly travelling through Pisa, Lucca, Florence, Bologna, Ferrara, Padua, Venice, Vicenza, Verona, Milan, Monte Generoso, the Splügen, and the Bernese Oberland. I read Italian poetry continuously, making an elaborate study of Ariosto, Tasso and Tassoni.⁶⁷ At the same time, I find, by notes in my diaries, that the congenital bent of my temperament was perpetually causing me uneasiness. All kinds of young men—peasants on the Riviera, Corsican drivers, Florentine lads upon Lungarno in the evenings, *facchini*⁶⁸ at Venice, and especially a handsome Bernese guide who attended to the strong black horse I rode—used to pluck at the sleeve of my heart, inviting me to fraternize, drawing out of me the sympathy I felt for male beauty and vigour. The sustained resistance to these appeals, the prolonged reversion to mere study as an anodyne for these desires, worried my nerves; and sometimes I broke out rebelliously into poems of passionate longing. One of these written at Bordighera, has a deep significance for me, when I read it now. It shows how inevitably I was tending to a certain goal, in spite of all resistance, and how the resistance tended to diminish. It seems important enough to be inserted here. The first part of the poem as it now stands was written in the summer at Clifton, the third part at Venice in May. The whole bears the name of a singular and fetid fungus, which exactly imitates in shape the *membrum virile*⁶⁹ when erect.

PHALLUS IMPUDICUS⁷⁰

i

Deep in the dank obscenity of shade
 Where day's Ithuriel lance⁷¹ was never laid;
 But mouldering elders and unwholesome yews
 Spread sun-proof, dense against heaven's healthy dews;

Where on the broken stone or roofless hut
 Coarse shapes of shame and words of lust are cut;
 While by rude feet the dull unlovely way
 Is roughly stamped upon the oozing clay;
 There, wandering an hour in woeful mood,
 And saddened by the squalor of the wood,
 I sat me down upon a stump to curse
 The days of man that grow from bad to worse.

Thus idly pondering, my foot that stirred
 Among the dead leaves, haply disinterred
 From slime and rubbish a white swollen cone
 Of mushroom birth smooth, silky, and full-grown
 For bursting. At a touch the fibre thin
 Broke; with a leap the life that lurked within
 Sprang skyward; forth it shot a curving trunk,
 And on the trunk an egg-shaped cone that stunk.
 The strange thing vibrated, and lewdly thrust
 Up from the gloom its mimicry of lust;
 For here had nature, in a freakish mood,
 Of mud and water framed a filthy brood:
 Symbols priapic, phallic, prurient, crude
 Of human needs and yearnings unsubdued.

Poisonous and loathsome both to touch and smell,
 Rotten and rotting, reeked⁷² the spawn of hell;
 Emblems of heat unhallowed, foul desire,
 Dry lust that revels in the fleshly mire,
 Of dreams that start from rancid thoughts to taint
 The soul with fevered joy too rank to paint,
 Of men who deeds unclean around them spread
 The sickening odours of a brothel bed.

ii

This was the manner of the lesson strange
 I learned at Naples. —We were bound next day,
 I and the tall Sorrento lad who drove
 My carriage to the town, and stayed with me,
 For England. In two chambers we were laid
 That night; a door between. Time-measuring bells
 Made through the still hours music in my brain;
 And something with the bells melodiously

Kept time: some far-off mystery of sense
 I could not check, some hint of coming change,
 Mingled with words which he had spoken, looks,
 Turns of the body, gestures, flitting smiles.
 Then, towards the dawn, I rose. The little light,
 Through heaven's grey concaves feeling tremulously,
 Melted the airy shadows, and made way
 For morning; but as yet the skies were cold.
 The door stood open: in I passed, and bent
 Attentive on the mat before his bed.
 What should I find? Tossed waves of tawny curls
 Dashed from his broad brows, or full fervent eyes
 Veiled by large eyelids, or the yellowing bloom
 Of three years' manhood soft on cheek and chin,
 With haply from the coverlid some flake
 Snow-white of strong smooth throat? Ah no! The dawn
 Bared me full-length within the curtain's shadow
 From feet to brow a languid-lying form,
 Swathed in deep slumber: thighs and rosy nipples,
 Elastic belly, and soft sheltering⁷³ velvet,
 Short clustering down, luxuriantly wanton
 Round the twin marble man-spheres shyly circling,
 Round the firm rondure of love's root of joy,
 The smooth rude muscle, calm and slow and tender,
 The alabaster shaft, the pale pink shrine,
 The crimson glory of the lustrous gland
 Lurking in dewy darkness half-concealed,
 Like a rose-bud peeping from clasped⁷⁴ silken sheath:
 All this I saw; one arm along the flank
 Out-stretched at ease, the other raised half-hidden
 In the curls' fiery tangle. Only this:
 Then to his slumber turned the youth, and sighed.⁷⁵
 And this was all? Oh, this was everything;
 For from that day I nurse a deathless fire:
 I am aflame with beauty—not that faint
 And vulgar phantom so miscalled by men,
 Whom use and procreative instinct sting;
 But the divine undying thirst that dives
 Deep to the centre of all sense, and drinks
 Masculine draughts of rapture epicene.
 Ah me! How sweet and bitter, drenched with tears,
 And wild with laughter, and deep-dyed with blood,

Is this charmed life within my life, this joy,
 Soul-born, soul-nourished, that consumes my soul;
 That with strong visionary splendour pales
 All sunshine, starlight, and soft moony sweetness
 Of the world's real skies; that with excess
 Of blossom mars my fruitage! —Do you loathe me?
 Curse me? I smile and care not. Spurn and shun me?
 Let all the world be sane; count me as madman!
 Have I not seen, felt, fingered, tasted? lo,
 Ye are the madmen; it is I am sound.

iii

A man of goodly build, on whose square⁷⁶ head
 Scarce forty years had wintered, whose dark eyes
 Flashed with a fitful lustre like cold⁷⁷ skies
 When flickering north-lights turn the horizon red,
 Leaned on a bridge at Venice. His thin lips
 Stirred fretfully, and with his hands he played
 On the worn⁷⁸ marble of the balustrade,
 As though some fiend moved in the finger-tips.
 Still, as I paused and marked him, down he cast
 Enquiring eager glances where there stood
 A group of fishermen in idle mood,
 Half-clothed and sinewy: at times there passed
 Those who, unheedful of the watcher, turned
 To wet the wall; whereat the dark eyes burned
 And the man's sinews shrank,⁷⁹ ring within ring,
 Straining to seize some⁸⁰ brief lascivious sight.
 While thus I mused and wondered what delight
 For one so framed desire so crude could bring,⁸¹
 There came a youth, who stayed: it seemed the wind
 Might waft him like a manlier Bacchus⁸² to
 Another Ariadne;⁸³ form and hue,
 Fine as a female's, with coarse strength was twined,⁸⁴
 Rank stuff of sex. The watcher by a word
 Held him in suspense; then downward dashed, and took
 The young man's palm, and into parley broke.
 What was proposed or promised went unheard.
 The youth, I thought, blushed, frowned, at first said nay;

Yet in the end he walked with that strange man away.

We reached Clifton again in July; and here I soon resolved to settle. The summer was divided between Clifton Hill House and Sutton Court.⁸⁵ I wrote many poems on Greek subjects—‘The Love-Tale of Cleomachus’, ‘Theron’, ‘The Clemency of Phalaris’, ‘The Elysium of Greek Lovers’, ‘Cratinus and Aristodemus’; all prelude to my ‘Eudiades’,⁸⁶ and all feeding the fever of my heart, which was also kept alive by innumerable fair sights and passing episodes. I also worked at the text of Zeller, and the edition of Clough’s works.⁸⁷ September and October were spent at Hastings and in London. More poems of the same sort: ‘The Tale of Leutyichidas and Lynkeus’, ‘Dipsychus Deterior’, ‘Diocles’, ‘Damocles the Beautiful’.⁸⁸ Essays of all kinds, descriptive and critical, were composed for publication. In fact I worked pretty hard.

On the 17th of November, Mr North was elected again M.P. for Hastings; on the 19th, we settled into 7 Victoria Square at Clifton; on the 1st of December I met Norman; on the ||⁸⁹ Madge was born.

This chapter must serve as introduction to the one which follows, on my ‘Emotional Development’.

NOTES

1. Charlotte (‘Lotta’) Mary Symonds (1867–1963) married Walter Leaf in 1894 and they had two children. She contributed a brief biography of her mother to *Out of the Past* (1925), her sister Madge’s family memoir. Following the death of her husband, she edited and published his *Some Chapters of Autobiography* (1932).
2. Edward Norman Peter Moor (1851–95). See Chapter 13.
3. This poem was included in the privately printed pamphlet, ‘Lyra Viginti Chordarum’, under the title ‘A Fantasia Improvisation’. It was later published as ‘An Improvisation on the Violin’ in *New and Old: A Volume of Verse* (1880).
4. Trans.: ‘Away, dream, however golden you are; | Here are love and life too.’ From ‘Auf dem See’ (1775) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.
5. William John Courthope (1842–1917) was a poet, editor, biographer, translator and literary historian. His first collection of poetry, *Poems by Novus Homo*, was published in 1865.

6. *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Paradise Regained* (1671) by John Milton.
7. Catherine's close friend, Joanna Hilary Bonham-Carter, died in 1865. She was survived by three sisters: Frances Maria (1823–70), Alice (1828–1912) and Elinor Mary (1837–1923). Their friend, 'Miss Shore', was likely to be a member of the Shore Smith family (with whom they were intimate friends).
8. Jacques (Jacob) Blumenthal (1829–1908) was a German composer and pianist to Queen Victoria.
Mathilde Loeser, née Dinkelsbühl (dates unknown), is described by Symonds in a letter to his sister, Charlotte, as Blumenthal's 'marvellous Aunt [...] the lady with the wild bush of grey hair whom Brett has painted for her strange and picturesque beauty' (*Letters*, I, p. 761). John Brett (1831–1902) captured her likeness in his *Lady with a Dove* (1864).
Hercules Brabazon Sharpe (1821–1906) was a painter best known for his watercolours and landscapes. His first exhibition was held at the New English Art Club in 1891.
9. The Châtetau de Chillon is situated by Lake Geneva and dates back to the twelfth century. The château was visited by Byron, inspiring his 'Sonnet on Chillon' and *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816).
10. *Lungarni* are roads running alongside the banks of the River Arno in Florence, Italy.
11. Trans.: all included.
12. Trans.: slowing down. 'As a musical direction: with a gradual decrease in speed.' (*OED*)
13. Symonds writes phonetically, mimicking Mme Loeser's accent—see also p. 337.
14. Presumably members of the large and illustrious Tolstoy family. This is not, however, the wife of the Russian novelist, Leo Tolstoy. Leo and Sophia Tolstoy had married in 1862, but their daughter, Tatiana, was only three years old in 1867.
15. *Lustige Geschichten und drollige Bilder* (1845), later known as *Struwwelpeter*, was a popular German children's book by Heinrich Hoffmann. It contained several cautionary tales of misbehaving children. *The English Struwwelpeter* was published in 1848; it changed the name of Paulinchen, the girl who played with matches,

- to Harriet. Later, ‘Struwelpeter’ functions as a nickname for W.J. Courthope—see p. 338.
16. In Greek mythology, Danaë was the daughter of Acrisius and Eurydice. She was imprisoned by her father after it was prophesied that her future son would murder him. Zeus, however, appeared to her in a shower of gold and together they had a child, Perseus.
 17. Cf. Exodus 16.
 18. Psalm 114, ‘When Israel went out of Egypt’.
 19. Trans.: Mother, I’m dying of hunger.
 20. Trans.: ‘Is it true, Mr Blumenthal?’ the pleased lady asked: ‘Is it really true that she had an effect, that she inspired such passion?’ —‘I assure you, Countess, that he is crazy for your daughter: he is madly in love; he wrote at last a lovely little poem, a real masterpiece.’ —‘But I used to think that she could produce an impression: but one does not know... a mother’s weaknesses; you know, Sir, this prevents me from judging properly. But I observed nothing: I did not see that an English gentleman...’ —‘Oh! I assure you, Madam, word of honour, that the young poet who left this morning followed her for two weeks, with a really insular timidity. He hid his emotions; but he has preserved them in a charming poem.’ —‘I won’t hide from you, Sir, that I am delighted.’ —‘Yes, Madam, a charming poem, a real little masterpiece. It’s a shame that he left without your seeing it.’
 21. Fanny Lewald (1811–89) was a German writer of novels and treatises on women’s rights. She married Adolf Stahr, author of *Ein Jahr in Italien* (1847–50), in 1854. Symonds misremembers or mistranslates the book’s title.
 22. Trans.: thriftily.
 23. Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486–1535), theologian and author of works on occultism, including *De occulta philosophia libri tres* (1531–33). His name is associated with the Faust legend, and his works influence Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley’s novel (1818).
 24. Trans.: The flying Dutchman. *Der fliegende Holländer* (1843) is an opera by German composer, Richard Wagner (1813–83).
 25. Trans.: Is that real?
 26. Frédéric Chopin (1810–49), Polish-born composer best known for his works for piano. During the 1830s and 1840s he had a

relationship with the French novelist, George Sand (pseudonym of Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin).

27. The aristocratic Manners family are associated with the Dukes of Rutland.
28. Passage marked for deletion (MS 340). Brown does not reproduce this material, beginning an extract from the *Memoirs* with the sentence that follows. He mistakenly transcribes 'Geneva' as 'Genoa', then jumps forward to material from MS 341: 'By Grenoble, Avignon', etc. See Brown, II, p. 13.
29. Lake Avernus near Cuma, Italy, was formed by a volcanic crater. According to ancient traditions, this crater was the entrance to the underworld. Cf. Virgil's *Aeneid*, Book 6.
30. Edward Lear (1812–88) was a painter and writer. He is best remembered for his nonsense verse, including 'The Owl and the Pussycat' (written in 1867 for Symonds's daughter, Janet—see *Letters*, I, pp. 784–5, 791–2). At this time his reputation was built upon landscape painting and natural history draughtsmanship.

Helen Mary Paget (1839–76) had been a friend of the Symonds family since the 1840s. In her family memoir, *Out of the Past* (1925), Madge lists 'Miss Paget' alongside Jenny Lind (Goldschmidt) and Josephine Butler as one of several 'remarkable women' who 'attracted and helped to train and stimulate [Symonds's] intellect.'

31. In a letter to Henry Graham Dakyns in July 1868, Symonds records that an 'Essay' had joined the poems locked away in a box. See *Letters*, I, p. 823, and Chapter 10, note 94.
32. Passage marked for deletion. Brown does not reproduce this material, closing an extract from the *Memoirs* with the preceding sentence. See Brown, II, p. 14.
33. Chapter 12 of *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873) on 'The Genius of Greek Art'.
34. This dating disagrees with Symonds's account in *Sexual Inversion* (1897): 'I wrote it in the year 1873, when my mind was occupied with my *Studies of the Greek Poets*. I printed ten copies of it privately in 1883.' See Crozier, p. 227 n. 1.
35. The word 'paiderastia' has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 343).

36. Passage marked for deletion (MS 343). Brown does not reproduce this material, beginning an extract from the *Memoirs* with the sentence that follows. See Brown, II, p. 20.
37. Deletes 'spiritual', substitutes 'past' (MS 343).
38. The words 'sexual' and 'in matrimony' have been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 343). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from 'sentimental vapours' to 'doubts about the existence of a moral basis to human life' (MS 343). See Brown, II, p. 20.
39. Following 'by impotence', deletes 'to labour' (MS 343).
40. The phrase 'of my ruling passion for the male' is heavily scored through in pencil; this has been smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 343). Brown does not reproduce the passage, jumping from 'Epicurean indulgence' to 'Together, these two motives' (MS 343). See Brown, II, p. 21.

Stoicism was a branch of ancient philosophy and ethics advocating reason and tolerance; its proponents included Zeno of Citium, Cleanthes (whose prayer or hymn to Zeus was a key influence upon Symonds), and Epictetus.

Epicureanism was a branch of ancient philosophy and ethics advocating pleasure and sensation; its proponents included Epicurus, Philodemus and Lucretius.

Symonds displays the influence of Arthur Hugh Clough, whose *Amours de Voyage* (1849) coined the phrase, 'Stoic-Epicurean acceptance' (Canto I). Later in the *Memoirs*, Symonds glosses this 'temper of mind which accommodates itself to everything, and finds everything passably good'—see Chapter 14.

41. Cf. Psalm 107. 10.
42. See Luke 16. 29 and Jonah 4. 6.
43. Trans.: I see virtue, and having left it behind I waste away to nothing. An allusion to Persius's *Satires* 3 (l. 38).
44. Cf. Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26. 39, 42; Mark 14. 35–6; Luke 22. 42; and John 18. 11).
45. Cf. Psalm 23. 4.
46. Passage marked for deletion (MS 345). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from 'lies still upon my soul' (MS 345) to 'Now I perceive, since the shadow' (MS 347). See Brown, II, p. 23.

47. Deletes 'face', substitutes 'cloak' (MS 346).
 48. From Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Inferno Canto 7 (ll. 121–3). Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1867 translation renders these lines:

Fixed in the mire they say, 'We sullen were
 In the sweet air, which by the sun is gladdened,
 Bearing within ourselves the sluggish reek;

49. In letters to Henry Sidgwick and Blanche Clough in March 1868, Symonds records his reading of *The Thoughts of the Emperor M. Aurelius Antonius* (1862) alongside the *Imitatio Christi* (composed c.1390–1440) by Thomas à Kempis (c.1379–1471). See *Letters*, I, pp. 799, 800.

Marcus Aurelius (121–180) was a Roman philosopher and Emperor (161–180). His *Meditations* are indebted to the Stoic teachings of Epictetus.

50. Word double underlined in pencil—see note 53.
 51. Deletes 'friends', substitutes 'companions' (MS 348).
 52. Words underlined in pencil—see note 53.
 53. In the margin next to this sentence there is a dialogue between Brown and Symonds's daughter, Katharine Furse (MS 348). Next to 'friendly love' Brown writes '=affection'; next to 'passionate sexual love' he writes '=lust.' These annotations are signed with his initials, 'HFB'. Furse responds below: 'Let JAS words stand. KF. June 1949.' See Introduction.

Brown does not reproduce this material. Following Symonds's declaration, 'I am not alone' (MS 348), he does not return to the text of the *Memoirs* for the rest of Chapter 9. See Brown, II, p. 23ff.

54. Chapters in *Sketches in Italy and Greece* (1874). 'Ajaccio', 'Ravenna', and 'The Love of the Alps' were previously published in the *Cornhill Magazine* between March 1867 and October 1868.
 55. Chapters on Ariosto and his *Orlando Furioso* (1516–32) appear in the fourth and fifth volumes (*Italian Literature I* and *II*, 1881) of *The Renaissance in Italy* (1875–86). A chapter on Tasso appears in the seventh volume (*The Catholic Reaction*, 1886).

Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533) was an Italian poet and diplomat best known for his epic work, *Orlando Furioso*.

- Torquato Tasso (1544–95) was an Italian poet best known for his epic work, *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581). He spent several years incarcerated for madness at the hospital of St Anna in Ferrara.
56. Trans.: by laboriously doing nothing. A death-bed epigram commonly attributed to Hugo Grotius: ‘Heu! Vitam perdidit operose nihil agendo!’ (‘Alas! I lost my life by laboriously doing nothing!’)
 57. Marginal note: ‘Monaco’ (MS 349).
 58. Trans.: drownings. The *Noyades* were series of executions by drowning committed at Nantes, France, during the Reign of Terror (1793–94).
 59. Trans.: ice house (presumably intended to suggest a morgue or mortuary).
 60. Trans.: masked balls.
 61. Trans.: cold blood.
 62. Trans.: ‘The last handshake.’ ‘I hope this will bring you luck: but.’
 63. Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850), French novelist and playwright who produced the voluminous *La Comédie Humaine* series.
 64. Trans.: ridges, peaks.
 65. Symonds lists famous German and Austrian composers spanning the Baroque, Classical and Romantic periods: Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791–1864); Johann Strauss I (1804–49) or II (1825–99); Johann Sebastian Bach (1665–1750); and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827).
 66. Trans.: folk song.
 67. Material on Tassoni appears in the seventh volume (*The Catholic Reaction*, 1886) of *The Renaissance in Italy* (1875–86).
Alessandro Tassoni (1565–1635) was an Italian writer best known for his epic poem, *La secchia rapita* (1622). He was also the author of several political, philosophical and literary commentaries.
 68. Trans.: porters.
 69. Trans.: penis; literally, manly part or member.
 70. Symonds transcribes this poem into the manuscript (MS 355–9). *Phallus impudicus* is a species of fungus better known as the common stinkhorn.
 71. Ithuriel is a character in *Paradise Lost* (1667) by John Milton. The name derives from Kabbalah traditions in Judaism and is associated with the ranks of angels. In *Paradise Lost*, Ithuriel carries a spear

- that commands truth, using it to expose Satan's disguise: 'Ithuriel with his Spear | Touch'd lightly; for no falsehood can endure | Touch of celestial temper' (Book 4, ll. 810–12).
72. Deletes 'stood', substitutes 'reeked' (MS 356).
 73. Deletes 'clustering', substitutes 'sheltering' (MS 357).
 74. Deletes 'soft', substitutes 'clasped' (MS 357).
 75. Deletes 'smiled', substitutes 'sighed' (MS 357).
 76. Deletes 'stature, on whose', substitutes 'build, on whose square' (MS 358).
 77. Deletes 'the', substitutes 'cold' (MS 358).
 78. Deletes 'smooth', substitutes 'worn' (MS 358).
 79. Following 'sinews shrank', deletes 'inordinately' (MS 358).
 80. Deletes 'the', substitutes 'some' (MS 358).
 81. Deletes 'be', substitutes 'bring' (MS 358).
 82. In Roman mythology, Bacchus was the god of wine (equivalent to Dionysus in Greek mythology).
 83. According to Greek mythology, Ariadne helped Theseus defeat the Minotaur and escape from the labyrinth at Crete. Theseus then abandoned Ariadne on the island of Naxos while she slept. Dionysus discovered her and fell in love. Symonds was an admirer of Titian's painting, *Bacchus and Ariadne* (c.1520–23), which depicts their meeting—see Chapter 10, note 10.
 84. Deletes 'combined', substitutes 'was twined' (MS 358^v).
 85. Sutton Court in Somerset was the home of Symonds's sister, Maribella, and her husband Edward Strachey.
 86. Poems entitled 'The Valour of Cleomachus', 'The Festival of Harmodius And Aristogeiton, or The Love of Theron', 'Melanippus, or The Clemency of Phalaris', 'The Elysium of Greek Lovers' and 'The Sacrifice of Cratinus and Aristodemus: A Fragment' appear in Symonds's privately printed pamphlet, 'Tales of Ancient Greece. No. 2'.
'Eudiades' is one of the titular poems in Symonds's privately printed pamphlet, 'Tales of Ancient Greece. No. 1. Eudiades, and A Cretan Idyll'.
 87. Blanche Clough requested Symonds's help in preparing an edition of her husband's work in early 1868, recording his assent in a letter dated 4 May 1868 (*Letters*, I, p. 804). The result was *The Poems and Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough* (1869).

88. Poems entitled ‘The Grave of Diocles’ and ‘Damocles The Beautiful’ appear in Symonds’s privately printed pamphlet, ‘Tales of Ancient Greece. No. 2’. A poem entitled ‘At Diocles’ Tomb at Megara’ appears in the privately printed pamphlet, ‘Lyra Viginti Chordarum’, and was later published in *New and Old: A Volume of Verse* (1880). I have not been able to trace the other works.
89. Symonds leaves a space in the manuscript; presumably it was his intention to supply the date of Madge’s birth (MS 359).

Margaret (‘Madge’) Symonds (1869–1925) was a writer. Her works include *Days Spent on a Doge’s Farm* (1893), *Our Life in the Swiss Highlands* (1892), written collaboratively with her father, and a family memoir entitled *Out of the Past* (1925). She married William Wyamar Vaughan in 1898 and they had four children.

Chapter 12: Emotional Development

I

It was my primary object when I began these autobiographical notes to describe as accurately and candidly as I was able a type of character, which I do not at all believe to be exceptional, but which for various intelligible reasons has never yet been properly analysed. I wanted to supply material for the ethical psychologist and the student of mental pathology, by portraying a man of no mean talents, of no abnormal depravity, whose life has been perplexed from first to last by passion—natural, instinctive, healthy in his own particular case—but morbid and abominable from the point of view of the society in which he lives—persistent passion for the male sex.¹

This was my primary object. It seemed to me, being a man of letters, possessing the pen of a ready writer and the practised impartiality of a critic accustomed to weigh evidence, that it was my duty to put on record the facts and phases of this aberrant inclination² in myself—so that fellow sufferers from the like malady, men innocent as I have been, yet haunted as I have been by a sense of guilt and dread of punishment, men injured in their character and health by the debasing influences of a furtive and lawless love, men deprived of the best pleasures which reciprocated passion³ yields to mortals, men driven in upon ungratified desires and degraded by humiliating outbursts of ungovernable appetite, should feel that they are not alone, and should discover at the same time⁴ how a career of some

distinction, of considerable energy and perseverance, may be pursued by one who bends and sweats beneath a burden heavy enough to drag him down to Pariahdom. Nor this only. I hoped that the unflinching revelation of my moral nature, connected with the history of my intellectual development and the details of my physical disorders, might render the scientific handling of similar cases more enlightened than it is at present, and might arouse some sympathy even in the breast of Themis⁵ for not ignoble victims of a natural instinct reputed vicious⁶ in the modern age. No one who shall have read these Memoirs, and shall possess even a remote conception of my literary labours, will be able to assert that the author was a vulgar and depraved sensualist. He may be revolted; he may turn with loathing from the spectacle. But he must acknowledge that it possesses the dignity of tragic suffering.

As a secondary object, I had in view the possibility of madness supervening on the long continued strain, the lifelong struggle of this tyrannous desire. Should the worst come to the worst, I wanted to leave an *apologia pro vita mea*⁷—no excuse, no palliation of my acts, but an explanation of them; from the perusal of which it should appear that my ἁμαρτία,⁸ my deviation from the paths of order, my stumbling up against the altar of Justinian's edict,⁹ has been, like that of Ajax or of Phaedra,¹⁰ something which the old Greek instinct recognized as fraught with fate or sent by God.

This being the case, I shall not shrink from continuing the analysis which I have undertaken, painful as it is to do so, and extraordinary as the needful confessions will have to be.

I have sufficiently described the character of my emotions during the period of adolescence. Up to the time of my marriage they were sentimental, romantic, without a touch of avowed sensuality. Even in day-dreams about the boys I loved, no thought of anything obscene formed itself distinctly in my mind. I experienced, indeed, the strongest physical disturbance when I came into close contact with them. The touch of their hands, the laughter of their eyes, and the silkiness of their hair provoked the same agreeable sexual sensations as young men ordinarily obtain from the company of girls. And at night, when I dreamed of them, the visions were erotic. But my wildest flights of fancy did not soar definitely beyond a kiss, a clasp, the virginal embrace which Daphnis gave to Chloe before Lycæon taught him what the way of a man with a maid should be.¹¹ There was, of course, an indefinite background,

made sufficiently apparent by the tumult of my blood, the quickening of my heartbeats, and the rising of my flesh. But these symptoms annoyed me; I strove to put them aside, and evaded the attempt to formulate their significance. I only twice kissed a male friend in those years—as I have already related in what I wrote about Willie: Good heavens! what an uproar in the city of my soul those kisses wrought, as we lay together couched in ivy and white wood anemones upon the verge of the red rocks which dominate the Avon!

I came to marriage then fatigued and fretted by intense desires, the worse for being still unconscious of their sensuality. Marriage, I thought, would satisfy the side of my nature which thrilled so strangely when I touched a boy. It did not, however; and the difficulties of my married life—difficulties connected with my wife's repugnance to childbearing and her constitutional indifference to sexual intercourse—whereby I spent many successive months as a bachelor beside the woman I had wedded, and with whom I strangely bedded—these difficulties prepared me for the three phases I have now to describe. The first of these corresponds exactly with what I have called 'the second main division of my literary life.' It was also the second main division of my emotional life, and it ended at the moment of my return to reside at Clifton in the autumn of 1868. In like manner the succeeding phase, or third in order, tallies with the third division of my literary life, when I left England for Davos in 1877; and the fourth begins with the new chapter of existence I opened among Swiss people.

The evolution of my emotional temperament comprehends four stages therefore. The first, of adolescence, sentiment, romance, has been dealt with. The three which followed, will engage me now.¹²

II

Being what I am, the great mistake—perhaps the great crime of my life, was my marriage. I ought not to have married when I did and whom I did. I ought not to have married at all. Yet I am able after nearly twenty-five years of matrimony to record my conviction that this marriage has not been a failure for either my wife or myself.

I called it a mistake in the first place, because I was urged to marry by my father, by my own earnest desire to overcome abnormal inclinations,¹³

by the belief that I should regain health, and by the confidence that I should not make a bad husband. I did not overcome abnormal passions. I did not regain health. Insofar I mistook my path. I think, however, that I have been upon the whole a good husband; my wife emphatically says so now.

I called it a crime in the second place, because none of these reasons for marrying justify the step, because I married without passion or the feeling that this particular woman was the only woman in the world for me. Thus I deceived her practically, if not intentionally or deliberately. And I deceived myself, insofar as her¹⁴ temperament was incapable of sharpening¹⁵ the sexual appetites which in me had hardly any edge where woman was concerned.

Some sorts of self-deceit are crimes. They are the sign of a soul's willingness to accept¹⁶ the second best and to give the second best, instead of waiting through all suffering and all privation for the best in life.

There is no word of blame for my wife here. She has been at every point a good, true, honest, loving and devoted wife to me. She is a woman whom better and happier men than I am might have worshipped with sex-penetrated passion.¹⁷ No: if anyone in our marriage has been the injured party, it is she. The imperfections of our life in common are due far less to her temperament than to the fact that I could not love her in the way which makes a man enamoured of¹⁸ his wife's peculiarities. I married her without giving my whole self; and the best things which marriage has brought us both are friendship and our children. I do not believe that she has ever been acutely sensible¹⁹ of what we both missed—that supreme joy which made Romeo and Juliet happy in the jaws of death. But I shall go to the grave with an unsatisfied desire. Here am I fashioned in every fibre for passionate pleasure, and married to a woman who has borne me four children. Yet we have never had any really passionate moments together. And for the last eleven years, after shilly-shallying with an ill-participated nuptial bed, we have found it best to live as male and female quite apart.

In spite of all this, my marriage has not to be regretted. So far as I am concerned, it probably saved my life from wreckage and prolonged my power of moral resistance.²⁰ On the other hand I feel tolerably sure that she has not suffered as other women might from the imperfection of our sexual relations. She married late—at twenty-seven—and carried into matrimony the instincts of a virgin, for whom there is something ignoble in physical appetite²¹ and nauseous in childbirth. Any touch in literature upon

the pleasures of the senses, gives her pain. She shrinks from what men and women are, and what they must be, as from something common and unclean. 'That vulgar and trivial way of coition,' as Sir Thomas Browne puts it,²² has for her no attraction. Having realized by a life in common of twenty-six years how much better it is to be married than to remain single, having found satisfaction in my society and a sphere of activity in her domestic cares, she is satisfied. She could not have enjoyed the society of her daughters, whom she deeply loves, except through the troublesome process²³ by which alone the human race is propagated. On the whole then, I estimate that our marriage, so far as it has gone, may be reckoned among the successful experiments of this nature—at any rate not among the more unsuccessful.²⁴

III

How far can anything in our mental and moral evolution be considered accidental? Nothing, I believe. And yet some of the most decisive turning-points in life seem to depend on casual circumstance. I well remember three apparently trivial occurrences during the first fifteen months after my marriage, which aroused the latent trouble²⁵ of my nature,²⁶ and opened a new phase of conflict with incurable desire.

In the spring of 1865 we were living in lodgings in Albion Street, Hyde Park. I had been one evening to the Century Club, which then met near St Martin le Grand in rooms, I think, of the Alpine Club.²⁷ Walking home before midnight, I took a little passage which led from Trafalgar²⁸ into Leicester Square, passing some barracks.²⁹ This passage has since then been suppressed. I was in evening dress. At the entrance of the alley a young grenadier came up and spoke to me. I was too innocent, strange as this may seem, to guess what he meant. But I liked the man's looks, felt drawn toward him, and did not refuse his company. So there I was, the slight nervous man of fashion in my dress-clothes, walking side by side with a strapping fellow in scarlet uniform, strongly attracted by his physical magnetism. From a few commonplace remarks he broke abruptly into proposals, mentioned a house we could go to, and made it quite plain for what purpose. I quickened my pace, and hurrying through the passage broke away from him with a passionate mixture of repulsion and fascination. What he offered³⁰ was not what I wanted at the moment, but the thought of it stirred me deeply. The thrill of contact with the man taught me something new about myself. I can well recall the lingering regret,

and the quick sense of deliverance from danger, with which I saw him fall back, after following and pleading with me for about a hundred yards. The longing left³¹ was partly a fresh seeking³² after comradeship and partly an animal desire the like of which I had not before experienced.

The memory of this incident abode with me, and often rose to haunt my fancy. Yet it did not disturb my tranquillity during the ensuing summer, which we spent at Clifton and Sutton Court. Toward autumn we settled into our London house, 47 Norfolk Square, Hyde Park. Here it happened that a second seemingly fortuitous occurrence intensified the recrudescence of my trouble.³³ I went out for a solitary walk on one of those warm moist unhealthy afternoons when the weather oppresses and yet irritates our nervous sensibilities. Since the date of my marriage I had ceased to be assailed by what I called ‘the wolf’—that undefined craving coloured³⁴ with a vague but poignant hankering after males. I lulled myself with the belief that it would not leap on me again to wreck my happiness and disturb my studious habits. However, wandering that day for exercise through the sordid streets between my home and Regent’s Park, I felt the burden of a ponderous malaise. To shake it off was impossible. I did not recognize it as a symptom of the moral malady from which I had resolutely striven to free myself. Was I not protected by my troth-pledge to a noble woman, by my recent entrance upon the natural career of married life? While returning from this fateful constitutional, at a certain corner, which I well remember, my eyes were caught by a rude *graffito* scrawled with slate-pencil upon slate. It was of so concentrated, so stimulative, so penetrative a character—so thoroughly the voice of vice and passion in the proletariat—that it pierced the very marrow of my soul.³⁵ I must have seen a score such *graffiti* in my time. But they had not hitherto appealed to me. Now the wolf leapt out: my malaise of the moment was converted into a clairvoyant and tyrannical appetite for the thing which I had rejected five months earlier in the alley by the barracks. The vague and morbid craving of my previous years defined itself as a precise hunger after sensual pleasure, whereof I had not dreamed before save in repulsive visions of the night. It is difficult to say how far the exercise of sex in marriage helped to determine this new phase of the old instinct.³⁶ I am inclined to think that it had much to do with the acuteness of the attack. Inborn instincts, warped by my will and forced to take a bias contrary to my peculiar nature, reasserted themselves with violence. I did not recognize the phenomenon as a temptation. It appeared to me, just what it was, the resurrec-

tion³⁷ of a chronic torment which had been some months in abeyance. Looking back upon the incident now, I know that that obscene *graffito* was the sign and symbol of a paramount and permanent craving³⁸ of my physical and psychical nature. It connected my childish reveries with the mixed passions and audacious³⁹ comradeship of my maturity. Not only my flesh, but my heart also, was involved in the emotion which it stirred. The awakening spasm⁴⁰ of desire had as little to do with either fancy or⁴¹ will as the return of neuralgia in a sudden throb of agony. God help me! I cried.⁴² I felt humiliated, frightened, gripped in the clutch of doom. Nothing remained but to parry, palliate, procrastinate. There was no hope of escape. And all the while the demon⁴³ ravished my imagination with ‘the love of the impossible.’⁴⁴ Hallucinations of the senses crowded in upon my brain together with the pangs of shame and the prevision of inevitable woes. From this decisive moment forward to the end, my life had to fly on a broken wing, and my main ambition has been to constitute a working compromise.

This afternoon walk to which I attach so great an importance, must have taken place a few weeks before my eldest daughter Janet’s birth. Soon after my wife was fit to move, we went down to Clifton, and there my father discovered that my left lung was seriously affected. During this visit I read Seeley’s *Ecce Homo*,⁴⁵ which interested me by reason of its style and its philanthropy. And it so happened that I also read Greenwood’s article ‘The Amateur Casual’ in an early number of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.⁴⁶ This brought the emotional tumour which was gathering within me to maturity. Almost without premeditation or plan I wrote the first part of the poem called ‘John Mordan’.⁴⁷ Since then I have suffered incessantly from my moral trouble,⁴⁸ which I have beguiled by sundry feeble devices, and which has assumed forms of bewildering and often painfully distressing variety.

A distinct stage in what I may call the palliative treatment I adopted was marked by the composition of ‘John Mordan’. I began to make verse the vehicle and safety-valve for my tormenting preoccupations. A cycle of poems gradually got written, illustrating the love of man for man in all periods of civilization. Of these the two best are perhaps ‘A Cretan Idyll’ and ‘Eudiades’.⁴⁹ The composition of the cycle lasted over the period between January 1866 and sometime after 1875.

Nothing could, I think, have been much worse for my⁵⁰ condition than this sustained utterance⁵¹ through verse of passions which I dared not indulge. It kept me in a continual state of *orexis*,⁵² or irritable longing.

And for my literary career it was at least unprofitable. I knew that all those thousands of lines, into which I poured my red hot soul, would never see the light of publication. Consequently I gave way to the besetting foibles of my literary temperament—facility, fluency, or carelessness of execution. The writing of these poems was⁵³ a kind of mental masturbation.⁵⁴

While thus engaged, and very early after the commencement of my cycle, I came across W. Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. I was sitting with F.M. Myers⁵⁵ in his rooms at Trinity, Cambridge, when he stood up, seized a book and shouted out in his nasal intonation with those brazen lungs of his: 'Long I thought that knowledge alone would content me.'⁵⁶ This fine poem, omitted from later editions of *Leaves of Grass*, formed part of 'Calamus'. The book became for me a sort of Bible. Inspired by 'Calamus' I adopted another⁵⁷ method of palliative treatment, and tried to invigorate the emotion I could not shake off by absorbing Whitman's conception⁵⁸ of comradeship. The process of assimilation was not without its bracing benefit. My desires grew manlier, more defined, more direct, more daring by contact with 'Calamus'. I imbibed a strong democratic enthusiasm, a sense of the dignity and beauty and glory⁵⁹ of simple healthy men. This has been of great service to me during the eleven years I have passed at Davos. I can now declare with sincerity that my abnormal inclinations, modified by Whitman's idealism and penetrated with his democratic enthusiasm,⁶⁰ have brought me into close and profitable sympathy with human beings even while I sinned against law and conventional morality.

The immediate result of this study of Walt Whitman was the determination to write the history of pederastia in Greece and to attempt a theoretical demonstration of the chivalrous enthusiasm which seemed to me implicit in comradeship. Both of these literary tasks I accomplished. The former has been privately printed under the title of *A Problem in Greek Ethics*. The latter exists in manuscript; and though I do not regard its conclusions as wholly worthless or its ideal as quite incapable of realization, I cannot take a favourable view, of my achievement. My own thwarted and perplexed instincts rendered me incapable of sound or absolutely sincere treatment.

Such was the expenditure of time and intellectual energy demanded by this inexorable and⁶¹ incurable disease. ἐράν ἀδυνάτων νόσος τῆς ψυχῆς. *L'amour de l'impossible est la maladie de l'âme.*⁶²

It cannot be doubted that the congenital aberration of the passions which I have described has been the poison of my life. In the first place

I shall die without realizing what constitutes the highest happiness of mortals, an ardent love reciprocated with ardour. This I could never enjoy, for the simple reason that I have never felt the sexual attraction of women. The following paragraph from a diary dated March 23rd 1889 shows what I mean:

I have been sitting opposite a young man in the *diligence* all day—a peasant about nineteen, with a well-knit frame and a good healthy face, exhibiting no special beauty but radiating intelligence and the magnetic force of the male adolescent.⁶³ I looked at his hands—great powerful palms and fingers, fashioned to mould and clasp, yet finely shaped, and attached to sinewy wrists, where the skin had smoother texture, showing veins and the salience of sinews. Enough of his throat and forearms was visible to make one divine how white and wholesome was the flesh of the young man's body. I felt I could have kissed these hands hardened with labour, bruised here and there, brown in complexion—have kissed them and have begged of them to touch me. Then it flashed across my mind that no woman's hands—whether of duchess or milkmaid, maiden or married—had ever possessed for me such sexual attraction as these of the young peasant had.

A man who feels like that has failed as certainly in finding life's chief boon as a repulsive hunchback has. For no young man will return his passion. Then again what hours and days and weeks and months of weariness I have endured by the alternate indulgence and repression of my craving imagination. What time and energy I have wasted on expressing it. How it has interfered with the pursuit of study. How marriage has been spoiled by it. What have I suffered in violent and brutal pleasures of the senses, snatched furtively with shame on my part, with frigid toleration on the part of my comrades, and repented of with terror.

Nature is a hard and cruel stepmother. Nothing that I could have done would have availed to alter my disposition by a hair's breadth—unless perhaps I had been coaxed to fornicate by my father at the age of puberty. I doubt even then whether I could have been rendered normal. These sexual aberrations cannot of course be rare. The more frequent they are, the more grim is human destiny.

The whole of this which I have called the second phase of my emotional development was therefore passed in slow continuous assimilation of the passion which possessed me. I condescended to no act of lust and engaged in no clandestine intercourse. But I exercised the imagination with audacious freedom, and intensified desire by dwelling on delights beyond my

grasp.⁶⁴ I thought it permissible to indulge my sense of plastic beauty in men. With this in view I often visited public baths, and when I was in London, I used to stroll out in early morning or late evening along the Serpentine. There I feasted my eyes upon the naked bathers, consumed with a longing for them which was not exactly lust. The breath of lust had not passed over my earlier ideal of sentiment at that stage. What I felt, vague indeed but acutely real, may be best exhibited by quoting a prose-poem written in the summer of 1867.

THE SONG OF THE SWIMMER⁶⁵

i

A young man, naked, is as good a sight as Monte Rosa. I could stand a day to gaze at him.

To see him curving for a dive, or emerging from the water after a long swim. To see him course along the bank, tossing up his arms; the dew is brushed from the grass by his feet, the morning sunlight slants across his flank, the buttercups lean forward to be touched by him, the chestnut branches bend their foliage and cones of snowy white blossom to shelter him.

He scuds across the green; he dries himself in the fresh air; his comrades shout and sing around him.

Swimmers and runners in the daybreak are all beautiful; in the early sunshine, under the fresh trees; scattering dewdrops from the herb-age, tossing gold-dust from buttercups with white ambrosial twinkling feet, illuminating the aisles of limes and chestnuts with divine human life.

ii

I walked by the Serpentine this summer morning. There were a hundred bathers there. Towers of Westminster, afar off, slumbered on the hot grey vaporous dawn.

A young rough passed before me. Uncouth he looked in his loose tattered clothes, soiled with labour and the sweat of many days.

He threw his rags aside. Naked he stood there; like an athlete, like a Greek hero, like Heracles or Hermes in the dawn of noble deeds. His firm and vital flesh, white, rounded, radiant, shone upon the sward.

Slowly he moved across the lawn. He sauntered by the water-side. He bent his wonderful straight body for the plunge.

Then I bowed my head. I acknowledged the god in him. I waited on the brink for the bather to reappear. I served him with my thoughts till he had swum his full. I followed him with swift eyes, as a slave to his master.

He returned; from the water he uprose; he stood upon the brink; the streamlets trickled down his side.

Then, like an arrow, straight he flew; he sped across the grass; he made a light of whiteness where he ran; laughter and singing followed on his steps.

I went along with him in spirit. My soul was not less ardent than his joy. She thrust her arms about his breast; she felt his heart throb; the dewdrops dried beneath her clasp; the ripple from the youth's curls drenched her hair.

He stayed: he kneeled upon the grass; quickly he resumed his clothes. The beautiful bright god was hidden; the hero disappeared.

This was clearly produced under the influence of Walt Whitman; and I thought then that, if I were ever allowed to indulge my instincts, I should be able to remain within his ideal of comradeship. The dominance of this ideal, as will be seen in the sequel, contributed greatly to shape my emotional tendencies. It taught me to apprehend the value of fraternity, and to appreciate the working classes. When I came to live among peasants and republicans in Switzerland, I am certain that I took up passionate relations with men in a more natural and intelligible manner—more rightly and democratically—than I should otherwise have done.

The same period, however, was marked by the intrusion into my life of two friends, both of whom swayed me prejudicially, but in different ways. These were Roden Noel⁶⁶ and Claude Delaval Cobham. They had done and were in the habit of doing what I had now begun to desire. In every respect but this, no two men could have been more dissimilar than they were. Noel was married, deeply attached to his wife, a poet of high soaring fancies, a philosopher of burning nebulous ideas. He justified passion to his own eyes and preached it to others in an esoteric quasi-Manichean mysticism. He was vain of his physical beauty, which was splendid at that epoch; and his tastes tended to voluptuousness. The attraction of the male governed him through this vanity and this voluptuousness. He loved to be admired. He enjoyed in indolent sultana fashion the contact of masculine desire, the *attouchements*⁶⁷ of excited organisms, the luxurious embraces of nakedness. Strange to say, the indulgence of these tastes did not disturb his mental equilibrium. Both as poet and thinker, he remained vigorous and grew in comprehension. Finally, I think, he overlived, absorbed, and clarified by religious mysticism the grossness of his passions. But for me the conversation of this remarkable man was nothing less than poisonous—a pleasant poison, it is true. What it cost me at times will appear from the following document, which is the copy of a letter in French I wrote him after a passage of intoxicating self-abandonment. The date

shows that the incidents referred to took place after the expiration of my second phase. ||⁶⁸

Cobham had no poetry, no religion, no philosophy. He disliked women. When I first knew him at Oxford in 1861, he professed himself an ‘anderastes’;⁶⁹ and this he consistently remained through life.⁷⁰ He had a passion for soldiers, and enjoyed the most licentious pleasures to which two men can yield themselves. His imagination was steeped in a male element of lust, himself being rather patient than agent. In all other respects but this, he was what the world calls an excellent fellow—sympathetic, warm-hearted, ready to serve his friends, successful in society, cheerful, and not devoid of remarkable intellectual gifts. I have only met with one linguist more versatile in the acquirement of ancient and modern languages. This man told me that, while he was a boy of thirteen, a friend of his brother seduced him at his mother’s house, and that he had never afterwards been able to conceive of love except under the form of rude and lustful masculine embraces. Both Noel and he were, I believe, among those individuals for whom this kind of passion is instinctive, not acquired. Only Noel remained superior in being sensitive to the attractions of the female.

NOTES

1. Marginal note:

This was written by me at Venice in May 1889. I had not then studied the cases of sexual inversion recorded by Casper-Liman, Ulrichs and Krafft-Ebing. Had I done so, I should not perhaps have dealt with my personal experience so diffusely as I have done in this chapter. What I wrote, I now leave as it stands. It forms a more direct contribution to the psychology of sexual abnormality than if I were to mix it up with the discussion of theories unknown to me at the time of writing (Dec. 1891). (MS 360)

Johann Ludwig Casper (1796–1864) and Carl Liman (1818–91), uncle and nephew, and German forensic physicians. Following Casper’s death, Liman edited and expanded his uncle’s *Handbuch der gerichtlichen Medicin* (first published 1856), placing his name alongside that of Casper from the fifth edition (1871) onwards. Symonds responds to the work of Casper and Liman in Chapter 6 of *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891). See Brady, pp. 138–42.

2. Deletes 'passion', substitutes 'inclination' (MS 360).
3. Deletes 'sexual indulgence', substitutes 'passion' (MS 360).
4. Deletes 'feel as well', substitutes 'should discover at the same time' (MS 361). Symonds also tries 'learn' instead of 'feel', but deletes this alternative.
5. In Greek mythology, Themis was a female Titan associated with law and order.
6. Deletes 'called ignoble', substitutes 'reputed vicious' (MS 361).
7. Trans.: an explanation (cf. apology, justification) of my life.
8. Trans.: fault, failure or error; a factor in Greek tragedy; theologically, sin.
9. Deletes 'eternal law', substitutes 'Justinian's edict' (MS 361).
Justinian I (483–565), Emperor of the Byzantine Empire (527–65). He is best known for his codification of law, including the *Codex Justinianus* or *Code of Justinian*. In 529 he issued an edict closing the Athenian Academy (founded by Plato in the 4th century BCE).
10. Ajax was a Greek warrior of the Trojan war. He committed suicide by falling upon his sword after failing to win the armour of Achilles. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book 13.
In Greek mythology, Phaedra was the sister of Ariadne and wife of Theseus. She fell in love with Theseus's son, Hippolytus, but was rejected by him. She falsely accused him of rape before committing suicide.
11. Deletes 'the love of mortal man for mortal woman is', substitutes 'the way of a man with a maid should be' (MS 362).
An allusion to *Daphnis and Chloe* (2nd or 3rd century BCE) by Longus. The title characters are foundlings; raised together, they fall in love but remain sexually ignorant (until Lycæon, a woman from the nearby town, explains sexual intercourse to Daphnis).
12. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 364 blank (20 cms of clear space).
13. Deletes 'passions', substitutes 'inclinations' (MS 365).
14. Following 'as her', deletes 'cold' (MS 365).
15. Deletes 'rousing', substitutes 'sharpening' (MS 365).
16. Deletes 'take', substitutes 'accept' (MS 365).
17. Deletes 'adored', substitutes 'worshipped with sex-penetrated passion' (MS 366).
18. Deletes 'accept', substitutes 'enamoured of' (MS 366).

19. Deletes 'felt', substitutes 'been acutely sensible' (MS 366).
20. Following 'resistance', deletes 'to temptation' (MS 366).
21. Deletes 'passion', substitutes 'appetite' (MS 366).
22. From Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (1643): 'I could be content that we might procreate like trees, without conjunction, or that there were any way to perpetuate the world without this trivial and vulgar way of coition.'
23. Deletes 'experience', substitutes 'process' (MS 367).
24. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 367 blank (8 cms of clear space).
25. Deletes 'malady', substitutes 'trouble' (MS 368).
26. Deletes 'passions', substitutes 'nature' (MS 368).
27. The Century Club was established in 1865. It first met in lodgings belonging to Henry Yates Thompson (whom Symonds knew at Harrow—see Chapter 4, note 18) before moving to the Alpine Club's premises at 8 St Martin's Place (not St Martin le Grand, as Symonds has it). Liberal in politics, the Century Club counted Walter Bagehot, Mark Pattison and Leslie Stephen among its members.
28. 'Trafalgar' is marked for deletion and underlined (MS 368). No alternative is provided.
29. St George's Barracks, Castle Street, was located behind the National Gallery until 1911 (when it was cleared to make way for an extension to the gallery). The 'little passage' was most likely Duke Court. I am grateful to Brian Pearson for providing this information.
30. Deletes 'longing. This', substitutes 'fascination. What he offered' (MS 369).
31. Following 'longing left', deletes 'as a residuum' (MS 369).
32. Deletes 'feeling', substitutes 'seeking' (MS 369).
33. Deletes 'malady', substitutes 'trouble' (MS 369).
34. Deletes 'connected', substitutes 'coloured' (MS 370).
35. Marginal note: "'Prick to prick, so sweet"; with an emphatic diagram of phallic meeting, glued together, gushing' (MS 370).
36. Deletes 'disease', substitutes 'instinct' (MS 371).
37. Deletes 'recrudescence', substitutes 'resurrection' (MS 371).
38. Deletes 'want', substitutes 'craving' (MS 371).
39. Deletes 'appalling', substitutes 'audacious' (MS 371).
40. Deletes 'ensuing aches', substitutes 'awakening spasm' (MS 371).

41. Following ‘fancy or’, Symonds deletes ‘my’ (MS 371).
42. Here two sentences are deleted: ‘I suffered horribly. I saw no escape in the future’ (MS 372). Symonds attempts to revise this material into a single sentence (‘I suffered horribly, and saw no escape in the future’), but deletes this alternative.
43. Following ‘the demon’, deletes ‘in that symbol’ (MS 372).
44. This phrase recurs later in Greek and French—see note 62.
45. *Ecce Homo: a Survey of the Life and Work of Jesus Christ* (1865) by John Seeley (published anonymously).
46. Symonds misremembers the details of this article: ‘The Amateur Casual’ was the pseudonym of James Greenwood (1832–1929). His three-part article, ‘A Night at the Workhouse’, was published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in January 1866. The second instalment featured a boy named ‘Kay’ who inspired one of the constituent poems of Symonds’s ‘John Mordan’ cycle (now lost). See *Letters*, I, pp. 609–10.
47. Marginal note: “‘John Mordan’ will be printed as an appendix to this chapter’ (MS 372). Symonds’s ‘John Mordan’ cycle was broken up and its titular poem lost, presumably destroyed—see Introduction and Chapter 10, note 94.
48. Deletes ‘malady’, substitutes ‘trouble’ (MS 372).
49. Originally part of the ‘John Mordan’ cycle, these poems constitute Symonds’s privately printed pamphlet, ‘Tales of Ancient Greece. No. 1. Eudiades, and A Cretan Idyll’.
50. Following ‘for my’, deletes ‘moral’ (MS 373).
51. Deletes ‘expression’, substitutes ‘utterance’ (MS 373).
52. Trans.: appetite.
53. Deletes ‘indulged myself in slovenly treatment, repeated my motives, and made this exercise far less a matter of art than of’, substitutes ‘gave way to the besetting foibles of my literary temperament—facility, fluency, or carelessness of execution. The writing of these poems was’ (MS 373).
54. Marginal note: ‘NB HFB’ (MS 373).
55. Symonds misremembers his friend’s initials: F.W.H. Myers was a Fellow and College Lecturer at Trinity College, Cambridge between 1865 and 1869.
56. The eighth constituent poem of ‘Calamus’ in *Leaves of Grass* (1860–61 edition) by Walt Whitman.
57. Deletes ‘a parallel’, substitutes ‘another’ (MS 374).

58. Deletes 'by steeping my soul in Whitman's ideal', substitutes 'by absorbing Whitman's conception' (MS 374). Symonds also tries 'point' instead of 'ideal', but deletes this alternative.
59. Deletes 'splendour', substitutes 'glory' (MS 374).
60. Deletes 'his religion of democracy', substitutes 'democratic enthusiasm' (MS 374).
61. Deletes 'which I devoted to this', substitutes 'demanded by this inexorable and' (MS 375).
62. Trans.: To desire the impossible is a sickness of the soul. Greek proverb commonly attributed to Bias of Priene (one of the Sages of Greece). Symonds translates these lines (an English translation being marked for deletion) (MS 375). He also translates νόσος τῆς ψυχῆς as 'l'amour de l'impossible' in *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873) and employs the phrase as the title of a sonnet sequence in *Animi Figura* (1882).
63. Marginal note: 'This passage has been used again at the end of Chapter on Sexual Aberration' (MS 375). See Introduction.
64. Here there is a 10 cm gap between the sentence ending 'beyond my grasp' and the sentence beginning 'I thought it permissible' (MS 377). These sentences are joined together by a line running across the page, accompanied by a note: 'run on.'
 Partially legible marginal note: 'Int. passage on Imaginative Sin from *opuscula*. This [?] in the Alfred Brooke cap [*sic*].' *Opuscula* (trans.: a collection of small works) is a term used by Symonds to describe his privately printed *Miscellanies* (1885). See Babington, pp. 55–61.
65. The printed text of 'The Song of the Swimmer' is pasted into the manuscript and annotated by hand (MS 378): two words are revised in the second section (see Appendices). This poem is taken from Symonds's privately printed *Miscellanies* (1885), and a marginal note reminds him to include the text: 'Insert "Song of the Bather" from *Opuscula*.'
66. Roden Berkeley Wriothesley Noel (1834–94) was a poet, editor, biographer and essayist. His works include *Behind the Veil, and other Poems* (1863), *Beatrice, and other Poems* (1868) and a life of Lord Byron (1890).
67. Trans.: touching.

68. Symonds does not transcribe or insert this letter. The rest of the page (MS 380) is left blank (14 cms of clear space).
69. Trans.: man lover.
70. Marginal note: 'He was certainly what Ulrichs calls a *Weibling*. (Note, written in August, 1889)' (MS 381)—see Chapter 2, note 7.

Chapter 13: Norman

It was not to be expected that this state of tension and of preparation should be protracted for ever. Residence at Clifton from the autumn of 1868 onwards determined a new phase of feeling.

In December 1868 my friend Graham Dakyns, a schoolmaster at Clifton College, invited me to dinner. Several members of the Sixth Form made up the party with ourselves; and among these was a boy who attracted me by his good looks, agreeable manners and excellent sense in conversation. He had a very remarkable face, rather long, but finely cut, with deep-set dark eyes under level marked brows, low white forehead, and a storm of flaky dark hair, laid in heavy masses on a somewhat small skull, and turning at the tips to dusky gold:

τάς μὲν ἔνδοθεν, μελαίνας,
τάς δ' ἔς ἄκρον ἠλιώσας.¹

It was the sort of face which seemed made to be cast in bronze.

This boy, whom I will call Norman, though that was not his real name,² played a considerable part in my life for the next few years. In order to approach him, I contrived that Percival,³ the head master of Clifton College, should invite me to lecture to the Sixth Form. Thus, to begin

with, it was Norman's influence which led me to take a step decisive for my literary career.

In preceding sections of this book enough has been set down to characterize the nature of my feelings for young lads before the year 1863—before I made a vigorous effort to shake off those enthralments, and sealed my vow by the decisive act of marriage. Six years had now elapsed, during which, as I have just said, the unconquerable instinct returned, was treated by me with literary and imaginative palliatives, and never found the least escape into experience.

I now deliberately engaged in an *amour* with Norman. It was romantic, delicately sentimental, but at the same time passionate and tinged with unmistakable sensuality. During its whole course, this leading type prevailed; but the sensual element was⁴ held in check. Nothing occurred between us which the⁵ censorious could rightly consider unworthy of two gentlemen.⁶

Norman reciprocated my affection to a considerable extent. He was himself sensitive to the attraction of the male; but his mode of feeling corresponded to my own—that is to say, he already loved boys younger than himself. This prevented our union from⁷ becoming that of lover and beloved in the deeper sense of mutual satisfaction. Rarely, I think, in these conditions of aberrant sexual emotion, is the fine flower of a perfect relation developed. It is the misery of people born like us that, far more than in the case of normal passion, the one kisses and the other turns the cheek. The result was that I had to suffer from jealousy, from the want of any definite hold upon my adored friend, from the dissatisfaction of incomplete spiritual possession, and from the hunger of defrauded longings. I would have relinquished a large part of the physical intimacy which I enjoyed, if I could have felt more certain of his real affection. Too often I had to repeat these couplets from Theognis:

μή μ' ἔπεσιν μὲν στέργε νόον δ' ἔχε καὶ φρένας ἄλλας
εἴ με φιλεῖς καὶ σοι πιστὸς ἔνεστι νόος,
ἀλλὰ φίλει καθαρὸν θέμιος νόον, ἢ μ' ἀποπειπὼν
ἔχθαιρ' ἀμφαδίην νεῖκος ἀειράμενος.
ὃς δὲ μῆ γλώσση δίχ' ἔχει νόον, οὗτος ἑταῖρος
δειλός, Κύρν', ἐχθρὸς βέλτερος ἢ φίλος ὤν.⁸

Not that Norman was ever disloyal. The maladjustment lay in our circumstances, our respective emotions; and I believe that even if I had not been a

married man, which of course complicated matters, the case would hardly have been bettered. Such as it was, this passionate friendship brought me an incalculable amount of delight. It also helped to emancipate my intellect and will, so that I date from it my entrance into a new phase of activity, the fruits of which soon afterwards began to show themselves in a full stream of literary performances.⁹ The history of those belongs to my mental development, and I think it best to keep this apart from the records of my emotional life. Anyone who cares to read them both, and to compare dates, will perceive what I mean.

Having by me diaries of the years I spent with Norman, I shall adopt the method of describing this episode by means of selected extracts from those books. It will perhaps prove tedious both to myself and my readers. But I gain the advantage of setting down what I felt from day to day.¹⁰

These words were written before I had looked through the diaries in question. After doing so, I find that Norman was inextricably interwoven with my whole life—literature, friends, home affairs, my wife and father and father-in-law, travels on the continent, etc.—so inextricably interwoven indeed with all these things that I cannot present any adequate view of our intimacy without relating in some detail the events of that period. This I will now do following the diaries; and perhaps in this way will be gained a faithful general notion of the rapport existing in my nature at that time between the domestic, literary, emotional and active aspects of life.

On the 18th of November my father-in-law Mr Frederick North was re-elected Member for Hastings together with Tom Brassey, now Lord Brassey.¹¹ On the following day I went to Clifton, where we had taken a furnished house for the winter, 7 Victoria Square. On the 1st of December I dined at H.G. Dakyns's. The party consisted of E.M. Oakley (a master at the college) and three Sixth Form boys, Norman, Bean, Howlett.¹² I find the beginning of an epigram by Straton used as motto for this dinner-party in my notes: *καὶ μισθοὺς αἰτεῖτε διδάσκαλοι; ὡς ἀχάριστοι κ.τ.λ.*¹³ During the first half of this month Conington came to stay; and the project of my lecturing to the Clifton College boys, and to the Clifton ladies, on Greek literature, began to form itself in my mind. Percival, the head master of the college, readily adopted the idea; and it was only a question whether my health would stand the strain. I plunged at once into preparatory studies, reading Greek authors of all kinds, Max Müller¹⁴ on language, Greek

histories, and the various books upon Greek poetry. It occurred to Graham who took interest in my own poetry, that I should attempt the description of a Greek boy who responds to his lover and lives a noble life with him. Accordingly, I gave myself to this task, and between December 22nd and 30th composed the tale in verse which is called 'Eudiades'. 'June days and nights in Athens', is the short note in my diary. Early in January 1869 Jowett paid us a visit; and on the fifteenth my daughter Margaret was born. Next day Henry Sidgwick came to stay, and we thoroughly investigated the subject of my poems on *erós*.¹⁵ His conclusion was that I ought to abandon them, as unhealthy and disturbing to my moral equilibrium. I assented. We locked them all up in a black tin box, with the exception of 'Eudiades', the MS of which belonged to Graham Dakyns. Having done this, Henry threw the key into the river Avon on the 23rd.¹⁶

There was something absurd in all this, because I felt myself half-consciously upon the point of translating my dreams and fancies about love into fact. And on the 27th of January occurs the entry: 'Norman dined with me alone: καλλιστος, ἀδμητος, εἰρωνικος.'¹⁷ I was launched upon a new career, with the overpowering sweetness of the vision of 'Eudiades' pervading my soul.

Norman soon assumed ascendancy over my imagination, and my diary is full of him:

February 1. Norman ascends like a star, but a troublous planet. And the prospect of these lectures to the Sixth Form involves a whole change of life. The black box is hidden away. The art which for three years has been so continuous a safety-valve is now shut off. Can I pour the old wine into these new bottles?¹⁸

I saw a great deal of Sydney Dobell at this time, and he gave me some good hints on criticism and style. He was a man of subtle, hair-splitting brain. But his judgments were those of a real poet and a naturally gifted scholar.

Meanwhile Norman often came to dinner. We met in the College Close and Library; and sometimes I sent him presents of books. And then we began to write each other letters. It is clear from the confidences of my diary that I was impatient, lacking faith, eager to bring this life-poem into bloom as quickly¹⁹ as the improvisatory poet brings his fancy. The boy responded readily, and felt my influence. I ought to have been satisfied. But I brooded too much on my own object; and we had not enough of life in common:

February 5. *Erós*, *storgé* and *agapé* are the τρία παλαιίσματα.²⁰ If you begin with *erós*, and then seek the other two, you have a hard task; for you will not be satisfied unless they are as candescent as your *erós*.

My intention to educate Norman and to stimulate his intellect, which seemed to me slack and indolent, soon assumed predominance. I began to coach him for his essays, and to read passages of good Greek and English authors with him. This led to little sweets of intimacy:

February 7. As he read, I leaned on his shoulder, and his ear-tip touched my forehead, and I felt his voice vibrate in his lungs, and I could see the subtle smile upon his lips, and I perceived the φυσική χροτὸς ἐϋπνοιῆ²¹ of which Straton talks, and which inebriates.

Befooled am I, besotted, to live thus a poem when I have strangled my written poems. I used to think Butler's sermon on self-deception unreal.²² I believe in self-deception now. I carry in my heart what I am afraid to analyze—even to define—what I hardly acknowledge to myself.

O Love, why hast thou brought me to this barren shore again? Why was I born for this—to be perpetually seeking παιδων νεογειον ἄνθος?²³ I said unto my soul, be still! and to my heart, be silent! I sought and found wells of cool waters, untroubled, ready to refresh me. I cried unto the Alps, receive and make me young again! I had peace among the great mountains. And yet, remorseless Love, I have not ceased to tremble at the ὄψις ἀστράπτουσα.²⁴

At this point I wished with half my will to break the thread of Norman's friendship. But how was I to do so with justice to him? I should have to confess²⁵ 'the unbearableness of his beauty', or to leave Clifton, or to give up my proposed lectures, or to be distant and yet on friendly terms. I felt incapable of taking any of these courses; and so things went their way, and the intimacy grew daily closer. Now I began to perceive that Norman was, and for some while past had always been, more or less sentimentally in love with one or other of his comrades. This added to my unrest:

February 10. 'O stultitiam humanam nescientem diligere homines humaniter!²⁶

Review writing, reading of Greek, lecture composing went steadily forward. I lived in a whirlpool of work and of emotion. Staying at Sutton Court, I stumbled on an old English translation of the *Gulistan*. The book upon love and friendship took hold of my fancy, and I copied out this bit:

February 11. ‘The herbage of his cheeks drinks the waters of life; everyone that eateth sweets, stareth at his lips.’²⁷

From Sutton Court I sent Norman letters, poems, violets:

February 13. Ἰὼν πέπομφα στέφανον εὐωδεστάτων
ἔάρος ἀπαρχήν σοι μὲν εὐωδεστέρω.²⁸

There was a splendid sunset this evening—the Mendip of transparent violet, marked against spaces of primrose and daffodil and sea-green sky, melting into turquoise, and flecked with lines and spots and scales and plumes and pinions of rose and crimson—the whole overshadowed by a purple roofage of heaven-ascending clouds, and cut by the massive limbs and delicate braches of elms black and leafless. Sad in its excessive beauty, its richness of symphonious hues.

On the 18th of February Mrs Clough came to stay with us; and I edited with her assistance the prose and verse remains of A.H. Clough.²⁹ This, in addition to my other brainwork, told heavily upon my strength. We had considerable difficulty in deciphering some of the MSS, and our opinions differed as to what pieces should be included in the collection. However, we always came to a final agreement, and about the end of March the two volumes were already getting into print. Mrs Clough’s preface to this edition is dated June, 1869.

Francis Newman³⁰ was a frequent visitor to my house now; and just at the end of the month we had a delightful visit from W.J. Courthope:

February 25. Returning home I found Hassan (a huge Persian cat) walking in the passage, and knew that Courthope had come. He is as bright as ever, as vindictive against modern humbugs—especially angry with Max Müller. Hassan dined with us, walking about the table, mewing, purring, sticking his great tail in our eyes and his whiskers into our plates.

At a concert on that evening, the vision which has been verified in ‘Genius Amoris Amari Visio’ came to me. I find it written down in prose exactly as it was afterwards metaphrased into rhyming couplets.³¹ Visions used often then to come in this way, under the influence of music or some peculiar effects of light in nature. I can remember seeing Antinous standing at the poop of Hadrian’s galley on the Nile before he plunged into

the water—seeing this distinctly from the pavement of Victoria Square, when the western sky had a greenish-yellow beryl colour after sunset.³² It became ‘The Lotos Garland of Antinous’ in my literature:³³

February 28. Courthope and I went for a walk at 12.30 p.m., and met Norman in Clifton Park. We walked till 1 a.m. together, I too inebriated to talk sense or to be self-possessed. He was coming to see me, he said. Courthope liked him, and remarked that he had irony in his voice.

Irony was a matter much discussed between Courthope and me at that time, and prized by us because of our admiration for Ariosto and Tassoni.

On the 1st of March my father left Clifton for Italy with my sister Charlotte. His health had begun to fail. It was the beginning of that long illness which ended in February 1871:

March 5. At 7 p.m. Norman came to dinner; elegant, self-possessed, in no sense disturbed by the three ladies he found there, willing to talk about things which interested him and, when silent, not uncomfortable, but slightly bored.

That evening I found out a good deal about his family:

He is not nineteen yet. His father died some time ago; and his mother, who seems to be a weak woman, married a disreputable old clerical schoolmaster. They are always in debt and difficulties.

All these things explained to me a great deal in Norman’s character. He had a bad unhappy home, a depressing and demoralizing milieu:

March 7. Oh, this sleep toward morning, illuminated by a dream so piercingly sweet that it cannot be written. I can never in life be what I was last night in dreams; never so put my arm around another’s neck, so thrill at the touch of another’s throat and hand, so be fused into the soul’s essence of one beside me, so know that eternity is perfected and shut and sealed and rounded in a single moment. There are sublimer, more lasting, better, more real things in life than this. I have experienced them. But except in such dreams life has never become art, no poem has been lived by me.

March 8. A black day. At eleven, dear little Margaret was christened in that abominable Clifton church; only Mrs Clough, Mary Hall, Catherine, I, the nurses, Janet and Lotta being there. A lame lugubrious curate officiated, supported by two sepulchral clerks. The whole was like a ghastly desiccated ceremony—a mere husk. I was godfather. The vows stuck in my throat. It was like a total lovelessness and carelessness about the dear white quiet little daisy. And a slight forethought might have remedied this. I had been too busy, fretted with Clough's poems, indolently self-absorbed—Catherine too weak and helpless from her slow recovery. She forgot to ask Auntie and Aunt Charlotte, who were much disappointed. This made her miserable, and I was unhappy. A bleak east wind swept a leaden grey sky. Frank Newman came and prosed. Mrs Clough and Mary and I drove round by Failand in my father's carriage, discontented, ill-assorted. Mrs Clough and Mary are jealous of each other about us.

This is the description of certainly a black unpleasant day. But it has been amply made up to 'dear little Margaret' in after life. Soon after that day, I resolved to buy 7 Victoria Square:

March 15. I see that there are three grades in art: the first is living out a dream, such as I lived with Willie, and now am trying to live with Norman. Next comes the personal work of art, in which we dream and know it is a dream, and pour our yearnings and our passions into the dream, and give it form in words, trying to realize a vision of what we desire: εἰδῶλοις κάλλεος κῶφα χλιαινόμενοι.³⁴ This is rather more like true art; and this I attained in 'Eudiades'. The third grade is the true impersonal work of art, in which we dream indeed, but create forms and stand aloof from them, and love them for their objective beauty, not merely because of some desire or longing of our own.

Norman continued to be much about the house. My wife did not take to him greatly. She was not exactly jealous of him then, though she became so afterwards, as was only natural. I shall have to enter into details about this, when the time comes. On my side the intimacy became more and more engrossing,³⁵ and I felt that I was taking some hold both on the lad's mind and his affections.

On the 19th of March there came bad news from Hastings. The Conservatives were filing a petition against Messrs North and Brassey, the Liberal members elected in the preceding November. I went up to London next day to consult with lawyers and old friends of the family

upon the subject, writing meanwhile letters to Norman, one of which contained this line:

Da mihi amicitiam; hoc praetexo nomine amorem.³⁶

I saw a good deal of the Lushingtons in London, and dined at old Dr. Lushington's house, where I met Jowett, stayed with Samuel Smith, Henry Sidgwick and Mrs Clough at Combe Hurst, and then travelled back with F.D. Maurice and his wife on the 23rd.³⁷

Silly discontents arose in my heart about Norman and his liking for other people; apropos of which I find scribbled in pencil at a later date upon the margin of the diary:

Mais que j'étais faible et égoïste! A ce moment il me donnait tout—son âme—son corps. J'avais sous les mains la jouissance de tout ce qui faisait lui. Mais j'avais désiré ce que seulement une femme peut donner, le complet dévouement de son être entier. Il n'était pas femme. Il n'était pas que garçon. Je ne voulais pas cueillir des raisins parceque je désirais les fruits de l'arbricotier.³⁸

Though this is bad French, it is good sense; and I think it must have been written after my return from a visit to London with him in May.

Arthur Sidgwick came to stay with Graham on the 30th:

I have not met him since we were at Glion in 1867. He is unaltered: as of old indolent in manner and voice, crystalline in thought and speech, abundant in silence, deep in feeling, real all through.

Arthur lectured me upon the right way in which I ought to approach my work with the Sixth Form—in a philanthropic spirit and so forth—repressing my emotional tendencies: very sound sense:

Arthur's strong clear spirit influenced and penetrated me. I do not compare him at all to Graham. Graham, like music, intensifies what is within those whom he loves.

Graham showed him 'Eudiades', and Arthur pronounced it 'degrading to whoever wrote and whoever reads.' I said that, for aught I cared, 'Eudiades' might be burned. Graham, however, claimed it as his own, and the [attempt]³⁹ to destroy the poem came to nothing. Arthur sent me a

pencil note: ‘He refuses to burn ‘Eudiades’. *Liberavi animam meam.*’⁴⁰ Of course if I had really cared to have the poem burned, I could have done so. But I was indifferent on the subject, and withal nettled by Arthur’s high and mighty ways. He had read and approved of many other poems by me in a like vein—‘A Cretan Idyll’, ‘John Mordan’, ‘Diego’, etc. And I did not see why he should suddenly turn round so.

Still his advice sank pretty deep into me; and when I discovered that Norman had not been to see me of late and had not written because he was laid up with that depressing malady the mumps, I had a revulsion of feeling against my own egotistic maundering. I thought I ought to change my tone toward him, and wrote the following letter under date April 1st:

I am going to confess to you something in my hatred of concealment. I know you enough, I think, to trust your good sense and good will. It is this. In my letters to you I have sometimes adopted an artificial and sentimental mode of expression. Please forgive me for this; and if you have found it a fault, attribute it to the awkwardness of commencing friendship, and also to the literary habits of one who has sought to gain a kind of freshness by using a language of his own determination. I have not said a single insincere thing to you—nothing that I do not mean and stick to. But somehow I feel that I need to ask your pardon for the strong language of attachment I have used. I believe and hope you understand me. But I would not have you think me a weakly sentimental man whose words go further than his feelings or his acts. Such is not the case. Nor would I have you mistake me for one of those who seek the impossible in friendship. I should like to tear my soul in shreds for those whom I love; and just now I would give you a very large portion of it.⁴¹ How easy it would be to die, if those dear ones could be made the better by my death! But this is vain talk. God has appointed for each of us a work; and none can lighten that work. I must do mine. And, as for you, if I can help you honestly and loyally, should you allow me so to do, I will do my best—so help me God!

There. I have trusted you and confessed. If henceforth I seem to play on the surface or to deal in trivialities, remember this which I have now said. Be open with me; accuse me, call me to task, if you think that I am doing wrong. Make me explain myself when I am obscure. On this ground be my friend, and give me love.

It appears from the diary that I duly received from Norman a highly satisfactory answer, and that our friendship was placed upon a sober understanding. Without diminishing in passion for the boy, I turned my thoughts steadily and with a will to forming his taste and training his intellect.

Under the same date, April 1st, I find a long letter to Arthur Sidgwick transcribed in the diary. Some extracts from this throw light upon the situation:

In consequence of what you said to me this morning, I have made the following resolution: I will not enter upon my school work next term in any but a philanthropic spirit. I will not seek in that work a mere form of emotional self-excitement.

I must, however, add that I never fancied for a moment that at Clifton College—of all places in the world, when there are Venice and Naples!—I should be able to live out an aesthetic ideal. I need not be told that life is not art, not even Goethe's or Shakespeare's art, far less such feeble art as mine. We do not meet Margarets and Juliets in real life—nor yet Myronides and Damocles the Beautiful.⁴² This such experience as I have already gained from Willie Dyer, Alfred Brooke, Rosa Engel, Letitia Malthus, one whom I care not here to mention (Mrs Butler), and another whom I will not mention (my wife), or from the dishonour of Shorting, or from the debasing spectacle of Pretor, has taught me.

Had I wanted to live a poem, I should have chosen Venice, and not Clifton. Be sure therefore that I shall not engage in my lectures on Greek literature in any maudlin spirit.

As to my cycle, I determined in August to suppress these poems; and now [the deed is done.]⁴³ I shake from my wings those drops of morning dew. What matters it if ephemerals like 'Eudiades' perish? This brain holds a dozen Eudiadeses. And you were quite at liberty, so far as I am concerned, to burn it.

But about 'Eudiades' I have still something to say. The poem was written with an attempt to realize a historical situation. You asked me what I meant by the temptation of the lovers. I chose to depict one of those young men of Plato's *Phaedrus*, who recoil from acts which were permissible in Hellas. But I admit there is an element of pathos in the poem, which makes it what you called 'orectic' and therefore inartistic.

Lastly, you thought perhaps that I ought to have mentioned Norman. I humbled my pride this morning, as one friend should do to another. But I could not speak of Norman. And even now it is chiefly pride which makes me write about him—lest haply you should say I have omitted aught. Well: I promise that, through Norman, without the flapping of an aesthetic tail in puddles of imagined sin, I will fail or conquer.

What I lived through last winter on the Cornice and in Corsica, placed me where the feet of dying men tread. I do not forget those months, nor can I ever forget them. This is enough. For the rest, I am very sick and sorrowful. I conceal my deepest smart. If my words are bitter, try to pardon

them. I have today drunk wormwood.⁴⁴ I have talked of my malady, and let you probe my soul.

O my brother, whom I love, whose life I have in these hours touched with keen delight, before whose strong swift sweet spirit I have bowed the neck of my soul, bethink thee yet awhile! Hast thou solved all things in the acid of thine understanding? Who came to Job and found him on a dunghill, scraping his sores with potsherds?⁴⁵

In the strained eager way of young life, all these talkings and letter writings and diary scribblings were accomplished on that April Fool's Day, 1869; and when I met Arthur on the 2nd at Graham's, there was no rift in the lute of our friendship. I find records of much merry conversation and good fellowship together till the day when Arthur left, and Jowett, who was always turning up at Clifton then, took his place in my thoughts and 'daily dreadful lines' of diary:

April 4. Two wishes: When is that good someday to come, when intercourse shall take place not in shred and scraps that cause shyness, but in rhythmical long lines and curves of continuity, which create the repose of confidence and intimacy? —I wish you were here, and that you were not going to rush out into the dark and cold, and that you were willing to lie upon the sofa and talk at intervals and forecast no morrow and be at rest.

So the days went by, and I visited Norman in his home, and made acquaintance with his aunt, and walked with him on Sundays in Leigh Woods, and learned more about his family, and wrote my lectures on Homer and Achilles,⁴⁶ and heard concerts and debates at the college. Here is a scrap, which afterwards became a poem:⁴⁷

April 10. There is a breath of Venice in this first spring day. I forget myself and fancy that it has a smell of seaweed in it, and that toward sundown the awnings of my gondola will be flapping Lido-wards. Here the chestnut buds are bursting into fans, and there is a gummy scent about the palings of town gardens. We lounged in the Close, where cricket was uppermost. Then I lay half an hour upon the cliffs above the Avon. Two sulphur butterflies flew past. Late at night, stars seen through the white bud-blossoms of a horse chestnut, birds half asleep, and the perfume of poplar sheathes unfolding.

But other interests began to occupy me. The election petition at Hastings was coming to trial. Mr Brassey had secured Ballantyne and Charles Bowen for his counsel; Mr. North, a certain Powell, Q.C. and Thurston Holland;

the Conservatives, Gifford.⁴⁸ I meant to be there. But on the night before I left Clifton I had a long talk with my wife. The points were these:

Our common wish to beget no more children, chiefly for her sake; the consequent difficulty of my position; the shutting up of the black box, and all that this involved; my increase in health since I knew Norman, the uncontrollable bias of my nature in this direction, and my firm resolve to keep within the limits of good sense and taste; my illness at Cannes last winter, and its threatened repetition in January; all intensification of my life intensifies my love for her.

Which latter point was certainly true.

On the 12th of April I came to Hastings. The next five days were spent in court, hearing the speeches of counsel on both sides and the examination of witnesses. The following is curious:

April 15. Early in the day Powell offered to transact with Gifford for North's seat. Gifford agreed to drop the North petition, if Brassey would consent to give up his seat under either contingency of success or failure. Brassey of course refused. Ballantyne suggested that he should do it, and then toss up with North for the seat. This shows how purely the whole thing is a political game, and how very little the interests of justice are considered. It is a game of chess between the lawyers.

There was no evidence at all against Mr. North, and only an odour of bribery clung to Mr Brassey, chiefly through his wife's extravagant expenditure. Blackburn, the judge, dismissed Mrs Brassey with a warning to ladies who canvass,⁴⁹ decided that there was no cause to unseat the members, and gave them costs. There was jubilation at Hastings Lodge.⁵⁰ But the worry of the trial told on Mr North, and helped, I think, to hasten his physical break-down. He had staunchly fought, through all his parliamentary life, for purity of election; and to be even accused of bribery stung him in his sense of honour to the quick.

On the 20th of April I went to Cambridge, and stayed with Henry Sidgwick at Trinity among the Dons—Munro, Currey, Jackson, Jebb.⁵¹ I showed my diary to Henry, who said,

It fills me with terror and pain. I admire your spiritual gifts so much, the versatility of your intellectual interests, your power of poetizing life. But this thread of etherealized sensuality.

In spite of the uneasiness which I too felt, and which these remarks accentuated, I was pledged to meet Norman in London. My foot was in, and could not be drawn out. So I arrived at 47 Norfolk Square upon the 24th, and lived in the big house alone with Norman for six very delightful days. We enjoyed some continuity of intercourse at last, and this week was one of the best we ever spent together. He had never been in London before. The opera, the theatres, the picture galleries, the Crystal Palace,⁵² my club, the Abbey and St Paul's, all delighted him immensely. Then there were people: Mrs Clough, the Charles Nortons,⁵³ George Miller, etc. We heard *I Puritani* and the *Trovatore*, saw *School* at the Prince of Wales's, and Sothorn in *Home* and *Night Watch* at the Haymarket.⁵⁴ Norman gave me unmistakable⁵⁵ signs of his affection:

April 30. Last night, *summa cacumina tetigi. In meis obdormivit brachiis, non sine basiis frequentissimis.*⁵⁶

There was no harm in this either to him or to me. The records of my diary during those six days are free from the self-introspection and etherealized sensuality of the previous months. I had found satisfaction in proximity with Norman, and was natural without wishing to be licentious. Health came to my heart and mind in his expansion. That Henry should be pained and terrified was intelligible. That I should feel the perplexities of the situation was inevitable. Yet it was to me as clear as day that the fruition of my moderate desires brought peace and sanity and gladness. If the mode of intercourse I now enjoyed with him could have been prolonged, our friendship might have been ideal. None but those who understand abnormal temperaments, will admit this, because they have not the evidence of their own experience to disprove and annihilate the misconceptions of prevalent opinion. But the fact is so.

On the 30th of April we travelled down to Bristol together. Norman went home to his aunt and I drove over to Sutton Court, where I found Catherine. It was a lovely spring—a spring of cowslip meadows, primrose lanes, and hyacinth dells, through which I walked with her:

May 2. Catherine and I talked long together about Norman and about our life during our walk upon those heavenly hills. I told her how I felt adequate to living a life of passion without the flesh, and to meeting the difficulty of celibacy in marriage. (We had resolved on that, though it proved impossible in the sequel to adhere continuously to our resolution.) Never again must

we be as we were last spring in Italy—companionless, uncomforted, though side by side—dragged down by the burdens of the flesh. (That was when she was suffering acutely under the gloom and depression of pregnancy.) She is not made to be a companion to me, and to be a child-bearing woman at the same time. But now she will be a companion in the highest sense, when she is relieved of these necessities. She comprehends the situation, and understands me completely about Norman—probably because I understand myself.

Events have proved that these prognostications, on the whole, were just. It is certain that what her nature required, was to be delivered from the peril of pregnancy, and that a celibate marriage caused her no discomfort. It is also certain that we have grown to be closer friends and better companions in proportion as we eliminated sex from our life. When, at a later period, Katharine was born,⁵⁷ we went through another nine months of antecedent wretchedness. And the last eleven years have been the happiest. But, on the other hand, the mode of existence laid out on that May day at Sutton Court, had its trials for both of us. She could not help being jealous of Norman, especially when she found some letters written by me to him in strains of passion I had never used to her. On my side, I was exposed to perturbations of the senses and the inconveniences of sexual abstinence while encouraging my love for Norman. Nevertheless, I did not break the promise I had made and though I desired him sensuously, I slipped into nothing base.

On the 7th of May we came to live at Clifton Hill House, while our own house, 7 Victoria Square, was being made ready:

May 7. Clifton is full of vague yet powerful associations. When will this Circe⁵⁸ cease to brew enchantments for my soul? The trees and streets and distant views of down and valley ||⁵⁹ kept saying to me, as I walked to Graham's: Put upon your soul the dress which we have woven for you; you will have to wear it, whether you like or not; palpitate, aspire, recalcitrate as you may, here it is ready for you.

And indeed a fresh period of unrest, agitation, and unwholesome self-analysis opened. Next day I began my lectures to the Sixth Form, which were continued through that term, and went on for more than two years regularly. By means of them I was brought acquainted with many boys, who have been my best friends—J.E. Pearson, A. Nash, C.W. Boyle, T.H. Warren, A.R. Cluer, and H.F. Brown,⁶⁰ not to mention a host of

others. Their society gave me great pleasure; and I am sure they will say that mine was both pleasant and beneficial. We used to dine and walk and talk together, stroll about my garden, sit among the trees of Leigh Woods. They brought me essays to read, and I discoursed on an infinity of topics. Though I dearly loved them, and felt the physical charm of one or another, I entered into no relations like that I had begun with Norman. The duties of a teacher prevented this; and besides, I felt that it would be a mistake to repeat what I gradually came to recognize as more or less a failure. Consequently, these friendships grew up without jealousies, sentimentalities, and etherealized sensualities:

May 12. The nights are still strange. I have had the same dream during the last ten nights. Half waking I clasp the sleeper at my side, and kiss sleepy lips. Is it Erôs himself? At first the prolonged dream makes me think so. Then my senses uncoil themselves from slumber and the fraud of dreams. Awake, I know it is she whom I have sworn not to touch. On my side I roll heavily and sigh. And Erôs? Where art thou?

This indicates no healthy state of things.

Clifton Hill House was far away from Durdham Downs, where Norman lived. He came often to see me, and did a good deal of work in my study. But I attributed all his unexpected absences to indifference, and became fretful. The good time of London seemed so far away. Then my family and I moved into our house in Victoria Square, which was nearer to the college and the Downs. But the work and play of the summer term absorbed Norman's time; and I noticed also that, under the sweet influences of the season, he had begun to love, as was his former wont, a boy. Norman was all right, giving me what he had the power to give, and this ought to have satisfied a less exacting man. Here is an instance:

24 May. Norman came at 9 p.m. with questions on political economy. We read together, and just before he went, he thought I was not going to kiss him. He stopped and put his face close to mine. Then we walked in the twilight to the Downs.

At the end of the month my father returned from Italy, rather better in health; but frequent illnesses had plagued him during his absence, and he was no longer the same vigorous and splendid man he used to be.

Here is a passage from the diary, recording a conversation I had with Norman's cousin:

June 15. I went out with him, and we began to talk about Norman. This topic so interested both of us that we walked, in a keen wind under a clear green sky, deepening to feldspar blues with stars in it, on to the cliff edge above the Avon at the sea-walls. His admiration for Norman is touching and beautiful. He says that all admire Norman, who can do what he likes with people. But his 'nearly perfect' character is spoiled by indolence, procrastination, want of definite will and ambition, readiness to let things take their course. He has not the energy of passion. He needs to be stirred up. (Dunn,⁶¹ a master in the school, had said that he wants squeezing.) Then about the evil influences of his home in Derbyshire. His father and two elder brothers threw themselves away. His mother is not much to be respected. Her second husband is an old scamp. Must Norman go the way of the rest, who are fascinating, clever, weak, indolent and self-indulgent. He has sincere enthusiasm for his school. He is really affectionate toward those of whom he has been fond: is fond of me: I can do much with him. —So I jot down some of the things which the cousin said. I wish I could write them as nicely as the cousin said them.

This extract throws light upon the situation. I was going astray by a keen desire to attach Norman, not merely through affection, but also through service and the ties which come of intellectual and moral life in common. He, of his nature, remained wavering, inconstant, readily affectionate, fascinating and conscious of his fascination, but not attachable. I imperiously craved too much. He indolently and kindly gave what there was to give. I wanted an ideal thing. It was not in him to respond; and probably I was not the man to draw him to the point I wished. The simple course would have been to have just taken the most which I could get, and to have plied the yielding side of his character toward sensuality. But this was precisely what I refused to do. At that period of my life I still clung to ideal conceptions, and I had fallen upon a friend who could not help me to realize them. Neither had blame.

There came a thunderstorm about these things with Catherine. We made a reconciliation and new bonds of friendship, which proved the essential rightness of our wills and wishes. But it was a moment of tempest:

June 18. No one but she will know what burdens I have borne, imposed upon me by my temperament, and how I have been disciplined to the

service of my congenital passion. I cannot write down what I have told her. And if I did, whom would it profit to know that this wretch, clasped from his cradle by a serpent, sought to elude its folds—that he ran to the waters of oblivion, but the stream dried up and the snake followed—that the thick leafage of close study was lightning-scathed, so that the glittering reptile eyes shone through—that the high tree of marriage was hewn down beneath him, so that he fell into those serpent jaws again—that the sinews of escape, the eyesight of occupation, the brain force of activity through will, were paralysed, and he was never free from the creeping coiling length of his soul's murderer. —To have the imaginative and sensuous side of passion disconnected in one's nature from the rational enduring solid part of love, and never to feel the former in its truest sense for women, but only for dreams or the incarnations of dreams in male beings, selected for the moment, not thoroughly respected or believed in; is this common?

Common enough, I answer now, but very tragic and pathetic.

Just then, so oddly was my life mixed, that I began to write the essay on Aristophanes, which is one of the best, I think, of my *Studies of the Greek Poets*.⁶²

June 18. What is painful about Norman is this—that as far as the selfish and lower parts of the desires expressed in my diary go, I have been satisfied; but the purer, nobler, more disinterested desires which have sprung up in personal contact with him, are unsatisfied. Of physical closeness I have as much as I can want. Of spiritual closeness I get little—I am not even allowed to exercise my pedagogic faculty for his good in any definite way. I have learned how valueless, how worse than valueless, how degrading in my own eyes, is mere physical closeness without truly passionate or spiritual closeness. Yet, were there but passion on his part or spiritual unity, how would not hand-touch, lips, scent of hair, be dignified? Do I dream? Are the two things really separate? I have spiritual closeness with Catherine.

Here I will transcribe some verses, to terminate a period of confused impulses:

Come back again, and let me live
 The golden days once more:
 Ten years of life I'd gladly give
 To be as heretofore—
 To feel your spirit fresh and strong
 Toward my spirit move,

And dream that you perchance ere long,
 Like me, might learn to love.
 O foolish dream! The flesh withholds
 No nearness that she knows,
 But not [for]⁶³ me your life unfolds
 Her spiritual rose.
 Within my arms you linger yet,
 Half scorning, half in joy;
 Then frowning bid me to forget
 I loved you when a boy:
 For boys will love, but love not them
 Who drain live hearts of gold
 To place a priceless diadem
 On foreheads fancy-cold;
 And love is love—a wingéd thing,
 So light and frail and free
 He still will break his leading-string
 And fly from pale ennui.
 And men, you say—you are a man,
 I grant, since yesterday,
 Want friends, not lovers, for they can
 Pluck loves like flowers in May.

I do not know precisely when these verses were written—at a later period, I think, in the episode of Norman. But they seem sufficiently appropriate to describe a mood that was becoming permanent

I had arrived now at seeing that I could not exactly establish the sort of comradeship which I desired. But Norman's society remained very sweet to me; and it speaks well for the relations we had established, that they suffered no change for the worse. I took him with me in July for a journey on the Continent, through Paris and Bern, to Mürren, then over the Grimsel and Furka to Hospental, down the Gotthard to Amsteg and up into the Maderanertal, to Axenstein and Rigi Scheidegg, Engelberg, and back by Basel to Clifton. We were alone, and enjoyed ourselves as much as we had done in London. The good times returned. I have many pleasant memories and records of that journey—the little wooden rooms of inns in which we slept together, generally in the same bed; the long walks upon the mountains, down the valleys in sunshine and in rain; the hay stable where we couched together through a night⁶⁴ by the Trübsee, intending to climb Titlis (but the Fohn⁶⁵ swept down and a thunderstorm

deluged the whole region); the sleepy voluptuous days at Axenstein; the kisses and embracements and the long delicious hours between walking and sleeping; the wet days spent in the Maderanertal with Miss Howard, Miss Fairbairn, Miss Crewe, and Miss Parker.⁶⁶ If I have the energy, I will write out some pictures from these scenes of travel. One little entry from the diary may be inserted here:

August 21. Jam summa cacumina voluptatis tetigi, et flosculos quales desiderabam plena manu in gremium recepi. Hic tamen morari nequeo. Flores flammiferi, in cineresque abituri, cor cordium ne comburant graviter metuo.⁶⁷

I was thoroughly satisfied with what I used to call physical closeness; but I dreaded what that might lead to, if the spiritual and intellectual relation between us remained imperfect.

I did a great deal of work too on the journey, reading through the whole of Bergk's *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*,⁶⁸ and making notes for my lectures, as well as writing English poems.

We reached Clifton on the 4th of September, and I settled down again to domesticity and work. Began writing on Pindar, and lecturing to boys and ladies. On the 23rd I had news that Conington had died almost suddenly; and on the 28th a telegram announced the serious illness of Mr North. Catherine was with him. On the 29th I reached Hastings just an hour too late to see him alive. After seven days spent at Hastings, I returned to my lecture work at Clifton, where my father was ill again—obliged to go to Brighton. Meanwhile there were people on visits—Roden Noel, John Nichol,⁶⁹ Mrs Clough.

On the 20th of November I heard two pieces of news, first that Percival was defeated by Dr Hayman⁷⁰ as a candidate for the headmastership of Rugby, and second that Norman was elected a scholar of Balliol. This was highly satisfactory to me, as well as to everybody—except that it implied a speedy separation. In fact it was settled that he should go up to Oxford at the beginning of the Lent term.

Life went on as usual: I lecturing and devouring the Greek tragedians with their fragments, one after the other, and writing lectures on them, which were afterwards turned into studies, writing poems (among them 'Genius Amoris Amari Visio' and 'The Lotos Garland of Antinous'), visiting my father at Brighton, going to concerts and dinner-parties, giving parties at home, entertaining the boys, seeing much of Norman in

the evenings, and often noting in my diary little phrases like φιλάματα μελίτος ἀδομελέστερα,⁷¹ receiving visits as usual from Jowett and Henry Sidgwick—carrying on the round of life, in fact, until the day approached when Norman was to go to Oxford.

How it happened I do not know; but he spent the last two days and nights before this parting as a guest in our house. I shall copy out what my diary contains about this visit. It happened to coincide exactly with the date of his first coming to my house in the previous year:

January 28. 1870. Norman came to me on Wednesday night at 11 p.m. I made James (my servant) make him a bowl of hot milk and bread which he likes. After he had eaten it, I said: ‘You are a snake to whom one offers innocent libations.’ Then again, looking into his face: ‘How could you think it strange that I should go on loving you passionately?’ —‘Most people don’t; it comes by fits and starts.’ —‘Then they are not like me.’ —‘You are not like most people.’

I have had two perfect midnight hours with him: one on each of the two past nights. The house was still; the windows of his room were curtained; the fire burned dim, but warm; a candle shaded from our eyes gave twilight, so that we could see. We lay covered from the cold in bed, tasting the honey of softly spoken words and the blossoms of lips pressed on lips. Oh, the strain of those delicate slight limbs and finely moulded breasts—the melting of that stately throat into the exquisite slim shoulders—as of the Genius of the Vatican—the στέρνα θ’ ὡς ἀγάλματος κάλλιστα.⁷² I find it hard to write of these things; yet I wish to dwell on them and to recall them, [pen in hand]:⁷³ —the head that crowned all, pillowed with closely cut thick flocks of hair and features as of some bronze statue, sharp and clear—the chiselled mouth, the short firm upper lip, the rounded chin, the languid eyes black beneath level lines of blackest brows, the low white forehead over-foamed with clustering hair and flakes of finest curls.

I stripped him naked, and fed sight, touch and mouth on all these things. Will my lips ever forget their place upon his breast, or on the tender satin of his flank, or on the snowy whiteness of his belly? Will they lose the nectar of his mouth—those opened lips like flower petals, expanding ’neath their touch and fluttering? Will my arms forget the strain of his small fragile waist, my thighs the pressure of his yielding thighs, my ears the murmur of his drowsy voice, my brain the scent of his sweet flesh and breathing mouth? Shall I ever cease to hear the [metallic]⁷⁴ throb of his mysterious heart—calm and true—ringing little bells beneath my ear?

I do not know whether, after all, the mere touch of his fingers as they met and clasped and put aside my hand, was not of all the best. For there is

the soul in the fingers. They speak. The body is but silent, a dumb eloquent animated work of art made by the divine artificer.

Beneath his armpits he has no hair. The flesh of his throat and breast is white as ivory. The nipples of his breasts are hardly to be seen; they are so lost in whiteness and so soft. Between them, on the breastbone, is a spot of dazzling brightness, like snow on marble that has felt the kisses of the sun. His hips are narrow, hardened where the muscles brace the bone, but soft as down and sleek as satin in the hollows of the groin. Shy and modest, tender in the beauty bloom of ladhood, is his part of sex κύπριν ποθοῦσαν ἦδη⁷⁵—fragrant to the searching touch, yet shrinking: for when the wandering hand rests there, the lad turns pleadingly into my arms as though he sought to be relieved of some delicious pang.

If I could only paint him, as he lay there white upon the whiteness of the bed, and where he was not white, glowing to amber hues, and deepening into darkness of black eyes and hair—dawn of divinest twilight—only one rose upon his flesh, and that the open, passionate, full-perfumed mouth, the chalice of soul-nourishing dew. Norman is all in all and wholly μελίλωρος.⁷⁶

Ah, but the fragrance of his body! Who hath spoken of that scent undefinable, which only love can seize, and which makes love wild mad and suicidal?

Now come the nonchalances and superb abandons of repose. How his head drooped on one shoulder, and how his arm lay curved along flank and thigh, and how upon the down of dawning manhood lay his fingers, and how the shrinking⁷⁷ god was covered by his hand!

A year has passed since Norman first came to dine with me. I think that the flower of the apricot hath crowned the misty brows of this past year, and that its feet have trodden on sweet Calamus. Truly, the reeds have pricked the tender feet of the year, so that the months are pearled with drops of blood.

The slender well-knit body of a lad: why is it so beautiful to me—more beautiful than Aphrodite rising from the waves, or Proserpine upon the meads of Enna?⁷⁸ Why do I love the star of the morning better than the sun, or the star of the evening better than the moon? Why are white violets in March (when flowers are few, and the wind blows dust along dry lanes) dearer than the rose gardens of Shiraz or the anemones of Bordighera?

After the long claspings of the first night with Norman, I dreamed. I dreamed of a lane of cypress trees and firs and cedars. Roses bloomed on the ground and in the underwoods, in the thickets, in the open. Roses climbed the cedar trunks, and trailed in odorous garlands from the topmost pines. They wreathed the cypress spires into thyrsi; they burned in dark tangles of bay, myrtle, ilex, rosemary and box. The air was heavy with their perfume.

Wandering and soaring roses made milky ways, and flaming, through the boscaige.

And now there is an end. Norman will breathe the same air with me no more. His bed in the upper chamber of the house upon the Downs knows him no more. He is a Scholar of Balliol; into Oxford rooms and walks and gardens he will carry his perfume (as of some white violet) for other men.

For me there is nothing left tonight, but to smooth and kiss the pillows where we lay together. The room is cold and cheerless now. Go down into your study, by the fire, and think of him.

Where is he now? A first night in college rooms is an experience. He will accommodate himself to circumstance more easily than most men do. But I know how cold it must be in his bedroom—how very cold the sheets are (college sheets always are cold)—how hard and narrow the bed is. He will assuredly feel solitary. He was never alone at school here, or with me abroad. I wonder whether, one moment, he will wish for me—for my arms making him warm, for my soft speeches wooing sleep!

Oh child, child! What would I not give to have you here? Your waist between my knees, as you knelt and I sat in the armchair before the fire. Or your head upon my shoulder. Or to be myself upon the floor, with my face in your lap. Or to be sitting on your knees.

What would I not give, for once and for one moment only, to lay my body on your body, and to drink your mouth.

What would I not give, even for a single instant, to be knotted with you, limb with limb, arms, breasts and bellies and hooked thighs and clinging ankles and fingers intertwined, mouths open and eyes drinking fire of eyes.

With this *chant d'amour*⁷⁹ I ought perhaps to close the chapter. The diary never rises to the same height of lyricism again. But there remains much to be told, without which the lyric cry would be a cry of shame.

In spite of the more than etherealized sensuality of the passionate farewell to Norman on his way into the world, which I have just transcribed, it is a fact that neither then, nor afterwards, nor before, did any one of those things take place between us which people think inseparable from love of this sort. I was content with contemplation, contact, kissing. The candour with which I have set down everything about myself, and the admission which I here make of having at a later period indulged in such⁸⁰ acts with other men, ought to be sufficient guarantee of my truthfulness.⁸¹

Well. Norman went to Oxford, where he in due course of time took his degree after a fairly distinguished career. I was not dissatisfied with his performance, though more might perhaps have been expected of him; for I had come to recognize that his brain lacked energy, and that

his temper was indolent. What distinguished him intellectually was justice of perception, lucid intelligence and good sense. These qualities made him, when still a boy, appear more remarkable than he really was. They helped him to be a sound scholar. But they did not contain the stuff of growth.

We continued to correspond; and I saw a great deal of him in vacation time. In the summer of 1872 I took him for another Continental tour—this time to Zermatt, across the Theodul pass into Valle d’Aosta, then to Milan and Venice, and home by the Etsch Thal, Finstermünz and Vorarlberg. We enjoyed this journey in a sociable comradesly way; but both of us felt tacitly that the proper season for amorous caresses had gone by. That I still regarded him as a lover appears from this last extract from my diary:

June 21. 1872. Yesterday was the eve of St John, and a night of full moon, wonderfully clear, a *Bezauberungsnacht*.⁸² We have invented sitting on the house roof (at Clifton Hill) during this summer time. The limestone flags are broad and white and dry and warm. The northern heavens hold faint twilight; toward the south-west sails the moon, golden, globed, high over fold on fold of hill and wood, on which lie swathes of mist. Down in the valley sleeps the city, a sublunar world of constellations, with the sharp white spire of Redcliffe and the massive cathedral tower among its limes, and lamps shimmering upon the water winding in and out among the houses. A sound of trains, throbbing and panting like dragons with lolled-out tongues, is heard far off. Our garden slumbers below—smooth lawn—velvety headed trees—solemn shadows and silvery lights. There, on such a night, in such a scene, Catherine took Norman to her heart, and pledged herself to love him like a son. She knows everything about him and me. We have both suffered much through him—she most—but she has borne and believed all; and now she has accepted him with more than toleration.

I must add that, soon after our return from this foreign tour, on 19th of September, 1872, I received the first copy of my *Introduction to the Study of Dante*. Thus my entrance into authorship took place exactly at the moment when a final reconciliation of opposites was effected in the matter of my love for Norman. He became a schoolmaster, married, and is now the father of children.

I always retained a tender affection for him; and when I was returning, sick to the death, from Italy in June 1877, I wrote this sonnet during the night upon the English Channel between Havre and Southampton. It has

been published in *Many Moods*. But I give it here as the proper epilogue to the episode of Norman.

MARI MAGNO⁸³

I met Love on the waters, and I said:
 ‘Lord, tell thy servant if the fault be mine
 Or his alone, that we also once were thine,
 Not daily further from thy face are led!’
 ‘I blame you both,’ Love answered: ‘You who read
 The book of self-deception line by line,
 Loving yourself, and fearing not to twine
 Poisonous passion-flowers around his head:
 Him too I blame because he too was weak
 To shun your evil and to choose your good,
 Too soft to serve you in the hour of need:
 Thus then I pass the sentence which you seek—
 Love’s higher law you still misunderstood;
 And love, for him, was but a wayside weed.’

Reviewing this episode of my love for Norman, twenty years after it commenced, I am able to perceive very clearly that the real malady of my nature was not in the passion I felt for him, but in the self-conscious morbid and sophisticated way in which the passion expressed itself. The passion was natural; and he responded to it naturally, so far as temperament, age and constitution of his emotional self permitted. I was always fidgeting and fiddling away in my self-scrutinizing mood at aspects of the passion—posing in the looking-glass, weighing him in balances. I approached sincerity and truth mainly in those ‘native moments’⁸⁴ of self-abandonment to what the moment offered, which have been described above. I approached truth again in certain rare efforts to suppress my instincts. But the large tracts of time employed upon self-analysis and fretful suspicious jealousy were thrown away, except in so far as they tended to clarify my reason, to disgust me with such shilly-shallying, and to prepare me for the franker comradeship of my later experiences. I do not take myself greatly to blame for all this folly. It was merely the inevitable outcome of my life through ten years of adolescence and early manhood, during which I had done everything in my power to sophisticate my inborn⁸⁵ bent of feeling, to warp my nature, to clog myself with chains of circumstance. I could not move freely, or take things as they came. I was a compound of antagonistic impulses, fostered by a radically vicious training; and when I now came to

close quarters with my desire, I could do nothing but pursue my desire through a jungle of unwholesome casuistry, self-deception, and mortified ideals. This episode closed the period of idealism; and certain experiences which I shall relate in another chapter, led me to seek a new solution upon lower and more practical lines of conduct.

NOTES

1. Trans.: The roots, dark, the ends sun-bleached. From *Anacreontea* 17 ('To Bathyllos', ll. 3–4).
2. Edward Norman Peter Moor (1851–95) entered Clifton College in May 1867. Following a degree at Balliol College, Oxford, he returned to the school as assistant master and house master.
3. John Percival (1834–1918) was the first head master of Clifton College (1862–79). He would later serve as President of Trinity College, Oxford (1879–86), and head master of Rugby School (1887–95). He was appointed Bishop of Hereford in 1895.
4. Following 'element was', deletes 'strictly' (MS 384).
5. Following 'which the', deletes 'most' (MS 384).
6. Following 'two gentlemen', deletes 'in act or word' (MS 384).
7. Following 'union from', deletes 'ever' (MS 384).
8. Trans.: Do not show affection to me in words, but have your mind and heart elsewhere, if you love me and the mind within you is faithful. Either love me having a clear mind (that is, sincerely), or renounce me, hate me and quarrel openly. He who says one thing and thinks another, he is a cowardly companion, Cynus; he is better an enemy than a friend. From Theognis's *Elegies* 1 (ll. 87–92 and 1082c–f). Translation adapted from Brady, p. 117 n. 6.
9. Marginal note: 'Precisely as my first love, for Willie Dyer, in 1858, marked a new burst of energy, which carried me with academical honour through my years at Oxford' (MS 385).
10. Marginal note: 'NB HFB' (MS 385).
11. Thomas Brassey, 1st Earl Brassey (1836–1918), was M.P. for Hastings between 1868 and 1886. He was particularly devoted to marine and naval affairs, and was appointed Civil Lord of the Admiralty in 1880.
12. Edward Murray Oakley (1840–1927) was an assistant master at Clifton College. One of the school's boarding houses bears his name, and in 1887 he compiled the *Clifton College Register, 1862–87*.

Edwin Bean (1851–1922) entered Clifton College between September 1862 and May 1863. He took his degree at Trinity College, Oxford, and later became head master of All Saints' College, Bathurst, in New South Wales, Australia. He was appointed head master of Brentwood School, Essex, in 1891.

William Frederick Howlett (1850–1936) entered Clifton College in January 1866. He took his degree at Christ Church College, Oxford, before emigrating to New Zealand. Howlett taught at Nelson College and Makaretu School, spending the later years of his life conducting botanical explorations of the Ruahine Mountains.

13. Trans.: And do you seek payment (*misthous*), teachers? How ungrateful, etc. From the *Greek Anthology* 12. 219 (Straton's *Musa Puerilis*, or 'Boy's Muse'). Symonds ends with 'etc.', expecting his reader to supply the remainder: Straton considers the opportunity to gain a boy's affection reward (*misthous*) in itself, offering to pay teachers to send their boys to him.
14. Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900), German philologist and scholar of Sanskrit and Vedic studies. His lectures on *The Science of Language* were published in 1861 and 1863, and he was appointed Professor of Comparative Philology at the University of Oxford in 1868.
15. Trans: love, sexual passion.
16. See *Letters*, II, p. 47 and Chapter 10, note 94.
17. Trans.: most beautiful, wild, insincere.
18. Cf. Matthew 9. 17; Mark 2. 22; and Luke 5. 37.
19. Following 'as quickly', deletes 'and as perfectly' (MS 387).
20. Trans.: three falls or bouts, i.e. a wrestling match. *Erôs*, *storgê* and *agapê* are three different types of love: sexual passion, familial affection, and spiritual/divine love.
21. Trans.: skin's natural scent. From the *Greek Anthology* 12. 7 (Straton's *Musa Puerilis*, or 'Boy's Muse'). The poem considers the sexual advantages of a young man (*sphinxter*) as compared to a young woman (*parthenos*).
22. 'Sermon on Self-Deceit' in *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel* (1726) by Joseph Butler. This sermon is a commentary upon 2 Samuel 12. 7.
23. Trans.: boys' fresh-limbed brilliance. Symonds may intend an allusion to Pindar's *Fragments* 123 (l. 12). The poem praises

- Theoxenus's beauty and its speaker is said to melt like wax at the sight of παίδων νεόγυιου ('the fresh-limbed youth of boys').
24. Trans.: radiant vision. Symonds may intend an allusion to Plato's *Phaedrus* 254b.
 25. Following 'to confess', deletes 'to him' (MS 388).
 26. Trans.: O human foolishness unaware of how to love men humanely! An appropriation of Augustine's *Confessions* Book 4: 'O demetiam nescientem diligere homines humaniter!' ('O madness unaware of how to love men humanely!')
 27. The *Gulistan* ('Rose Garden') is a thirteenth-century collection of poetry and prose fragments by the Persian writer, Sa'di (also known as Saadi Shirazi). Symonds translates material from the tenth tale in Chapter 5 ('On Love and Youth').
 28. Trans.: A garland of violets, most fragrant, I have sent to you, | Spring's first fruits, though (you are) more fragrant. Source unknown (possibly Symonds's own composition). The addressee is singular and male. In Greek mythology, Aphrodite was said to be garlanded, or crowned, with violets.
 29. Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–61), poet and contemporary of Benjamin Jowett at Balliol College, Oxford, where he studied between 1836 and 1841. Clough is best known for *The Bothie of Toper-na-Fuosich* (1848) and *Amours de Voyage* (1858). Symonds would assist with the editing of *The Poems and Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough* (1869).
 30. Francis William Newman (1805–97), scholar of classics and writer upon religious and moral topics. He is best known for *Phases of Faith* (1850).
 31. 'Genius Amoris Amari Visio' was printed as a private pamphlet.
 32. Antinous (c.110–30) was the lover of Emperor Hadrian (76–138). He drowned in the Nile while sailing up the river as part of the imperial entourage.
 33. 'The Lotos Garland of Antinous' was printed as a private pamphlet (alongside the poem 'Diego'). It was later published in revised form in *Many Moods: A Volume of Verse* (1878).
 34. Trans.: being warmed mutely (or senselessly) by reflections of beauty. From the *Greek Anthology* 12. 125 (Straton's *Musa Puerilis*, or 'Boy's Muse'), attributed to Meleager and relates a sexual dream. Symonds changes the participle to suit his context, replacing the feminine singular with the masculine plural.

35. Deletes ‘satisfactory’, substitutes ‘engrossing’ (MS 392).
36. Trans.: Give me friendship; I cloak love with this name.
37. Stephen Lushington (1782–1873) was a Doctor of Civil Law, M.P. for several constituencies in the south of England, and a judge. He came from a large and illustrious family, boasting prominent figures in the East India Company, politics and the professions. Lushington had ten children, including Godfrey (1832–1907), a civil servant who married Beatrice Anne Shore Smith in 1865, the sister of Blanche Clough and daughter of Samuel Smith (1794–1880).

F.D. Maurice married his second wife, Georgina Hare-Naylor (half-sister of Julius Hare), in 1849.

38. Trans.: How feeble and selfish I was! At that moment, he was giving everything—his soul—his body. I had under my hands the pleasure of all that made him. But I had desired what only a woman can give, the total surrender of her whole being. He was not a woman. He was not just a boy. I did not want to pluck grapes because I desired the fruit of the apricot tree.

NB: For ‘Il n’était pas que garçon’ (‘He was not just a boy’), it is likely that Symonds intended ‘Il n’était qu’un garçon’ (‘He was just a boy’).

39. Material underlined in pencil (MS 393) with accompanying cross in the margin. There are several similar marks throughout the chapter, several of which relate to Symonds’s writing and suppression of his poetry.
40. Trans.: I freed my soul.
41. Cf. Psalm 7. 2.
42. Symonds employs a similar set of allusions in his description of Rosa Engel: compare his ‘Margarets and Juliets’ (above) to his ‘Juliet, Virginia, Gretchen’ (Chapter 8, note 80). Gretchen is a shortened version of Margaret, the tragic heroine of Goethe’s *Faust* (1808 and 1832).

Myronides was an Athenian general who fought in the First Peloponnesian War (460–46 BCE) between Athens and Corinth.

Damocles the Beautiful appears in Plutarch’s account of Demetrius in *Parallel Lives* (commonly known as *Plutarch’s Lives*). In order to escape Demetrius’s sexual advances, Damocles commits suicide by jumping into boiling water.

43. Material underlined in pencil (MS 396) with accompanying cross in the margin—see note 39.
44. Cf. Lamentations 3. 15.
45. Cf. Job 2. 7–8.
46. Homer (fl. 8–9th century BCE) is the authorial name attached to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, epic poems dating back to the earliest period of Greek literature (and before, to Hellenic oral cultures).
 Achilles was the son of Peleus and Thetis, a nymph. He fought in Agamemnon’s army during the Trojan War and is famed for killing Hector, son of Priam—see Chapter 3, note 17. In his *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873) Symonds declared: ‘In Achilles, Homer summed up and fixed for ever the ideal of the Greek character.’
47. ‘A Spring Day’ in the privately printed pamphlet, ‘Lyra Viginti Chordarum’. This poem was later published as ‘An April Day’ in the ‘Spring Songs’ cluster of *Many Moods: A Volume of Verse* (1878).
48. Symonds misspells the names of some of these legal men. The case was reported in *The Times*: ‘The counsel appearing in the case were:— For the petitioners, Mr Giffard, Q.C., and Mr Middleton; for Mr North, Mr Powell Q.C. and Mr Thruston Holland; for Mr Brassey, Mr Serjeant Ballantine and Mr Charles Bowen’ (15 April 1869).
 William Ballantine (1812–97), Serjeant-at-Law, earned a formidable reputation on account of several famous cases. These include the Mr Briggs murder case (the first murder on the British railway) in 1864, and the Tichborne Claimant cases of the 1870s.
49. Colin Blackburn, Baron Blackburn (1813–96), was appointed Justice of the Court of Queen’s Bench in 1859.
 Anna Brassey, née Allnutt, Baroness Brassey (1839–87), married Thomas Brassey in 1860. She became well known as a travel writer, publishing an account of her round-the-world yachting trip, *A Voyage in the Sunbeam* (1878). During the trial she was accused of bribing voters.
50. The North family home.
51. Hugh Andrew Johnstone Munro (1819–85) was elected a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1843. He is best known for his work on Lucretius, publishing an edition of *De Rerum Natura* in 1861 (revised and expanded in 1864). He was appointed Professor of Latin in 1869.

Henry Jackson (1839–1921) was elected a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1864. He was a member of the Cambridge Apostles, and in 1906 succeeded Richard Jebb (below) as Regius Professor of Greek.

Richard Claverhouse Jebb (1841–1905) was elected a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1863. He was a member of the Cambridge Apostles, and following a period spent at the University of Glasgow, returned to Cambridge as the Regius Professor of Greek (1889–1905).

52. The Crystal Palace, designed by Joseph Paxton to host the Great Exhibition in 1851, was moved from Hyde Park to Sydenham Hill between 1852 and 1854.
53. Charles Eliot Norton (1827–1908) was an American art historian. He married Susan Ridley Sedgwick in 1862 and the family travelled widely in Europe during the 1860s and 1870s. He would act as literary executor for both Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin.
54. *I Puritani* (1835), an opera by Vincenzo Bellini.

Il Trovatore (1853), an opera by Giuseppe Verdi.

School, a play by Thomas William Robertson, opened at the Prince of Wales Theatre, London, in January 1869.

Home, a play by Thomas William Robertson (an adaptation of Émile Augier's *L'Aventurière*, 1848), opened at the Haymarket in January 1869.

Symonds misremembers the title of this play: *Captain of the Watch* (1841), a play by James Robinson Planché, was revived and presented alongside *Home* at the Haymarket Theatre, London, in April 1869.

Edward Askew Sothorn (1826–81), popular comic actor. He worked in America during the 1850s before returning to Britain in 1861 to perform the role of Lord Dundreary in *Our American Cousin* at the Haymarket (the role that made him famous).

55. Following 'gave me unmistakeable', deletes 'and innocent' (MS 399).
56. Trans.: I touched the highest height. He slept in my arms, not without most frequent kisses.
57. Katharine Symonds (1875–1952) married the painter Charles Wellington Furse in 1900 and they had two children. Following her husband's death, Katharine enrolled in the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachments, serving in active and administrative roles during

the First World War and becoming Commandant-in-Chief in 1916. In 1917 she became Director of the newly established Women's Royal Naval Service. In 1940, Katharine published a family memoir and autobiography, *Hearts and Pomegranates: The Story of Forty-five Years, 1875–1920*.

58. Circe was a witch or sorceress who used potions and spells to transform humans into animals. See Homer's *Odyssey*, Books 10 and 12.
59. Here the manuscript jumps from MS 401 to 403; it is not clear whether the pages have been numbered in error, or if a page is missing from the sequence. If the former, Symonds imagines the landscape addressing him; if the latter, material from his diary has been lost. See Notes on the Text.
60. James Edward Pearson (1850–1931) entered Clifton College in May 1867 and afterwards took his degree at Christ's College, Cambridge. He returned to Clifton to serve as assistant master (with a brief period spent as head master of Exeter School between 1877 and 1881).

Augustus Nash (1851–1913) entered Clifton College between September 1862 and May 1863, and afterwards took his degree at Trinity College, Oxford. He emigrated to Sydney, Australia, and was a practising barrister.

Cecil William Boyle (1853–1900) entered Clifton College in January 1866 and afterwards took his degree at University College, Oxford. He distinguished himself in cricket and rugby, and while at Clifton he was the particular favourite of Symonds's friend, Henry Graham Dakyns. Boyle died on active service during the Second Boer War.

Thomas Herbert Warren (1853–1930) entered Clifton College in January 1868 and afterwards took his degree at Balliol College, Oxford. He was later elected a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and served as its President (1885–1928).

Albert Rowland Cluer (1852–1942) entered Clifton College in September 1869 and afterwards took his degree at Balliol College, Oxford. He would later become a county court judge.

Horatio Robert Forbes Brown (1854–1926) entered Clifton College between September 1863 and August 1864, and afterwards took his degree at New College, Oxford. He made his name as a writer and historian, and would later act as Symonds's literary executor and biographer.

61. Thomas William Dunn (1837–1930) was elected a Fellow of Peterhouse College, Cambridge, in 1864. He took up the position of assistant master at Clifton College in 1868, leaving after ten years to become the first head master of Bath College (1878–97).
62. Symonds's chapter on 'Aristophanes' was first published as an article in the *Westminster Review* in April 1871.
63. Missing word supplied by Brown: a caret has been inserted between 'not' and 'me', with accompanying marginal note: 'for? H.F.B' (MS 407).
64. Deletes 'slept', substitutes 'couched together through a night' (MS 409).
65. 'A warm dry south wind which blows down the valleys on the north side of the Alps.' (*OED*)
66. In a letter to Blanch Clough in August 1869, Symonds remarked upon 'four very artistic and delightful Englishwomen (two of them, a Miss Fairbairn and Miss Howard)' who were staying at the same Swiss inn. See *Letters*, II, p. 80.
67. Trans.: Now I have touched the highest height of pleasure, and I received with a full hand into my lap that type of little flower which I used to desire. However I can't delay here. I greatly fear that the flame-bearing flowers, about to disappear into ashes, might burn up my heart of hearts.
68. *Poetae Lyrici Graeci* (1843) edited by Theodor Bergk. A third edition was published in 1865–67.
69. John Nichol (1833–94) was Professor of English at the University of Glasgow (1862–89). While at Oxford he had been one of the founder members (alongside Symonds's future brother-in-law T.H. Green, Albert Venn Dicey and A.C. Swinburne) of the Old Mortality Society.
70. Henry Hayman (1823–1904) was elected head master of Rugby School in November 1869, a position he held until 1874.
The defeated John Percival would stand again for the headmastership of Rugby; he was successfully elected in 1887.
71. Trans.: kisses sweeter than honey. The sweetness indicated by ἄδυμελέστερα is normally aural (e.g. sweet music).
72. Trans.: most beautiful breast, like a statue. From Euripides's *Hecuba* (cf. ll. 555–65). For 'The Genius of the Vatican', see Chapter 3, note 33.

73. Material underlined in pencil with accompanying cross in the margin (MS 411)—see note 39.
74. Material underlined in pencil (MS 411) with accompanying cross in the margin.
75. Trans.: already yearning for love (*cypris*). In Greek mythology, Cypris (a deity) is identified with Aphrodite.
76. Trans.: honey-pale (or -green). Symonds may intend an allusion to Plato's *Republic* 5 (cf. 474e) where the term (*melichloros*) serves as an example of lovers' biased and partial recognition of beauty in the beloved.
77. Deletes 'little', substitutes 'shrinking' (MS 413).
78. In Greek mythology, the goddess Aphrodite was said to be 'foam born', rising from the sea. Famous depictions (named after the Roman equivalent, Venus) include Titian's *Venus Anadyomene* (c.1520) and Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (c.1485).
According to Roman mythology, Proserpine (variously Proserpina, the equivalent to Persephone in Greek mythology) was abducted by Pluto as she was gathered flowers near Enna, Sicily, and was taken to the underworld. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book 5.
79. Trans.: love song. Following '*chant d'amour*', deletes 'and this passionate farewell to Norman on his way into the world' (MS 415).
80. Deletes 'many of those', substitutes 'such' (MS 415).
81. Marginal note:

After writing the above paragraphs I happened to come upon one of the few letters which I have preserved of Norman's correspondence. It is dated November 26th 1886. He describes in it some of the temptations and the evils of his boyhood. Then he proceeds: "A most pandemic state. The combined influence of Percival *and yourself* did something to cure me of this." The words I have italicized show that, in spite of all appearances, and in spite of what I have described myself, he, after the lapse of sixteen years, looked back upon my influence as salutary in the very matter of love between male and male. The original letter, though it is very private, I shall enclose among these papers. (MS 414^v)

See Appendices for Norman's letter.

82. Trans.: enchanting or bewitching night.

83. Part of the 'Lyrics of Life' cluster in *Many Moods: A Volume of Verse* (1878). Symonds takes his title from a cluster of poems in *The Poems and Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough* (1869): 'Mari Magno, or Tales on Board'.
84. This phrase appears twice in the 'Enfans d'Adam' cluster in *Leaves of Grass* (1860–61 edition) by Walt Whitman.
85. Deletes 'natural', substitutes 'inborn' (MS 418).

Chapter 14: Intellectual and Literary Evolution

I

Since I have reached the point of my embarking on the great wide sea of literature, it is right that I should attempt to form some estimate of my natural and acquired faculties for this branch of art.

From nature I derived a considerable love of books, an active brain, a fairly extended curiosity, receptivity to ideas above the average, an aptitude for expression, sensibility to external objects in the world of things, and intense emotional susceptibility of a limited and rather superficial kind.

My power of application was always small. What patience I may now possess in the acquisition of knowledge or in the exercise of my talents, has been gained with difficulty. Quick and intelligent at the outset, I grew very slowly, and arrived comparatively late at the control of my faculties for any definite purpose. The larger part of my early years was spent in apparently ineffectual dreaming.

Few people are contented with their memory, because all of us feel the inevitable limitations of a faculty on which we are continually making extraordinary demands. The more we have of it, the more we expect from it, and at the same time there are few who train it systematically. In my own case I am certain that my memory was originally weak and unreliable. I remembered nothing definitely which I had not

either seen or acutely felt. Names, dates, numbers, historical events entered my mind with facility, abode there for a short space under the control of a deliberate volition, and vanished again as though I had never possessed them. I could get a subject up with tolerable ease. But I could not retain my knowledge of it. This gave me some advantage in preparing for examinations; and like the sieve used in the story of the Forty Thieves, my memory caught in its meshes a piece of gold here and there.¹ Having an active brain and a lively curiosity, I was always acquiring information; while the defect of my retentive power made me continually lose the larger portion of it. In this way my intellectual furniture grew to be a vague, ill-digested, inaccurate mass, rich in possibilities but poor in solid stuff. I have never been able to overcome the congenital inferiority² of my brain in these respects. Yet being aware of the deficiency, and resolving to make the best of things which might be worse or better, I learned to utilize the strength and to supplement the weakness of my memory. I saturate my mind with rapid reading, devour multitudes of books, and make voluminous notes, feeling sure that I shall obtain a general conception of the subject under consideration. Then I return again and again to the leading documents, check every impression of fact by reiterated comparison of my notes with their sources, verify dates and quotations, force myself to attain accuracy by drudgery. Few writers, I take it, have undergone so much preparatory labour as I am obliged to go through.

For numbers I have absolutely no head. I do not visualize them except in the most rudimentary way. At best I can see the digits scrawled upon a slate. I am unable to remember the multiplication table; and it is notorious in my family that I constantly make mistakes between a ten and a hundred, a hundred and a thousand, so feeble is my grasp upon the value of the symbol '0'. If I have not been involved in pecuniary difficulties, it is because I am conscious of this imbecility, and refer on every occasion to written memoranda. The same consciousness made me early in life scale my expenditure considerably below my income, in order that I might have always a fair margin of cash to fall back upon.

I cannot learn anything systematically. Grammar, logic, political economy, the exact sciences offered insuperable obstacles to my mind. The result is that I know nothing thoroughly. And I do not think this is so much due to laziness as to cerebral incapacity. My brain was always impenetrable to abstractions. When I attacked them, I felt a

dull resistance, a sense of benumbed and benumbing stupor stealing like a fog over my intellect. I have had to circumvent abstractions, to present them in the concrete, and to return upon them by the path of metaphor or symbol, before I was able to approach them in the form of pure thought.

I have already observed that visible objects—forms, colours, aspects of nature, faces, buildings, statues, pictures—leave keen and durable impressions on my sensibility. What I have once regarded with curiosity I retain. And more than that, I remember the atmosphere of these things, the feeling they exhale, their specific quality so far as I am able to perceive it. This has helped me in the line of graphic writing, and has given me such certainty of touch as I possess. The same may be said about the other senses—touch, taste, hearing, smell—but in a less degree. In spite, however, of this retentive receptivity to objects of sense, I am not strong in the faculty of observation—that faculty which makes the novelist, the man of science, and the higher artist. Perhaps I lack patience or interest in things for their own sakes. What I observe and treasure up comes to me casually, by no premeditated effort, but because it attracts me and is correlated to my tastes or sympathies.

Emotional states, whether painfully poignant or fragile in their evanescent lightness, I remember with unerring accuracy. This, I think, has been useful to me in the exercise of criticism; and had I been a greater master of expression, it would have made me a no common lyric poet. As it is, I possess a certainty with regard to past conditions of feeling, which I find valuable when attempting to pronounce judgement upon works of art or literature or to recall the sentiment evoked by places. At the same time, just as I am no deliberate observer, I cannot claim to be an analyst of emotion. Retentive receptivity is the quality I claim. Combined with a moderate estimate of my own powers and a fair share of common sense, together with an active curiosity, this receptive and retentive susceptibility to various objects and emotions has given a certain breadth, a certain catholicity, a certain commonplaceness to my aesthetic conclusions. Being sufficiently³ conscious that I am⁴ far from⁵ normal in my personal proclivities and instincts, I have perhaps the right to give this⁶ explanation of my sanity as a critic. No doubt another explanation could be offered. Those who study these⁷ Memoirs will be able to say—and to say with justice—that they now understand the⁸ balance of my mind in matters of the higher criticism, the even-handed justice of my verdicts, the irritatingly

comprehensive way I have of looking upon things they value more than I do. 'In his lifetime the man never spoke out,' they will assert.⁹ 'He cherished an engrossing preoccupation, an absorbing and incurable proclivity, which found no outlet except in furtive self-indulgence,¹⁰ which had to be suppressed and hidden out of sight, although it flamed within him in the foreground of all vision, rendering him comparatively indifferent and therefore apparently equitable to everything which lay outside that fiery circle of his inmost self.'

My powers of expression were considerable, yet not of first-rate quality. Vaughan at Harrow told me the truth when he said that my besetting sin was 'fatal facility.' I struggled long to conquer fluency. Still I have not succeeded. I find a pleasure in expression for its own sake; but I have not the inevitable touch of the true poet, the unconquerable patience of the conscious artist. As in other matters, so here, I tried to make the best of my defects. Concentration lies beyond my grasp. The right words do not fall into the right places at my bidding. I have written few good paragraphs, and possibly no single perfect line. I strove, however, to control the qualities I knew myself to have, to train and curb them, to improve them by attention to the details of style. If I have achieved any success in literature, the secret of that success lies in persistent effort, combined with a steady determination to preserve the spirit of delight in labour and the spontaneity of self.

Passion and imagination, in the true sense of these words, were denied me. I was not born without capacity for passion. But I had to tame it down and subdivide it for reasons which ||¹¹

I may conclude this topic then by saying that spontaneous passion and creative imagination have hitherto been sterilized in my work. The one point of my nature on which they might have taken hold and flourished, was that central love of the soul's malady, which remained for ever inaccessible to their approaches. Wheeling round and round the stubborn rock of agony and heartache, finding no foothold there, breaking and bruising their wings against its barren adamant, the pair of soaring eagles retired to self-built cages. There they have drooped a lifetime. It has been my destiny to make continual renunciation of my truest self, because I was born out of sympathy with the men around me, and have lived a stifled anachronism. What I have achieved in literature might be compared to the fragments of an aerolite¹² scattered upon the summits of some hard impetuous peak.

Of moral qualities exercised in the same field of work, I may claim the following. First, humility, developed by the sense of inefficiency which overclouded my earliest efforts. Secondly, pride and self-respect, developed during the same period of baffled aspiration. Blending their forces, these qualities rendered me indifferent to criticism, comparatively cold about the fortune of my books, alien to cliques and coteries, contented to compose for my own pleasure in a spirit half sanguine and half pessimistic. I have never expected success or been fretful when I did not gain it; never cared very much for praise or blame; never curried favour or sought to disarm opposition. In the third place, I think I may ascribe to myself justice and open-mindedness, enabling me to take a broad survey of the fields I had to traverse. But perhaps this virtue is rather the outcome of indifference than an active sense of what is righteous. Fourthly, I have been gifted with obstinacy, in the face of physical and other disadvantages. This might also be described as courage or tenacity, or a determination to make the best of things, or a want of fastidiousness, impelling me to push my work forward in spite of obstacles, and without caring greatly how much it suffered owing to adverse circumstance. Fifthly, I find in my character a freedom from jealousy and envy. This has perhaps been tainted with indifference: so that the maxim *noli aemulari*¹³ bears upon my lips something of contempt for things which are really more important than I choose to hold them. Experience of life, often extremely bitter, at times unexpectedly blissful, has taught me that there is nothing extraordinarily great in the greatest of achievements, nothing mean in the meanest of occupations: briefly that human life is not to be estimated by what men perform but by what they are. I have learned that rank can be vulgar, genius fretful and ignoble, virtue unsympathetic, vice heroic and amiable. I have discovered the best society and finest courtesy in cottages, the most lovable comrades among peasant folk, the soundest wisdom in those who never heard the name of culture. What essential difference indeed is there between making books or boots, manoeuvring for a mayoralty or a premiership, driving in a donkey-cart or a *barouche*, embracing a duchess or a dairymaid, dining off ortolans¹⁴ or porridge? Struggle for place, contention about title, strivings to eclipse our neighbours in wealth or fame, appear to me essentially ignoble and subversive of man's equipoise. It is the duty of each to perform his own function as faithfully as he can; his privilege to obtain his pleasure where he finds it; his dignity to suffer his pain as cheerfully as he is able. But petty wranglings, rivalries, heart burnings

about nothings corrupt the source of happiness. What is there worth fighting for, that lies outside ourselves, our own capacity for joy? The span of the greatest, as also of the least of us,¹⁵ is too insignificant, the span of the universe is too incalculable, for a mortal to waste his precious breath in competition. Money-makers are bound indeed to do so; and we need not be too scornful in judging Rothschilds.¹⁶ But children of the spirit ought not to descend into the arena of their mud. It is enough for them to produce the best work they can, and not to be annoyed when others produce better than God allotted for their own share. The final question is what a man enjoys. Perhaps Titian and Pictor Ignotus enjoyed equally.¹⁷ Perhaps the latter enjoyed more than his decorated and justly famous fellow craftsman. In either case fame had little to do with their pleasures and pains. What Clough called ‘a Stoic-Epicurean acceptance’¹⁸ seems to be the wisest attitude: the temper of mind which accommodates itself to everything, and finds everything passably good. For me, my deepest¹⁹ preoccupations have been so far beyond the sphere of art and letters, my desires so painfully unrealizable in life, that literature has always seemed to me a noble pastime—what Aristotle called a διαγωγή²⁰ but not of sufficient importance to involve a free man in ambitious toils. Under the dominance of these moral qualities I have pursued literature, not as a mission, not as a vocation, not as a profession, but to please myself and to occupy the leisure which would else have been for me the *λίαν σχολή*²¹ of Prometheus on his crags of Caucasus.

This account of my natural faculties, so far as I am aware of them, will serve perhaps to explain why I have produced so much, why I have entered into no literary contests and enrolled myself under no banner of a sect, and also why my work is marked by something approaching to amateurishness. The review of what education and circumstance have done for the development of these faculties will cast further light upon the same questions.²²

The chief fault of my education as a training for literature was that it was too exclusively literary, and favoured my own indolent unambitious inclinations.

Neither at Clifton, nor at Harrow, nor yet at Oxford did I learn any one thing thoroughly. I failed to grasp the elements of mathematics, absorbed nothing of physical science, acquired a bare smattering of two modern languages, and, after spending long years upon Latin and Greek, emerged a wretchedly inadequate scholar.

The Harrow system in my time was a bad one. I venture to say this because I can challenge anyone to produce a list of five really eminent men turned out of Harrow between the years 1854 and 1859. I have chosen a lustre, and have demanded only one eminent individual for each year of that lustre.²³ Can they be found? I think not. Yet Harrow numbered at that period an average of five hundred students; and these were recruited from the aristocracy, the landed gentry, the professional and mercantile classes. No school could have desired a wider selection, including specimens of the most favoured and the most energetic stocks which England generates. The stuff was excellent; the handling of the stuff was miserable. In theory, athletics balanced study. We were supposed to combine gymnastic and music—Plato's phrases²⁴—in the healthy all-round exercise of human faculties. But athletics degenerated into lawlessness, licentiousness and rowdiness. Study dwindled into mechanical and easily evaded task-work. The athletes were exposed to sensual vices and the brutification of their intellects.²⁵ Physically beautiful, and fit for noble purpose, they had no moral discipline. The students were starved through the inadequacy and negligence of their instructors, stupefied by unintelligent routine, numbed by the goddess Dullness which spread her sleepy money-getting wings above the place. There was no master-spirit to infuse energy into either of the dual branches of the system, to combine both in a vital organism and to provide a proper scope for individuals. In spite of its theory, so plausible in aspect, the little state of Harrow was rotten to the core.²⁶ Learning could not flourish there. No tough studies were encouraged. Even the lighter graces of humanism shrank beneath the touch of dullards like Drury and Harris, egotists like Middlemist, zanies like Steel, pragmatist martinets like Rendall, scholastic souls like Westcott,²⁷ sphinx-natured shams like Vaughan. In a blundering sort of way the docile boys were made to recognize the force of drill and duty. That was nearly all we gained. We learned to work for work's sake. Of solid knowledge we acquired next to nothing. It must also be admitted that the prevalent somnolence, the reign of intellectual dullness, had its paradoxical advantages. Our brains, except through our own fault, were not overtaxed. No effort was made to turn us into youthful prodigies. I am perhaps not in the position to speak justly about Harrow. English public schools deliberately sacrifice exceptional natures to the average; and I was in many respects an exceptional nature. Still, judged by the low standard of an English public school, I think that I am justified in saying that Harrow failed conspicuously as a nursery for the picked youth of a great nation. What I owe to

Harrow is first the contamination of my moral sense, and secondly the hardening of my character by premature initiation into the bear-garden of mundane life. Neither of these things is exactly what an ambitious and very expensive system of education aims at. Of substantial knowledge I owe nothing to the system. Still I acquired the habit of work there. I think I should have acquired it anywhere, and with less expenditure of useless labour under more congenial conditions. At Harrow I learned to be acquainted with work, ‘as the tanned galley-slave is with his oar’:²⁸ not because I liked the work appointed, or felt that it was well appointed; but because it offered a pause and respite in the utter wilderness and desolate conditions of the godless place.²⁹

II

On leaving Harrow for Oxford, I very soon began to feel the stirring of a more vigorous intellectual life. The conditions of society and the methods of study suited me; and I derived great benefit from the friendships I made with men of distinguished talents—Professors Conington and Jowett, Edwin Palmer, T.H. Green, Albert Dicey, A.O. Rutson, Charles Parker, Lyulph Stanley, James Phillpotts,³⁰ G.A. Simcox, and others whom it would be tedious to enumerate. At Balliol I worked harder than I had done at Harrow. Yet I pursued no rigorous course of study—nothing which deserves the name of *études fortes*.³¹ Jowett was the leading spirit in the college at that epoch; and under his influence even philosophy was studied mainly from the rhetorical point of view. {The temper of his mind unfitted him for systematic thought. He mistrusted the dominance of rigorous method, and disbelieved in metaphysics. So far as he possessed a philosophy, it consisted in a criticism based on common sense (shrewdness, knowledge of the world and men) applied to the history of ideas. He abhorred precise definitions and shrank from logical dilemmas. One of his favourite ways of solving a difficulty was to state its several aspects and to fall back upon an appeal to instinct. Aristotle’s φρόνιμος³² seemed always present to his mind. Under his influence we} were taught to write upon a vast variety of debatable topics, and to acquire a wide but superficial familiarity with what the several schools of Greece and Rome and modern Europe had thought about the universe. The aspirants after honours learned to deal cleverly with words and phrases, and to criticize without possessing substantial knowledge. This sophistic training in which I delighted, developed my literary faculty and filled my memory with a really

considerable amount of facts, ideas, and speculative points of view. But the absence of any robust intellectual gymnastic encouraged my natural propensity toward amateurishness. Just after taking my degree I found myself able to write articles on all kinds of books and many sorts of questions for the *Saturday Review*. The editor Cook³³ said that they were admirably packed with matter. All this, however, did not make me a scholar in the higher sense of that word—the sense attached to it by Pattison.

The fact is that I was not qualified by nature to be a scholar in this higher sense, and my education did nothing to correct my bias. Plodding along at the curriculum, and taking vivid interest in those subjects which suited my literary bent, I obtained a zeal for study, and contracted habits which made study and production of one sort or another the pleasure and necessity of my subsequent existence. But I did not acquire the method of rigorous investigation. In the same way I learned to think, and largely increased the activity and subtlety of my brain. But I did not gain a due sense of what may be called the search after truth. I was too easily satisfied with plausibilities, and content to grasp the *à peu près*³⁴ instead of waiting till I had seized the very heart of things.

Some of my contemporaries were by nature provided with strong political interests. Outside the curriculum, they grew and flourished and evolved their personalities by reading the newspapers and taking part in the Union debates. It was the momentous period of the great American war and the Lancashire cotton famine.³⁵ Others pursued an ideal of more or less effective genius. But many of us, among whom I was, had proclivities without any commanding bias. We wandered only too helplessly between duty to the curriculum and indulgence of undisciplined instincts. I could mention men who might have been musicians or painters, but who wasted their time at Oxford in aimless strumming on the piano or in silly sketching. I, for my part, went philandering about music, heraldry, the fine arts, and literary studies, doing nothing thoroughly and acquiring no fundamental science. I wrote poetry, weak in form and morbid in feeling. I dreamed away hours in ante-chapels. I mooned in canoes along the banks of Cherwell or among yellow water lilies at Godstow. I joined the volunteer rifle corps, and neglected drill. I entered MacLaren's gymnasium,³⁶ and got no further than jumping and vaulting. I rode across the country, larking on half-broken hacks and taking no pride in becoming an expert horseman. I indulged daydreams about choristers,³⁷ and acted trivial dramas of love and hate and reconciliation with my less respectable friends. My suppressed emotional life was indeed a great hindrance—perhaps the

chief hindrance to my making myself a scholar or an artist. It absorbed an enormous amount of time and engaged the larger part of my nervous energy. {It preoccupied my thoughts, and rendered me comparatively indifferent to the acquisition of knowledge. Engulfed in it, I refused to take either science or art seriously. They appeared secondary in my scheme of life, which already placed life before learning and above art.} Yet the literary faculty was so strongly pronounced in me that nothing which I did or thought was wholly thrown away. I passed brilliant examinations with comparative ease, impressed examiners with my style and mental versatility, and acquired the reputation of being what was called ‘an able man.’ What was more important, I learned to write, to command my powers of expression, and to utter with some precision what I felt and thought. The different kinds of writing which I was continually practising developed my gifts in this direction. These were elaborate essays on philosophical and historical subjects, English verses of many sorts, answers to questions in examinations, and lastly the copious private diaries I kept.

Meanwhile, the society of friends and counsellors whom I was free to choose, kept exercising a salutary influence over my mind. Among these I place my father in the first rank. Growing into ever closer sympathy with him, I learned immensely from his fine and varied culture, his high ideal of purity in language, and his liberal philosophy of life. He belonged to the school which had been formed by Wordsworth, Coleridge, De Quincey, Hazlitt, Shelley, Landor, Keats, Lamb, in their prime.³⁸ He was well read in the Greek and Latin classics, a diligent student of English literature, and the generous admirer of his contemporaries—Tennyson, Macauley, Carlyle, Hallam, Maurice, Thackeray, Dickens.³⁹ He hated neologisms, slipshod diction, perfervid enthusiasm, affectation of any kind, and sentimentalism. Nothing that was not pure in outline, sincere and manly in tone, idiomatic and simple in expression escaped his censure. Yet he also could appreciate the special qualities of style for which he had no natural predilection—for instance the descriptive writing which early pleased me, and of which my essay on the Greek Idyllists⁴⁰ (a favourite production with my father) was a specimen. But the *sine qua non*⁴¹ in his eyes was that a man should have something to say, and should say it idiomatically and logically. Rhapsodies, unless they were as good as De Quincey’s, he detested. I may add he could not tolerate Ruskin, Swinburne⁴² and Browning. The first he thought both arrogant and inurbane. The second seemed to him an impure windbag. The third rasped his ear and set his teeth on edge.

T.H. Green, though I could not share his powerful political and philosophical interests, impressed me with the force of his character. There was something contemptuous in his attitude to men whom he thought weaker than himself, or whose strong points he imperfectly comprehended. — Not an acrid contempt like that of Mark Pattison for people who write books and are not scholars; rather let me call it a genial and naïve sense of superiority, founded upon the boyish belief that truth is attainable by metaphysical method, and that nothing else except practical life has any real value. Of this good-humoured and elder-brotherly contempt he was not sparing to me in my undergraduate days. And it did me good; for it braced me to resistance. Intuition early taught me that society needs individuals of different calibre and different intellectual quality, and that the utility of nearly all of them is equal. {I have always held that the world could have got on as well without a Spenser or a Shelley or even a Spinoza.⁴³ On the other hand it has been my opinion that men of talent, the diffusers and diluters of ideas, are necessary for preparing an intellectual atmosphere in which the thoughts of genius shall thrive and multiply.} ‘We should be dull dogs,’ I thought:

...if we were all Greens. The world would be too serious, and the feast of reason would be uneatable for⁴⁴ want of cooking. I too have my function, and I feel my innate power. It behoves me therefore to give the lie to Green’s prognostications of my inefficiency. I will see to occupying at least as large a space in the annals of our age as he does.

I cannot say whether I have succeeded. But the fate of metaphysical thinkers and practical workers in the past inclines me to believe that my nature is likely to survive in literature so long as his—*nominum umbrae*,⁴⁵ but names of friends and brothers.

Conington exercised a stronger formative influence over my growth than Green. Here I met a literary personality, modified by scholarship, but notably literary within the sphere of Latin erudition. He moulded my taste and directed my critical instincts by his sound common-sense and mainly prosaic judgment. A vein of sentiment in the man, analogous to that which ran so far more lawlessly in me, secured my sympathy. This may not have been altogether wholesome; but it gave me the singular advantage of unrestrained communion with a rarely endowed mental and moral being, whose tastes in literature were similar to my own, but more severe and trained by constant study through the fifteen years which separated

our respective ages. An epigram introduced me to his notice. We met at a reception given by the Vice Chancellor in my first term to the Prince of Wales, who had just come up to Oxford.⁴⁶ Gladstone, I remember, was there; and Mrs Gladstone,⁴⁷ attired in green velvet trimmed with Greek lace, which I was told she had brought from the Ionian islands. It was the time, I suppose, of the cession of Corfu.⁴⁸ Dr Jeune (the Vice Chancellor) presented me to Conington, who always took an interest in sprightly youths. Our conversation turned upon some examination, possibly the Hertford.⁴⁹ Conington told me that De Quincey's dream of the Consul Romanus⁵⁰ had been set as a piece for Latin prose. I exclaimed: 'To turn that into Latin would be the same as plucking an eagle!' Conington fixed his glassy eyes and spectacles upon me, pursed up his lips, and said nothing. To my confusion I remembered that he was nicknamed 'the sick vulture'; and I thought I might have put my foot into it, as the saying goes. Far from that. It appeared from what he afterwards told me, that he was struck with the brilliance and readiness of the image. When in later years he chose to chaff me, he used to say: 'Barnes, you cannot come up to your plucked eagle.' Barnes was a name I got at Harrow, and which Conington thought fit to fix on me.

Conington snubbed and at the same time stimulated my vague sensibility to beauty. {I remember his showing me a letter he had written to his friend Cotton, the Bishop of Calcutta,⁵¹ in which he described me as a young man of pleasant conversation and lively parts, 'although he is aesthetic.' The term aesthetic as indicating some defect of character or intellect was novel to me then. Conington's explanation threw light upon one weakness of my temperament. But I privately determined not to sacrifice the quality implied in aestheticism. It had to be improved and strengthened.} He made me reflect and distinguish in matters of art. Conington's own sense of what is sound or magnificent, delicate or great, in prose and poetry detached itself against a background of indifference to nature, music, painting, sculpture, architecture. Through him I began to discern that literature is something by itself, with laws and a territory of its own, not part of an iridescent nebula including all our cult of loveliness. This lesson was salutary to a dreamer of my temper; and I owe much to the years of close intimacy I passed with him. Yet I cannot be sorry that I was created with a temperament less exclusively literary than his. I am thankful that I remain open at all pores to beauty,⁵² especially to the beauty of simple and natural things. This has preserved my sense of the underlying fibres which connect all our perceptive faculties. This enabled me to

regard beauty as a whole and the arts of expression as ancillary to one great master-craving of the human mind. This prevented me from isolating literature, although I learned to recognize its independence. The divergence between Conington and myself may be well expressed by an anecdote. He was once asked in my hearing if he knew the primrose by sight. He replied 'No.' 'What then does it represent to your mind when you read of it in poetry?' 'I take it for a symbol of the spring.' That was Conington's attitude towards a 'yellow primrose.' I have been taxed for abusing my right to name the *mesembryanthemum*. That flower, like the periwinkle, ought perhaps to claim no place in literature; and Mr Gosse was right, I daresay, when he wrote in a review: 'we must tell Mr Symonds that we cannot bear the *mesembryanthemum*.'⁵³ [Still I am pleased to have erred on the side of too much rather than too little sympathy with nature.]⁵⁴

Jowett, when I came under his influence, proved a more potent master of my mind than Conington. He enjoyed peculiar prestige among the young men, owing partly to the stir which *Essays and Reviews* had made, and to the battle which was going on about the endowment of the Greek Chair.⁵⁵ Besides, it was impossible not to recognize something unique in his mental and moral personality.

I feel inclined to break this paragraph, and to indulge in some personal reminiscences of Jowett, while he was still the leading Balliol scholar. When I went up in the autumn of 1858, my father gave me a letter of introduction to the awe-inspiring Don. I found him dozing in an armchair over a dying fire. It was about 5 p.m. His rooms were then in Fisher's Buildings, looking out upon the Broad. The study was panelled, with an old-fashioned mantelpiece of carved wood. He roused himself, glanced at the letter, and said dreamily: 'I do not think I know your father.' Then, after an awkward pause, he rose and added: 'Goodbye, Mr Symonds.' I had gone with all a boy's trepidation to present myself, intensified by my own repugnance to any semblance of uncalled for self-assertion. This dismissal, therefore, hurt me exceedingly; and I do not understand it, for I know that my father had a slight acquaintance at that time with Jowett.

I saw nothing more of him for at least a year. But shortly before I went in for Moderations, he sent for me, and asked me to bring him Greek and Latin composition. The few evenings during which he coached me made me feel for the first time what it was to be *taught*. He said very little and gave me no tips. But somehow he made me comprehend what I had to aim at, and how I had to go about it. The contact of his mind enabled me

to use my reading in Greek for the purpose of writing. {We learn not so much by what is dictated to us or by set instruction as by sympathy and effused influence.} I am sure that the iambs I produced for those few lessons were better than the thousands I had laboured at before. And yet I had been working under men, technically reported better scholars than Jowett—Westcott, Vaughan, Conington.

When I began to read for Greats,⁵⁶ I took him an essay on some philosophical or historical subject every week. The work for this essay, including a great deal of miscellaneous reading and a sustained effort to write effectively, absorbed the larger portion of my energy. I neglected everything, except my sentiments and fancies, for its production. And, in a certain direction, I grew vigorously under this discipline. I used to wait with intense eagerness, after reading my composition aloud, for Jowett's remarks. They were not lengthy. 'That is very good, Mr Symonds.' 'That is not so good as what you read last week.' 'You want to aim at condensation.' 'There are faults of taste in your use of metaphors and illustrations.' 'You have not taken the point about Utilitarianism.' 'That is an admirable statement of Plato's relation to the pre-Socratic philosophers.' 'Very good, very good, indeed.' 'You write too much; you ought to write less and with more care; you can write well, and you have some power of thinking.' I can hear him letting fall these sentences, bent before his fireplace in the tower room of the New Buildings—the room which had been Lake's,⁵⁷ which I had occupied for three terms, and which was afterwards Green's. I treasured up each word he uttered. The full force of each remark penetrated my brain, expanded there, and intuitively made me conscious of comparative success or failure in each effort. Indeed, Jowett helped me to write as clearly as I could, with as firm a grasp as I possessed upon the subject, and with an orderly disposition of the knowledge I accumulated. I wish that I had preserved the books in which those essays were written. Two in particular—upon the Eleatic⁵⁸ school and the Predecessors of Plato—would, I think, do credit both to my industry and to Jowett's method of instructing a lad of nineteen.

When the essay was over, Jowett made tea, or drank a glass of wine—far more often we had tea of the uncomfortable college sort, lukewarm, out of a large metal pot, in big clumsy cups. There was generally a second undergraduate on these occasions, Tait, afterwards rector of Tavistock.⁵⁹ He wrote on the same subject, and read his composition before or after me. Conversation did not flow. Occasionally we discussed topics suggested by the essay of the evening. I remember once, for instance, apropos

of the Eleatic ontology, that he told us what he thought about the idealism of Hegel. He pointed out how different the position of Parmenides⁶⁰ six centuries before the Christian era was from that of a thinker in the 19th century—how abstract the philosophy of being then, how complex, concrete and imaginative now—and wound up by expressing his opinion that the Hegelian system was chiefly valuable as a scheme for contemplating the world and summarizing knowledge from the point of view of unity of thought.

More often we talked jerkily about things in general—Jowett never suggesting a topic—I starting one hare after another in the awkward abrupt way of boyhood—meeting silence or being quenched by some remark which killed the game in mid-career—feeling myself indescribably stupid and utterly below my own best level—but quitting the revered teacher with no diminution of an almost fanatical respect. Obscurely, yet vividly, I felt my mind grow by contact with his mind, as it had never grown before. That was enough. The psychical influence sufficed to stimulate and impregnate. I did not then, and do not now know what the process may have been. Perhaps the very paucity of speech, the sort of intellectual paralysis produced by what I knew to be neither unsympathetic nor indifferent in the man I admired, was more effective than lucid exposition or fluent conversation would have been. It had the merit at least of an impressive singularity. And my belief in him was unlimited. Physicians, whose patients believe in them, can work cures by the exhibition of bread pills and coloured water.

One evening Jowett sat staring at the fire, and would not speak, and did not seem to want me to go. At last he said: ‘When I say nothing, people fancy I am thinking about something. Generally, I am thinking about nothing. Goodnight.’ On another occasion he broke silence with this abrupt remark: ‘Mr Swinburne is a very singular young man. He used to bring me long and eloquent essays. He had an illimitable command of language; but it was all language; I never could perceive that he was following a train of thought.’ On a third evening, he stopped me before I sat down to read: ‘I cannot listen to your essay tonight. I have just had news that Clough is dead.’ This was the first time, I believe, that I had ever heard of Clough. Jowett went on, ‘He was the only man of genius—whom one felt to be a man of genius—I have known among the younger men of Balliol.’

Jowett’s breakfast parties were even more paralysing than his coaching hours. Nothing is anywhere more depressing than a breakfast at which

conversation is expected. In the great tutor's rooms the young men came together, torpid, stiff, shy, awkward. He sat, sipped tea, ate little, stared vacantly. Few spoke. The toast was heard crunching under the desperate jaws of youths exasperated by their helplessness. Nevertheless, it was a great event to go there—although nobody shone, neither host nor guest. I used to be delighted if I saw the face of Lyulph Stanley among the crew invited. Nothing repressed his animated chatter, and Jowett brightened under the audacious rattle.

Walking with Jowett was, for me at least, no pleasure. Yet I coveted the honour. It seemed impossible to start a subject which should survive the exchange of four laconic remarks. Jowett had the knack of killing the innocent foundlings of his own or his companion's brain by some crushing and yet inconclusive observation. One after another, topics fell still-born from our lips. The stock story of the undergraduate who, passing the gate of Balliol, remarked: 'A fine day, Mr Jowett', and getting no answer relapsed into silence during an hour and a half of peripatetic exercise, to be greeted on re-entering the gate with, 'A poor remark, that of yours, Mr Jones'—this story is hardly a caricature of the truth.

In course of time Jowett became a frequent visitor to my father's house at Clifton. There I learned to know him more familiarly, and derived great benefit from his sparse utterances. They were so long waited for and so eagerly welcomed that they made a deep impression. Jowett's mixture of shrewd sense, acute criticism, and evasive subtlety of thought (which preferred to compromise conclusions instead of forming them this way or that) determined me against dogmatism—even had I been inclined to dogmatize, which I do not think was the case. Jowett no doubt gave a sceptical and sophistical direction to those of his pupils who accepted his ways of dealing with problems. I used to be reminded of Montaigne's motto when I had done talking to him: 'Ni comme ceci, ni comme cela, ni même autrement.'⁶¹ He positively disliked to 'trancher la question.'⁶² He felt that truth, so far as truth can be approximately attained, consisted in a balance of opposites, an adjustment of contradictory points of view, the exact sum and total of which remained nebulous. I do not even now know whether this is not the utmost which can be expected from the human mind, at all events in our present stage of evolution. Metaphysical, moral and religious problems hardly admit of definite solution.

The yearly journeys on the Continent which began in the autumn of 1860 did much to determine my literary bias. Before I left Oxford, I had acquired a superficial knowledge of Belgium, the German cities,

a considerable part of Switzerland and Tyrol, Lombardy and Venice, and some portions of France. Travelling with my father, I had been shown everything of historical interest which the towns we visited contained—their architectural monuments, pictures, art galleries, museums of antiquity, and so forth. I kept a minute diary; and the habit of recording aesthetical impressions on the spot greatly helped to form my critical and descriptive style. The training which began among the engravings and portfolios of our Clifton home was now extended and confirmed by these extensive rambles. The love of nature which had grown up in the leafy thickets of Leigh Woods became a passion in the valley of Chamonix, on the Simplon Pass, at Isola Bella, on the lagoons of Venice and the terrace of Novara. My faculty was thus being powerfully, if not systematically, developed for the kind of work to which in afterlife it was devoted. I started, at the close of my academical career, with a really considerable stock of ideas and a large fund of knowledge about the arts of antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, as well as a pretty vivid conception of the landscape features of the principal European countries. This miscellaneous culture, it is true, was amateurish. Yet it possessed the quality of catholicity and spontaneity. I learned to appreciate art in a large and liberal spirit, without prejudice, prepossession or dogmatism—and what was better, without looking through the spectacles of any master. Such as it was, my knowledge had been acquired in moments of delightful leisure, on holiday trips or in the comfort of our home. I have never dissociated culture from enjoyment or regarded art as other than a pleasurable adjunct to the serious life of men and nations. Thus it is possible for me now to trace a continuous quality, a specific note, in all that I have thought and felt and uttered about art and nature. {This quality, this note, is a certain carelessness about details, a want of thoroughness, combined with a vivid sense of things as they affected me. My literary work has been a prolonged *causerie*,⁶³ deficient in scientific research but abundant in suggestiveness. I do not think that it smells of the lamp or smacks of the workshop.} If temperament and education failed to make me in any strict sense a scholar, they enabled me to become a lover of beauty and an impartial sympathetic student of its manifestations.

In my last year at Oxford an opportunity was afforded me for displaying the first fruits of this culture. The Chancellor's prize for an English Essay was given to a composition on 'The Renaissance'. I competed and won the prize. The two streams of my previous mental training converged

and blent in this production. I applied the skill I had acquired in handling philosophical and historical themes to the matter of aesthetical evolution. The essay is immature and crude, based to a large extent on superficial and uncritical study of Michelet.⁶⁴ Yet it possesses the merit of freshness on the one hand and of width of survey on the other. The touch on works of art and literature is that of one who has enjoyed them and feels at home among them. The subordination of both Renaissance and Reformation to a single intellectual movement of the modern spirit shows a right sense of the problem and a comprehensive view of history. I have thought it worthwhile to dwell upon this performance because it no doubt directed my thoughts to the chapter of European *kultur-geschichte*⁶⁵ which I afterwards expanded into the seven volumes of *Renaissance in Italy*.

While reading for the Final Schools I began to study the Elizabethan Drama. I needed some distraction and relief after the hard work of the day was over. This I found in poetry. What first attracted me to the minor dramatists I do not remember. I think I had an instinct that my style would gain by drinking at the well of English in its earlier abundance.⁶⁶ At any rate I seized on Beaumont and Fletcher,⁶⁷ and sucked the sweetness of their romantic dramas with the avidity of a bee rifling the treasuries of honey-laden blossoms. Marlowe and Webster followed.⁶⁸ Gradually I collected and perused the whole mass of Shakespeare's predecessors, contemporaries and successors. Reading led, as it has always done in my case, to writing. I planned and executed a literary history of the drama. But when it was finished, in the course of about four years, I threw the whole aside. I judged and judged rightly that my powers were not mature enough, my style not fixed enough, for so ambitious a performance. One volume on *Shakespeare's Predecessors* (which ought to have been followed by two others on his successors and contemporaries, had publishers and public allowed) remains the principal fragment of this original design.⁶⁹

After I became Fellow of Magdalen, the question of a profession had to be seriously entertained. It is singular, I think, that I should not have been aware that my real bent was literary. I felt indeed that literature was my chief pleasure; and I had no confidence in my power to engage in any other work successfully. But my father displayed an intelligible dislike to my engaging in this career where mediocrity is tantamount to failure. —*Mediocribus esse poetis, non di non homines non concessere columnae*⁷⁰—I was too modest to feel sure of attaining to eminence as a writer; nor did I feel drawn to any definite line in literature. I wavered still between poetry,

criticism, journalism, miscellaneous culture. Besides, we both of us knew beforehand that literature, as a profession, is not lucrative; and though I already possessed a competency, I could hardly marry and support a family. A man who sets up at the age of twenty-one to be a man of letters exposes himself to other risks, moreover. He may easily drift into sloth and diletantism and self-indulgence. Good sense therefore indicated some other form of work. With my usual docility I resigned myself to studying law, though I thoroughly disliked the prospect and felt sure that I should never succeed either as a Chancery or a common-law barrister.

Looking back upon the past, I see now that immediately after my probationary year at Magdalen, I ought to have applied myself to palaeography and learned the modern languages—in Germany, France, Italy. This would have added to my training what it lacked, and the want of which has made itself painfully felt in my published works. But I was incapable of a decisive step. Constitutional indolence and the dislike of doing anything upon a systematic plan would probably have rendered such a process of exact self-education nugatory in my case. I became a student at Lincoln's Inn, ate dinners, and in due course entered a pleader's office. But I only trifled with law. {Butterworth,⁷¹ under whom I worked in Paper Buildings, used to tell me that Goldwin Smith had come to read with him—'and it was like setting a razor to chop wood.' He meant, I think, to hint politely that, though I might not be a razor like Goldwin Smith, I was equally unfit for drawing declarations and drafting pleas.}

III

At this critical point all plans and prospects for the future were confused and overclouded by the collapse of my health. It had never been robust. At Harrow and Oxford I was always on the verge of falling into invalidism. Irritable nerves and a morbid condition of the reproductive organs, due to the peculiar erethism of my sexual instincts and the absurd habit of antenuptial continence, rendered me physically a very poor creature. Then I continuously overworked myself—not by steady application to severe studies, but by the strain of emotions combined with my specific tendency to approach knowledge from the aesthetical and literary side. I lived in a perpetual simmer of intellectual and emotional fermentation. The pain and distress of Shorting's attack upon me during my first months at Magdalen broke me down. I received a blow then from which I have never recovered.

In some obscure way my brain became functionally disordered. They called the affection hyperaesthesia, and gave it all kinds of names. I do not know what it was. But it came upon me one night in a form of a frightful dream, from which I awoke with the consciousness that something had gone wrong in my head. And this sense of something wrong lasted for several years. I was never free from a dull ache in the periphery of the brain and a dead sense of weight in the cerebellum. One symptom, practically the most annoying, was chronic inflammation of the eyes. I could not read by candlelight at all, could only read for short spaces of time together, could not read manuscript or small print, shrank from strong light, felt as if sand was sprinkled over the surface of both orbits. At the same time the whole man drooped and suffered from a languor which seemed less endurable than pain. I was still able to write, and composed many articles for the *Saturday Review*. I wrote my essay on 'The Renaissance' while this brain-affection and the attendant inflammation of the eyes were in an acute stage—before they had settled down into a chronic malaise. But after writing, I suffered from irritation and exhaustion. {I flung my thoughts on paper with a febrile volubility, and when the task was finished, fell back quivering like one who has abused his manhood.} The night became a season of torment; terrible dreams alternated with heavy semi-conscious slumber, from which I rose in the morning unrefreshed and unstrung for the burden of the day.

This state of things destroyed all chances of systematic study either in literature or law. My *dilettante* habits were now no longer a matter of choice but of necessity. I wandered about Switzerland and Italy, coquetted with journalism for a month or two, then married and pretended to read law in the Temple. After my eldest daughter's birth my lungs gave way; and from this time forward their condition determined my movements. We wintered on the Riviera, toured in Switzerland, passed some part of each year at Hastings and Clifton, keeping our London house but never settling down there. At last we gave it up, and bought a house at Clifton, 7 Victoria Square, in which we managed to reside rather more continuously.

The period of six years, between November 1862 when my health broke down at Magdalen, and November 1868 when we went to live at Clifton, forms the second main division of my literary life. What I managed to do was done under great difficulties, and in a desultory fragmentary manner. Moving from one place to another, without access to libraries, and always in depressed health, I could not undertake any important work or engage in any regular scheme of study. Intellectually I lived from hand to

mouth. The weakness of my eyes rendered systematic reading impossible; and I depended in a great measure upon my wife's unfailing kindness. She read aloud to me for hours together. Curiously enough, the lung troubles which now threatened my very existence, seemed to relieve the misery of my brain. Gradually that organ regained tone, although I suffered frequently from attacks which proved that the disorder had not been lived down. Sustained mental labour was out of the question. I worked by fits and snatches.

Not having the strength for what the French call a 'work of long breath',⁷² I contented myself with swallow flights. I wrote a great deal for the *Cornhill*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *North British* and the *Westminster*. In this way I composed some of my Italian sketches—'Orvieto', 'The Cornice', 'Siena and St Catherine', 'Ajaccio', 'Christmas in Rome', 'The Love of the Alps', 'Provençal Towns', 'Ravenna', and others which have been incorporated with the productions of a later period.⁷³ They were transcribed almost literally from the diaries I left during our winter and spring wanderings. Some of the *Studies of the Greek Poets* also belong to this time. Among them I may mention 'Aristophanes', 'Empedocles', 'The Idyllists', 'The Gnostic Poets'. I also wrote those essays on the English Dramatists of which I have already spoken. My little book on Ben Jonson in the 'English Worthies' series⁷⁴ is mainly a *rifacimento*⁷⁵ of the elaborate study I then made of him. Much time was wasted upon the translation of Zeller's history of Aristotle and the Aristotelian school. This I undertook at Jowett's suggestion. Jowett, I may say in passing, has a singular way of setting his friends to do work undoubtedly useful but for which they are not suited. To make me translate Zeller instead of Cellini or Boccaccio, was nothing short of a *gaucherie*.⁷⁶ I found it intolerably irksome. I did it abominably ill. It retarded the recovery of my eyesight; and when it was done, I abandoned it as worthless. Later on, I gave my miserable manuscript over to someone, who wanted to carry through the business. It was a Mr Costelloe,⁷⁷ I think. But so far as I know, that part of Zeller's *History of Greek Philosophy* has not yet seen the light in English. After some years I became again interested in Zeller, when he fell into more competent hands than mine—those of my friend Miss S.F. Alleyne.⁷⁸ It was indeed at my recommendation that she took the translation up; and she performed her task as ably as I had done mine feebly.

So far, I have spoken of literary work which was designed for publication. It only represented a portion of my persistent, though hampered, activity. Writing for myself alone, I produced the larger portion of my

poetic⁷⁹ cycle—on the love of comrades.⁸⁰ In another chapter I shall have to relate how and why I came to undertake this ambitious enterprise in verse—an enterprise as unprofitable as it was hopeless. Some of the best pieces in the cycle, ‘John Mordan’, ‘A Cretan Idyll’, ‘Hesperus and Hymenæus’, ‘The Schoolmaster’, ‘Love and Music’, ‘Diego’, were composed during this period. Others belong to the next phase of my literary life. [But I never expected them to see the light of day.]⁸¹ Their theme forbade that. And I suppose that my best claim to be called a poet will be consumed in the flames to which they are probably destined. Also I designed and partly executed a history of Greek love. This has been privately printed; and it is one of the few adequate works of scholarship I can call my own. The study of Greek literature in sources commonly accessible and in sources more recondite, which was forced upon me by this labour,⁸² bore fruit afterwards in my books on the Greek poets. The treatise itself, unexceptionable as I feel⁸³ it to be in moral tone and literary taste, ought at some time or another to be given to the world. Yet I have not had the courage to do so.⁸⁴ While it was passing through the press of Messrs Ballantyne and Hanson—ten copies only being printed for the author’s use—a compositor wrote to upbraid me for my iniquity.⁸⁵ Such is the state of scientific investigation in our island, while we allow Jowett to translate the *Phaedrus* of Plato and encourage our youth to explore the Greek classics.

This period of six years was in one sense miserably misemployed. I ought properly at that time to have been invigorating my mind by [*études fortes*, and laying the foundations for a really magnum opus.]⁸⁶ Bad health and perpetual change of place forced me to fritter my energies away. Yet the peculiar conditions of my life were not without some counterbalancing advantages. I learned in that long tract of weariness and leisure—that *λίαν σχολή* as Prometheus called his time on Caucasus—to take a just measure of man’s endeavour in the world. Enforced abstinence and baffled ambition implanted in me a wise indifference, a Stoical sense of ἀδιάφορα.⁸⁷ I said to myself, ‘entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren.’⁸⁸ I saw contemporaries pass me in the race of life; and taught myself not to envy this man’s strength or that man’s skill, the art of Jack, the health of Tom, or the prosperity of Harry. In a word, the stern school of adversity delivered me from many pettinesses which beset most men⁸⁹ of letters; and in a genial, if somewhat scornful, mood I determined to do what I could, however little and however worthless that might be. I wrote for distraction, for enjoyment, for myself; and did not cumber my soul with

what society or critics thought about me. Hampered by so many disabilities, I slowly but surely emancipated my soul from academical and middle-class prejudices. The callings and the works of men appointed to different places in the world assumed proper proportions in my tired and disillusioned eyes. To wear the poet's crown, to win the fame of a scholar, seemed to me on a par with driving a straight furrow through the cornland or steering a ship to port through perilous waters under stormy skies. I was disciplined into democracy with all its sympathies and all its *hauteur*.⁹⁰ Moreover, in proportion as I ceased to study systematically, I learned to think and feel originally. In my prostration I grew to be self-confident without losing humility. Daily experience told me what a slight difference there is between a man handicapped as I was and a man as privileged as Southey. I mention Southey because he is the sort of man of letters I might have become if I had not been thwarted by circumstance. On a lower level, it was no small gain to acquire the knack of pursuing my studies, such as they were, in hotels, in railway carriages, on steamboats, in lodging houses, in lonely alpine chalets. The life of the spirit, a thin thread, it is true, but tough and elastic, was carried on continuously under conditions which would have appalled an armchair student or the *habitué*⁹¹ of a public library. What the Italians call *sprezzatura*⁹² sustained me. I adored beauty, I enjoyed mental energy, but I held opinion, as Farinata held hell, in *gran dispetto*.⁹³ Then there was the close communion with nature in many fascinating and appealing places. This surely was some equivalent for the loss of methodical investigation, of physical vigour, of combative ambition, and of opportunities for strenuous⁹⁴ study. Lastly, I ought not to neglect benefit derived by a man of my temperament from the slow dumb imbibition of a few books—Whitman, Theocritus, Shelley, Wordsworth, Milton, Marlowe, Dante, Browne—in hours of inertia face to face with Mediterranean seas or alpine summits.

IV

The next period may be reckoned from November 1868 till August 1877, at which date I removed to Davos Platz. These nine years were spent at Clifton, first at 7 Victoria Square, and after my father's death in 1871 at Clifton Hill House. It was decisive for my career as a man of letters. At the commencement of this period I continued my previous occupations. That is to say, I wrote a great deal of poetry, continuing and completing the poetic⁹⁵ cycle, so far as this was ever finished. Two of the best

pieces, ‘Eudiades’ and ‘The Lotos Garland of Antinous’, belong to the first year of my residence at Clifton. I also contributed descriptive articles on Italian towns to the *Cornhill*, and occasionally published something in the *Westminster*. Though I still suffered from a chronic weakness of the eyes, I regained to some extent the power of reading, and began dimly to project a history of Italian culture. With this object in view I studied Sismondi and made analyses of Muratori’s *Dissertations*.⁹⁶ My thoughts were being gradually drawn to Italy.

The most important event, however, was my acceptance of a lectureship to the Sixth Form of Clifton College. I chose for my subject Greek literature. This brought me into close relations with the boys. The interest I took in them made me work with energy and enthusiasm. Once more I read through the Greek poets, and wrote copiously, assimilating at the same time the criticisms of Müller, Mure⁹⁷ and many scattered essayists. These lectures proved successful; and I was asked to repeat them for classes formed by a society for the Higher Education of Women.⁹⁸ I have always thought that the large amount of time and vigour devoted to this work of lecturing prepared me for the definite career of authorship. I became conscious of my own powers, and learned the art of rhetoric—the art of putting forth my knowledge impressively, attractively and systematically. Writing connectedly on so vast a theme as Greek poetry, always with the view of exposition, trained me to attempt a work of long breath and ripened my faculty of *vulgarisateur*.⁹⁹

A minor undertaking of the year 1869 was the collection, arrangement and editing of Clough’s remains. This I did in concert with his widow. They appeared in two volumes, and still survives as the standard—probably the final—edition of Clough’s prose and poetry.¹⁰⁰

In 1870 I agreed to lecture to women on Dante. This involved a study of the *Divine Comedy*, *Vita Nuova*, and *Canzoniere*.¹⁰¹ I wrote the bulk of these lectures in a little tavern at Heiligenblut during the month of June, and remodelled them at Clifton while Europe was ringing with the fall of the French Empire at Sedan.¹⁰²

In February 1871 my father died. As yet I had published nothing with my name attached to it—except the Newdigate prize poem on the Escorial and the Chancellor’s prize essay on the Renaissance. It has always touched me with a thrill of pathos to think that my good kind father died before I came before the world as an avowed author. His ambition for his only son had been checked and thwarted. He had suffered deeply by my failure in health at the close of a brilliant academical career. Yet he never uttered one

peevish word to make me feel his disappointment. Shortly before his death he expressed to me his conviction that I should never acquire the physical force to do anything like solid work. ‘You have one of those constitutions,’ he said, ‘with just enough nervous strength for the common requirements of life. You cannot draw upon the fund of energy without imperilling your health.’ In fact he had resigned all expectation of my making a mark in the world—and herein he was amply justified, for I had now reached my thirty-first year, with nothing to show but a somewhat misty reputation as a writer of articles. Yet what I still sustained of slumbering force was now on the point of bursting out into sudden activity. And nobody would have watched the efforts of the next eighteen years with more sympathy and satisfaction than he would have done. Modest as my achievement may have been, I am sure it would have gratified his fatherly pride and have compensated in his old age for the disappointment of the past. *Dis aliter visum est.*¹⁰³ And so strangely are we mortals made that God forgive me if I do not believe my father’s watchful supervision would have hampered my energy. He exerted an extraordinary influence over those who came within his sphere. Always benevolently exercised, this was none the less despotic. I doubt whether I could have written as freely and published as spontaneously as I have done, had I been conscious of his criticism.

Anyway, the year of his death coincided with a new and far more energetic phase of my literary life. For the rest of that year things went forward much as usual. In the spring of 1872, however, I made arrangements for publishing my lectures on Dante under the title of *An Introduction to the Study of Dante*. The book was favourably received upon the whole, and added to my reputation.¹⁰⁴ At the same time I collected and published a volume of my father’s miscellanies (Arrowsmith, Bristol, and Macmillan), and prepared Conington’s remains in two volumes for the press (Longmans).¹⁰⁵ Both of these latter works I scamped—not wilfully or culpably, but because I was still indifferent to the technique of literature. I allowed my own articles to scramble into print as they could, neglecting proofs and not resenting misprints which would now make my blood boil and the hair bristle on my head.

In 1873 I published the first series of my *Studies of the Greek Poets* (Smith and Elder). It consisted of essays reprinted from the *North British* and *Westminster Reviews*, together with an equal number based upon my Clifton lectures. The success of this book was marked. In London I found that everybody I cared for had been reading it. Miss Thackeray¹⁰⁶ said to me at a dinner-party: ‘We have all been thrilling over your *Greek Poets*.’

Swinburne wrote to congratulate me on ‘this delightful book—in the true sense of the word delight-full.’ But the main event of the year was the composition of a long series of lectures on ‘The Renaissance in Italy’. Since this formed the kernel of my future labours, the fact deserves mention. I worked very hard in my study at Clifton Hill House, and filled four or five thick books of manuscript with fervid¹⁰⁷ declamation.

The year 1874 saw the publication of my *Sketches in Italy and Greece*. These were reprints from magazines together with pieces extracted from my diary. The article on Perugia, for instance, which now appeared for the first time, had been written at Arezzo in the previous December. I remember how cold and dismal the Tuscan inn room was, and how my blood burned while I sat scribbling till the manuscript was finished. I ought to say that in this year I began to work for the *Fortnightly Review*, at John Morley’s express request.¹⁰⁸ He had been struck by the *Greek Poets*. I also joined the *Academy* newspaper, to which I promised my work *gratis*, and nothing that I sent there has been paid for.

In 1875 I published the first volume of *Renaissance in Italy*.¹⁰⁹ It was entirely rewritten from lectures; and the defect of the method is clearly observable in its structure. I believe that I should not have obtained the initiative for a ponderous work unless I had begun by lecturing. The irritability of my brain rendered me peculiarly intolerant of sustained labour. But a rhetorical tone survived my best attempts to rehandle the material which had been designed for declamation. Changes of style and purple patches deformed the unity and gravity of a serious historical work. Private sorrows and disappointments, which I shall elsewhere explain, induced me to undertake the heavy task of the *Renaissance*. {Relief from thoughts which had become intolerable, and longings recognized as unassuageable, had to be sought in brain-labour.} That being so, I did not sufficiently count the cost or approach my theme in a calm artistic spirit. This origin of my magnum opus is hinted at in sonnets called ‘The Envoy to a Book’—*Vagabunduli Libellus*.

I worked furiously, recklessly, at this period, devouring books upon Italian history, art, scholarship and literature, writing continually, and pushing one volume forward while another was going through the press. The same year 1875¹¹⁰ sent out the second volume of *Studies of the Greek Poets*, a large number of which were prepared from lectures or written expressly to fill up gaps in the series. The last essay in this volume, on the Greek spirit,¹¹¹ was a first attempt to deal philosophically with moral and religious problems. It adumbrated a confession of faith, and stood

in my way when I foolishly came forward as candidate for the Oxford Professorship of Poetry in the summer of 1876.¹¹²

This year, 1876, was wholly occupied with the composition of the second and third volumes of the *Renaissance*.¹¹³ That on the *Revival of Learning* displayed a far superior command of literary method than anything which I had yet attempted. Both volumes were printed in the following winter. But meanwhile my father's dying prediction had been fulfilled. The tax upon my nervous strength during four years of intense and feverish industry exhausted my constitution; and the old pulmonary disease assumed a serious and threatening aspect. In February 1877 I was prostrated with a severe attack of acute bronchitis;¹¹⁴ and my physician Dr Beddoe¹¹⁵ (to whom I dedicated the *Renaissance*) informed me gravely that extensive mischief had been going on for some time in the left lung. He sent me away in April—to travel with F. Tuckett in Greece. At Cannes I felt inadequate to so long a journey, and spent the month of May in unprofitable wanderings about Lombardy and Venice. Chronic fever was upon me; and I had the recklessness of disease—the curious fretful energy of someone tormented by a persistent yet unlocalized drain upon his vitality. On this tour I discovered Campanella's sonnets, and began to translate them in railway carriages, determining to turn them together with Michelangelo's into English.¹¹⁶ Terribly ill at last, I managed to reach Clifton early in June without a collapse. During a night spent in great misery at Turin I was probably on the verge of calamity. Fortunately I reached home; and the next day, while riding on the Downs, I was surprised by a sudden and violent haemorrhage from the lungs.

V

This accident abruptly put an end to the period of my literary activity at Clifton, and led to a change of life. As soon as I could move, we left home for Davos Platz, intending to winter on the Nile. I derived so much benefit from the alpine climate during the months of August and September that I determined to stay there for at least a year. In course of time I discovered that there was little hope of my regaining strength enough to bear a return to old ways of life in England. We resigned ourselves to Davos, where we have now spent nearly eleven years.¹¹⁷

A new period of mental work under very peculiar conditions now began. My intellectual energy was rather increased than diminished by the

change. But I had to subsist upon such books as I could collect for myself. To carry on the *Renaissance in Italy* seemed at first impossible. I did not expect that the work would get beyond the first three volumes which were already published in 1877. Finding me some time later employed upon it in a room of Hotel Buol, Mark Pattison remarked with one of his grinning snarls: ‘Of course you cannot be thinking of writing *a book* here!’ He knew perfectly well that this was precisely what I was about at the moment. He wanted to annoy me; and he felt it his duty to protest against a proceeding so opposed to his own notions. ‘Certainly I am,’ I replied: ‘since I write for my distraction and pastime, I intend to make the best of my resources; and I hold that a great deal of nonsense is talked by some people about the scholar’s vocation; men who might have written excellent books, are sterilized by starting with fastidious conceits.’

Nevertheless, I felt that residence at Davos Platz put an end to any hopes of my becoming a scholar in the exact sense. I could no longer look forward to utilizing public libraries, to examining original documents, and to working up a subject with the fullness demanded by scientific criticism in our day. The forces which since my boyhood had been directly and indirectly moulding me for a particular kind of writing, were once more operative. I had to remain a man of letters in the looser sense of that term, choosing such useful or enjoyable occupation as could be carried on without a large stock of books. Literature more than ever came to be regarded by me as a διαγωγή.¹¹⁸ On the other hand the bracing climate and the solitude of the mountains helped me to acquire a more forcible¹¹⁹ style, enabled me to be as active as I liked without damage to my health, and added to the vigour of my brain. Accustomed as I was to compromise by the whole previous tenor of my life, I cheerfully accepted the situation, and fixed my thoughts upon compensating advantages instead of chewing the cud of mortification. What I felt most was the separation from friends of like interests and pursuits. I had to do without the stimulus which comes from conversation. Whatever work I did, must be accomplished in solitude, without sympathy. As it turned out, the continual production of books in that stern alpine region—the contrast between my life there among peasants and invalids with my growing reputation as a man of letters—acted somewhat unwholesomely upon my moral temperament. This topic will be dealt with in another chapter. At present I must turn aside to record some theories and experiences regarding the influence of climate and altitude above the sea-level upon literary productivity. ||¹²⁰

Before I returned to Clifton from Venice in June 1877 I had translated some sonnets by Michelangelo and Campanella. No sooner could I lift my head from my pillow after the haemorrhage, than I recommenced this work. I managed to do a sonnet a day at first, then perhaps a couple. It was just what I wanted at this period to keep me going and to divert my thoughts from the depression of my illness. During the first four months of 1878 I printed and published *The Sonnets of Michael Angelo and Campanella*¹²¹ and *Many Moods*, a volume of original verse. The dedication of the latter to Roden Noel shows that I was still not very sanguine about ultimate recovery. In the summer I wrote and published my *Shelley* in Morley's 'English Men of Letters' series.¹²²

The year 1879 opened with the publication of *Sketches and Studies in Italy*. I now recommenced work at the *Renaissance in Italy*, and accumulated materials for the fourth and fifth volumes. {Three¹²³ of the best chapters in volume four, those on Boiardo¹²⁴ and Ariosto were written in my bedroom at the wayside inn of Argentière, Val de Chamonix.} At the same time I published an enlarged and revised edition of the first volume.

In 1880 I printed a second collection of original verse, called *New and Old*, and composed the article on Italian History for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. I was already on the staff of that great dictionary, to which I contributed articles on Ficino, Filelfo, Guarini, Guicciardini, Machiavelli, Aldus Manutius, Poggio, Poliziano, Metastasio, Petrarch, Renaissance, Tasso, Valla.¹²⁵

In 1881 the fourth and fifth volumes of *Renaissance in Italy* were published.¹²⁶ I meant to stop here, and turn my thoughts to other undertakings. Translating Michelangelo and Campanella had given me technical command over the sonnet. I now used this as the vehicle for my own thoughts and feelings. *Animi Figura* appeared in the spring of 1882, and during the autumn and winter following I wrote *Shakespeare's Predecessors*. It was published at the close of 1883. Another book of sonnets was already in process of formation. This I called *Vagabunduli Libellus*, and published it through Kegan Paul Trench and Co in 1884. I may remark that all my books had hitherto been taken by Messrs Smith and Elder, with the exception of the *Shelley* which I wrote for Macmillan. The same year saw *Wine, Women, and Song* (Chatto and Windus) appear.¹²⁷ The title was ill-chosen: for this little book is a careful piece of critical scholarship and poetical translation, which deserved a name more suggestive of its serious character. {It was composed in the empty Villa Emily at San Remo

(now a Ladies' Home and formerly the residence of Mr Edward Lear),¹²⁸ which my wife and I had taken in order to secure a proper hospital for our daughter Madge in an attack of typhoid fever.)

Nothing was published in 1885. The whole of this year I dedicated to the composition of volumes 6 and 7 of the *Renaissance in Italy*. 1886, on the contrary, was a year of excessive activity. When I had completed the volumes on the *Catholic Reaction*, I sat down and wrote off my *Ben Jonson* ('English Worthies': Longmans). When that was finished, I went to Badenweiler and composed *Sir Philip Sidney* ('English Men of Letters': Macmillan) at a prolonged sitting of about four weeks.¹²⁹ Then I printed and published the two final volumes of *Renaissance in Italy* upon the *Catholic Reaction*. Having done this, I proceeded to translate Cellini's autobiography, which was ready for the press before Christmas. I never crowded so much work into a single year; and I have omitted to mention a preface to Sir Thomas Browne (Walter Scott) and a preface to selections from Ben Jonson (ditto).¹³⁰ It is not to be wondered that my health suffered and my eyes gave way. But the remarkable adaptation of my physical constitution to the climate of Davos and the habits I formed there, enabled me to get through without a serious breakdown.

The year 1887 was spent in writing essays on critical and speculative problems. These were afterwards published in 1890 (Chapman and Hall).¹³¹ {My *Cellini* (John C. Nimmo) appeared in the autumn of 1887,¹³² and was immediately successful. In less than a year two editions were exhausted, and a third was called for. I} also worked for Vizetelly's Mermaid Series of English Dramatists, contributing a general introduction to Volume I, and introductions to *Webster and Tourneur* and *Thomas Heywood*.¹³³

1888 was devoted to the translation of Carlo Gozzi's *Memoirs* and the composition of essays on the Italian *Commedia dell' Arte* and the *Fiabe Teatrali*. This book, in two volumes, has been printed, but not yet published.¹³⁴ In like manner I wrote a long introduction to Boccaccio for Vizetelly, which remains in manuscript. Both Gozzi and Boccaccio are suspended by the prudery of the English public and the fear of prosecution which had fallen upon publishers.¹³⁵

At this point I must conclude the survey of my literary career.¹³⁶ During the last quarter of a century I have never ceased from scribbling and have produced, as I have shown, a large quantity of various work. Yet on striking an average of my yearly receipts, I find that I have earned only about £250 per annum. I could not put my gains at this figure,

were it not for pay derived from lectures, magazines, newspapers, and the *Encyclopaedia*. At least two thirds of this income has been spent on books and journeys necessary for my undertakings. This shows sufficiently how poor a trade is literature. Equal abilities and equal industry devoted to law, medicine or the art of painting, might have secured me an income where tens would have been replaced by hundreds. But I could not do otherwise than I did. I had to follow the bent of my talent, and that directed me into unpopular channels of literature. Had I possessed a faculty for novel-writing, the case would have been different. Had I been gifted with conspicuous genius, I should no doubt have been adequately remunerated. I am content, however, with things as they are. The pleasure and the solace I have derived from letters during a life which without them would have been cramped and crippled and condemned to stagnant sloth, are sufficient rewards. Moderately supplied with the goods of this world, I have never felt the pinch of want, and I do not envy more fortunate contemporaries.

VI

I have often endeavoured to formulate my conception of the influence, physical and moral, which this literary work prolonged for a quarter of a century exerted over me. In the first place it greatly contributed to my enjoyment, since it gave me that pleasure and exhilaration which is the concomitant of any energy unimpeded in its exercise. I always liked writing, and never disliked reading. In the second place it afforded me an occupation which could be carried on with more or less convenience under the peculiar conditions of my unsettled life. Had I not already formed myself for literature when I was compelled to settle at Davos Platz in 1877, I doubt whether I should have even partially recovered health. The habit of writing rendered me independent, and sustained my spirits under circumstances which would have been unutterably depressing to a barrister or merchant checked in his career. In the third place it brought me a fair amount of distinction and a certain kind of¹³⁷ consideration. Without being ambitious or overvaluing the sort of reputation I have gained, I am not insensible to this advantage. I feel with satisfaction that a large number of people both in England and America are favourably predisposed towards me. My natural shyness—a shyness in which there is quite as much pride as of awkwardness and conscious inability to shine—has been diminished by knowing that I have made my mark and won a name.

When the Committee of the Athenaeum elected me to that club in 1882, I became aware that I had the right to consider myself one of the men of our time.

On the other hand I cannot pretend to think that literature, in the way I have pursued it, is exactly wholesome for a man of my peculiar temperament. ‘Travailler pour la gloire,’ says George Sand, ‘est un rôle d’empereur ou le métier d’un forçat.’¹³⁸ I have never indeed laboured for glory, because I have always thought less of results than of pleasurable exercise and innocent pastime. Yet study and composition are none the less exhausting to the nerves, when taken from this point of view, than when a man is consciously ambitious. Often I have felt myself as tired and worn with writing ‘as the tanned galley-slave is with his oar.’ Reaction follows; and the fatigue of labour craves the distraction of amusement. Trying to evade the congenital disease of my moral nature in work, work has drained my nerves¹³⁹ and driven me to find relief in passion. The subjects with which I have been occupied—Greek poetry, Italian culture in one of the most lawless periods of modern history, beauty in nature and the body of man—stimulate and irritate the imagination. They excite cravings which cannot be satisfied by simple pleasures. Long after work is over, the erethism of the brain continues. The little ocean of the soul is agitated by a ground-swell. The pulses beat, the nerves thrill and tingle. To escape the tyranny of the impossible vision which keeps the mind upon a rack, ‘libidinous joys’¹⁴⁰ present themselves under seductive colours, and the would-be hierophant of artistic beauty is hurried away upon the wings of an obscene¹⁴¹ Chimaera. For anyone who may have read my sonnets in *Animi Figura* and *Vagabunduli Libellus*¹⁴² this state of emotions needs no further exposition. They are to a great extent autobiographical.¹⁴³ The sonnets entitled ‘L’Amour de l’Impossible’, ‘Intellectual Isolation’, ‘Stella Maris’, and ‘Self-Condensation’ were penned under the stress of poignant and present suffering. One of my most penetrative and sympathetic critics, Mr Hall Caine, writing in the *Academy*, pronounced his opinion that there was no exit for the hero of ‘Stella Maris’ but in madness.¹⁴⁴ Alas! he did not know perhaps that he had given voice to my soul’s darkest apprehensions.

It may be questioned whether the pursuit of literature as διαγωγή¹⁴⁵—as that mode of life which secures its end by employing energy and occupying leisure agreeably to the individual—renders a man really happy. The¹⁴⁶ underlying preoccupation of my life has been a tyrannous emotion, curbed and suppressed for the most part, but occasionally indulged with spasmodic

violence. Literature takes the second place; and for this reason, although I have persevered in it for solace and escape from fretting care, I have never been able to regard it very seriously. In a certain sense I do not condemn this habit of mind. It enables a man to keep in view the truth that literature exists for life, not life for literature—a truth which less half-hearted men of letters do not sufficiently recognize.¹⁴⁷ {It delivers him from the conceit of authorship by constantly reminding him how trivial any literary successes and achievements are in comparison with the solid good things of a¹⁴⁸ comely and contented existence; how little talent or even genius weighs in the scale against character, strength of will, goodness, and tranquillity of mind; how men ought really to be reckoned not by what they think or write or create in art, but by what they are and what they have enjoyed.} This attitude, however, is not without counterbalancing disadvantages. It precludes that centralizing force of enthusiasm which springs from self-dedication to a single great conception. The literary *viveur*¹⁴⁹ cannot hope to become a scholar or to produce a monumental work. In so far as he shares the scientific spirit of our age—in so far as he is sensible of possessing faculties above the average and is open to the animating ideas of the modern world—he will have to endure a lifelong recurrent regret for sterner paths abandoned and for nobler triumphs of the spirit carelessly forgone. His activity is necessarily divided, and his vigour attenuated by distribution.

It were a thesis worthy of discussion whether the scholar—such a scholar as Mark Pattison idealized and Robert Browning sung (in ‘A Grammarian’s Funeral’)¹⁵⁰—be happier and more useful than the man of letters I have been describing. The former may loom more largely on the mists of time, unless he fritter his force away as Wolf¹⁵¹ did and Pattison himself did. But in order to feel at his life’s end that he has fulfilled the whole duties of man, he must possess the felicitous and self-complacent nature of a Gibbon.¹⁵² Otherwise he runs the risk of awaking too late to the consciousness of Goethe’s Faust that knowledge is but vanity and that the best fruits of the tree of life have never been plucked:

Grün ist der Baum des Lebens und grau ist alle Theorie.¹⁵³

Then he exclaims like Louis Bouilhet on his deathbed:

Une voix dit, une voix lamentable,
Je suis ton coeur, et je n’ai pas aimé.¹⁵⁴

Or like Michelangelo reviewing the past years expended in self-consecration to the noblest service of the sublimest art, he sighs:

Now know I well how that fond phantasy
Which made my soul the worshipper and thrall
Of earthly art, is vain.¹⁵⁵

The exclusive pursuit of science, of scholarship, of art, leaves some portion of a man's nature unemployed and unsatisfied. When the doleful days arrive, the days of spent creative powers and waning energy, those unexpended elements¹⁵⁶ of his nature awake from slumber. They are still young because they have remained unexercised; but it is now too late for them to expand within the crumbling palace of man's mortal frame. If he is sanguine, he exclaims: 'Other heights in other lives, God willing!'¹⁵⁷ If he inclines to hopelessness, he meditates the end of Ecclesiastes,¹⁵⁸ and embitters the evening of life with regret more poignant than that we feel for a renounced ideal. I speak only of the more generous souls. There are men enough who placidly believe they could not have been better than they are—simply because they are themselves. But this egotism is vanity; vanity more ignoble than the vanity of regretting misused opportunities of enjoyment or abandoned paths of heroic ambition.

Who shall be contented with his life when he looks back upon it? Contentment is not the appanage of high-born natures. They must be like Marlowe's heroes:

Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres.¹⁵⁹

It is not possible upon this path or that to satisfy the insatiable within the mind. That is the frank pledge of the soul's infinity—if not of personal immortality. It were as easy to drink the ocean up as to exhaust man's capacity for curiosity and desire for enjoyment. Therefore the only contentment we dare hope for here is that which comes from being satisfied with limitation and inured to imperfection. From this point of view it signifies extremely little at our life's end whether we have been a Virgil, a Titian, a Gibbon or a literary *viveur*. In the scheme of the universe all sorts and conditions of men have their inevitable place and their irrefragable [right]¹⁶⁰ to exist. Nothing is known to us about their relative importance or the issues of their several activities.

NOTES

1. Allusion to 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves'. This tale was first included in the *Arabian Nights* translated by Antoine Galland (1704–17). Richard Burton reproduced the tale in the third volume of his *Supplemental Nights* (1886–88).
2. Deletes 'weakness', substitutes 'inferiority' (MS 420).
3. Deletes 'I am so painfully', substitutes 'Being sufficiently' (MS 424).
4. Deletes 'of being', substitutes 'that I am' (MS 424).
5. Following 'far from', deletes 'commonplace or' (MS 424).
6. Following 'give this', deletes 'favourable' (MS 424).
7. Following 'study these', deletes 'veracious' (MS 424).
8. Following 'understand the', deletes 'even' (MS 424).
9. Allusion to Matthew Arnold's 'Critical Introduction' to Thomas Gray in *The English Poets* (1880), edited by Thomas Humphrey Ward. Arnold takes the phrase, 'He never spoke out', from the posthumous assessment of Gray's friend, James Brown, and employs it as a refrain throughout his essay.
10. Deletes 'sin', substitutes 'self-indulgence' (MS 424).
11. Incomplete sentence (MS 425). The sequence of numbered pages continues, but it seems likely that one page (at least) is lost, missing or destroyed—see Introduction.
12. A meteorite.
13. Trans.: do not try to outdo another. Cf. Psalm 37 and 'Noli Aemulari' in *The Poems and Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough* (1869).
14. A species of bird belonging to the Bunting family, eaten as a delicacy in France. Ortolans are force-fed then drowned in brandy before being consumed whole.
15. Cf. Luke 9. 48.
16. Family banking dynasty. Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744–1812) was a German coin dealer and financier; his five sons settled across Europe and established banking houses: Amschel (1773–1855) remained in Germany, while Salomon (1774–1855) went to Austria, Nathan (1777–1836) to England, Calmann (1788–1855) to Italy, and Jakob (1792–1868) to France. N.M. Rothschild & Sons bank was established in London in 1811.

17. Titian (c.1489–1576), Italian Renaissance painter famed for his portraits and depictions of mythological and devotional subjects.
Pictor ignotus is Latin for ‘unknown painter’; it is also the title of a dramatic monologue by Robert Browning. Composed in 1845 and published in *Men and Women* (1855), the narrator is a monastic painter from sixteenth-century Florence.
18. From Arthur Hugh Clough’s *Amours de Voyage* Canto 1.
19. Deletes ‘real’, substitutes ‘deepest’ (MS 429).
20. Trans: carrying across (or, passing). Used by Aristotle with reference to time, hence Symonds’s ‘pastime.’
21. Trans.: excessive leisure. From Aeschylus’s *Prometheus Bound* (cf. l. 818). Prometheus is chained to a rock within the Caucasus mountains, his liver being eaten by an eagle. In an oblique reference to his chained state, Prometheus says he has more leisure (σχολή πλείων) than he desires.
22. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 430 blank (11 cms of clear space).
23. ‘A period of five years.’ (*OED*)
24. Allusion to Plato’s *Republic*, especially Book 2 (376e).
25. Following ‘their intellects’, deletes ‘by running idly to seed in an unwholesome moral atmosphere’ (MS 432).
26. Allusion to *Hamlet* (c.1600) by William Shakespeare: ‘Something is rotten in the state of Denmark’ (I. 4. 72).
27. Robert Middlemist (1808–77), assistant master and house master of Church Hill (1845–76).
 Brooke Foss Westcott (1825–1901), assistant master from 1852 and house master of Moretons (1864–70). He was elected Bishop of Durham in 1890.
28. From *The Duchess of Malfi* (c.1612) by John Webster.
29. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 434 blank (19 cms of clear space).
30. James Surtees Phillpotts (1839–1930) was educated at New College, Oxford, where he was later elected a Fellow. He served as head master of Bedford School between 1875 and 1903.
31. Trans.: hard or serious studies.
32. Trans.: one characterised by practical wisdom (*phronesis*); sensible or prudent. See Aristotle’s *Eudemian Ethics*, Book 8.
33. John Douglas Cook (c.1808–68) was the founding editor of the *Saturday Review*. Its first issue was published on 3 November 1855.

34. Trans.: almost, thereabouts.
35. Symonds studied at Balliol College between 1858 and 1862, and was a Fellow at Magdalen College between 1862 and 1863. These dates coincide with the American Civil War and Lancashire Cotton Famine of 1861–65 (the latter caused, in part, by the former's interruption of cotton trading).
36. Archibald MacLaren (c.1819–84) opened a gymnasium at the corner of Alfred Street and Bear Lane, Oxford, in 1858. In the early 1860s he was commissioned to develop a new physical training regime for the British Army.
37. The phrase 'about choristers' has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 437).
38. Symonds lists eminent Romantic writers: William Wordsworth (1770–1850), poet; Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834), poet; Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859), essayist and memoirist; William Hazlitt (1778–1830), essayist, critic and artist; Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), poet; Walter Savage Landor (1775–1864), poet; John Keats (1795–1821), poet; and Charles Lamb (1775–1834), poet and essayist.
39. Symonds lists eminent Victorian writers: Alfred Tennyson (1809–92), poet; Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–59), historian and essayist; Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), historian, biographer and essayist; Henry Hallam (1777–1859), historian; F.D. Maurice (1805–72), theologian; William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–63), novelist; and Charles Dickens (1812–70), novelist, journalist and editor.
40. 'The Greek Idyllic Poets' was published in the *North British Review* in June 1868. It was later reprinted in *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873).
41. Trans.: without which, there is nothing; something essential.
42. Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909), author, poet and associate of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Swinburne entered Balliol College, Oxford, two years before Symonds, and he too developed a close friendship with Benjamin Jowett. Swinburne made his name with the publication of *Poems and Ballads* in 1866.
43. Edmund Spenser (c.1552–99), poet and author of *The Faerie Queene* (1590–96). Spenser served as secretary to Lord Grey in Ireland in 1580–82, and held a series of administrative positions throughout the 1580s.

Baruch Spinoza (1632–77), Dutch philosopher best known for his posthumously published *Ethics* (1677).

44. Deletes ‘unnutritious by’, substitutes ‘uneatable for’ (MS 439).
45. Trans.: shadows of names.
46. Francis Jeune (1806–68), Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford between 1858 and 1862. He was elected Bishop of Peterborough in 1864.

Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (1841–1910), later King Edward VII (1901–10), entered Christ Church College, Oxford, in 1859. In 1861 he transferred to Trinity College, Cambridge.

47. William Ewart Gladstone (1809–98) would later serve as Prime Minister on four occasions (1868–74, 1880–85, 1886, 1892–94). In 1858 he was sent as Commissioner-Extraordinary to the Ionian Islands, returning to Britain in 1859 after a brief spell as Lord High Commissioner. He was re-elected as M.P. for Oxford University in 1859, and resumed his former political office, Chancellor of the Exchequer, under Lord Palmerston.

Catherine Gladstone, née Glynne (1812–1900), was a public figure who played an active role in her husband’s political career. In 1887 she was elected President of the Women’s Liberal Federation.

48. The Gladstones’ residence on the Ionian Islands pre-dates their cession from the British Empire (agreed in 1862 and completed in 1864).
49. Presumably an examination in translation held at Hertford College, Oxford.
50. From *Confessions of an Opium Eater* (1821) by Thomas De Quincey. This dream was inspired by De Quincey’s reading of Livy’s *History of Rome*.
51. George Edward Lynch Cotton (1813–66) was elected Bishop of Calcutta in 1858. He was previously head master of Marlborough College (1852–58).
52. Symonds employs a variation of this phrase in Chapter 1 when describing his father: ‘He was open at all pores to culture, to art, to archaeology, to science, to literature.’ In his biography of Oscar Wilde, Richard Ellman transcribes a draft letter from Symonds written in 1881. In July that year Wilde sent a copy of his *Poems* (1881) to Symonds (see *Letters*, II, p. 686), and this draft appears to be a version of his reply; in it he praises the ‘Keatsian openness

at all pores to beauty' of Wilde's early poems. See *Oscar Wilde* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987), p. 139.

53. Edmund Gosse (1849–1928), poet, essayist and memoirist best known for his auto/biographical work, *Father and Son* (1907). Gosse was Chair of the London Library Committee when it accepted Horatio Brown's bequest of the *Memoirs* manuscript. He is believed to be responsible for the posthumous destruction of many of Symonds's private papers.

Gosse reviewed Symonds's *Studies of the Greek Poets, Second Series* (1876) for the *Examiner* and offered the following remarks upon his 'flowery' prose:

The over-sweet luxuriance of his Italian volumes was not repeated in the first series of the *Greek Poets*, but there was, even there, a tendency to exaggerate figurative emphasis [...]. These showers have abated, and we are pelted less, too, with clusters of strange flowers. We cannot bear the mesembryanthemum! (24 June 1876)

54. Later addition in a smaller script (MS 442).
55. Benjamin Jowett contributed an essay entitled 'On the Interpretation of Scripture' to *Essays and Reviews* (1860), edited by John William Parker. He argued that the Bible should be subject to the same critical methods employed in the study of classical works.

The Regius Professorship of Greek at the University of Oxford is one of ten Chairs (five at Cambridge, five at Oxford) founded and endowed by Henry VIII. The incumbent was provided with a stipend of £40 per annum, but the Greek Chair was the only position not to see this figure rise over time. In 1862 and 1864, votes to increase the stipend were defeated amid fears this would increase the religious influence of the post holder (at the time, Benjamin Jowett, a controversial figure following the publication of *Essays and Reviews*—see above). The latter vote was challenged and the stipend was increased in 1865.

56. Greats is University slang for *Literae Humaniores*, or the study of Classics. More specifically, it refers to the second part of the degree programme following successful completion of Moderations.

57. William Charles Lake (1817–97) was elected a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, in 1838. He left in 1858 to pursue a second career in the church, and in 1869 he was elected Dean of Durham Cathedral and Warden of Durham University.
58. Eleaticism is a monistic school of pre-Socratic Greek philosophy. Eleatics believed that change (e.g. birth and death) was illusory, and that all existence was part of the same immutable being.
59. Walter James Tait (1839–1913) studied at Balliol College, Oxford, between 1858 and 1863. He was elected a Fellow of Worcester College in 1865, leaving in 1871 to pursue a second career in the church (serving as Vicar of Tavistock between 1873 and 1883).
60. Parmenides was the founder of Eleaticism—see note 58. His three-part poem, *On Nature*, is the only work to survive (albeit in fragments), and his ideas are the subject of Plato’s *Parmenides* dialogue.
61. Trans.: Neither this way, nor that, nor any other way. Motto attributed to Michel de Montaigne (1533–92). See, for example, ‘Montaigne en Voyage’ in the second volume of *Nouveaux Lundis* (1863–70) by Charles Sainte-Beuve.
62. Trans.: settle the question.
63. Trans.: chat.
64. Jules Michelet (1798–1874), French historian and author of *Histoire de France* (1833–67). He is credited with coining and popularising the term ‘Renaissance’.
65. Trans.: cultural history.
66. Deletes ‘luxuriance and purity’, substitutes ‘abundance’ (MS 452).
67. Francis Beaumont (c.1584–1616) and John Fletcher (1579–1625) were playwrights and collaborators. Following the poor reception of Beaumont’s *Knight of the Burning Pestle* (c.1606) and Fletcher’s *Faithful Shepherdess* (c.1608), they began working together and enjoyed early success with *Philaster, or Love Lies a-Bleeding* (c.1609).
68. Christopher Marlowe (c.1564–93), poet and playwright best known for *Tamburlaine* (c.1587), *Doctor Faustus* (date unknown), *The Jew of Malta* (c.1590) and *Hero and Leader* (unfinished, c.1593).

- John Webster (c.1580–c.1638), poet and playwright best known for *The Duchess of Malfi* (c.1612). He often wrote in collaboration with others, including Thomas Dekker, William Rowley and John Ford.
69. *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama* was published in 1884.
 70. Trans.: Neither the gods, nor men, nor booksellers have conceded that poets are nothing special. From Horace's *Ars Poetica* (ll. 372–3).
 71. Joshua Whitehead Butterworth (c.1818–93), law publisher with premises on Fleet Street (near the Temple, London). He inherited the business from his father, Henry Butterworth (1786–1860).
 72. From the French expression, *un ouvrage de longue haleine* (trans.: work requiring time and effort; literally, a work of long breath).
 73. Several of these essays appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* before being reprinted in Symonds's travel writing collections (see Babington, pp. 135–6): 'Orvieto', 'The Cornice', 'Siena', 'Ajaccio', 'The Love of the Alps', 'Old Towns of Provençal' and 'Ravenna' were included in *Sketches in Italy and Greece* (1874); 'Thoughts in Italy about Christmas' was included in *Sketches and Studies in Italy* (1879).
 74. *Ben Jonson* was published in 1886. The 'English Worthies' biographical series was published by Longmans and edited by Andrew Lang (1844–1912), poet, anthropologist and historian.
 75. Trans.: remaking.
 76. Trans.: an awkward or improper action; faux pas.
 77. Benjamin Francis Conn ('Frank') Costelloe (1855–99) was the first husband of art historian, Mary Berenson. Costelloe collaborated with John Henry Muirhead on *Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics, being a translation from Zeller's 'Philosophy of the Greeks'* (1897).
 78. Sarah Francis ('Fanny') Alleyne (1836–84), poet and translator. In her family memoir, *Out of the Past* (1925), Madge Symonds identifies Alleyne alongside Mary Clifford, Susannah and Catherine Winkworth as early feminist campaigners. Alleyne translated and published material from Eduard Zeller's *Philosophie der Griechen* throughout the 1870s and 1880s, and this work was completed after her death by Evelyn Abbot.

79. Deletes 'erotic', substitutes 'poetic' (MS 459).
80. Deletes 'men for men', substitutes 'comrades' (MS 459). The original has been heavily scored through in ink, while the revision has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the correction.
81. Pencil cross in the margin next to this material (MS 459)—cf. Chapter 13, note 39.
82. Following 'this labour', deletes 'of disinterested love' (MS 460).
83. Deletes 'flawless as I know', substitutes 'unexceptional as I feel' (MS 460).
84. Symonds included a version of *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (1883) in his collaboration with Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Inversion*: it formed the third chapter of the German edition (1896), and Appendix A in the first English edition (1897). See Babington, pp. 49–50, Brady, pp. 41–121, and Crozier, pp. 227–95.
85. Ballantyne and Hanson were publishers and printers based in Edinburgh and London. Its founder, James Ballantyne (1772–1833), was a friend and publisher to Walter Scott.
Norman Moore's letter in the Appendices makes further reference to the offended compositor.
86. Passage marked for deletion (MS 461). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from 'carry through the business' (MS 458) to 'Bad health and perpetual change' (MS 461). See Brown, II, p. 68.
87. Trans.: *adiaphora*, a Stoic term describing things neither good nor bad (hence Symonds's 'indifference').
88. Trans.: thou shalt forego, shalt do without. From *Faust* (1808 and 1832) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.
89. Symonds tries 'men' and 'the man' (both marked for deletion) before settling on 'most men' (MS 461).
90. Trans.: haughtiness; literally, height.
91. Trans.: regular.
92. Trans.: the appearance of effortlessness; nonchalance. This concept derives from *The Book of the Courtier* (1528) by Baldassare Castiglione.
93. From Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Inferno Canto 10 (l. 36). Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1867 translation renders this 'great despite', suggesting scorn and contempt.

Farinata degli Uberti (d. 1264) was leader of the Florentine Ghibelline faction. Nearly twenty years after his death, his bodily remains were exhumed and posthumously tried for heresy.

94. Deletes 'facile', substitutes 'strenuous' (MS 463).
95. Deletes 'erotic', substitutes 'poetic' (MS 464).
96. Jean Charles Léonard de Sismondi (1773–1842), Swiss-French historian and author of the multi-volume *Histoire des républiques italiennes du Moyen Âge* (1807–18).
Lodovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750), Italian historian. His *Antiquitates italicae medii aevi* (1738–43) contain seventy-five 'dissertations' on various subjects including the famous Muratorian Canon.
97. William Mure (1799–1860), classical scholar, traveller and author of several books including *A Critical History of the Language and Literature of Antient Greece* (1850–57). He was appointed Rector of St Andrews University in 1859.
98. Symonds published a syllabus for these lectures, *Higher Education of Women, A Course of Twelve Lectures on the Early Lyrical and Dramatic Poetry of Greece* (1869).
99. Trans.: populariser.
100. *The Poems and Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough* (1869) edited by Blanche Clough.
101. *Il Canzoniere* (c.1330–c.1370) is a collection of poems by Petrarch. Symonds compares Dante and Petrarch in the final chapter of his *Introduction to the Study of Dante* (1872).
102. French forces were defeated at Sedan in September 1870. This battle formed part of the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71).
103. Trans.: It seemed otherwise to the gods. From Virgil's *Aeneid* Book 2 (l. 428).
104. Marginal note: 'It has since been translated into French. *Dante, son Temps, son Oeuvre, son Genie*, Paris, 1891' (MS 467).
105. *Miscellanies by John Addington Symonds, M.D., Selected and edited, with an introductory Memoir, by his Son* was published in 1871.
Miscellaneous Writings of John Conington, With a Memoir by H.J.S. Smith was published in 1872.
106. Anne Isabella Ritchie, née Thackeray (1837–1919), followed in the footsteps of her father, William Makepeace Thackeray, to become a successful novelist. Symonds records this encounter

- with Anne Thackeray in a letter to Henry Sidgwick (*Letters*, II, p. 333).
107. Deletes ‘impassioned’, substitutes ‘fervid’ (MS 468).
108. John Morley (1838–1923), writer, editor and politician. He succeeded George Henry Lewes as editor of the *Fortnightly Review* in 1867, remaining in post until 1882. Morley entered Parliament as M.P. for Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1883.
109. This volume explored *The Age of Despots* (1875).
110. Symonds misremembers the date: *Studies of the Greek Poets, Second Series* was published in 1876.
111. Symonds’s ‘Conclusion’ to *Studies of the Greek Poets, Second Series* addressed criticisms levelled against the first book. It begins:

I may, perhaps, be allowed in this last chapter to quit the impersonal style of the Essayist and to refer to some strictures passed upon the earlier series of my studies of Greek Poets. Critics, for whose opinion I feel respect, have observed that, in what I wrote about the genius of Greek Art at the end of that volume, I neglected to notice the sterner and more serious qualities of the Greek spirit. (p. 373)

112. The ‘76’ is marked for deletion and accompanied by a marginal note: ‘8?’ (MS 470). In either case, Symonds misremembers the date: he stood for the Oxford Professorship of Poetry in 1877. He withdrew his candidature following attacks in the press; for example, Richard St John Tyrwhitt’s ‘The Greek Spirit in Modern Literature’ in the *Contemporary Review* (March 1877).
113. These volumes explored *The Revival of Learning* and *The Fine Arts* (1877).
114. Deletes ‘phthisis’, substitutes ‘bronchitis’ (MS 471).
115. John Beddoe (1826–1911) was a practising physician at Bristol between 1858 and 1891. He was also an ethnologist and anthropologist, serving as President of the Anthropological Society (1869–70) and Anthropological Institute (1889–91).
116. Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639), Italian philosopher, poet and theologian. He was imprisoned in 1599 for plotting to overthrow Spanish authorities in Calabria. He wrote some of his most celebrated work, including his surviving poems and *La città del sole* (1602) while incarcerated.
117. Marginal note: ‘Written in 1889’ (MS 472).

118. Trans: carrying across (or, passing)—see note 20.
119. Deletes ‘purer’, substitutes ‘more forcible’ (MS 473).
120. Note below paragraph: ‘introduce passage from red note-book’ (MS 474). This instruction is in Symonds’s hand, and presumably refers to the promised account of climate, altitude and literary productivity. This material has not been added to the *Memoirs* manuscript and thus constitutes a break in the narrative.
121. *The Sonnets of Michael Angelo Buonarrotti and Tommaso Campanella* (1878) reproduced material already published in the *Contemporary Review* (‘Twenty-three Sonnets from Michael Angelo’, September 1872) and *Cornhill Magazine* (‘Some Sonnets of Campanella’, November 1877). Symonds also included translations of Michelangelo’s sonnets in the privately printed pamphlet, ‘Pantarkes’. See Babington, pp. 33–4, 138, 181.
122. *Shelley* was published in 1878. The ‘English Men of Letters’ biographical series (1878–92) was published by Macmillan and edited by John Morley.
123. Deletes ‘Two’, substitutes ‘Three’ (MS 475). Despite this revision, Symonds only lists two exemplar chapters.
124. Matteo Maria Boiardo (c.1440–94), Italian poet best known for his epic poem, *Orlando Innamorato* (c.1482–95). Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* (1516) was conceived as a response to this work.
125. Babington identifies fourteen entries by Symonds in the Ninth Edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1875–99). These include articles on the figures listed by Symonds, with the exception of Valla (presumably Lorenzo Valla, 1407–57) and with the addition of Jovianus Pontanus (Giovanni Pontano, 1426–1503). See Babington, pp. 182–4.
126. These volumes explored *Italian Literature* (1881).
127. Marginal note: ‘Add letter to Brown’ (MS 476). This appears to be in Brown’s hand.
128. Edward Lear named the Villa Emily after Emily Sarah Tennyson, née Sellwood (1813–96), wife of Alfred Tennyson.
129. *Sir Philip Sidney* was published in 1886. It formed part of the same ‘English Men of Letters’ series to which Symonds also contributed a biography of Shelley—see note 122.

130. Symonds provided introductory essays to *Sir Thomas Browne's Religio Medici, Urn Burial, Christian Morals, and Other Essays* (1886) and *The Dramatic Works and Lyrics of Ben Jonson* (1886). Both were published by Walter Scott, a London publishing house named after its owner Walter Scott (an engineer who constructed the first London underground railway, not the Scottish poet).
131. *Essays Speculative and Suggestive* (1890). Symonds revised the *Memoirs* manuscript to keep his publications up-to-date; he had originally written, 'These about fifteen in number, have not yet been published' (MS 479).
132. *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini* was post-dated 1888.
133. Henry Richard Vizetelly (1820–94), journalist, engraver and publisher. In 1878 he established Vizetelly & Co., specialising in translations and editions (including the Mermaid series of 'The Best Plays of the Old Dramatists').

Symonds's 'General Introduction on the English Drama during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I' appeared in the first Mermaid edition: *Christopher Marlowe* (1887) edited by Havelock Ellis (with whom Symonds would later collaborate on *Sexual Inversion*).

Thomas Heywood and *Webster and Tourneur* were published as part of the Mermaid series in 1888 (the former edited by A. Wilson Verity).

134. Marginal note: 'June, 1889. It was published in October of that year' (MS 479).

Symonds's translation of *The Memoirs of Count Carlo Gozzi* (1890) included essays on 'The Italian *Commedia dell' Arte*' (trans.: impromptu or improvised comedy) and 'Gozzi's Dramatic Fables' (*Fiabe Teatrali*, trans.: dramatic fable or fairy tale).

135. *Giovanni Boccaccio, As Man and Author* (1895) was published posthumously by John C. Nimmo, not Vizetelly. It was later reprinted as a prefatory essay to *The Decameron of Giovanni Boccaccio* (1905), translated by J.M. Rigg. See Babington, pp. 93, 211.

136. Marginal note:

A large portion of 1889 was spent in the writing of this autobiography which is still in MS, and also in the composition of *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (being an enquiry into the phenomenon of sexual inversion), which I privately printed. The whole of 1891 has

been dedicated to a long biography of Michelangelo Buonarroti.
(MS 479)

Chapter 9 of *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891) on ‘Literature: Polemical: Karl Heinrich Ulrichs’ was later included in *Sexual Inversion*, Symonds’s collaboration with Havelock Ellis: it formed Appendix C in the first English edition (1897). See Babington, pp. 75–6, Brady, pp. 125–208, and Crozier, pp. 301–12.

The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti, based on Studies in the Archives of the Buonarroti Family at Florence was published in 1893.

137. Following ‘kind of’, deletes ‘social’ (MS 481).
138. Trans.: Working for glory is both the role of an emperor and the occupation of a convict. From the sixth letter (written to ‘Éverard’) of George Sand’s *Lettres d’un voyageur* (1857).
139. Following ‘my nerves’, deletes ‘of force’ (MS 482).
140. From the eighth constituent poem of the ‘Enfans d’Adam’ cluster in *Leaves of Grass* (1860–61 edition) by Walt Whitman. Later editions re-title this poem ‘Native Moments’.
141. Deletes ‘a bestial’, substitutes ‘an obscene’ (MS 483).
142. Deletes ‘Stella Maris’, substituting ‘*Vagabunduli Libellus*’ (MS 483).
143. Following ‘extent autobiographical’, deletes ‘penned under the stress of poignant and present suffering’ (MS 483).
144. Thomas Henry Hall Caine (1853–1931) was a critic, bestselling novelist, and an associate of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. He reviewed Symonds’s poetry collection, *Vagabunduli Libellus* (1884), in the *Academy* and concluded:

The end of such a mind will probably be madness in any case, and the madness will come the quicker from the fact that the artist, being richer in sensibilities than poetic faculty, is rendered by nature incapable of resting on that love of beauty which is partially realisable as a purely intellectual passion in a picture or statue. (29 November 1884)

145. Trans: carrying across (or, passing)—see note 20.
146. Deletes ‘The central and’, substitutes ‘The’ (MS 483).
147. Note in the header above this sentence: ‘Topos of Religious devel?’ (MS 484).

148. Following ‘of a’, deletes ‘wholesome’ (MS 484).
149. Trans.: pleasure seeker, libertine.
150. ‘A Grammarian’s Funeral’ is a dramatic monologue in *Men and Women* (1855) by Robert Browning. The narrator is a pallbearer carrying the coffin of the eponymous scholar.
151. Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824), German classicist, philologist and historian best known for his study of Homer, authorship and orality, *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795).
152. Edward Gibbon (1737–94), historian best known for his multi-volume *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–88).
153. Trans.: Green is the Tree of Life and grey is all Theory. An approximation of lines spoken by Mephistopheles in Goethe’s *Faust* (1808 and 1832): ‘Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie, und Grün des Lebens goldner Baum’ (trans.: Grey, dear friend, is all theory, and Green the golden Tree of Life).
154. Trans.: ‘A voice says, a lamentable voice, | I am your heart and I have not loved.’ From ‘Dernière Nuit’ in *Dernière Chansons* (1872) by Louis Bouilhet.
155. From ‘Giunto è già’ by Michelangelo Buonarroti. Symonds’s translation is based upon Cesare Guasti’s 1863 edition: it was included in his privately printed pamphlet, ‘Pantarkes’, and first published in an appendix to the third volume of the *Renaissance in Italy* (*The Fine Arts*, 1877).
156. Deletes ‘passions’, substitutes ‘elements’ (MS 485).
157. From ‘One Word More’ in *Men and Women* (1855) by Robert Browning. This poem is addressed to Elizabeth Barrett Browning.
158. Cf. Ecclesiastes 12. 12: ‘And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books *there is* no end; and much study *is* a weariness of the flesh.’
159. From *Tamburlaine* (c.1587) by Christopher Marlowe.
160. Material underlined in pencil (MS 396) with accompanying cross in the margin—cf. Chapter 13, note 39.

Chapter 15: Religious Development

Religion is so important a factor in man's intellectual life, and has so direct a bearing upon the growth of the emotions, that I ought not to omit some account of my development upon this side.¹

I have already observed that I was not gifted by nature with any strong sense of God as a person near to me; nor was I naturally of a pious disposition; nor yet again endowed with that theological bias which qualifies the metaphysical thought of philosophers like my late brother-in-law, Professor T.H. Green.

The groundwork of my mental temperament might rather be described as literary, aesthetical, with a certain bias to scholarship and curiosity.

In boyhood I received the usual kind of training in religious matters at home. I learned the Catechism, the collects of the prayer book, and considerable portions of the Psalms and Gospels. My aunt, Miss Sykes, used to read the Bible with us every morning; and on Sundays we always went twice to church. In a previous section of this book I described the dreary impressions made upon me by the place of worship we frequented, and the dislike I felt for the dry uninteresting evangelicalism of the Knight family. There was nothing in my early surroundings to evoke the religious sentiment by any appeal to my peculiar nature. And yet I believe that I

went to Harrow with as strong a sense of moral allegiance to the deity, as God-fearing and as willing to receive religious influences, as most boys of my age.

Just at the time of my confirmation, a period when young people of thoughtful disposition are compelled to take stock of their religious feelings, I made that discovery about Dr Vaughan's relations with Alfred Pretor² which so strongly influenced my character. It was impossible but that a boy *in statu pupillari*³ should greatly exaggerate the importance of this matter. I⁴ could not be expected to regard the failings of our⁵ head master with comprehensive justice. The shock of the discovery, and the casuistical reflections it engendered, had the immediate effect of dissociating piety from morality in my view of the religious life. There existed no doubt that Dr Vaughan⁶ passed for an eminently pious man; and it was equally clear that he indulged habits in secret which he denounced as sins from the pulpit. Brooding upon this discord in his character, I began to suspect human nature at large of hypocrisy and inconsistency. A scepticism, cynical and jaded rather than logical or aggressive, checked the further growth of faith; just as a frost may throw back budding vegetation, I broke into dangerous paths of speculation, and questioned the ground principles of social ethics. Intellectually, I was too languid to become rebellious. But I went on unhealthily musing, poring⁷ over my difficulties, consulting no one, and allowing them slowly to sap and soak into my spiritual tissue.

This state might be compared to the gradual infiltration of disease through previously normal lungs in the first stages of consumption. About the same time my aesthetic sensibilities awoke to one side of ritualism. I delighted [in church music, church architecture, church millinery. What this eventually led to was a passionate attachment to a chorister. I did not acquire any kind of reliance on the Anglican creed, the loss of which could cause acute pain. What I took for a religious movement in my heart, I soon discovered to be a form of sentimentalism.]⁸

My father's mental and moral influence began to make itself powerfully felt during my Oxford life. We were drawn together by the painful catastrophe to which I have alluded,⁹ and exchanged thoughts upon the deepest problems, with a freedom unusual perhaps in the intercourse of father and son. Some of his most intimate friends had been, and others still were, thinkers of the Broad Church school—John Sterling, the

Rev. Frederic Myers of Keswick, F.D. Maurice, Francis Newman and Professor Jowett. Their ideas filtered through my father's conversation into my head, together with the criticism of his own clear logic. The conversation of the three last whom I have mentioned, and also of that subtle thinker, Sydney Dobell, familiarized me with lines of speculation antagonistic to any narrow interpretations of Christian dogma. The creeds which cling so firmly to many minds, hung loose on me. As they dropped off and melted away, they did so without appreciable suffering or keen regret. I felt, indeed, the difficulty and the danger of living in the world without a fixed belief in God, Christ, the scheme of redemption, the immortality of souls assigned to reward or punishment. I sympathized much with Arthur Clough. But I soon perceived that it would be impossible for me to rest in that halting-place, which men like my father, Maurice, Jowett, Stanley, had constructed for themselves and fitted up according to the particular tone and bias of their several dispositions. I understood and respected their position, especially my father's. Still I felt that their qualified adherence to Christianity and the Scriptures had something illogical in it, which might be explained and excused by the circumstances of their emergence out of¹⁰ rigid orthodoxy into liberalism. I was starting from the point which they had reached; and I should be compelled to go further.

This does not mean that I became irreligious. On the contrary, I now for the first time began to comprehend¹¹ what religion is, and to feel¹² about for some faith whereby my own soul might be supported. I took to examining my thoughts and wishes with¹³ regard to the mysteries of the universe, God, nature, man. This I did seriously, almost systematically, during more than two years of reading for the Final Schools at Oxford. The studies on which I was engaged, Plato, Aristotle, the history of ancient and modern philosophy, logic, supplied me with continual food for meditation; and in the course of long walks or midnight colloquies, I compared my own eager questionings with those of many sorts of men—Conington, who professed himself a submissive Christian through terror; Hugh Pearson, one of the mellowest of the orthodox Broad Churchmen; T.H. Green, the sturdy and yet imaginative¹⁴ philosopher; C.C. Puller, already fascinated by the gospel of Auguste Comte; W.R.W. Stephens, a man of simple faith; A.O. Rutson, George Bright, J.S. Philpotts, Albert Dicey, Charles Parker, James Bryce,¹⁵ Edwin Palmer. A book called *Essays and Reviews* attracted

extraordinary attention at that time; and a vehement contest about the endowment of Professor Jowett's chair was raging between the Liberals and Conservatives of the University. Theology penetrated our intellectual and social atmosphere. We talked theology at breakfast-parties and at wine-parties, out riding and walking, in college gardens, on the river, wherever young men and their elders met together.¹⁶

The lines of speculation which I followed led me to believe that some radical change in the current conceptions of the Divine Being was necessitated by the changes taking place in modern thought; and that this would eventually substitute the ideal of a God immanent in the universe for the ideal of a God external to it, creative of the world-machinery and providentially controlling it. Goethe's Proemium to the poems called 'Gott und Welt' supplied me with a formula adapted to my own emotional and rational forecast of this new phase, on which I thought theology must enter. Just after leaving Oxford, I wrote a commentary on those stanzas (privately printed in my *Miscellanies*, pp. 1–36), which expresses the point of view I had then attained by the process I have been describing.

During my readings in the Greek philosophers, I came upon the Hymn of Cleanthes: ἄγου δέ μ' ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ σὺ γ' ἡ πεπρωμένη.¹⁷ This suggested the moral attitude of willing submission to universal law, which will have to supply a groundwork for the conduct of the individual under the conditions of the new faith I had conceived. The study of Marcus Aurelius now absorbed me. Eagerly and spontaneously, I grew to be penetrated with what has since been called 'The Cosmic Enthusiasm'.¹⁸

While this religion, composed of scientific pantheism and of Stoical morality, was forming in my mind, I read Seeley's *Ecce Homo*. The enthusiasm of humanity expressed in that essay took no hold upon me; just as Comte's worship of the *Être Suprême*¹⁹ (so eloquently advocated by Richard Congreve in my frequent walks with him about the Roman hills) had been rejected, and as Renan's seductive portrait of 'le doux Galiléen'²⁰ was somewhat contemptuously laid aside. They struck me as ineffective attempts, each in its own way and on its own line, to save something valuable from the mass which had to be rejected. The first was a survival of evangelical piety transmuted into philanthropy; the second a survival of Catholicism, in curious conjunction with scientific agnosticism; the third a survival of the old religious sentiment, denuded of dogma, replaced by means of scholarship and romantic emotion upon a treacherous ground of poetical sympathy. The respectability of such efforts to modulate from the

old to the new, and of many other efforts made by many eminent persons, I could not and did not wish to deny. But I felt that I should not be saved by any of these palliatives. My soul needed something more sincere than the first and third of those I have named, something less pretentious and grotesque than the second. It was surely better to abide upon the rock of expectation I had found for myself; however stern, arid, unhomely, the landscape might appear; however dolefully the waves and winds of the eternal storm raged round it. I therefore stuck to the determination of singing my hymn of praise in Goethe's Proemium, of breathing out my prayers at night in the verses of Cleanthes. The religion of the Cosmic Enthusiasm appeared to me the only creed compatible with agnosticism forced upon a candid mind.²¹

Nothing but the bare thought of a God-penetrated universe, and of myself as an essential part of it, together with all things that appear in their succession—ether and inorganic matter passing into plants and creatures of the sea and beasts, rising to men and women like myself, and onward from us progressing to the stages of lives unrealized by human reason—nothing but the naked, yet inebriating, vision of such a Cosmos satisfied me as a possible object of worship. When this thought flooded me, and filled the inmost fibres of my sentient being, I discovered that I was almost at rest about birth and death and moral duties and the problem of immortality. These were the world's affairs, not mine. Having lost the consolations of faith in redemption through Christ, and all that pertains thereto, I had gained in exchange this, that I could

lay myself upon the knees
Of Doom, and take mine everlasting ease.²²

So far I had travelled on the path of self-construction, when I came across the writings of Walt Whitman. I find it difficult to speak about *Leaves of Grass* without exaggeration. Whitman's intense emotional feeling for the universe, his acute sense of the goodliness of life in all its aspects, the audacity of his mood—as of one eager to cast himself upon illimitable billows, assured that whether he sank there or swam it would be well with him, confident the while that sink he could not, that nothing can eventually come to naught: this concrete passionate faith in the world, combined with the man's multiform experience, his human sympathy, his thrill of love and comradeship, sent a current of vitalizing magnetism through my speculations. The formulas of Goethe and Cleanthes fell into their proper

place. The Stoical philosophy, like Aaron's dry rod, put forth blossoms.²³ The rock of expectation I had found, and where I meant to stay, began to sprout with herbage, rustle with forests, echo to the notes of singing birds, and gush with living fountains. The waves and winds of the eternal storm around it changed their message. If they spoke not to my soul of peace, they roused me to the sense of 'liberty, immensity, action.'²⁴ In short, Whitman added conviction, courage, self-reliance, to my sense of the Cosmic Enthusiasm. What is more, he taught me, as no enthusiasm of humanity could do, the value of fraternizing with my fellows—for their own sakes, to love them, to learn from them, to teach them, to help and to be helped by them—not for any ulterior object upon either side. I felt, through him, what it really is to be a member of²⁵ the universe I sought to worship.

About this time I began to study Darwin's theory of zoological development, and absorbed, so far as suited me, from him and Herbert Spencer the philosophy of Evolution.²⁶ With the metaphysical idea of that philosophy I was sufficiently acquainted through my readings in the works of the Greek sages, Bruno,²⁷ Spinoza, Goethe, lastly Hegel. But I perceived at once how the latest aspect of the theory and the partial proof of it squared with my religion and gave it substance. I derived, as I suppose all men must do, only so much from these teachers as might feed a self-forged faith.

So then, having rejected dogmatic Christianity in all its forms, Broad Church Anglicanism, the Gospel of Comte, Hegel's superb identification of human thought with essential Being, and many minor nostrums offered in our time to sickening²⁸ faith—because none of these forsooth were adapted to my nature—I came to fraternize with Goethe, Cleanthes, Whitman, Bruno, Darwin, finding that in their society I could spin my own cocoon with more of congruence to my particular temperament than I discerned in other believers, misbelievers, non-believers, passionate believers, of the ancient and the modern schools. This is the way with all of us who, like the caddis-worm, build houses to abide in for a season, out of husks they seek around them. Men of a different stamp follow the ways of the hermit-crab, and creep into solid shells which shelter them against the sea and assaults of neighbours. It comes to the same thing in the end; only the caddis-worm is the pupa of that winged ephemeron, the mayfly, born to be eaten up by trout; while the shell into which the hermit-crab has crept may last long after its tenant's lonely death, until at

last it perishes beneath the stress of elemental forces, pounding waves and churning sands.

But these things are metaphors; and there is a want of taste and sense in straining metaphors too far. Speaking simply I chose for my motto ‘to live resolutely in the Whole, the Good, the Beautiful.’²⁹ I sought out friends from divers centuries—Marcus Aurelius, Cleanthes, Bruno, Goethe, Whitman, Darwin—who seemed to have arrived, through their life-throes and ardent speculations, at something like the same intuition into the sempiternally inscrutable as I had. They helped me by their richer or riper experience, by flights beyond my reach, by knowledge denied to my poor studies, by audacities which thrilled the man in me. I addicted myself to their society because they accepted the Whole, and were not trafficking or pettifogging about a portion. They threw themselves upon the world and God with simple self-devotion, seeking nothing extraordinary in this life or the next, accepting things as they beheld them, attempting to mould no institutions, leaving the truths they had discovered to work like leaven, aiming at justice and a perfect clarity of vision, discarding economies and accommodations of all kinds, casting the burden of results upon *that* or *him* who called them into being, standing³⁰ unterrified, at ease, before time, space, circumstance,³¹ and any number of sidereal systems.

Because these men were so, I elected them as the friends with whom my spirit chose to fraternize. From being in their company I derived solace, and their wisdom, like in kind, was larger than my own. It is good for the soul to dwell with such superiors; just as it is also good, in daily life, to live with so-called inferiors, to learn from them and love them.

I do not seek to preach this faith which animates me. As a necessary part of my autobiography, I have described how I came to form a certain religious creed. No one more than myself is capable of criticizing its inadequacy to satisfy other minds. Certainly no one but myself knows how tentative and far from stable it is, how like a gaseous fluid, in the mind of him who lives by it. After admitting so much, I may anticipate ridicule by comparing my faith to something which lifts a balloon in air, to the fermentation of a fungus, to the sulphuretted hydrogen in a rotten egg. Still, being what it is, this faith has enabled me to do my duty insofar as I have done it by my family and friends; it has brought forth my literary work, and has sustained me active under the pressure of many grievous and depressing maladies. Through it, I think, with God’s blessing, I have been enabled to pull through consumption preying on my vitals during

the last quarter of a century. It penetrates almost everything I have sent to press under my own name. It will be found notably in the last essays of my *Studies of the Greek Poets*, in the last two volumes of *Renaissance in Italy*, in the epilogue to 'Palumba',³² in the last sections of *Animi Figura*, in the whole of my latest work, *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*. The perorations of all that I have written are inspired by this faith, as the substance of all my labour was for me made vital by it.

How frail and insecure is any faith! I might adapt a memorable sentence of Walt Whitman's, and exclaim: 'Belief is to the believer, and comes back most to him.'³³ We know that the solidest stronghold of faith, dogmatically built up, mortised on granite, mortared into battlements, garrisoned by multitudes of men militant, will crumble with the lapse of ages. The form passes away; and only the enduring relations which it represented, partial adequacies to the wants and truths of human nature, partial adequacies to the facts of the universe, remain. These survive, accumulate, and are continually being worked into the form and substance of new creeds. The question for a man who has dared to innovate in any age, is whether his religious instincts are at all concordant with the coming belief. If they should be, he may reckon among pioneers. If they are not, it will not signify for him so long as he has lived by them. God is the only judge; and God 'reveals Himself in many ways'; God is known to us as everlasting variation, albeit 'God is the same and his years do not change.'³⁴

Let then the one man who has found his faith speak to the rest of human kind, as a linnnet sings to linnnets.

The ever-during idea, independent of dogmas, of creeds, of cocoons spun by the individual in order to protect his germ of spiritual life against the cold—that idea, out of which religions spring, is the same now as when Kant expressed it in his pregnant imaginative phrase: nothing stirs the sense of awe in me except the stars at night and the soul of man.³⁵ The soul and the universe, their apparent contradiction and their ultimate solidarity; that is the ideal substance out of which all creeds are carved. In both and each of the factors, as these present themselves in apparent duality to us, God remains the only reality, the unifying constituting life. To transcend, to circumvent, to transact with the law of the world, is impossible. To learn anything final about it is probably denied the human intellect. Yet the very consciousness of these limitations and disabilities forces the soul back upon religion. It does not so much matter which faith a man adopts or what he fashions for himself. Yet hardly can he live to any purpose without faith.

In conclusion, as regards myself, I am compelled by the spirit of veracity which dictates every paragraph of these Memoirs, to put on record that the religious emotion I have described has not made me submissive to the human laws of conduct condensed in any code at present known to me. I have allowed myself to be an innovator, taking the principles of human sympathy and self-respect as my³⁶ guides. [At only one point have I come into collision with conventional morality; and on this point I have felt it to be both my right and duty to act as I thought best.]³⁷

[In practical rules of conduct this ethical attitude resulted in the following formula.]³⁸

The indulgence of any natural craving so as to injure the whole organism of the man, is sin.

The young man who has used his stomach and the apparatus of taste connected with it for more than the purposes of healthy nutrition, is on the wrong road.

The young man who has used his brain and all the emotions and thoughts dependent on it for more than the legitimate acquisition of knowledge and sane exercise of intellectual activity, is on the wrong road.

The young man who has used his heart and lungs and all the sensations of vigorous virility that flow from their exercise for more than the proper strengthening and evolution of his physical force, is on the wrong road.

The young man who has used his sexual organs and all the exalted passions implicit in them³⁹ for more than sober steady satisfaction of imperious desire, or for more than the consolidation of a durable love, is on the wrong road.

In each of these cases he runs the risk of disturbing that equilibrium of the man which is virtue and health, the violation⁴⁰ of which is vice and disease.

The violated organ, whether stomach, brain, heart, lungs, or reproductive apparatus, is equally a deity offended by the youthful sinner.

Fortunately for the human race, each of these organs is capable of very considerable wear and tear; so that we may sin with regard to each of them until seventy times seven,⁴¹ in calm expectation of the mercy of offended deity.

But each has a point of strain which cannot be overpassed. And some of them, notably the alimentary⁴² and the reproductive⁴³ apparatus, have dangers from deterioration through infection which constitute a secondary point of weakness.

The Greek virtue of Temperance, σωφροσύνη,⁴⁴ was a recognition of the equilibrium which man should aim at in the maintenance of his chief glands through sober use of them.

In a large measure it was a virtue based on physical foundations. But it implied a delicate consciousness possessed by man of his essential functions, of the necessity under which he lies of correlating and harmonizing the exercise of each for the service of the whole, and the subordination of all bodily organs to the one purpose of a sustained life in health.

Christian theology has to some extent confused this simple and clear intuition. It has encouraged us to condone injuries done to the brain, while it has weighed fantastically on the least indulgence of the sexual apparatus. The vices of the stomach pass for venial; while the ruin of the human being through activity of the heart and lung is hardly considered.

Why this should be is clear enough. Historical Christianity, framing itself as a practical discipline for semi-barbarous masses of the Occidental nations, regarded the chief perils of the average man. That average man is not inclined to superfluous cerebral energy, or to more muscular exercise than is good for him. He is very much prone to indulge his sexual appetites, because the sexual organs are the centre and main point of his structure; and these he indulges to his own injury and to the subversion of social order. This main instinct must therefore be kept under control. His stomach also has a large demand to make upon him. But gluttony is not obviously injurious to the individual, since the stomach is a capacious vessel and tolerant of much misuse; nor is gluttony, except as indirectly, pernicious to the social organism.

On the score of σωφροσύνη⁴⁵ then, Christianity sought to protect and govern the sexual organs in the first place, for the welfare of the individual and the benefit of the race. In the second place it took the stomach under its discipline. Brain, heart and lungs were left to shift for themselves.

And in the established moral order there was good reason for this. Physical exercises, carried even to the point of sinning, imply ethical qualities of great value and virtue both for the individual and for society. The same may be said about cerebral exercises in even a higher degree, for these are rarer and imply a more distinguished quality of nature. Both together elicit brave fruits from humanity, and serve the end we seek. The maximum of good result is to be expected from them. The minimum of bad may be anticipated—since the vicious indulgence in either strenuous physical exercise or in severe mental labour is exceptionally rare, while such⁴⁶ indulgence in both⁴⁷ may elicit something beneficial to society by the sacrifice of the sinners.

Having made these allowances, the supreme justice which Nature teaches, and which is summed up in the words ‘Live only in the Whole,’ compels us to revert to that old Hellenic standard of σωφροσύνη.⁴⁸ He who overworks any organ, whether brain, heart, lung, stomach or sexual apparatus, sins. The indulgence in excessive brain exercise, in excessive muscular exercise, in

excessive or innutritious feeding, in excessive or libertine sexual pleasure, is wrong. The hierarchy of functions which compose us and on which society depends, forces man to regard one indulgence as more pardonable than another. Thus the indulgence in sex is so bound up with the first object of our physical being, propagation, that it cannot be viewed as more than venial. The indulgence in muscular activity is so serviceable as an example to the race at large that it appears almost to rank with virtues. The indulgence in cerebral tension is so rare and aims at such high objects that, even when it maims or kills, it passes for ‘the last infirmity of noble minds.’⁴⁹ The indulgence in food is either so harmless or so ignobly detrimental to the individual alone, that it is almost overlooked.

Yet all excessive indulgences in all of these regions are sins against the nature of man considered as a whole, and playing his part in a larger whole.

Rightly understood, properly expounded, the doctrine of the equality of all these sins in the sight of an inexorable God of natural law would go far to restore mankind to the pristine ideal of human excellence imagined by the Greeks.

Am Hof. April 14. 1885.

NOTES

1. Note in the header: ‘Chop’ or ‘Chap’ (MS 487). Brown begins his chapter on ‘Manhood—Religious Development’ (II, pp. 107–36) with material from Chapter 17 (MS 518–19), before returning to MS 487.
2. The phrase ‘Dr Vaughan’s relations with Alfred Pretor’ has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 488).
3. Trans.: in the state of being a pupil. ‘As a pupil or ward; under scholastic discipline; at the universities, designating all who have not the degree of Master.’ (*OED*)
4. Deletes ‘He’, substitutes ‘I’ (MS 488).
5. Deletes ‘his’, substitutes ‘our’ (MS 488).
6. Here Dr Vaughan’s name has been cut, quite literally, from the manuscript (MS 488—see Appendices). There is a hole in the page over which his name is re-inscribed.
7. Deletes ‘dreaming’, substitutes ‘poring’ (MS 488).
8. Passage marked for deletion (MS 489). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from ‘most boys of my age’ (MS 487) to

- ‘My father’s mental and moral influence’ (MS 489). See Brown, II, p. 109.
9. Deletes ‘of Vaughan’, substitutes ‘to which I have alluded’ (MS 489).
 10. Deletes ‘growth from’, substitutes ‘emergence out of’ (MS 490).
 11. Deletes ‘feel’, substitutes ‘comprehend’ (MS 490).
 12. Deletes ‘stretch’, substitutes ‘feel’ (MS 490).
 13. Deletes ‘own state of thinking and desiring with’, substitutes ‘thoughts and wishes with’ (MS 490).
 14. Deletes ‘mystical’, substitutes ‘sturdy yet imaginative’ (MS 490).
 15. George Charles Bright (1840–1922) entered Balliol College, Oxford, in 1860. He went on to study medicine in London, Edinburgh and Paris, and spent many years as a practising physician in Dresden and Cannes.
James Bryce (1838–1922) entered Trinity College, Oxford, in 1857. He went on to pursue a career in politics, serving as M.P. for Tower Hamlets and South Aberdeen between 1880 and 1907. He was British Ambassador to the United States of America between 1907 and 1913.
 16. A pencil line joins a caret at the end of this paragraph to the margin (MS 491). At this point in Brown’s biography, he interpolates letters to W.R.W. Stephens and Henry Sidgwick. See Brown, II, pp. 111–28.
 17. Trans.: Lead me, O Zeus, and you, Destiny. From Epictetus’s *Enchiridion* 53. This Stoic hymn celebrates the acceptance of fate, which is in any case irresistible.
Marginal note: ‘Add’ (MS 491). This appears to be in Brown’s hand, but rather than add material to his biography he jumps from ‘theology must enter’ (MS 491) to ‘During my readings’ (MS 491). See Brown, II, p. 128.
 18. Marginal note: ‘Add’ (MS 492). This appears to be Brown’s hand, but rather than add material to his biography, he follows the text of the *Memoirs*.
Symonds includes a discussion of ‘The Cosmic Enthusiasm’ in relation to Walt Whitman and religion in his *Walt Whitman: A Study* (1893).
 19. Trans.: supreme being. Auguste Comte’s *Système de politique positive, ou traité de sociologie instituant la religion de l’Humanité* (1851–54) set out a controversial model of secular religion.

20. Trans.: the gentle Galilean. From Ernest Renan's *Vie de Jésus* (1863).
21. Here a sentence is aborted and marked for deletion: 'Not very much later than the time of which I am now' (MS 493).
22. Symonds adapts lines from 'The Genius of the Vatican' in *Many Moods: A Volume of Verse* (1878): 'lay thee on the knees | Of Doom, and take thine everlasting ease.'
23. Cf. Numbers 17. 8.
24. Symonds misquotes a line from 'Poem of Salutation' in *Leaves of Grass* (1856 edition) by Walt Whitman: 'immensity, liberty, action.' Later editions re-title this poem 'Salut au Monde!'
25. Deletes 'man of', substitutes 'member of' (MS 494).
26. Charles Darwin (1809–82), famous naturalist and author of *On the Origin of Species* (1859), *The Descent of Man* (1871), and *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872).
Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), philosopher and evolutionary theorist. His works include *The Principles of Psychology* (1855) and *First Principles* (1862).
Symonds included several essays on evolution, art and science in his privately printed *Miscellanies* (1885). These were later published in *Essays Speculative and Suggestive* (1890): 'The Philosophy of Evolution', 'On the Application of Evolutionary Principles to Art and Literature', and 'Darwin's Thoughts about God'.
27. Giordano Bruno (1548–1600), Italian astronomer and philosopher. His works include *De la causa, principio e uno* (1584) and a series of ethical dialogues. He was tried and executed on charges of heresy.
28. Deletes 'human', substitutes 'sickening' (MS 495).
29. From 'Generalbeichte' in *Goethe's Werke* 1 (1815): 'im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen, | Resolut zu leben' (ll. 34–5).
30. Following 'being, standing', deletes 'modestly'.
31. Deletes 'eternity', substitutes 'circumstance' (MS 496).
32. 'Palumba' is the title given to the middle section of Symonds's long poem, 'A Mexican Tale', included in the privately printed pamphlet 'Old and New' and published in *Many Moods: A Volume of Verse* (1878).
33. Symonds adapts lines from 'Poem of The Sayers of The Words of The Earth' in *Leaves of Grass* (1856 edition) by Walt Whitman:

- ‘The song is to the singer, and comes back most to | him’, etc. Later editions re-title this poem ‘To The Sayers of the World’.
34. From ‘The Limits of Knowledge’ in *Essays Speculative and Suggestive* (1890).
 35. Allusion to Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788). Kant (1724–1804) was a German Enlightenment philosopher. His *Critique of Practical Reason* explores moral arguments for the existence of God.
 36. Following ‘as my’, deletes ‘only’ (MS 499).
 37. Passage marked for deletion (MS 499). Brown does not reproduce this material, concluding his chapter with the statement: ‘Yet hardly can he live to any purpose without faith’ (MS 499). See Brown, II, p. 136.
 Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 499 blank (7 cms of clear space). A document (containing Symonds’s ethical ‘formula’) is then bound into the manuscript, formed from small sheets of lined paper, bound with tape and string to form a booklet (MS 499a–i).
 38. Written across the header of the document (MS 499a). This appears to be Brown’s hand, but he does not reproduce the passage or ‘formula’ in his biography.
 39. This is a revision: ‘them’ replaces an original phrase, heavily scored through and now illegible (MS 499b).
 40. Deletes ‘disturbance’, substitutes ‘violation’ (MS 499b).
 41. Cf. Genesis 4. 24 and Matthew 18. 22.
 42. Deletes ‘stomach’, substitutes ‘alimentary’ (MS 499c).
 43. Deletes ‘sexual’, substitutes ‘reproductive’ (MS 499c).
 44. Trans.: *sophrosyne*, moderation (commonly with regard to sensual desires); one of the four cardinal virtues.
 45. See note 44.
 46. Deletes ‘abnormal, whereas the’, substitutes ‘exceptionally rare, while such’ (MS 499g).
 47. Following ‘in both’, deletes ‘carried to a sinful degree’ (MS 499g).
 48. See note 44.
 49. From ‘Lycidas’ (1638) by John Milton.

Chapter 16: Life at Clifton Hill House, 1870–77

I

Autobiographies are commonly accused on insincerity. People start with the assumption that nobody sits down to write his own life without some motive of vanity, or without the wish to present himself in the most favourable aspect.¹ From this they argue that what a man puts on record about himself must be more or less a plausible lie, intended to cast dust in the eyes of readers, and to glorify the individual.

Students of this kind of literature are well aware that such is not the case. Self-written Memoirs may indeed be found, which are nothing better than special pleadings in the author's favour, and carefully prepared apologies for his conduct. These are at once detected; and they detach themselves by unmistakable marks of style and treatment from the majority of autobiographical compositions.

It is true that some motive of vanity, or of interest in self, does induce men to write their lives. But this motive, instead of making them attempt to beautify their portrait, leads to quite the opposite result. They are so absorbed in themselves that, when they have begun to write, they dwell with even too much emphasis upon their marked peculiarities. They are aware that they, and they alone, possess sources of information concerning the² person they are painting; and these they determine to bring forth, in order to explain that person's action in the world, to justify him by

appeal to his specific nature, and to let his neighbours know how little they understood the hidden motives of his character. In this way autobiographies are, for the most part, only too veracious—in spite of suppressions, minor mendacities, and falsifications of fact. Corrected by external information regarding the authors, they present a fuller and more accurate conception of his moral and mental nature than the biographies composed by a friend or a stranger can give. We practically admit this principle by attaching the greatest weight to epistolary correspondence which is a kind of unconscious autobiography.

It is not veracity in which self-written Memoirs fail. What they really lack is atmosphere. No man can see himself as others see him. He is so engrossed in what have been the main preoccupations of his own individual self,³ that he forgets how small a part those all-important things played in his commerce with the world. Therefore, out of pure sincerity and the wish to inform posterity of what he really was, he paints a portrait which his most intimate friends repudiate. They say: 'there is another instance of the untruthfulness of autobiography. Our deceased friend never appeared to us like that.' The answer to this is that the deceased friend appeared to himself like that; and his Memoirs are valuable as supplying what nobody who knew him could communicate with equal force. The report has to be supplemented indeed, in order that a perfect portrait may be painted of the man. But it is impertinent to maintain that anyone has the same right to speak about a person as the person himself has.

I have been led by a long and sympathetic study of personal confessions, and lately by laborious work on two remarkable examples, to these conclusions.⁴ The general veracity of an autobiography, as an index to its author's character, and as a record of what he considered the important points about himself, is indubitable. But the want of atmosphere, the neglect of qualifying considerations, the absorption in certain engrossing aspects of self to the exclusion of the common stuff of humanity, are no less apparent.⁵ Every artistic product has a defect corresponding to its quality. The quality of autobiographic writing, which springs from vanity or interest in self or wish to tell the truth about self, is a certain psychical truthfulness. The defect is that, in this attempt to be true and self-presenting, the writer forgets how much of his life was made up of quite common stuff. He wants to portray the individual, and omits the species. And thus he does himself injustice.

This preamble I have written because I am well aware that the foregoing chapters on my emotional and literary development concentrate attention exclusively on⁶ the two points which make it worth my while to write my life at all. I cannot chronicle the little daily doings, or stipple in the myriad touches of fact and behaviour which, in their combination with deeper psychical preoccupations, constitute a living man. I cannot proclaim that I was helpful to my neighbours, merry with my friends, thoughtful and kind and watchful in my family. It is impossible for me so fully to describe myself as to make it obvious that those who lived nearest to me in everyday existence, had no conception of my sexual troubles, and regarded me less as a writer of books than as a practical authority and a source of stimulus and animation. I have not space at my command to introduce the elements of [humour]⁷ and of commonplace into my records.

This is what I mean by the want of atmosphere in autobiographies written with a defined purpose.

In order, as far as possible, to correct these inevitable short-comings of an autobiography, I must now proceed to 'chronicle the small beer'⁸ of my uneventful life. The transition from an epoch of work and of emotion to another epoch has to be effected by interpolating a record of facts which have nothing peculiar or significant in themselves. This is the only way in which I can supply the element of atmosphere, and evade the artistic error of depicting a psychological monster.

II

In the episode of Norman, I gave a sufficiently exact view of our life at 7 Victoria Square. This chapter will be occupied with the domestic events which led us to fix our abode at Clifton Hill House, and with the small affairs of seven years.

On the 23rd of May in 1870 my wife and I started for a tour upon the Continent, alone together. I had been working at the *Divine Comedy*, with the view to a series of lectures on Dante, and I took this poem as my travelling companion. We went straight to Axenstein upon the Lake of Lucerne, then crossed the Gotthard, and spent some days on Monte Generoso with Miss North. She was engaged in shaping a new mode of life, consequent upon her father's death, which left her alone in the world. She had begun to paint in oils; and the vision of a roving existence,

dedicated to the delineation of landscape and of vegetation, was already floating in her brain. The solid result of this plan is now visible in the house at Kew, which she built and presented to the nation.⁹

From Monte Generoso we descended to the Lombard plain, and went by way of Milan, Lake Garda, Vicenza and Bassano into the Dolomites. There we passed a pleasant time with F.F. Tuckett and his sister Mrs Fowler. When they left us, we travelled from Cortina into the Pustertal and on to Heiligenblut. In a primitive village inn, close to the pilgrimage church, and often deafened by the peasant pilgrims, we sojourned many days, and I made notes on Dante. Then onwards over the Mallnitzer Tauern, through Gastein to Berchtesgaden, and so to Munich. We wanted to be present at the Ammergau Play;¹⁰ but fate forbade. Places were engaged, and we were starting, when a telegram reached us from Clifton, calling us immediately home. My father was dangerously ill.

We travelled day and night, missed a special train which was waiting for us at Paddington, and arrived at Clifton in the middle of the night of Sunday July 10th. Several weeks of suspense, anxiety, and watching by my father's bedside followed. He was visited by Sir William Jenner and Dr Radcliffe from London, and by his brother Frederick Symonds from Oxford.¹¹ Gradually he emerged from a distressing state of comatose delirium. Meanwhile, these personal anxieties were intertwined with the great Franco-German war.¹² On the 15th of July, news reached us that war had been declared; on the 3rd of September, we heard that Louis Napoleon¹³ had capitulated at Sedan. I happened to be informed of this astounding event by a ferryman, as I was crossing the float which divides Bristol from Bedminster.

When I was able to take thought again of literature, I turned to Dante, and worked my notes up into a series of lectures, which were afterwards published in book form as *An Introduction to the Study of Dante*. On the 18th of August I entered this sentence in my diary: 'I may be said to exist in the thought of Dante.'

Norman, Jowett, Arthur Sidgwick, Miss North, came to stay with us at 7 Victoria Square. I undertook the editing of Conington's *Miscellanies*, and made a new friend, Edward Clifford the painter.¹⁴ We passed some days at Sutton Court, where I wrote English poems for the cycle. Toward the end of September, I resumed my lectures on Greek literature to the Sixth Form at Clifton College. On the 1st of October my father was so far recovered as to be able to take a drive in his close carriage.

During the month of October many things happened. I wrote some vigorous poems about Roman lust, and conversed intimately with Frederick Myers. T.H. Green came to stay, and confided to me his feeling for my sister Charlotte. We proposed to consult my father, who raised no opposition, and Green declared himself a suitor for my sister's hand. In the desperate state of my father's health nothing was settled. It was also at this time that I entered into intimate relations with T.E. Brown of Clifton College.¹⁵ He and Graham and I used to spend evenings together, in the course of which Brown and I read out our poems. On one particular evening, both 'Betsy Lee'¹⁶ and 'Eudiades' were read to the accompaniment of much tobacco smoke and a little whiskey and water. There was also an interesting visit to Rugby, then fermenting with the assistant masters' rebellion against Hayman.

The winter saw me engaged in a new course of studies. I read through Sismondi and a great deal of Muratori, made voluminous notes, and began writing an Italian history. This was the foundation of the [work I have subsequently done in the field of Italian sculpture. I also lectured to ladies at Clifton and Exeter upon Dante. So my hands were fully employed. And I was far from strong in health.]¹⁷

On the 25th of February my dear father died.¹⁸ He had been sinking gradually for three or four weeks, and during a few days previously to the fatal termination of his illness, the change was rapid. About a week before his death, he told me that all his thoughts upon 'the great questions' (so he always spoke) were resolved in the one thought of God, as good, and of trust in Him. He was buried by the side of my mother in Arnos Vale Cemetery near Bristol on the 2nd of March:

The scene, as we mounted the hill and stayed under the plane tree by the ivy-covered grave was very lovely—such a blue kind sky and laughing earth, with spring flowers everywhere. The slopes of the down above were as dewy as some alpine upland meadow. In my mind I repeated—'And death once dead there's no more dying then.'¹⁹

I had promised my father, before he died, to make Clifton Hill House my home. But we resolved to postpone our settling there until the end of the summer. Charlotte was married to T.H. Green in June;²⁰ and in July Catherine and I went to Switzerland—Rigi Scheidegg, Eggishorn, Montreux, Chamonix, Thun, Mürren, Schynige Platte. I wrote a good deal of poetry: 'With Caligula in Rome', 'Le Jeune Homme caressant

sa Chimère', 'The Eiger and the Mönch', and the *terza rima* dithyramb called 'Love and Death'.²¹ On the 4th of September we arrived at Clifton Hill House, which was crowded in a somewhat ghastly way with the old things of my father and with our own furniture.²²

Clifton Hill House continued to be our home until the end of July 1877—almost exactly six years; and here our youngest daughter Katharine was born. My wife's good taste made the old home very beautiful and pleasant. She laid out the gardens new, and built glass-houses for store plants, flowers of all sorts, and vines. In course of time I purchased the next house and garden, Callander House, with a view to improving the property. We settled down in fact as though our lives were to be lived there till the end.

It seems unfilial, almost impious, to say so. Yet it is true that the independence I now acquired, added a decided stimulus to my mental growth. My father had been so revered and so implicitly obeyed by me, that his strong personal influence kept me in something like childish subjection. I did nothing without consulting him; and when I was unable to repress those parts of my nature with which he could not sympathize, I resorted to subterfuge, half-measures and concealments. Left without him, I had to act for myself, and insensibly I became more manly.

The events of the following years, insofar as they are not connected with my rapidly expanding literary energies, might be summed up in a series of foreign journeys and a succession of civic duties. I was elected to my father's place upon the Council of Clifton College. This involved me in a large amount of serious business. I helped to found the Bristol University.²³ I acted as ||²⁴ secretary to an Invalid Ladies' Home at Clifton, and sat on the Committee for promoting the Higher Education of Women. I connected myself with the Liberal politicians of the city, and was proud to count our member (and my neighbour), Mr Lewis Fry,²⁵ among my intimate friends. Of public business, and of social intercourse, I had enough and to spare during that period; and considering the rate at which I read and wrote, as is proved by my publications, I was burning the candle always at both ends.²⁶

My health frequently broke down; and it was only by tours abroad that I kept myself from a physical collapse. Thus, in the late summer of 1872, I took the journey to Switzerland and Venice with Norman, which has already been described. In the spring of 1873, I went with my wife to Sicily and Athens²⁷ and in the summer we spent some time together with Miss S.F. Alleyne in North Wales. On our return from the latter

trip, I fell into a fainting fit from the saddle of my horse, while riding at full gallop on the Durdham Downs.²⁸ I was brought home unconscious; and after recovery, my friend and physician, Dr Beddoe, advised me to roam again. It was the only way of keeping me from study. I engaged a Courmayeur man we knew as servant—Jean Tairray by name; and in his company voyaged from Southampton to Malta, visited Tunis and Sicily, and returned by Naples, Rome, Perugia, Florence and Cannes. My sister, Lady Strachey, had a villa then at Cannes, and my sister-in-law, Lady Kay-Shuttleworth,²⁹ had another at San Remo. So the Riviera was like a second home to us. It must not be thought that I was idle on these journeys. Being now engaged in the work of the *Renaissance*, I explored localities, read chronicles and histories, and wrote the sketches which have since been published. In 1874 Madge had a bad illness—a pleurisy, which brought her very low. My wife could not leave her. So I went alone to Switzerland with James Pearson.³⁰ There we met Miss Alleyne; and the impulse to make my wife one of the party was too strong to resist. I telegraphed for her. She joined us in the Rhône Valley, whence we crossed the Col Ferret together, and spent some glorious September weeks in the old Lombard towns. Next year, in the spring of 1875, she and I set forth again for Rome, Amalfi, Capri—lovely wanderings, of which a pale shadow remains in my sketches. And in the summer of the same year, I again betook myself to the Rhône Valley, Belalp, and Chamonix with the two Dakynses.³¹ Here I worked hard at the second volume of my *Renaissance in Italy*.

[Throughout this period, which I have been rapidly describing in its insignificant external aspects, my psychical troubles remained almost wholly in abeyance. I made no new romantic friendships, though I felt at times the inclination to begin again the bittersweet experience of love with one or other of the boys about the college.³² Work and my]³³ position of trust restrained me. On foreign journeys I occasionally felt drawn toward some attractive youth; but I did not indulge the passing fancy, only suffered from its pang. Once in the Parks I went with a young soldier, and touched the man immodestly. This yielding to abnormal impulse pained my conscience with a terrible sense of danger and impending ruin, which I expressed in the poem called ‘The Valley of Vain Desires’³⁴ and which translated itself unconsciously into mysticism while I was under the influence of anaesthetics.³⁵ I also used to draw from nude male models, satisfying my delight in the beauty of the masculine form. Yet, though I

was once upon the verge of yielding to the fascination of a ship's carpenter—and the man thoroughly understood my passion—I succeeded in controlling my appetite. Only with Noel and with Cobham, when they came to stay with me, I now and then gave way to lust—and always suffered from intense reactions.

Had it not been for the discomforts connected with my wife's last pregnancy and the birth of our daughter Katharine in November 1875, I believe that I might have overcome my malady. It played a subordinate³⁶ role in those years of strenuous intellectual labour, varied activity, and constant change. But the birth of that dear child, who has been to us in every other way a blessing of great price, caused such a disturbance in our matrimonial union that I was exposed at no short distance of time to new phases of temptation.

NOTES

1. Following 'favourable aspect', deletes 'to posterity' (MS 500).
2. Following 'concerning the', deletes 'interesting' (MS 500).
3. Deletes 'soul', substitutes 'individual self' (MS 501).
4. *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini* (1888) and *The Memoirs of Carlo Gozzi* (1890). In a letter to Henry Graham Dakyns in March 1889, he remarks upon their influence: 'My occupation with Cellini and Gozzi has infected me with their *Lues Autobiographica*; and I have begun scribbling my own reminiscences' (*Letters*, III, p. 364). I am grateful to Andrew Dakyns for sharing a copy of the original letter.
5. Following 'less apparent', deletes 'to my mind' (MS 501).
6. Following 'exclusively on', deletes 'what I regard as' (MS 502).
7. Material underlined in pencil with accompanying cross in the margin (MS 502).
8. Allusion to *Othello* (1604) by William Shakespeare: 'To suckle fools and chronicle small beer' (II. I. l. 169).
9. The Marianne North Gallery at Kew Gardens opened in 1882.
10. The Oberammergau Passion Play has been performed since 1634.
11. William Jenner (1815–98) conducted ground-breaking research into the distinction between typhoid and typhus. He served as Physician-Extraordinary to Queen Victoria, and in 1881 was elected President of the Royal College of Physicians.

Charles Bland Radcliffe (1822–89) was a physician and expert in epilepsy and other nervous disorders. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in 1858.

Frederick Symonds (1813–81) was Symonds's paternal uncle and a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. As a young man he followed in the footsteps of his elder brother (John Addington Symonds Snr) by serving as an apprentice at their father's surgical practice.

12. Also known as the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71).
13. Louis Napoleon, Napoleon III (1808–73), was President of the French Second Republic (1848–52) and Emperor of the Second French Empire (1852–70). He surrendered to Prussian forces at the Battle of Sedan in September 1870.
14. Edward Clifford (1844–1907), artist best known for his watercolours and portraits. His sister, Mary Clifford, was an early feminist campaigner.
15. Thomas Edward Brown (1830–97) was master at Clifton College between 1863 and 1892. His poetry was influenced by the lives, legends and landscapes of the Isle of Man, and his works include *Fo'c'sle Yarns* (1881), *The Doctor and Other Poems* (1887) and *The Manx Witch and other Poems* (1889).
16. Narrative poem by T.E. Brown. 'Betsy Lee' was first printed and circulated privately, then revised and published anonymously in *Macmillan's Magazine* (April and May 1873).
17. Passage marked for deletion (MS 506). Brown does not reproduce this material in his biography; his brief treatment of Symonds's father's death is taken from the paragraph that follows (cf. II, pp. 59–60).
18. Marginal note: 'Chap' (MS 506). Brown begins his chapter on 'Manhood—Embarked on Literature' (II, pp. 71–106) with the paragraph beginning 'I had promised my father' (MS 506).
19. From 'Sonnet 146' (1609) by William Shakespeare.
20. Symonds misremembers the date of his sister's wedding: Charlotte married T.H. Green on 1 July 1871.
21. These poems are included in the privately printed pamphlet, 'Studies in Terza Rima, Etc.' 'Le Jeune Homme caressant sa Chimère', 'The Eiger and the Mönch' and a section from 'Love and Death' were later published in *Many Moods: A Volume of Verse* (1878).

22. Marginal note: 'Add /T.S Sept 24' (MS 507). This appears to be in Brown's hand and the note may refer to supplementary letters consulted during the preparation of his biography. Several letters pertaining to Chapter 16 are now bound with the *Memoirs* manuscript, though no letter dated September 24th is included among them—see note 24. Brown does not interpolate material at this point in the biography, jumping from 'end of the summer' (MS 506) to 'It seems unfilial' (MS 507). See Brown, II, p. 71.
23. The University of Bristol was established as a University College in 1876. It received its royal charter in 1909.
24. Five letters are mounted and bound into the *Memoirs* manuscript at this point (between MS 507 and 508). See Appendices.
25. Lewis Fry (1832–1921) was M.P. for Bristol (1878–85) and Bristol North (1885–92, 1895–1900). He lived at Goldney House in Clifton, very near to Clifton Hill House.
26. Pencil caret accompanied by a marginal note: 'add' (MS 508). Brown interpolates material from Chapter 14 at this point in his biography, jumping from 'the candle at both ends' (MS 508) to 'It has always touched me' (MS 465–6). See Brown, II, p. 72.
27. Pencil caret accompanied by a marginal note: 'of which these are some notes' (MS 508). Brown employs this phrase in his biography: 'In the spring of 1873, Symonds went with his wife to Sicily and Athens, *of which these are some notes*' (II, p. 80—emphasis added).
28. Pencil caret (MS 508). Brown interpolates material from a letter to Symonds's sister, Charlotte, at this point in his biography. See Brown, II, p. 88 (cf. Appendices, Letters 18 and 19).
29. Lady Janet Kay-Shuttleworth (1817–72) was Catherine's half-sister, the daughter of her mother's first marriage to Robert Shuttleworth.
30. Partially legible marginal note: 'add /[?] March 10/74' (MS 509). This corresponds to an extract from a letter to Henry Sidgwick reproduced by Brown (II, pp. 96–7).
31. Henry Graham Dakyns married Margaret Elsie ('Maggie') Cay, née Pirie, in 1872. She was the widow of Dakyns's former colleague at Clifton College, Charles Hope Cay.
32. The phrase 'with one or other of the boys about the college' has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 509).

33. Passage marked for deletion (MS 509). Brown does not reproduce this material, jumping from ‘Here I worked hard at the second volume of my *Renaissance in Italy*’ to material taken from Chapter 17 (from ‘In the winter of 1875–6 my health, as usual, began to fail’, MS 511). See Brown, II, p. 101.
34. Published in *New and Old: A Volume of Verse* (1880).
35. Marginal note: ‘See privately printed *Miscellanies* p. 212—“A Psychical Problem”’ (MS 510). Symonds records his experience ‘under the influence of chloroform and laughing gas together’ in a letter to Henry Sidgwick in February 1873 (*Letters*, II, pp. 271–3). Brown reproduces this letter in his biography (II, pp. 77–80).
36. Deletes ‘quite insignificant’, substitutes ‘subordinate’ (MS 510).

Chapter 17: The Transition to Davos Platz, and Life There

I

In the winter of 1875–76 my health, as usual, began to fail. Dr Beddoe recommended me to go to the Riviera. My wife and I accordingly settled at San Remo in February. There I wrote a large part of the second volume of my *Renaissance in Italy*. It has also to be mentioned that I took a fancy there for a¹ curly-headed quarryman from the hills beyond Savona. This *amour* did not advance far beyond Platonic relations. The summer was spent in hard work upon the third volume of the *Renaissance*; and at the end of it I went with H.F. Brown and James Pearson to the Valais. Here I found that my physical vigour was considerably abated. I took severe colds which left me exhausted; and I remember suffering considerable fatigue after a walk with Brown from Saas over the flanks of the Fletschhorn to the Simplon Hospice. Work meanwhile advanced with a regularity and rapidity which told of feverish and diminishing nervous energy.

In February 1877, I think, I gave three lectures on ‘Florence and the Medici’ at the Royal Institution.² This took me of course to London; and, as it happened, an acquaintance of old standing asked me one day to go with him to a male brothel near the Regent’s Park Barracks. I consented out of curiosity. Moved by something stronger than curiosity, I made an assignation with a brawny young soldier for an afternoon to be passed in a private room at the same house. Naturally, I chose a day on

which I was not wanted at the Royal Institution. We came together at the time appointed; the strapping young soldier with his frank eyes and pleasant smile, and I, the victim of sophisticated passions. For the first time in my experience I shared a bed with one so different from myself, so ardently³ desired by me, so supremely beautiful in my eyes, so attractive to my senses. He was a very nice fellow, as it turned out: comradely and natural, regarding the affair which had brought us together in that place from a business-like and reasonable point of view. For him at all events it involved nothing unusual, nothing shameful; and his simple attitude, the not displeasing vanity with which he viewed his own physical attractions, and the genial sympathy with which he met the passion they aroused, taught me something I had never before conceived about illicit sexual relations.⁴ Instead of yielding to any brutal impulse, I thoroughly enjoyed the close vicinity of that splendid naked piece of manhood;⁵ then I made him clothe himself, sat and smoked and talked with him, and felt, at the end of the whole transaction, that some at least of the⁶ deepest moral problems might be solved by fraternity. He made no exorbitant demands upon my purse, and seemed to appreciate the way in which I had accepted him—adding an agreeable intimation of his own satisfaction at the delight I took in his delightfulness. And all this was expressed by him in a wholly manly way, although I could not help imagining what he might have undergone on previous occasions⁷ within the walls of that same chamber, and thinking how mean and base any⁸ comradeship must be, built upon such foundations. We parted the best of friends, exchanging addresses; and while I was in London, I met him several times again, in public places, without a thought of vice. This experience exercised a powerful effect upon my life. I learned from—or I deluded myself into thinking I had learned—that the physical appetite of one male for another may be made the foundation of a solid friendship, when the man drawn by passion exhibits a proper respect for the man who draws.⁹ I also seemed to perceive that, within the sphere of the male brothel, even in that lawless Godless place, permanent human relations—affections, reciprocal toleration, decencies of conduct, asking and yielding, concession and abstention—find their natural sphere:¹⁰ perhaps more than in the sexual relations consecrated by¹¹ middle-class matrimony. So at least the manly and comradely attitude of the young soldier, who had sold his body to a stranger, and with whom I as a stranger fraternized, indicated. Was this a delusion? To this hour I do

not know, though I have extended the same experience, with similar results, a hundredfold, never seeming to outrage¹² any purely natural sentiments,¹³ but only colliding with the sense of law and the instincts of convention. What I mean will be explained in a future chapter of these Memoirs. For the present it is enough to say that I came away from the male brothel with a strong conviction that, although it was a far more decent place than I expected, *this* was not the proper ground in which to plant the seeds of irresistible emotion. It offered an initial difficulty—a false position—which had to be overcome. It raised disgust, and I left it shaking the dust and degradation of the locality off my feet. {With just the same feeling of disgust, not more, not less, have I quitted female brothels. But there I never found the satisfaction which the soldier gave me. From him I learned} that natural male beings in the world at large were capable of corresponding to my appreciation of them. A dangerous lesson, perhaps.

Meanwhile I was giving my lectures on Florence to the Royal Institution. Very dull lectures they were; for my soul was not in them; my soul throbbed for the soldier; and I had composed the lectures specially for what I most abhor, an audience of cultivated people. This is a paradoxical¹⁴ confession. I am nothing if not cultivated; or, at least, the world only expects culture from me. But, in my heart of hearts, I do not believe in culture except as an adjunct to life. ‘Life is more than literature,’ I say. So I cannot, although I devote my time and energy to culture (even as a carpenter makes doors, or a carver carves edelweiss on walnut wood), regard it otherwise than in the light of pastime, decoration, service. Passion, nerve and sinew, eating and drinking, the stomach and the bowels, sex, action, even money-getting—the coarsest¹⁵ forms of activity—come, in my reckoning, before culture.¹⁶ The man, the man’s the thing.¹⁷ And the man in me tumultuously throbbed for the escapements from that droning lecture desk into a larger, keener, more dignified, more actual existence. Little did I care what the gentlemen in frock coats and the ladies in bonnets thought of my lectures. I did not care what they thought, because I knew that the real arena for myself and the rest of them was not in that theatre of disputations, elucidations, and plausible explications of all sorts of theories. It lay outside, inside, in a world of things which each carries about with him, and into which each penetrates when the voice of the lecturer is no more heard in the theatre.

The theatre of the Royal Institution—that dismal pit, in which a lecturer stands, under malign London light in February, with a cold draught pumped upon his shoulders—took its revenge upon me for the insolence I have declared and my indifference to culture. In short, I caught a bad cold in the lungs, while engaged in that husky task of lecturing to drowsy folk on topics which they neither understood nor cared to be instructed in.

This cold developed into a sharp attack of bronchitis, when I returned to Clifton. I had a long and tedious illness; my good friend and doctor, John Beddoe, pronounced that the left lung was now at last seriously and dangerously compromised. He sent me off to Greece: I was to go there in the company of F. Tuckett of the Alpine Club. But I only got as far as Cannes upon the way. A certain δαιμόνιον¹⁸—or instinct of abstinence—which attends all open-minded human beings, when they have a choice between the possible and the impossible in practical circumstances—told me that I was unfit to risk a journey into Greece, and that it would be inflicting a too serious responsibility upon my travelling friends if I should do so. In other words, I felt too weak to go to Greece; and, without exactly knowing why, I determined to await a coming crisis in regions which were better known to me. Dr Beddoe, if he should read this, may perhaps say that I chose wrongly, because I did not trust to the recuperative force of nature. But he was not in my skin at the time when I abandoned Greece and turned to Lombardy.

It is only the man himself who knows (and he knows very indistinctly) with what forces he has to measure himself. Dr Beddoe knew nothing of what had passed between me and the brawny young soldier in the male brothel near the Regent's Park.¹⁹ I knew something about this factor in my case. {And what I knew, taught me that I must wait and reckon with it.} I could not fly from it. I had to face it. The solution was not yet found for moral difficulties which had begun to present themselves in different ways from what I had imagined. What was Greece, its monuments, its mountains, its transparent air, for a man at strife with his own soul—indifferent to antiquity for the moment, hungering after reality, careless of nature, acutely sensitive to life? Greece, for such a man, was only a wide field of experience in the solution of the now commanding problem—the problem of correlating his dominant passion with the facts of existence. And the man, I, did not possess physical strength enough to try the issues in so bewildering a region as Greece offers to a scholar and a nature lover. The δαιμόνιον²⁰ told me to draw in my sails. What little strength I had left, must be reserved for the close battle with my passions; and my physi-

cal resources must be dedicated to the contest which could not longer be deferred.

So I pottered about Lombardy in the spring of 1877. I visited brothels and tried women. I fraternized with men, and entered into comradeship with pathics.²¹ I trailed the skirts of my physical and nervous unrest through those Italian cities, always alive to their monuments of art and history, always touching human nature at its crudest and coarsest points, and in no wise gaining satisfaction. The problem was not solved, but protracted; and what the soul gained or lost in this process of experience, was a levelling down until it touched the ground-pan of 'pauvre humanité'.²² The lesson taught me by the soldier in²³ London found its application here. And yet, so strong is custom, so imperious is education, I never condescended to a single act which the most virtuous could call reprehensible. I consorted with what are supposed to be the dregs of human nature; but I demanded nothing from these men and women but comradeship. What I discovered was that I could love and fraternize with the least and last and poorest, that I could call the meanest my friends, my brothers and sisters. But I had no gospel to preach to them. I only came to understand them and their integrity with myself.

On my way back from this spring-journey, while I ||²⁴ was diversifying these practical experiences with the study and translation of Campanella's sonnets, I fell ill at Turin. A night of acute physical disturbance and fever there warned me that I was upon the verge of a serious collapse. Summoning all my strength and courage, I travelled without stopping to Clifton. The day after I reached home, I was laid prostrate with a violent haemorrhage from the lungs. The storm in my petty region had broken out now. A great peace came over me, as I lay for weeks in bed, (fed through the mouth by my wife, who acted as a ministering angel), forgetful of the conflict, slowly and painfully recovering a dram of strength. It was a blissful interlude in my life of passion,²⁵ those weeks in which I lay resigned to death. But life returned; and though I was maimed and bruised, definitely convicted of acutal phthisis and of breaking-down of the lung tissue, I felt the call to live. When I got up at last from my sick-bed, I could hardly recognize myself as the same person.²⁶ The struggle for mere life had now absorbed and superseded the struggle for what I sought²⁷ in life. I seemed for the moment like a man new-born. I was a child in the hands of something divine, to which I responded with an infinite gratitude. So preoccupied was I with the difficulty of existing, that I did not then think what further existence would imply—the

recrudescence of my old pangs and pains and wounds, the resumption of the burden of my personality. I employed myself to the best of my ability in setting my worldly affairs in order (being conscious of impending death); and for the rest I exercised my literary faculty in such light work as I could do—translating the sonnets of Michelangelo Buonarroti and Tommaso Campanella, which I had begun before my illness. Never have I felt happier in the soul than during those weeks, when my life was hanging on a thread, and when the sensuous faculties remained in abeyance—the real man, the self which is immortal, being left open to only intellectual influences, and those pervading only a small portion of his total sensibility.²⁸

II²⁹

It was impossible to think of remaining in England; and the³⁰ doubt was whither we should wend our way—whether to the Canaries or Australia (for the sake of the sea journey) or to Egypt. I decided against the sea journey after short deliberation. I knew too much about its inconveniences from invalids who were better able to endure them than I was; and I remembered how poor young Goodall³¹ suffered during the storm in the Bay of Biscay, when I went out with him to Malta,³² and how he died immediately after reaching Alexandria. We determined at last upon a winter in a Dahabeeyah.³³ We were to take Janet and Madge and Isabella Gamble³⁴ with us, leaving Lotta and Katharine under the charge of their nurse with our relations at Clifton and Oxford. But before we made the move, I went up to London and consulted Sir William Jenner. He told me very gravely that I must not leave England without settling all my affairs, and that, in his opinion, a fresh cold would render my recovery impossible. He also recommended me to spend some weeks upon the way to Egypt in the high Alps, in order, if possible, to gain a little strength. I had every reason to trust in his judgement, for he knew the circumstances of my family, and had watched my sister Lady Strachey's case for years. She had been suffering from chronic disease of the lungs like me, but had already fallen into the condition of a regular invalid. On my asking if he thought my state at all as serious as hers, he replied: 'I have never seen Lady Strachey in anything like the same danger of a rapid and irretrievable breaking up of the lungs. You must not allow yourself to think that you can take the same liberties with yourself as I should permit her.' This answer surprised me, for I had always been accustomed to regard my poor

sister as less favoured than myself to a marked degree. It made me sober, and prepared me for beginning a manful battle with my treacherous foe.

My youngest sister, Mrs. T.H. Green, and her husband happened at this time to be staying at Davos Platz. They wrote a very favourable account of the place—it was the first time I heard of it—the doctors, appliances for illness, air, hotels and so forth. This induced me to prefer Davos to the Engadin, especially as I should have her company there.

Accordingly I arrived, more dead than alive after the fatigues of the hot journey, at Davos on the 7th of August, 1877. As the valley opened before me from the height of Wolfgang, veiled in melancholy cloud, toward the close of a weary day, I thought that I had rarely seen a less attractive place to live in. Everything looked so bleak and bare; and though I loved the Alps, I discerned little of their charm in Davos. What should I have thought, had I then been told that twelve years afterwards, on the anniversary of that day, I should be penning these lines in a house built for my habitation here? That I should have spent by far the larger part of those intervening years in ever-growing and abiding love for Davos, in strenuous literary work, and in the enjoyment of a society singularly congenial to my peculiar nature? On this 7th of August, 1889, while I am writing in the open air, under the shadow of my *wandelbahn* or ambulatory, I look back with a curious mixed sense of gratitude, surprise, and self-abasement over those twelve years past. Janet, our firstborn, who was then as beautiful as an angel, as wise as Hypatia,³⁵ as lithe as a young antelope, is dead. My sister Lady Strachey has been dead some years. My brother-in-law, T.H. Green, died long ago. So did Fanny Alleyne, who came to be with us in those first anxious weeks. And I, who least deserved perhaps to live, who had so little prospect then of living, am yet here. God forgive me and assist me; God grant I may not arrive at wishing that the day which brought me to this valley had been my last! I cannot, indeed, in any circumstances do *that*. Whatever happens, I shall remember that these years of my chequered, confused and morally perturbed existence have been³⁶ the best, the healthiest and the most active of the whole. [I may have to say with Job: ‘Quare de vulva me eduxisti?’³⁷ But I shall not say: ‘Quare me ad Davosias duxisti, Domine?’]³⁸

Dr Rüedi,³⁹ when he came to inspect me the morning after my arrival, pronounced it a grave case, and said that the left lung had begun to form a cavity a little way below the nipple. He gave me directions which I scrupulously followed. The first three weeks were spent in sitting all day long in the open air upon a gravel terrace in part of the Hotel Belvedere. Then

I was allowed to go into the wood. My manservant took me up in a little carriage, hung a hammock between two pine trees, carried and placed me in the hammock, and when the sun came near to setting fetched me again in the carriage.

Whenever I pass the place where they used to sling my hammock, a curious sense of reverence comes over me, a feeling of the mystery surrounding human life. Then I seemed so surely marked out for gradual declension that my thoughts assumed the grey and quiet tone of resignation. I lay watching the squirrels leap from pine to pine above my head, and the clouds sail through the quiet spaces of the sky—listening to my wife's reading of Boswell's *Johnson*⁴⁰—noticing the children play, turning now and then a couplet in my Michelangelo translation. I was not fit for work. Nature went healthily to sleep in me; and the first sign of convalescence was a slow dim sense of reawakening mental energy, very different from the feverish and fretful activity of the past years. This found its expression one day soon after noon—I remember the hour, the place, the aspect of the sky and valley well—when I felt impelled to write that series of my sonnets which are called 'Sonnets on the Thought of Death'.⁴¹

Fortunately we were favoured with a wonderfully fine autumn. About the beginning of September I was permitted to walk a little, and to take drives. Then I began to explore the beauties of Davos; climbing by slow degrees higher and higher up the Schatzalp, which I finally surmounted in November; driving with my wife into Sertigtal, Dischmatal and the Züge. I saw that Davos could be lived in, and felt myself so well here that I resolved to give up Egypt and complete my winter under Dr Rüedi's care. I wrote on the subject to Sir William Jenner, who replied that he must bid me pause and reflect before I determined 'to give my vile body to the Davos doctors.' Not intimidated by this, because I knew that I was thriving, and greatly dreaded change, I stuck to my plan, put aside our Nile outfit and sent to England for clothes and furs suited to an alpine winter.

[Meanwhile, with the gradual return of vitality, the sense of beauty returned; and I wrote some sonnets on the problem of man's irrepresible desire, which grazed the surface of my life's wound.⁴² The pain of that incurable wound slumbered,⁴³ however, and I fondly dreamed that it would never recrudescence.

I ought here to mention that it had become an article in my creed of social duty that men and women convicted of hereditary disease, phthisis or insanity, ought to refrain from procreation. Acting upon this principle I separated from my wife with her approval. She gave it readily; for

the sexual side of marriage had never been for her more than a trouble. She disliked childbirth, and had, I think, no constitutional difficulties to overcome. In truth our married life had long been ill-arranged upon the ordinary basis of cohabitation. We had taken precautions against pregnancy; and our intercourse in this respect was principally determined by the need I felt of sexual outlet. This outlet was now definitely closed; and with reviving energy,⁴⁴ the need became imperious. I suffered a period of painful and exhausting erethism, attended with profuse seminal losses. Still I stuck to my decision, mainly because I thought it my duty to do so, but also because I judged, and judged rightly, that this return of sexual appetite was the sign of returning vigour. Even now I do not repent of the line we took. It placed me upon a sound and true relation to my wife—that of pure and faithful friendship, which from the commencement had been the real basis of our union. It delivered us both from sordid cares and preoccupations, and left her, on the verge of middle life, in full possession of her physical faculties. Still it had serious drawbacks for a man of my temperament. I began to feel morally irresponsible toward the woman who had willingly sanctioned the solution of the sexual bond between us. This state of things has lasted now for twelve years, during which we have rarely shared the same bedroom, and never the same bed.

A slight incident, late in the autumn of 1877, occurred, which warned me that the slumbering wound was still unhealed. Sitting upon the terrace of the Belvedere Hotel one afternoon, a young man passed before my eyes, and stopped at no great distance to obey a natural call. He was, I think, a Tyrolese pedlar, dressed in short jacket and knee-breeches of brown velveteen: a handsome fellow with a bold bright gaze⁴⁵ and the loose free lounge of a born mountaineer. He had probably taken too much wine, and there was licence in his gait. Desire for the *Bursch*⁴⁶ shot through me with a sudden stab. I followed him with my eyes until he passed behind a hay-stall; and I thought—if only I could follow him, and catch him there, and pass this afternoon with him upon the sweet new hay! Then I turned to my Campanella's sonnets, and told myself that these things were for ever over.

Dr Rüedi ordered me to drink as much Valtelline wine as I could, without disturbing my digestion. I followed his advice, and found it suited me admirably. The wine, rather distasteful at first to an uneducated palate, acted like a powerful tonic, and in combination with the mountain air, regular exercise, simple habits and sound sleep, effected a cure.

III

All that winter, 1877–78, I remained of course very weak, suffering from frequent relapses, enduring long tiresome hours of inactivity, but still on the whole making slow progress. I attribute my gradual recovery in no small measure to the fact that I resolutely refused to give up study. Some hours of every day were devoted to literature; and thus I succeeded in printing and publishing two books (*Sonnets of Michael Angelo and Campanella* and *Many Moods*), together with several articles for the *Cornhill* and the *Academy*, before the spring.

A young man, called Christian Buol,⁴⁷ used occasionally to drive me out in sledges on the snow. He belonged to a very ancient noble family of Graubünden. The first Buol settled at Davos at the end of the thirteenth century. The pedigree records several lines of Counts and Barons of the Empire. One of them, a Graf von Buol-Schauenstein, was known in England as Austrian ambassador during the Crimean war, and finds a place in Browning's poems.⁴⁸ The armorial bearings of the Buols, 'party per pale azure and argent, a dame attired in medieval German costume, holding in her dexter hand a rose, counterchanged', will be found in churches and on old manorial houses all about the valleys which descend upon the Rhine. Here in Davos they have preserved the simplicity of patriarchal manners, though always conscious of their noble ancestry; and, what seems very strange to English folk, they are so identified now with the Swiss democracy that they do their own work in the woods and fields, keep an inn, and speculate commercially. Christian's eldest brother was the doctor at Thusis; another was the owner of a hotel; a third was studying medicine; two were in America; and there were several more. I think his mother had borne sixteen children to his father, the *Landammann*⁴⁹ of Davos.⁵⁰

Christian was the youngest of this family—just nineteen, when I first knew him; and one of the finest specimens of robust, handsome, intelligent and gentle adolescence I have ever met with. Possessed of enormous muscular strength, he had the quiet temperate manners, and the subdued speech, of a well-trained gentleman. I soon began to love him: shyly at first, struck with the wonder of discovering anyone so new to my experience, so dignified, so courteous, so comradely, realizing at one and the same time for me all that I had dreamed of the democratic ideal and all that I desired in radiant manhood. When he came towards me, standing erect upon an empty wood-sledge, and driving four stout horses at a brisk

trot down a snow slope, I seemed to see an ancient Greek of the Homeric age, perfect in *σωφροσύνη*⁵¹ and sober unassuming power. ‘That is a man,’ I felt within myself. And I also felt obscurely that my ruling passion had reached a new and better stage, devoid of sentimentality, devoid of sordid appetite, free from the sense of sin. It was indeed impossible to think of Christian Buol and of sin in the same moment. Of this twelve years of intimate friendship with him have amply assured me.

Anyhow, I made up my mind to bid for his friendship. On a dull cold day, between Christmas and the New Year, I saw him standing at the door of a cow-stable belonging to the Buols. This stable has now been removed, and the house of Christian’s brother, Dr Florian Buol, occupies the site. I had a new meerschaum pipe in my pocket—a pretty bauble in a morocco case, sent me from Paris. I went up to him, and asked him if he would accept this as a New Year’s gift from me. He took it with kindness, showing, I thought, just a touch of surprise. Nothing more passed. But he has afterwards told me that the surprise I noticed was due to the fact that no *cur-gast*, or winter invalid at Davos, had shown the same personal interest in him before. In fact he liked it, though, with the stately repose of a Bündner, he made no demonstration of his liking. I was left with the uncomfortable doubt, which is one of the pleasant pangs of incipient affection, whether I had not committed a *gaucherie*.⁵²

Nothing was said or done on either side, after this incident, to alter our relations. But little by little I perceived that they were growing closer, and that in his own calm way Christian appreciated the very slight advances I made toward him. Through the next three months we grew in intimacy and discussed a variety of topics in our drives. I asked him to dine in my private room at the Belvedere, and he invited me on his birthday (March 22) to a family party in the old house of the Buols. I well remember that room panelled with cembra planks—the first of so many Bündner rooms into which I afterwards gained entrance as a welcomed honoured guest—the grave faces of his brothers, and the grand bearing of his old mother, born Ursula Sprecher von Bernegg. It was like a scene out of one of Whitman’s poems, filling me with the acutest sense of a new and beautiful life, to partake in which I was invited by a friend. I only feared that I should not be fit to play my part among these people. They seemed to me essentially superior in some points of breeding and in general human dignity to what I had hitherto known in any of the numerous circles I had visited. Nor was this an illusion. After many illusions have been rubbed away by intercourse with the people of Graubünden, I retain my sense of

their noble, because absolutely natural, breeding. It springs, I think, from the self-respect of free men, for centuries unqualified by caste, who have always lived plainly, battled with a step-motherly nature, and submitted to the discipline of patriarchal authority and severe social criticism in small communities.

An accident informed me about this time that Christian's brother, the owner of Hotel Buol, was involved in serious financial difficulties. Like so many Swiss people of good means, he had engaged in a speculation for which he was not fitted by previous experience. In short, he was not born to be an inn-keeper, and to compete⁵³ with Dutch and German men of business. These persons, I heard, were buying up his debts, and meant to force him to a sale of property—by which he would have been declared bankrupt. It was a word dropped out of vulgar⁵⁴ elation by a German innkeeper, which informed me of the projected transaction. Concealing my indignation at the baseness of the scheme, I resolved to ascertain the facts of the case, and, if I judged the undertaking not too perilous, I proposed to supply the Buols with enough capital to help them out of their embarrassments.

Christian, when I asked him, told me plainly what he knew about the situation; and I saw that a round sum of £1000 would suffice to avert ruin from his brother's head. Accordingly, I said that I had cash to that amount at my disposal—it was, in fact, just what I had meant to spend upon my now finally abandoned Dahabeeyah. If his brother Caspar liked, we might do business. So I lent the money upon the best security which the Buols could give; and the only difficulties I met with in the transaction arose from my astonishment at the simplicity of Swiss law respecting mortgage, the absence of any lawyer in Davos who might have helped me, and the sensitive pride of the Buol family. I have had no cause to regret a step which was prompted by friendship for Christian and by indignation against commercial conspirators. Nor do I regret having advanced a further sum of £2000 to the family upon a subsequent occasion. They have dealt loyally with me on all points; and their property rising greatly in value owing to the prosperity of Davos, has given me the amplest security for my loan, a large part of which is now paid off.

This incident I record chiefly because it illustrates to what good results a love which most people regard as abominable and unnatural may lead. Love for Christian Buol, respectful but ardent, induced me thus to help his family at a shrewd pinch. Had it not been that I, an English stranger,

had been attracted by the splendid youth who drove me, the Buols would certainly be now in a very different position to that which they occupy—involved like the Brosis of Klosters and the Sprechers of Davos in inextricable financial difficulties. And here I must add that my wife, acquainted at every point with the details of the transaction, and not ignorant of my affection for Christian, gave her unhesitating assent to my plan for their salvation. Generous and noble wife, born of a noble stock, and gifted with the noblest natural sentiments!⁵⁵

IV

The friendship which sprang up between me and Christian Buol was cemented by this act of confidence on my part. I do not think we either of us attached great importance to it. My feeling for him rested on quite a different ground from that of money relations. And he was not the man to give anything whatever of himself in return for pecuniary considerations. He understood, however, that I had conceived a real and disinterested liking for his family; and he knew that I had given substantial proof of my attachment. We were thus brought into closer rapport than that of a mere casual intimacy.

When I proposed to take him with me on a journey into Italy, which I projected for the spring, he was delighted. He had not travelled further than to Chur, Tirano in the Valtelline, Vicosoprano in the Val Bregaglia. The prospect of visiting the Lake of Como, Milan, Venice, Genoa, and other places which he came to see in April and May, was attractive to the vigorous young fellow.⁵⁶

Before we started, I mentioned to a good counsellor of mine in Davos that I meant to take Christian Buol as my travelling servant on the journey. Actuated by what motives I know not, this person told me that I would be extremely unwise to do so. Christian, said my counsellor, had been twice fined for brawls upon the open street in Davos. He was a young man of Herculean build⁵⁷ (which I knew well), and might prove very dangerous if he should get into a quarrel in one of the Italian cities. This made me reflect; for I was going with my wife and three daughters and my cousin Isabella Gamble—a party of five ladies and their maid. I was a feeble invalid, slowly gaining ground after what threatened to be a mortal blow. Nevertheless, although I did not doubt the truth of the information given, I determined to take Christian. Love and instinct gained the day. I felt that I could trust in him. It was my business to watch the man,

and send him back if the noble animal proved rebellious. I thought I was capable at least of doing that.

We made a most delightful journey together; and in the course of it, he showed that he was ready, out of sympathy and liking for me, to concede many innocent delights of privacy, which cost him nothing and which filled me with ineffable satisfaction. In his company I seemed to realize what my nature had been blindly seeking for through many tedious years—a loyal comradeship, to which my friend's physical beauty added for me the charm of sensuous romance. We often slept together in the same bed; and he was not shy of allowing me to view, as men may view the idols of their gods, the naked splendour of his perfect body. But neither in act nor deed, far less in words, did the least shadow of lust cloud the serenity of that masculine⁵⁸ communion. He gave what honour and affection prompted him to concede. I took what passion and my reverence for the generous youth⁵⁹ allowed me to enjoy. I did not want more indeed than the blameless proximity of his pure person. Odd and unnatural as this may seem to those who cannot understand a man's love for a man, or to those who have made their minds up that such love must be brutal, I declare that this is the fact. Anyone who has enjoyed the privilege of Christian's acquaintance will know that he could not have yielded a base pleasure to me, and that I could not have dared to demand it. If the soldier whom I met in the London brothel taught me the rudiments of comradeship, Christian made me perceive its higher more delightful issues. I have never enjoyed a more sense-soothing and more elevated pleasure than I had with him—sex being nowhere—drowned and absorbed in love, which was itself so spiritually sensual that the needs of the body disappeared and were forgotten. {Words fail me when I try to describe a relation which had much of hazardous, but which the respective natures of the men concerned made natural and right. A spy might have looked through cracks in doors upon us; and the spy would have seen nothing reprehensible.} So we continued to respect each other; and when he told me that his heart was set upon a girl, whom he had learned to love in the school at Thusis, and whom he subsequently married, our relations remained unaltered. He accepted me for what I was; and I asked nothing except his proximity. It was enough for me to be with him.

Alas, while writing this, I must perforce lay the pen aside, and think how desolate are the conditions under which men constituted like me⁶⁰ live and love. {Into comradeship itself does not our abnormal nature introduce an element of instability, even as it distorts marriage? Something

remains amiss, unsatisfied, ill-correlated in each case.} The utmost we dare expect is tolerance, acceptance, concession to our inclinations, gratitude for our goodwill and benefits, respect for our courtesy and self-control. The best we obtain is friendship grounded on the intimate acquaintance with our character derived from long experience in extraordinary circumstances. Love for love we cannot get; and our better⁶¹ nature shrinks from the vision of what a love aroused in the beloved (corresponding to our love for him) would inevitably involve. We are therefore too often goaded into insane acts by the mere discord between our desires and their dearly beloved object—between our cruelly repelled senses and our sustained ideal—by the impossible cul-de-sac into which nature has driven our sexual instincts, and the rebellion of the aspiring spirit, finding itself in ‘a waste of shame’⁶² or in the desert of unfulfilled longings. I have veiled some aspects of this pitiable⁶³ situation in my sonnets on ‘Intellectual Isolation’ and ‘L’Amour de l’Impossible’.⁶⁴ But it would need the pen of the all-revealer, the truth-dictator, the Word,⁶⁵ to express the whole of this dire agony. I quit the present subject with some stanzas, in which I have described one perfect moment enjoyed by me upon that May Italian journey with my⁶⁶ friend Christian.

THE SLEEPER⁶⁷

Half-light of dawn in the hushed upper room,
 Where all night long two comrades, side by side
 Have slumbered in the summer-scented gloom,
 Fanned by faint breezes from a window wide.

He sleeps, and stirs not. He meanwhile awake,
 Steadfastly gazing and with mind intent
 To drink soul-deep of beauty, dares not break
 By breath or sigh his own heart’s ravishment.

Bare arms light folded on the broad bare chest;
 Dark curls crisp clustering round the athlete’s head;
 Shoulder and throat heroic; all is rest,
 Marble with loveliest hues of life o’erspread.

Life in the glowing cheeks, the hands sun-brown,
 The warm blood tingling to each finger-tip;
 Life in youth’s earliest bloom of tender down,
 Tawny on chin and strong short upper lip:

Life in the cool white, flushed with faintest rose,
 Of flank and heaving bosom, where each vein,
 Half seen, a thread of softest violet, flows,
 Like streaks that some full-throated lily stain.

Deep rest, and draught of slumber. Not one dream
 Ruffles the mirror of that sentient sea,
 Whereon the world and all its pride will gleam,
 When the soul starts from sleep, so royally.

Hush! 'Tis a bell of morning. Far and near,
 From sea-set tower and island chimes reply:
 Thrills the still air with sound divinely clear;
 And the stirred sleeper wakens with a sigh.

V

I was just a little curious upon this journey to see whether Christian would fulfil my sagacious counsellor's prognostications. His conduct was invariably quiet and self-possessed—if anything perhaps, I thought, a trifle too phlegmatic. At last one evening at Menaggio upon the Lake of Como, while we were strolling together after sunset by the water, I opened the matter, and told him not without amusement what I had heard about him at Davos. His rage and indignation were something magnificent to behold; and yet I was sorry then that I had spoken; for naturally I could not conceal my counsellor's name, and I perceived at once that this man would never be forgiven by Christian. As he pointed out, the calumny, coming from such a quarter, was meant to ruin him and probably to break off those cordial relations which were springing up between his family and me. He warmly expressed his gratitude for the confidence I had shown in taking him abroad and trusting my own impression of his character against the positive testimony of a man of great weight in Davos and of paramount importance with myself. I suggested that there might have been a mistake; and when I returned home, I referred the matter to my informant, who declared that he had been alluding to quite another person—a certain Lemm. As I had never heard of Lemm before, I could not have enquired about his character. So the explanation seemed to me a lame one. There I dropped it. But the suspicion of some lurking malevolence toward the Buols confirmed me in my resolve to help them. On the Monte Generoso in May I wrote an article on 'Davos in Winter', which appeared in the *Fortnightly*, and created a considerable sensation.⁶⁸ I left the Hotel Belvedere, and settled with my family in Hotel Buol, which through my

influence was immediately converted into a flourishing hotel for English people; and so it has continued for the last eleven years. The Buols, in fact, have to thank the *beaux yeux*⁶⁹ of Christian, and the affection he inspired in me, not only for salvation from financial ruin but also for prolonged prosperity. This I set down, not in self-praise, but as a testimony to that *erôs* whom the world misjudges and conceives incapable of good.

VI

Christian used always to travel with us in Italy until his duties on the farm at Davos kept him at home. And then I took his nephew Christian Palmy,⁷⁰ a young man of nearly the same age and almost equally attractive, though in a different way.⁷¹

By my friendship with these people I was introduced to Graubündeners of all kinds and sorts. Without dwelling further on the topic, I will only say that I now count scores of men among my intimate acquaintances—peasants of every description, postillions, drivers, carters, conductors of the *diligence*, carpenters, doctors, parsons, schoolmasters, porters in hotels, herdsmen on the alps, masons, hunters, woodmen, guides, hotel-keepers, shopkeepers, stable-boys, artisans. In my personal relations to them I have never met with one who shared my own abnormal tastes; but upon this point I have invariably received from them a frank compliant correspondence when I sought it. This has happened frequently;⁷² for I am unable to dissociate in certain cases my friendly feeling for a man from the plastic admiration of his beauty. I have driven with them across all the mountain roads in summer and winter, gone to their balls and village theatricals, smoked and drunk with them in taverns, invited them freely to my house, slept with them in their own cottages on lonely hillsides, joined their clubs, and shared their pastimes. {Entering thus into their lives, I have brought, as I confessed above, my passions with me; and often have I enjoyed the sweetest fruits of privacy, with no back-thoughts except such as must be always given to law and custom.} It would astonish an Englishman who knows nothing of the Swiss to hear that during the whole course of this careless and promiscuous intimacy, I have never heard low talk or witnessed a single unbecoming action on the part of my acquaintances. In heart and nature I found this people of Graubünden essentially pure and gentle. From those who had been sophisticated by residence in foreign cities I kept more aloof; for contact with the *bourgeoisie* does not improve the manners, though it may not contaminate the morals, of mountaineers. I cannot speak from wide

experience of the Swiss outside this canton; and some things lead me to suspect that the Graubündeners, owing to their peculiar history, have a higher average of manliness and manners than will be found at large in Switzerland. Be that as it may, I have enjoyed in this society privileges of which I had not dreamed before I settled at Davos. For a student and a man of letters what I learned from these sturdy children of nature has been invaluable. They have confirmed my belief in democracy, and proved to me that high thinking and loyal feeling can be combined with the plainest living. Nor are they in any true sense of the word uneducated or stupid. The general excellence of Swiss primary schools, the exercise of equal political rights, the discharge of public duties, the absence of class distinctions and caste privileges, the common service in the army, the habit of reading newspapers, the conversation of the tavern to which men of every quality and all professions go to exchange thoughts and hear news, the mixture in every family of peasants, merchants, magistrates, artisans and doctors of the liberal sciences (each member choosing his own line)—all these conditions of a life⁷³ exceedingly unlike our own in England raise the average intelligence and cultivation of the male population to a high level. I know one clergyman of great distinction whose son is in training for a butcher; a porter in a Chur hotel, one of whose uncles was bishop of Chur, while the other was a *diligence* conductor; a doctor of civil law, whose brothers are poor peasants and chamois hunters; a family, two of whose members are working carpenters, while the other two are partners in a firm at Palermo, clearing above £3000 a year. I might run on *ad infinitum*, extending the list of apparent social anomalies. But when one sees the system in working order, there is nothing to surprise. All seems natural. You go to consult the *Landammann*, or supreme magistrate of the *Landschaft*,⁷⁴ upon some knotty point of law or some difficulty regarding the introduction of a railway. His secretary in the *Rathaus*⁷⁵ informs you that he is carrying hay, and will be found at home for dinner at 11 a.m. Strolling across the meadows to his wooden house, you meet him helping to load his stalwart son with a heavy burden; and as you walk slowly to the humble roof, he gives a lucid explanation of the point at issue, displaying native shrewdness, fortified with an exact calculation of financial circumstances, complete knowledge of the legal aspects of the case, and a sagacious insight into the characters of the men who have to be considered. Maybe, if you are a friend, he invites you to share the midday meal. This consists of bread, dried meat, sausages and cheese, all of good quality, and is partaken of by the family and their farm servants sitting round one table in their

shirt-sleeves. After a while, I repeat, there is nothing surprising in this state of things. It comes to be recognized as beautifully, ideally natural—as what ought to be, and may possibly be universal at some future period of history. No doubt the absence of overwhelming wealth and the contentment with comparative poverty, which are marked features of Swiss society, help to facilitate this simplicity of life. And something is due to the fact that few families are destitute of landed property, while each man is a member of some commune, where he can vote on public business, exercise influence by speaking, and to which in the last resort he can appeal for maintenance—unless he have temporarily lost his rights by misconduct. Finally, it need not be remarked that, here as elsewhere, human nature has its seamy side, and that the mountaineers of whom I have been speaking are distinguished by some repellent qualities. They are close in money-matters, hard at driving bargains, phlegmatic, slow to move, prosaic in their aims and aspirations, unimaginative and indifferent to ideas. These characteristics, however, do not render them unprofitable companions for one who, like myself, possesses faults of quite the opposite description. In truth I have learned from them more than I can say. Their society has been to me a constant source of relief in my solitary life of literary industry. It would be an ideal condition of existence were I as free from dread of human law and custom as I am conscience-free before God and nature in the matter of my passions.

VII

Much of our time, during these years of Davos residence, have been spent in Italy; and I now occupy the entresol of my friend H.F. Brown upon the Zattere at Venice under a lease from him. These Italian journeys brought me acquainted with a certain number of Italian young men, some of whom I managed to treat in the same way as I treat my comrades in Graubünden.⁷⁶ That is to say, I have formed permanent friendships, into which an element of passionate desire has entered upon my side, while my comrade⁷⁷ gave freely and frankly what I asked for.⁷⁸ The relation thus established varies in each new case, being infinitely elastic and capable of subtle⁷⁹ modifications according to the disposition of the comrade. In order to base a friendship of this kind on solid foundations, it is needful that the seeker or the lover should conform to the instincts and respect the feelings of the sought and loved. Acting thus he may expect a moderate degree of satisfaction. I will give an instance.

NOTES

1. Following 'for a', deletes 'handsome' (MS 511).
2. These lectures were delivered at the Royal Institution on three consecutive Saturdays between 3 and 17 February 1877.
3. Deletes 'deliriously', substitutes 'ardently' (MS 512).
4. Deletes 'indulgence', substitutes 'relations' (MS 512).
5. Deletes 'humanity', substitutes 'manhood' (MS 512).
6. Deletes 'my', substitutes 'the' (MS 512).
7. Deletes 'help reflecting on what he had before exposed himself', substitutes 'help imagining what he might have undergone on previous occasions' (MS 512).
8. Symonds appears to struggle with this word; he tries 'a' and 'our' (both marked for deletion) before settling on 'any' (MS 512).
9. Following 'who draws', deletes 'and only demands some satisfaction of his sensual desire as a tribute to the beauty and carnal comeliness of his superior manhood' (MS 513). Before settling on this correction, Symonds tries 'physical' instead of 'manhood.'
10. Deletes 'place', substituting 'natural sphere' (MS 513).
11. Deletes 'brutal marriage bed of the consecrated', substituting 'sexual relations consecrated by' (MS 513).
12. Deletes 'clashing with', substitutes 'seeming to outrage' (MS 513). Before settling on this correction, Symonds tries 'violate' instead of 'outrage.'
13. Deletes 'human antagonisms', substitutes 'natural sentiments' (MS 513).
14. Deletes 'curious', substitutes 'paradoxical' (MS 514).
15. Deletes 'grossest', substitutes 'coarsest' (MS 514).
16. Symonds would repeat and extend some of these arguments in his essay, 'Culture: Its Meaning and Its Uses', published in the *New Review* (July 1892) and reprinted in *In The Key of Blue and Other Prose Essays* (1893).
17. Symonds adapts lines from *Hamlet* (c.1600) by William Shakespeare: 'the play's the thing' (II. 2. 1. 536).
18. Trans.: *daimonion*, divine power (distinct from the deity itself). Symonds may intend an allusion to Socrates' prophetic spirit, a kind of guardian that warns against improper action. Cf. Plato's *Apology* 40a.

19. The phrase ‘between me and the brawny soldier in the male brothel near Regent’s Park’ has been heavily scored through in pencil; this is smudged or erased to reveal the original (MS 516).
20. See note 18.
21. ‘A man or boy who is the passive partner in homosexual anal intercourse.’ (*OED*) This usage dates back to the seventeenth century.
22. Trans.: poor humanity.
23. Following ‘soldier in’, deletes ‘the male-brothel of’ (MS 517).
24. At this point two pages (MS 517a-b) are inserted in the manuscript that revise and censor the experiences recounted on MS 516–17. See Appendices.
25. Deletes ‘struggle’, substitutes ‘passion’ (MS 518).
26. Symonds tries ‘man’ and ‘personality’ (both marked for deletion), before settling on ‘person’ (MS 518).
27. Deletes ‘one feels’, substitutes ‘I sought’ (MS 518).
28. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 519 blank (17 cms of clear space).
29. Note in the header: ‘Chap’ (MS 520). Brown begins his chapter on ‘Manhood—From Clifton to Davos’ with this new section. See Brown, II, p. 137.
30. Following ‘and the’, deletes ‘only’ (MS 520).
31. Presumably a servant.
32. Marginal note: ‘In my winter journey, November 1873, alluded to above’ (MS 520).
33. ‘A large sailing-boat, used by travellers on the Nile.’ (*OED*)
34. Isabella Harriette Gamble (b. 1851) was Symonds’s cousin, the daughter of his mother’s sister, Isobel (‘Isabelle’) Gamble, née Sykes. She attended the College for Women in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, later Girton College, Cambridge, between 1870 and 1874. She married Robert Otter in 1883.
35. Hypatia (c.355–415) was a Greek mathematician and philosopher. Her works, now lost, are thought to include commentaries upon the works of Apollonius, Diophantus and her father, Theon. She was murdered by Christians during a religious feud in the city of Alexandria.
36. Following ‘have been’, deletes ‘among’ (MS 522).
37. Trans.: Why have you brought me out of the womb? Cf. Job 10. 18.
38. Trans.: Why have you brought me to Davos, Lord?
 Later addition written in a smaller script (MS 522).

39. Karl Rüedi (1848–1901), Swiss physician who grew in fame and prominence as Davos was recognised to be a health resort. He also treated Robert Louis Stevenson and is one of the dedicatees of *Underwoods* (1887).
40. *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1791) by James Boswell.
41. A sequence of twenty-two sonnets first published in *Many Moods: A Volume of Verse* (1880) and reprinted in *Animi Figura* (1882).
42. Following ‘life’s wound’, deletes ‘It did not wake into pain, however’ (MS 523).
43. Passage marked for deletion (MS 523). Brown does not reproduce this material, closing an extract from the *Memoirs* with ‘furs suited to an alpine winter’ (MS 523). See Brown, II, p. 141.
44. Deletes ‘returning strength’, substitutes ‘reviving energy’ (MS 524).
45. Deletes ‘eye’, substitutes ‘gaze’ (MS 525).
46. Trans.: fellow, chap.
47. Christian Buol (b. c.1858). Symonds records ‘[entering] into bonds of Comradeship with Christian Buol’ in a letter to Henry Graham Dakyns in February 1878 (*Letters*, II, p. 528). It is clear from the *Memoirs* that they had a sexual relationship.
48. Allusion to ‘Apparent Failure’ in *Dramatis Personae* (1864) by Robert Browning: ‘Thought of the Congress, Gortschakoff, | Cavour’s appeal and Buol’s replies’ (ll. 7–8). The narrator of this dramatic monologue muses upon the Congress of Paris (1856) before visiting a morgue and viewing the bodies of recent suicides.
Karl Ferdinand Graf von Buol-Schauenstein (1797–1865) represented Austria at the Congress.
49. Trans.: chief magistrate of the canton; literally, husband of the land.
50. Cf. Symonds’s account of the Buol family in his ‘Winter Nights at Davos’, published in the *Cornhill Magazine* (April 1881) and reprinted in *Italian Byways* (1883) and *Our Life in the Swiss Highlands* (1892).
51. Trans.: *sophrosyne*, moderation (commonly with regard to sensual desires); one of the four cardinal virtues.
52. Trans.: an awkward or improper action; faux pas.
53. Deletes ‘consort’, substitutes ‘compete’ (MS 530).
54. Deletes ‘in his commercial’, substitutes ‘out of vulgar’ (MS 530).

55. Following this paragraph, Symonds leaves the rest of MS 531 blank (6 cms of clear space).
56. Deletes 'enchanting to him', substitutes 'attractive to the vigorous young fellow' (MS 532).
57. Deletes 'strength', substitutes 'build' (MS 532).
58. Deletes 'divine', substitutes 'masculine' (MS 533).
59. Deletes 'noble friend', substitutes 'generous youth' (MS 533).
60. Following 'like me', deletes 'must' (MS 534).
61. Deletes 'nobler', substitutes 'better' (MS 534).
62. From 'Sonnet 129' (1609) by William Shakespeare.
63. Deletes 'tragic', substitutes 'pitiable' (MS 535).
64. 'Intellectual Isolation' is a sequence of seven sonnets published in *New and Old: A Volume of Verse* (1880) and reprinted in *Animi Figura* (1882). 'L'Amour de l'Impossible' is a sequence of fourteen sonnets published in *Animi Figura*.
65. Cf. John 1. 1.
66. Following 'with my', deletes 'dear' (MS 535)
67. The printed text of 'The Sleeper' is pasted into the manuscript. (MS 535). Above this material, written in pencil and much faded, is the poem's title; presumably, this was a note to remind Symonds to insert the poem. 'The Sleeper' forms part of the 'In Venice' cluster in the privately printed pamphlet, 'Rhaetica'. This cluster was later published in *New and Old: A Volume of Verse* (1880), but Symonds omitted 'The Sleeper'.
68. Published in July 1878 and reprinted in *Our Life in the Swiss Highlands* (1892). In a postscript appended to this essay in the latter publication, Symonds remarked that it had 'powerfully stimulated the formation of an English colony in Davos.'
69. Trans.: beautiful eyes.
70. Christian Palmy (dates unknown) became Symonds's favourite after Christian Buol had married. Palmy would later open a hotel in Wiesen, Austria.
71. Marginal note: 'Those who have read my *Italian Byways* will now see why the book is dedicated to the two Christians' (MS 537). Symonds's dedication reads: 'To Christian Buol and Christian Palmy, my friends and fellow travellers, I dedicate this book.'
72. Deletes 'now and then', substitutes 'frequently' (MS 537).
73. Deletes 'society', substitutes 'life' (MS 538).
74. Trans.: landscape or countryside.

75. Trans.: council house or town hall.
76. Deletes 'dealt with as I deal with the Graubünden peasants', substitutes 'managed to treat in the same way as I treat my comrades in Graubünden' (MS 540).
77. Deletes 'the man I sought', substitutes 'my comrade' (MS 541).
78. Deletes 'he chose to give out of himself', substitutes 'I asked for' (MS 541).
79. Deletes 'the most diversified', substitutes 'subtle' (MS 541).

Chapter 18: Angelo Fusato

In the spring of 1881 I was staying for a few days at Venice. I had rooms in the Casa Alberti on the Fondamenta Venier, San Vio, and it was late in the month of May.

One afternoon I chanced to be sitting with my friend Horatio Brown in a little back-yard to the wine shop of Fighetti¹ at Santa Maria Elisabetta on the Lido. Gondoliers patronize this place, because Fighetti, a muscular² benevolent giant, is a hero among them. He has won I do not know how many flags in their regattas. While we were drinking our wine Brown pointed out to me two men in white gondolier uniform, with the enormously broad black hat which was then fashionable. They were servants of a General de Horsey;³ and one of them was strikingly handsome. The following description of him,⁴ written a few days after our first meeting, represents with fidelity the impression he made on my imagination:⁵

He was tall and sinewy, but very slender—for these Venetian gondoliers are rarely massive in their strength. Each part of the man is equally developed by the exercise of rowing; and their bodies are elastically supple, with free sway from the hips and a Mercurial poise upon the ankle. Angelo⁶ showed these qualities almost in exaggeration. Moreover, he was rarely in repose, but moved with a singular brusque grace. —Black broad-brimmed hat thrown back upon his matted *zazzera*⁷ of dark hair. —Great fiery grey eyes, gazing intently, with compulsive effluence of electricity—the wild glance of a Triton.⁸ —Short blond moustache; dazzling teeth; skin

bronzed, but showing white and delicate through open front and sleeves of lilac shirt. —The dashing sparkle of this splendour, who looked to me as though the sea-waves and the sun had made him in some hour of secret and unquiet rapture, was somehow emphasized by a curious dint dividing his square chin—a cleft that harmonized with smile on lips and steady fire in eyes. —By the way, I do not know what effect it would have upon a reader to compare eyes to opals. Yet [Angelo's]⁹ eyes, as I met them, had the flame and vitreous intensity of opals, as though the quintessential colour of Venetian waters were vitalized in them and fed from inner founts of passion. —This marvellous being¹⁰ had a rough hoarse voice which, to develop the simile of a sea god, might have screamed in storm or whispered raucous messages from crests of tossing waves. He fixed and fascinated me.¹¹

Angelo Fusato at that date was hardly twenty-four years of age. He had just served his three years in the Genio,¹² and returned to Venice.

This love at first sight for Angelo Fusato (*ditto*¹³ Signoretti) was an affair not merely of desire and instinct but also of imagination. He took hold of me by a hundred subtle threads of feeling, in which the powerful and radiant manhood of the splendid¹⁴ animal was intertwined with sentiment for Venice, a keen delight in the landscape of the lagoons, [and something penetrative and pathetic in the man.]¹⁵

[How sharp this mixed fascination was at the moment when I first saw Angelo, and how durable it afterwards became through the moral struggles of our earlier intimacy, will be understood by anyone who reads the sonnets written about him in my published volumes.]¹⁶ These are 'A Portrait' and 'Angelo Ribello' (*Vagabunduli Libellus*, 1884, pp. 119, 120); together with the whole of the following series of sonnets: *Animi Figura*, 'L'Amour de l'Impossible', i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi. *Vagabunduli Libellus*, 'Stella Maris', i, ii, iii, xii, xiii, xvii, xviii, xix, xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii, xxiv, xxv, xxxv, xLi, xLiii, xLiv, xLv, xLvi, xLvii, xLviii, xLix, L, Li, Lii, Liii, Liv, Lv, Lvi, Lvii, Lviii, Lix, Lx, Lxi, Lxii. *Animi Figura*, 'Self-Condensation', i-vii, 'O Si! O Si!', 'Amends', i-iv. Taken in the order I have indicated, and detached from the artificial context framed to render publication possible,¹⁷ these sonnets faithfully describe the varying moods, perplexities and conflicts of my passion before it settled into a comparatively wholesome comradeship.

Eight years have elapsed since that first meeting at the Lido. A steady friendship has grown up between the two men brought by accident

together under conditions so unpromising. But before I speak of this—the happy product of a fine and manly nature on his side and of fidelity and constant effort on my own—I must revert to those May days in 1881.

The image of the marvellous being I had seen for those few minutes on the Lido burned itself into my brain and kept me waking all the next night. I did not even know his name; but I knew where his master lived. In the morning I rose from my bed unrefreshed, haunted by the vision which seemed to grow in definiteness and to coruscate with phosphorescent fire. A [trifle]¹⁸ which occurred that day made me feel that my fate could not be resisted, and also allowed me to suspect that the man himself was not unapproachable. Another night of storm and longing followed. I kept wrestling with the anguish of unutterable things, in the deep darkness of the valley of vain desire—soothing my smarting sense of the impossible with idle pictures of what it would be to share the life of this superb being in some lawful and simple fashion:

Φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν
ἔμμεν ὠνήρ, ὅστις ἐναντίος τοι
ἰζάνει...¹⁹

In these waking dreams I was at one time a woman whom he loved, at another a companion in his trade—always somebody and something utterly different from myself; and as each distracting fancy faded in the void of fact and desert of reality, I writhed in the clutches of Chimaera, thirsted before the tempting phantasmagoria of Maya.²⁰ My good sense rebelled, and told me that I was morally a fool and legally a criminal. But the love of the impossible rises victorious after each fall given it by sober sense. Man must be a demigod of volition, a very Hercules, to crush the life out of that Antaeus,²¹ lifting it aloft from the soil of instinct and of appetite which eternally creates it new in his primeval nature.

Next morning I went to seek out Angelo, learned his name, and made an appointment with him for that evening on the Zattere. We were to meet at nine by the church of the Gesuati. True to time he came, swinging along with military step, head erect and eager, broad chest thrown out, the tall strong form and pliant limbs in action like a creature of the young world's prime. All day I had been wondering how it was that a man of this sort could yield himself so lightly to the solicitation of a stranger.

And that is a puzzle which still remains unsolved. I had been told that he was called *il matto*, or the madcap, by his friends; and I gathered that he was both poor and extravagant. But this did not appear sufficient to explain his recklessness—the stooping to what seemed so vile an act. I am now inclined, however, to imagine that the key to the riddle lay in a few simple facts. He was careless by nature, poor by circumstance, determined to have money, indifferent to how he got it. Besides, I know from what he has since told me that the gondoliers of Venice are so accustomed to these demands that they think little of gratifying the caprice of ephemeral lovers—within certain limits, accurately fixed according to a conventional but rigid code of honour in such matters. There are certain things to which a self-respecting man will not condescend, and any attempt to overstep the line is met by firm resistance.

Well: I took him back to Casa Alberti; and what followed shall be told in the ensuing sonnet, which is strictly accurate:—for it was written with the first impression of the meeting strong upon me:²²

I am not dreaming. He was surely here,
 And sat beside me on this hard low bed;
 For²³ we had wine before us, and I said—
 ‘Take gold: ’twill furnish forth some better cheer.’
 He was all clothed in white; a gondolier;
 White trousers, white straw hat upon his head,
 A cream-white shirt loose-buttoned, a silk thread
 Slung with a charm about his throat so clear.
 Yes, he was here. Our four hands, laughing, made
 Brief havoc of his belt, shirt, trousers, shoes:
 Till, mother-naked, white as lilies, laid
 There on the counterpane, he bade me use
 Even as I willed his body. But Love forbade—
 Love cried, ‘Less than Love’s best thou shalt refuse!’

[With me it has always been the same experience. I will not take what I seem to myself to have bought.]²⁴

Next morning, feeling that I could not stand the strain of this attraction and repulsion—the intolerable desire and the repudiation of mere fleshly satisfaction—I left Venice for Monte Generoso. There, and afterwards at Davos through the summer, I thought and wrote incessantly about Angelo. The series of sonnets entitled ‘The Sea Calls’,²⁵ and a great many of those indicated above were produced at this time.²⁶

In the autumn I returned alone to Venice having resolved to establish this now firmly rooted passion upon some solid basis. I lived in the Casa Barbier. Angelo was still in the service of General de Horsey. But we often met at night in my rooms; and I gradually strove to persuade him that I was no mere light-o'-love, but a man on whom he could rely—whose honour, though rooted in dishonour, might be trusted. I gave him a gondola and a good deal of money. He seemed to be greedy, and I was mortified by noticing that he spent his cash in what I thought a foolish way—on dress and trinkets and so forth. He told me something about his history: how he had served three years in the Genio at Venice, Ferrara and Verona. Released from the army, he came home to find his mother dead in the madhouse at San Clemente, his elder brother Carlo dead of sorrow and a fever after three weeks' illness, his father prostrated with grief and ruined, and his only remaining brother Vittorio doing the work of a baker's boy. The more I got to know the man, the more I liked him. Yet there were almost insurmountable obstacles to be overcome. These arose mainly from the false position in which we found ourselves from the beginning. He not unnaturally classed me with those other men to whose caprices he had sold his beauty. He could not comprehend that I meant to be his friend, to serve and help him in all reasonable ways according to my power. Seeing me come and go on short flights, he felt convinced that one day or other my will would change and I should abandon him. A just instinct led him to calculate that our friendship, originating in my illicit appetite and his²⁷ compliance, could not be expected to develop a sound and vigorous growth. The time must come, he reasoned, when this sickly plant would die and be forgotten. And then there was always between us the liaison of shame; for it is not to be supposed that²⁸ I confined myself to sitting opposite the man and gazing into his fierce²⁹ eyes of fiery opal. At the back of his mind the predominant thought, I fancy, was to this effect: 'Had I not better get what I can out of the strange Englishman, who talks so much about his intentions and his friendship, but whose actual grasp upon my life is so uncertain?' I really do not think that he was wrong. But it made my task very difficult.

I discovered that he was living with a girl by whom he had two boys. They were too poor to marry. I told him that it was his duty to make her an honest woman, not being at that time fully aware how frequent and how binding such connections are in Venice. However, the pecuniary assistance I gave him enabled the couple to set up house; and little by little

I had the satisfaction of perceiving that he was not only gaining confidence in me but also beginning to love me [as an honest well-wisher.]³⁰

I need not describe in detail the several stages by which this liaison between myself and Angelo assumed its present form. At last he entered my service as gondolier at fixed wages, with a certain allowance of food and fuel. He took many journeys with me, and visited me at Davos. We grew to understand each other and to conceal nothing. Everything I learned about him made me forget the suspicions which had clouded the beginning of our acquaintance, and closed my eyes to the anomaly of a comradeship which retained so much of passion upon my part and of indulgence on his. I found him manly in the truest sense, with the manliness of a soldier and the warm soft heart of an exceptionally kindly nature—proud and sensitive, wayward as a child, ungrudging in his service, willing and good-tempered, though somewhat indolent at the same time and subject to explosions of passion. He is truthful and sincere, frank in telling me what he thinks wrong about my conduct, attentive to my wants, perfect in his manners and behaviour—due allowance made for his madcap temperament, hoarse voice and wild impulsive freedom.

I can now look back with satisfaction on this intimacy. Though it began in folly and crime, according to the constitution of society, it has benefited him and proved a source of comfort and instruction to myself. Had it not been for my abnormal desire, I could never have learned to know and appreciate a human being so far removed from me in position, education, national quality and physique. I long thought it hopeless to lift him into something like prosperity—really because it took both of us so long to gain confidence in the stability of our respective intentions and to understand each other's character. At last, by constant regard on my side to his interests, by loyalty and growing affection on his side for me, the end has been attained. His father and brother have profited; for the one now plies his trade in greater comfort, and the other has a situation in the P & O service³¹ which I got for him, and which enabled him to marry. And all this good, good for both Angelo and myself, has its tap-root in what at first was nothing better than a misdemeanour punishable by the law and revolting to the majority of human beings. The situation is so anomalous that I still shudder when I think of it, knowing how impossible it is to bring forth good things out of evil, and how little I have done to eradicate my inborn insanity. Angelo's own theory about liaisons of this sort is that they do not signify, if they are monogamous and carefully protected by

the prudence of both parties. Then they remain matters for the soul of each in sight of God—‘Our Lord above,’ as he says, pointing to the skies. On the other hand a man who goes from love to love—with Jack today and Tom tomorrow—sinks deep into the mire, loses respect, and ends in degradation. While discoursing on this topic, he instanced Marzials and Lord Ronald Gower.³²

My belief is that the Venetians³³ understand the link between Angelo and myself, but that they accept it after becoming convinced of its permanence and freedom from the vices of *volgiva* Venus.³⁴

They then say what has been put into monumental words by a man of the gondolier class: ‘Quando viene il desiderio, non è mai troppo.’³⁵

This account of Angelo shall be followed by another Venetian episode, belonging to a later period. ||³⁶

In my connections of this sort with men—and they have been very numerous—I can say with truth that I always aimed at comradeship, and never treated my companion as a mere instrument of lust or pleasure. This has given a healthy tone to my feelings about masculine love, and it has also introduced an element of serious responsibility into the matter. I do not deny that I have taken occasional liberties with strangers—soldiers on the streets, sailors, folk who offered themselves in foreign cities, professional male prostitutes, and casual acquaintances. But these adventures gave me little pleasure, and left me with a strong disgust, except in the case of some good fellow who took the moment in the sense I did. To pay a man to go to bed with me, to get an hour’s gratification out of him at such a price, and then never to see him again, was always abhorrent to my nature. I have tried the method, and have found that it yielded no satisfaction—less even than similar arrangements which I have made with women in brothels. The sexual relation between man and man seems to me less capable of being reduced to frank sensuality than the sexual relation between man and woman. An element of intimacy is demanded, out of which the sexual indulgence springs like a peculiar plant, which has its root in something real, which does no injury to either party, which leads to no result of fruitage in the flesh of either, and which therefore exists only as the sign on both sides of particular affection. When a young man whom I loved has become aware that I desired this pledge of comradeship, this satisfaction of my want,³⁷ he never refused it, never showed that he disliked it. But I have not sought it, except in the occasional instances mentioned above, unless I was aware that the man knew I meant to be his friend and stand

by him. At that point, he gave what I desired, as a token of friendliness. It cost him nothing, and he saw that I took pleasure in it. Without altering his own instincts and appetites for the female, it enlarged his experience, and was, in many cases I think, not without its pleasure for himself. At all events it bloomed up, like a spontaneous flower, from the conditions of our intercourse as comrades.

This kind of thing seems to me innocuous and quite outside the region of immorality. {I can also defend, on what appears to me sufficient grounds, a large amount of promiscuity.} In the very nature of the sexual contact between two males there inheres an element of instability. No children come of the connection. There can be no marriage ceremonies, no marriage settlements, no married life in common. Therefore, the parties are left free, and the sexual flower of comradeship may spring afresh for each of them wherever favourable soil is found. Viewed in this way, viewed as the final expression of mutual love and liking, I see no harm to society or character in sensual enjoyment between man and man. Something is asked on one side, conceded on the other, which leaves both as it found them, and which binds neither except as it is a pledge of their affection. Vice only comes into the matter when the man who seeks, allows himself to be the creature of mere lust; or when the man who gives, does so for the sake of gain. It is the same as with wine. There is no evil in moderate indulgence. The dedication of the higher self to lust or drunkenness, the immersion of the personality in either pursuit, is ruinous.³⁸

Of course the responsibilities connected with this passion, in the way I understand them, tax a man's resources. In many cases he must be prepared to support his friend with money or with influence. In all cases he must be ready to yield him yeoman's service in the battle of life. But this is what we are supposed to do for friends. The mere fact that sexual connection has taken place, does not alter the conditions. It certainly makes the friendship more personal, more intimate. Those therefore who invite this final flower to grow upon the soil of friendship, cannot neglect its corresponding consequences. They are linked to the man whom they have loved, who has suffered them to love, or has corresponded to their love, in a way which introduces strict relations. I have hitherto found that this duty, correlative to the pleasure of absolute intimacy, becomes a means of binding the two men together firmly—if both are honest, and the duty is honourably discharged. It does not break their love. On the contrary, their love is cemented by the introduction into it of daily life affairs.

An opponent might observe that all this comes to money in the long run. I do not know what does not come to money in the long run: women, horses, houses, do so. Besides, there is much, which is not money, whereby a friend can help a friend he loves.

Angelo is an episode, a very important episode, in the history of my life during the Davos period.³⁹ Like Ariosto's epic,⁴⁰ the poem of my existence has been made up of episodes, connected by slender threads with the main theme. This peculiarity in it is due to the abnormal nature of my desires, which never find the rest of perfect reciprocity.

I have nearly done the work of self-delineation. It remains to describe with a few brief touches what the tenor of our life has been here. We have lived as an united family, and I think my wife and children will combine in saying that I have played the part of husband and of father to them well. We have shared numerous pleasures of all sorts together, and have suffered one great sorrow in the long illness and death of my dear eldest daughter. My deepest cares and interests have always been for them; and it is only the thought of them that adds a pang to those passions on which I have dwelt so much, with a deliberate purpose, in this autobiography.

The leisure of the mountains has enabled me to do much work since I settled at Davos. In order that it should not appear that my intellectual activity has been diminished by other preoccupations, I will repeat, by way of catalogue, what I have published during the last twelve years:

History

Four volumes of the *Renaissance In Italy: Italian Literature, and the Catholic Reaction*.⁴¹

Poetry

Sonnets of Michael Angelo and Campanella.

Many Moods.

Poems and Translations (in preparation)⁴²

New and Old.

Animi Figura.

Descriptions of Travel

Sketches and Studies in Italy.

Italian Byways.

Our Life in the Swiss Highlands.

Biography

Shelley: 'English Men of Letters.'

Sidney: ditto.

Ben Jonson: 'English Worthies.'

Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti.

Criticism and Translation

Wine Women and Song.

Translation

Benvenuto Cellini.

Count Carlo Gozzi.

Articles for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

Machiavelli.

Petrarch.

Renaissance.

Tasso.

Italian History.

etc. etc.

English Literature

Shakespeare's Predecessors in the Elizabethan Drama.

Introductions

To the first volume of the Mermaid Series.

To Heywood, ditto.

To Tourneur and Webster, ditto.

To Ben Jonson, (Walter Scott.)

To *Religio Medici*, Camelot Classics.

To *The Decameron*, Inedited.

Criticism

Twenty Essays, Speculative and Suggestive.

Miscellaneous

This Autobiography.

A Problem in Modern Ethics.

Scattered Articles in the *Quarterly*, *Fortnightly*, *Cornhill*, *Macmillan*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Academy*, etc.

This, I submit, is a large amount of work to accomplish in fourteen years;⁴³ for I may fairly carry the whole to the account of this period, seeing that, although the larger part of *Many Moods* and *New and Old*, together with some of the descriptive pieces in *Sketches and Studies*, were produced before I came to Davos, I have in manuscript at least as much belonging to my time at Davos.

So then, working steadily at what I take to be an average of six hours *per diem*, walking on the hills, sharing the occupations of my wife and daughters, enjoying the society of my peasant friends with a keen relish, I have passed this period in greater health upon the whole and with more serenity of mind than fell to my lot in earlier youth and manhood.

And yet I carry within me the seeds of what I know to be an incurable malady—not merely the disease of the lungs, which is always ready to reappear—but that more deeply rooted perversion of the sexual instincts (uncontrollable, ineradicable, amounting to monomania) to expose which in its relation to my whole nature has been the principal object of these Memoirs.

It is a singular life history; and yet, for aught I know, it may be commoner than I imagine.⁴⁴ A town-bred boy, burdened with physical ailments, shy and sensitive, above the average in mental faculty, but ill-adapted to the ordinary course of English education. Emotion wakes in him; and just when the first faint stirrings of sex before the age of puberty are felt, he discerns the masterful attraction of the male. He feels it dimly and grotesquely at the commencement, then distinctly, overpoweringly, in dreams and waking fancies. It connects itself with the impressions he derives from art, from poetry, from nature. Remaining a timid, reserved, refined child, he goes to a great public school, is ailing there, incapable of joining his comrades in their games, inferior to the best of them in scholarship. His life passes like a turbid vision of the night. The vicious habits of the boys around him repel him with a keen repugnance. He is poisoned by discovering the secret of his head master. Plato's *paiderastic* dialogues bring a sudden revelation, and he devotes himself to the study of Greek love. All this while he forms himself surely, blindly, into a literary being with an absorbing passion for persons of his own sex. He falls in love shyly, purely, imaginatively, with a boy of little less than his own age. This leads to nothing but the torture of caressed emotion, the thrilling of some coarser chords which he resolutely masters. He goes to Oxford, begins to discover his mental force, dreams continually, carries off the usual academic prizes, but cares little for such success. At root he is love-laden, love-smitten, wounded. Suffering comes to him, through his own fault in part, but more through the malice of a treacherous friend. Determined to trample down his abnormal inclinations, he marries a woman for whom he feels the strongest admiration and the firmest friendship, but not the right quality of sexual passion. Soon afterwards he falls ill, and is pronounced consumptive. Incapable of following a profession, he spends years in seeking health, with his wife, with children growing up. At length, when he has reached the age of twenty-nine, he yields to the attraction of the male. And this is the strange point about the man, that now for the first time he attains to self-mastery and self-control. Contemporaneously with his first indulged passion, he begins to write books, and rapidly becomes an author

of distinction. The indecision of the previous years is replaced by a firm volition and a consciousness of power. He can deal more effectively with men and women, is better company, learns to write with greater force. He seems to draw strength from the congenital malady which has now come to the surface. Upon the verge of fifty, this man is younger and wholesomer than when he went to Harrow at thirteen. He is easier to live with than when he married at twenty-four. He has to some extent surmounted his consumptive tendencies. He has made himself a name in literature. Altogether he is more of a man than when he repressed and pent within his soul those fatal and abnormal inclinations. Yet he belongs to a class abhorred by society and is, by English law, a criminal. What is the meaning, the lesson, the conclusion to be drawn from this biography?

NB: I am writing these passages in my study. At the window sits a young peasant, reading the old *Landbuch* (Statutes) of Davos, by whose side I slept last night. Bewildering contradictions, tending to madness.

Few situations in life are more painful⁴⁵ than this: that a man, gifted with strong intellectual capacity, and exercised in all the sleights of criticism, should sit down soberly to contemplate his own besetting vice. In pleasant moments, when instinct prevails over reason, when the⁴⁶ broad way of sensual indulgence⁴⁷ invites his footing, the man plucks primroses of frank untutored⁴⁸ inclination. They have for him, then, only the fragrance of wayside flowers, blossoms upon the path of exquisite experience. But, when he comes to frigid reason's⁴⁹ self again, when he tallies last night's deeds with today's knowledge⁵⁰ of fact and moral ordinance, he awakes to the reality of a perpetual⁵¹ discord between spontaneous appetite and acquired respect for social⁵² law. By the light of his clear brain he condemns the natural⁵³ action of his appetite; and what in moments of self-abandonment to impulse appeared a beauteous angel, stands revealed before him as a devil abhorred by the society he clings to. The agony of this struggle between self-yielding to desire and love, and self-scourging by a trained discipline of analytic reflection, breaks his nerve.⁵⁴ The only exit for a soul thus plagued is suicide. Two factors, equally unconquerable, flesh and the reason, animal joy in living and mental perception that life is a duty, war in the wretched victim of their equipoise. While he obeys the flesh, he is conscious of no wrong-doing. When he awakes from the hypnotism of the flesh, he sees his own misdoing not in the glass of truth to his nature, but in the mirror of convention.⁵⁵ He would fain have less of sense or less of intellect. Why was he not born a savage or a normal citizen? The quarrel drives him into blowing his brains out, or into idiocy.

NOTES

1. *Soprannome*, or nickname, of Domenico De Gasperi, a gondolier who won three prizes at the Regata Storica between 1878 and 1881.
2. Deletes ‘handsome and’, substitutes ‘muscular’ (MS 541).
3. William Henry Beaumont de Horsey (1826–1915) was a veteran of the Crimean War (1853–56). He retired in 1883 with the rank of Lieutenant-General.
4. Giacomo (‘Angelo’) Fusato (c.1856–1923). In her family memoir, *Out of the Past* (1925), Madge describes Fusato as ‘the splendid gondolier who remained as the faithful friend and servant of my Father up till the day of his death in 1893.’
5. Symonds’s description of Fusato is cut from a handwritten document, presumably a diary or notebook, and pasted into the manuscript (MS 541^{r-v}).
6. Symonds originally spelt Fusato’s name ‘Anzolo’ (MS 541). Correction is contemporary with the compiling of the *Memoirs* manuscript.
7. Trans.: mop or mane of long hair.
8. In Greek mythology, Triton was the son of Poseidon, god of the sea, and Amphitrite, a Nereid. He is variously associated with rivers, lakes and the sea, and lends his name to a mythic race of merman-like sea creatures, the Tritons.
9. Repeats misspelling of Fusato’s name (MS 541^v)—see note 6.
10. Deletes ‘fascinating creature’, substitutes ‘marvellous being’ (MS 541^v). Correction is contemporary with the compiling of the *Memoirs* manuscript.
11. Symonds revised this description of Fusato and included it in ‘A Venetian Medley’, published in *Fraser’s Magazine* (September 1882) and reprinted in *Italian Byways* (1883).
12. The Genio were a division of army or navy engineers.
13. Deletes ‘*soprannominato*’, substitutes ‘*ditto*’ (MS 542). Signoretti was Fusato’s *soprannome*, or nickname.
14. Deletes ‘noble’, substitutes ‘splendid’ (MS 542).
15. Later addition in a smaller script (MS 542).
16. Passage is heavily revised. The original reads: ‘How durable and penetrative this mixed fascination of Angelo was from the first moment of my seeing him, and afterwards contemned through the

- moral strain of our earlier intimacy, will be understood by anyone who takes the trouble to read the sonnets written about him in my published volumes' (MS 542).
17. Marginal note: 'Many of these sonnets were mutilated in order to adapt them to the female sex' (MS 542).
 18. Word underlined in pencil accompanied by three question marks in the margin (MS 543).
 19. Trans: 'That man seems to me to be a peer of gods, | Whoever opposite you sits...' From Sappho 31 ('Phainetai Moi'). Symonds's translation of this poem appears in *Sappho: Memoir, Text, Selected Renderings and a Literal Translation* (1885), edited by Henry Thornton Wharton: 'Peer of gods he seemeth to me, the blissful | Man who sits and gazes at thee before him.'
 20. Marginal note: 'The key to all the phrases I have used above, "unutterable things", "valley of vain desire", "the impossible", "Chimaera", "Maya", will be found by those who read my poems. Each phrase has its specific significance' (MS 543).
 21. In Greek mythology, Antaeus was the son of Poseidon, god of the sea, and Mother Earth. He drew his strength from contact with the earth, and was an infamous wrestler who killed his competitors. Antaeus was defeated by Heracles during the twelve labours: Heracles broke his ribs and held him in the air, away from the earth, until he died.
 22. Marginal note: 'Sonnet' (MS 545); presumably, this was a note to remind Symonds to transcribe the poem.
 23. Deletes 'And', substitutes 'For' (MS 545).
 24. Later addition in a smaller script (MS 545).
 25. 'The Sea Calls' is a sequence of seven sonnets published in *Vagabunduli Libellus* (1884).
 26. Marginal note: 'See above the numbers given from *Animi Figura* and *Vagabunduli Libellus*' (MS 545).
 27. Following 'and his', deletes 'cynical' (MS 546).
 28. Following 'supposed that', deletes 'by this time' (MS 546).
 29. Deletes 'fine', substitutes 'fierce' (MS 546).
 30. Later addition in a smaller script (MS 547).
 31. The Peninsular Steam Navigation Company (later the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company) was established in 1837 with a contract to deliver mail. P & O began to offer passenger routes during the 1840s.

32. Theo Marzials (1850–1920), poet and composer. He stayed with Symonds in Venice during April and May 1889, and Symonds described him as ‘a sprite, always eloquent and always bizarre’ (*Letters*, III, p. 378).
 Ronald Gower (1845–1916), sculptor and writer. His works include the Shakespeare monument at Stratford-upon-Avon, historical accounts of Marie Antoinette and Joan of Arc, and two autobiographies: *My Reminiscences* (1883) and *Old Diaries* (1902).
33. Following ‘the Venetians’, deletes ‘thoroughly’ (MS 549).
34. Trans.: crowd-mingling Venus; promiscuous (literally, wandering love). From Lucretius’s *De Rerum Natura*, Book 4 (l. 1071).
35. Trans.: When you desire, it is not too much.
36. Here the manuscript jumps from MS 549 to 556. It seems likely that the promised ‘Venetian episode’ has been removed, lost or destroyed. See Notes on the Text and Introduction.
37. The phrase ‘this satisfaction of my want’ is scored through in pencil (MS 556).
38. Cf. Symonds’s ethical ‘formula’ inserted into Chapter 15 (MS 499a–i).
39. New section numbered ‘viii’ (MS 559). This numbering may be due to the missing pages (MS 550–5), or it could be evidence that Chapters 17 (comprising six numbered sections) and 18 were once combined.
40. Allusion to *Orlando Furioso* (1516–32) by Ludovico Ariosto.
41. Symonds’s studies of *Italian Literature* (1881) and *The Catholic Reaction* (1886) were each published in two parts, constituting the last four volumes of his *Renaissance in Italy* (1877–86).
42. In a letter to Horatio Brown in December 1891, Symonds records his intention ‘to publish a volume of Poems and Translations’ with Alfred Nutt, head of Trübner & Co. publishers. The following month he wrote to Nutt to confirm this plan, but the project was not completed before Symonds’s death. See *Letters*, III, pp. 635, 651–2.
43. Symonds’s ‘catalogue’ was intended to cover his writing between the years 1877–89, but he continued to update the list until 1891. It is, however, incomplete: *Vagabunduli Libellus* (1884) is omitted, and his contributions to collections, anthologies and periodicals are modestly under-estimated. See Babington’s *Bibliography* for a more detailed account of Symonds’s work during these years.

44. Note on the verso side of MS 561:

When I wrote the above, I had not yet read the autobiographies of *Urnings* printed in Casper-Liman's *Handbuch der Gerichtlichen Medicin*, in Ulrichs's "Numa Numantius" various tracts, notably in *Memnon*, and in Prof. Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*. I have recently done so, and am now aware that my history is only one out of a thousand. (MS 561^v)

45. Deletes 'terrible', substitutes 'painful' (MS 564).
46. Following 'when the', deletes 'smooth' (MS 564).
47. Following 'sensual indulgence', deletes 'and facile sympathy' (MS 564).
48. Deletes 'simple', substitutes 'frank untutored' (MS 564).
49. Deletes 'his natural', substitutes 'frigid reason's' (MS 564).
50. Deletes 'sense', substitutes 'knowledge' (MS 564).
51. Deletes 'dreadful', substitutes 'perpetual' (MS 564).
52. Deletes 'natural instinct and intellectual', substitutes 'spontaneous appetite and acquired respect for social' (MS 564).
53. Deletes 'spontaneous', substitutes 'natural' (MS 565).
54. Deletes 'processes of thought is unendurable', substitutes 'discipline of analytic reflection, breaks his nerve' (MS 565).
55. Deletes 'as in the glass of truth', substitutes 'not in the glass of truth to his nature, but in the mirror of convention' (MS 565).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Miscellaneous Papers Bound with the Memoirs Manuscript

I. Symonds's Case Study for *Sexual Inversion*

A handwritten copy of Symonds's case study for *Sexual Inversion* (first published in German as *Die Konträre Geschlechtsgefühl* in 1896) is bound into the manuscript. This version differs from the text published as 'Case VIII' (cf. Crozier, pp. 142–7), being far more reticent when dealing with Symonds's sexual practices. The material covers six pages of lined paper (MS 566–71).

A was the son of a physician. Father's family robust, vigorous, healthy and prolific. They had been Puritans since the middle of the sixteenth century. Mother's family tainted with both insanity and phthisis. A's maternal grandmother and one aunt died of phthisis. The two eldest children of A's parents were girls: one of these died of phthisis at the age of forty-two. Next came male twins, born dead. Next a boy, who died of hydrocephalic inflammation at the age of three to four. A was born in 1840, and had a sickly childhood, suffering from night terrors, somnambulism, excessive shyness, religious disquietude. The last of the family was a girl, who has grown up into a healthy and intellectually robust woman.

A has communicated these facts concerning the development of his sexual instincts:

1. In early childhood, and up to the age of thirteen he had frequent opportunities of closely inspecting the genital organs of both boys and girls, his playfellows. The smell of the female parts affected him disagreeably. The sight of the male organ did not arouse any particular sensation. He is, however, of opinion that, living with sisters, he felt more curious about his own sex as being more remote from him. He showed no effeminacy in his preference for games or work.
2. About the age of eight, if not before, he became subject to singular half-waking dreams. He fancied himself seated on the floor among several adult and naked sailors, whose genitals and buttocks he contemplated and handled with relish. He called himself the 'dirty pig' of these men, and felt that they were in some way his masters, ordering him to do uncleanly services to their bodies. He cannot remember ever having seen a naked man at that time; and nothing in his memory explains why the men of his dreams were supposed to be sailors.
3. At the same period, his attention was directed to his own penis. His nurse, out walking one day, said to him 'When little boys grow up, their p's fall off.' The nursery-maid sniggered. He felt that there must be something peculiar about the penis. He suffered from irritability of the prepuce; and the nurse powdered it before he went to sleep. There was no transition thence to onanism.
4. At the same period, he casually heard that a man used to come and expose his person before the window of a room where the maids sat. This troubled him vaguely.
5. Between the age of eight and eleven he twice took the penis of a cousin into his mouth in the morning, after they had slept together; the feeling of the penis pleased him.
6. When sleeping with another cousin, they used to lie with hands outstretched to cover each other's penes or *nates*.¹ A preferred the *nates*, but his cousin the penes. Neither cousin, just mentioned, was homosexual; and there was no attempt at mutual masturbation.
7. He was in the habit of playing with five male cousins. One of these boys was unpopular with the others, and they invented a method of punishing him for supposed offences. They sat round the room on chairs together, each with his penis exposed. The boy went round on his knees and took each penis into his mouth in turn. This was supposed to humiliate him. It did not lead to masturbation.
8. He accidentally observed a boy who sat next him in school, playing with his penis and caressing it. This gave him a powerful uneasy sensation.

With regard to all these points, A observes that none of the other boys with whom he was connected at that period, and who were exposed to precisely the same influences, became homosexual. He also remarks that most boys thrown together will have the fact of the penis brought frequently before their notice.

9. One of the very first events in his life which he can recall is the following. A male cousin of about twenty-two was reclining on an armchair, with legs spread out. A jumped upon his lap, and felt his hand fall upon a soft yielding thing in the young man's trousers. A perceived that his cousin shrank together with pain, and wondered what this meant.
10. A was mentally precocious. When he began to read books, he felt particularly attracted to certain male characters: the Adonis of Shakespeare's poems (he wished he had been Venus), Anzoleto in George Sand's *Consuelo*,² Hermes in Homer. He was very curious to know why the Emperors kept boys as well as girls in their seraglios, and what the male gods did with the youths they loved.
11. While at a public school, he never practised onanism with other boys, though they often tempted him, and he frequently saw the act in process. It inspired him with a disagreeable sense of indecency. Still in his fifteenth year, puberty commenced with nocturnal pollutions and occasional masturbation. His thoughts were not directed to males while masturbating, nor to females. A spoke to his father about these signs of puberty; and on his father's recommendation, he entirely abandoned onanism.³
12. The nocturnal pollutions became very frequent and exhausting. They were medically treated by tonics—quinine and strychnine. A thinks this treatment exasperated his neurosis. All this while, no kind of sexual feeling for girls made itself felt. With the exception of a comradely liking for his younger sister and her Swiss governess, he was perfectly indifferent to them. He could not understand what his schoolfellows found in women, or the stories they told about wantonness and the delights of coitus.
13. His old dreams about the sailors disappeared. But now he enjoyed visions of beautiful young men and exquisite Greek statues. Occasionally he saw in sleep the erect organs of powerful grooms or peasants. The gross visions offended his taste and hurt him; he took a strange poetic pleasure in the ideal forms. But the seminal losses which attended both kinds, were a perpetual source of misery to him. There is no doubt that at this time, i.e. between the fifteenth and seventeenth years, a homosexual diathesis⁴ had become established in A.
14. It was in his eighteenth year that an event which A regards as decisive in his development occurred. He read the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* of Plato. A new world opened, and he felt that his own nature had

been revealed. Next year he formed a passionate but pure friendship with a boy of fifteen. Personal contact with the boy caused erections, extreme agitation, and aching pleasure: not ejaculation however. Through four years of intimacy, A never saw him naked, or touched him pruriently. Only twice he kissed him. A says that those two kisses were the most perfect joys he ever felt.

15. A's father became seriously anxious both about his health and reputation. He warned him of the social and legal dangers attending his temperament. Yet he did not encourage A to try coitus with women. A's own sense of danger⁵ would, he thinks, have made this method successful: at least, the bait of intercourse with females would have lessened his neurosis and diverted his mind to some extent from homosexual thoughts.
16. Now opened a period of great pain and anxiety for A. It is true that at the University he made very brilliant studies, and won for himself a distinguished reputation. As poet and prose writer he was already known in his twenty-second year. Still his neurasthenia increased. He suffered from insomnia, obscure cerebral discomfort, stammering, chronic conjunctivitis, inability to concentrate attention, and dejection. It must be added that, when he was twenty-five, a chronic disease of the lungs declared itself, which forced him to winter out of England.
17. Meanwhile A's homosexual emotions strengthened and assumed a more sensual aspect. Yet he abstained from indulging them, as also from onanism. Fear of infection prevented him from seeking relief in ordinary coitus. Having no passion for women, it was easy to avoid them. And yet they inspired him with no exact horror. He used to dream of finding an exit from his painful situation by cohabitation with some coarse, boyish girl of the people. But his dread of syphilis stood in the way.
18. A now felt that he must conquer himself by efforts of will and by persistent direction of his thoughts to heterosexual images. He sought the society of distinguished women. Once he coaxed up a romantic affection for a Bernese maiden. But this came to nothing, probably because the girl felt a want of absolute passion in A's wooing.
19. He was now strongly advised to marry by his father and other physicians. He did so when he was exactly twenty-four years and one month old. Then he found that he was potent. But to his disappointment he also found that he only cohabited with his wife *faute de mieux*.⁶ He still dreamed of men, desired them, even began to desire soldiers. He begat in all four children, females. His wife, the member of a noble family, disliked sexual connection and hated pregnancy. This was a great misfortune for A. His wife's temperament led to long intervals of separation *a toro*.⁷ During those months, this physical, mental and moral discomfort was acute. At last, unable to bear it any longer, he indulged his passion with a young man of nineteen.

This took place when he was 30 years of age. Soon afterwards he wholly abandoned matrimonial connections. He did this with the full approval of his wife, to whom the step brought relief. The reason assigned was that his pulmonary disease made slow but sure advances, rendering the further procreation of children morally wrong.

20. When A had once begun to indulge his inborn homosexual instincts, he rapidly recovered his health. The neurotic disturbances subsided; the phthisis—which had progressed as far as profuse haemorrhage and formation of cavity—was arrested. By the age of fifty, that is during the next twenty years, he made himself one of the leaders of English literature.
21. A has not informed me what form of homosexual intercourse he practises. He is certainly not simply passive and shows no sign of *effeminatio*.⁸ He likes sound and vigorous young men of a lower rank from the age of twenty to twenty-five. I gather from his conversation that the mode of pleasure is indifferent to his tastes.
22. A believes firmly that his homosexual appetite was inborn and developed in exactly the same way and by the same exciting causes as the heterosexual appetite in normal persons. He is persuaded that, having in boyhood frequented the society of boys and girls alike, he leaned toward the suggestions of the male because there was in him a congenital bias of sex in that direction. He has no moral sense of doing wrong, and is quite certain that he suffers or benefits in health of mind and body according as he abstains from or indulges in moderate homosexual pleasure. He feels the intolerable injustice of his social position, and considers the criminal codes of modern nations, in so far as they touch his case, to be iniquitous. As an artist and man of letters he regrets the fate which has forced him to conceal his true emotions, and thereby to lose the most genial channels of self-expression.

2. Letter of Instruction to Horatio Brown

Typed instructions concerning the fate of the *Memoirs* are bound into the manuscript, with Symonds petitioning Brown to ‘save it from destruction.’ The document is an extract from a letter, details of which have been added to the header in Brown’s hand. The material covers two pages taped together to form a booklet and mounted for the purposes of binding (MS 572–3).

H.F.B. Davos

RE. *autobiography*

Dec. 29. 91

it {the autobiography}⁹ was so passionately, unconventionally set on paper. Yet I think it a very singular book—perhaps unique, nay certainly unique,

in the disclosure of a type of man who has not yet been classified. I am anxious therefore that this document should not perish. It is doubtful when or whether anyone who has shown so much to the world on ordinary ways as I have done, will be found to speak so frankly about his inner self. [I want to save it from destruction after my death, and yet to reserve its publication for a period when it will not be injurious to my family.]¹⁰ [I do not just now know how to meet the difficulty. And when you come here, I should like to discuss it. You will inherit my MSS if you survive me. But you take them freely, to deal with them as you like, under my will. I have sketched my wish out that this autobiography should¹¹ not be destroyed. Still, I see the necessity for caution in its publication. Give the matter a thought. If I could do so, I should like to except it (as a thing apart, together)¹² with other documents) from my general literary bequest; so as to make no friend, or person, responsible for the matter, to which I attach a particular value apart from life's relations.

We have Fred and Dora North from Rougham here (very English), and Warren's brother (the architect) expected tomorrow.¹³ There were a lot of people to dinner tonight, including a Mr Coke (W Leicester)¹⁴ whom perhaps you saw here last year—a very odd man—also a nephew of John Morley¹⁵—also a young doctor from British Guiana. Such an odd lot. They talked about insanity and genius, hereditary proclivities, and sexual inversion until I got quite nervous. Not to much purpose the talk. The difficulty was how not to cut into the pomegranate and reveal the truth. Fortunately I refrained from taking that extreme step. —Soon you will be back with A.S. and G.F. God bless you.

J.A.S.

Thanks for your words of heartening comfort. I¹⁶

3. Symonds's 'History of the Rutson Affair'

A handwritten account of Symonds's friendship with Albert Rutson is bound into the manuscript. Relations were strained following Symonds's marriage, and in Chapter 9 of the *Memoirs* he promises to 'introduce a succinct account of this extremely disagreeable episode, which was written when all the facts were fresh in my memory, and an open rupture between Rutson and ourselves had happened.' The material covers six pages of purple paper, taped together to form a booklet (MS 574–9).

This is the history of the Rutson affair.

I was abroad with him in the autumn of 1863. He then at Leipzig told me he was desirous of marrying my sister Charlotte. Again at Rome soon after Christmas in that year on the eve of his leaving for England

he repeated this desire with energy, so as to make me think that he really wished to marry her but that he prudently sought some further acquaintance with her. He talked much about the solidity which this step would add to *our* friendship.

Just before I met Rutson in Germany in 1863 I made acquaintance with the Norths in Switzerland, at Mürren. There I made up my mind that Catherine was the only woman whom I should ever care to marry; and I wrote to my sister to tell her that she had narrowly escaped having a sister-in-law brought home: I have this letter.

After Rutson left Rome in January 1864 he met Catherine with the Ewarts and went twice to the play with her and met her once at dinner at Mrs Brassey's. I returned from Italy in April 1864 and in May went to live in the same house with Rutson in London. I then told him that if he was still anxious of seeing more of Charlotte with a view to marriage, I should have to tell my father, which I did. Rutson did not much like this at first; but he only objected to it because it seemed to make his views too definite.

Both my father and I felt, and told him, that we would rather have him than any other man for my sister's husband. But my father called in question the health of Rutson's family. He has two mad uncles; his mother is strange; his elder brother is so deficient in intellect as to have made his father unwilling to have him for his heir; two of his cousins¹⁷ are odd. On deliberation my father decided that it would not be prudent for the marriage to take place. Rutson then insisted and showed the utmost eagerness to have it prosecuted. My father being anxious to strain a point in favour of a man for whom he had so great a regard, then said that we might take the opinion of the chief doctors in London. We did so and went to several, stating the case. They all took my father's view. Rutson with great reluctance and much sense of the hardness of my father, was thus obliged to relinquish his plan.

This took place in May. I became very ill about that period. In the midst of my illness I told Rutson that I had seen Catherine North in Switzerland and thought that I should like to marry her. He said that he had met her and thought her very nice; but not the least suspicion crossed my mind that he cared for her. I asked whether his cousin Mary Ewart would give me an introduction to them; for, though the Norths had asked me to come and see them in London, I hardly liked to act upon this general invitation. He said Mary would certainly be glad to do so.

I went to dinner at the Norths'; and called after it one Sunday afternoon, when I found Catherine alone and looked at her drawings and had a long talk with her. That same evening I met Rutson and walked in Richmond Park with him, and told him how much I was getting to like Catherine. Something in his look or manner seemed to me odd; and I turned round and said 'Why, you do not care for her, do you? Because we had better understand ourselves.' He at once said No, no! He had hardly seen her; he

did not care for her. And I remember thinking it had been half ungenerous and indelicate of me to have this momentary suspicion, seeing that he had professed himself so fond of my sister and had been seeking to be accepted as her suitor by my father. I explained to myself the sudden thought by the natural suspiciousness of a lover.

Rutson showed the greatest interest in my courtship; and I am absolutely certain that whatever he may then have said, he never said anything which reached my intelligence at all implying that he loved Catherine. Had it been so; had he put anything like a sacrifice before me; I was in a humour then to do anything rather than *accept* his sacrifice. I should have told him clearly that a man ought not to make, far less to accept, such sacrifices; but that two friends ought to run fair in such a race. Yet there was no appearance of his making a sacrifice. He had hardly seen Catherine. I had seen her first and had¹⁸ prosecuted her acquaintance while he remained quite idle about her; and while he was professing a love for my sister which induced him to go about to all these doctors and to press my father to accept him as a suitor.

I went abroad and soon was engaged to Catherine. Rutson wrote me constant kind letters full of the most warm affection. I supposed all this while that he was expressing his love and care for me, and I felt very grateful.

Until one day at Poschiavo after our engagement, on August 26th, a combination of circumstances—my own gloomy temper, Mr North's warnings, Catherine's irritability, and a dread of the fixed state of marriage—made me satirical and vicious. His rose coloured letters flowed in, and I wrote him a bitter jaundiced one which ought never to have gone. For this letter, which he kept and sent to my father, I gave him afterwards the fullest apology I could. I owed him an apology for the terms in which I spoke of his friendship for me—but for nothing else. If he disliked any other parts of the letter, they still did not wrong *him*, however much they might have been unworthy of *me*.

We came home and often saw Rutson. But in the spring of 1865 he began to tell me he was very ill, to hint at uneasiness about me and my state of mind; and at last said that I had accepted a sacrifice from him before my marriage, that he had relinquished Catherine to me, and that I was in some way ungrateful. The thing appeared to me absolutely monstrous—mad—most disgusting. I told him: i) I had never known of any sacrifice, ii) that such a sacrifice, if made, ought never to have been mentioned, iii) that he could not have made such a sacrifice, since he hardly knew Catherine and had no right to her as he was professing an attachment to my sister. He answered in these extraordinary words: 'My love for your sister was a calculation, for Catherine an inspiration.' I did not know how to treat him; but I suspected his sanity. He still leaned on me very much and he was dreadfully ill.

About this time he asked me to go to his father and tell him he wanted money to marry upon or go into the house. I did not know his family; but

I offered to go at once to Newby Wiske and see him. Rutson then said his mother could not have visitors in the house—I must write to his sister. I said I would rather speak than write. He urged me to write, and I said I would do so as he wished it. I wrote to his sister and told her how ill I thought he was, how much he needed distraction and the like. I sent the letter. He rushed off, unknown to me, to his home; found his sister before she got the letter, asked her for it, received it sealed, and then, instead of destroying it at once, *read* it and returned in a fury abusing me for my ‘damnable dishonourable’ letter.

I pacified him. I began to think him quite deluded. His cousin Mary Ewart wrote to tell me she believed his notion about Catherine a pure hallucination—that she had seen him much in the summer of 1863 and had noticed none of it. He continued to lean on me and I did all I could to help him. We used to talk for five or six hours a day about the past, about his wretchedness, etc. He used to beg me and Catherine to help him to find a wife. But at the same time he would now and then get into violent states of anger and pain and make me over and over again express my sorrow for the two offensive letters: I always retracted the whole of the Poschiavo letter and expressed my *sorrow* that the letter to his sister had been written; but I could not say that I had been guilty of anything but want of tact in the manner of writing it, while I told him that the way in which he had got possession of it and the use he had made of it was (at least) most unjustifiable.

About this time, I think it was, Rutson wished to correspond with Catherine and to enter into a ‘sisterly’ relation with her. He used this phrase, and again mentioned the *sacrifice* he supposed himself to have made as giving him some right to lean on her. I knew what a source of pain and anxiety he had been to me. And for this reason, and because he wounded my taste, and because I thought that such an intimacy would be bad for us all three and be (after his declarations) compromising to me, I would not allow it. I then told Catherine the *whole*. She was very much disgusted and of her own accord repudiated the notion of any special intimacy being allowed.

In the autumn of 1865 he went abroad. After his return the old distressing scenes recommenced. We constantly met and raked up the whole matter but to no effect. I could not and would not lie that I had accepted a sacrifice.

Next he appealed to my father who went into the whole matter and could not find me wrong in it, but believed Rutson to be deluded.

Rutson broke with him upon this.

I was much abroad in the spring of 1866. When I came back the same sort of correspondences continued, but I have forgotten their coherence. I only remember of this period that I made several declarations of my willingness to believe in his statement that he had *intended* to express to me his regard for Catherine in 1864 and that it was owing to my own stupidity that it had not reached my intelligence: but I could not say I had ever guessed it till he told me of it in the spring of 1865.

In that autumn he abused my father to me so that I nearly broke with him. We, however, came to terms. His rancour against my father was such that when *his* father died and mine wrote to condole he never noticed the letter.

The correspondence dropped now; but it began again in the spring and summer of 1867, when Catherine and I saw him for the last time in July (I think) and told him, both of us, *for the first time severely* how selfish and absurd we thought his conduct had been. Catherine attributed much of my illness (both head and lungs) to my over-attention to his wearying communications.

In this statement I have hitherto confined myself, as far as possible, to a narrative of events. I have a few things to say now about my own feeling.

Rutson sought my friendship; I did not seek his. He regarded me with admiration, and credited me with a nobleness of character of which he had but small means of judging. He tried to do whatever I did, to like my likings, etc. So much so that Green once said, 'Rutson likes you too much—it is all nonsense his taking to these aesthetics—he does no good with them and they only spoil him.' He helped me very much in a disagreeable affair I had at Magdalen, and I have always been most grateful to him for this.

This attachment to me was always foremost in his speech and in my thought; so that when he seemed anxious to marry my sister, it had the appearance of an extension from me to her of lively regard. And when he talked about his love for Catherine after my marriage I regarded this as another transference of his affection for me to an object which I had set my heart on. It was *thus* that I explained his hallucination; and Mary Ewart arrived at the same explanation by her own observation. It was this affection that made him seek to find his wife through me *after* my marriage.

In the early stages of this matter I suffered appallingly from his suffering. It seemed like a hideous dream—this story of a sacrifice, this burden of a life devoted to me, thrust upon me. The tragedy cast a horrible light on my own marriage. It required all my force to remind myself that he was deluded, that there had been no such crime. At times I almost felt, under the smart of his accusations and despairs, as if I wished I had gone to the dogs instead of being married.

My respect for his character made me attribute much weight to what were mere ravings. I scrutinized my own feelings. I tested my own memory. I probed my conscience to see if there were any self-deception on my part. But I always found the same report—that I had entered simply, honourably and straightforwardly into my marriage—that I had accepted no sacrifice and incurred no debt of gratitude to Rutson except such a debt as comes from great love and great exertion to help me when I was in trouble at college. This debt I tried to pay by giving him my time and attention and care,

by exposing my health in every way for his sake, by restraining my temper, by forgetting his insulting words spoken in anger, by bearing with him in short as I should have borne with no one else.

I have written all this trusting to my memory and with the full persuasion that the whole of it is substantially correct. I have in no place or way altered, hidden or slurred over anything.

Hastings

Nov: 1868—

J.A. Symonds—

4. Letter from Norman Moor

A letter from Norman Moor is bound into the manuscript. It is a direct response to a question posed by Symonds, now lost, but inferred to concern homosexuality in public schools and the influence of classical literature. Symonds includes material from this letter in Chapter 13. The letter covers three pages, written upon front and back: a single sheet and two sheets folded in half. The single sheet is taped to a folded sheet to form a booklet, and the material is mounted for the purposes of binding (MS 580-4^v).

6 Northcote Road
Clifton
Nov 26/86

My dear Johnnie,

Your question is not I think a very easy one to answer—chiefly because people do not talk about their experiences in this line much. I think one may say without fear or contradiction that a very large proportion of the ‘unnatural vice’ which they say is so prevalent in public schools has nothing whatever to do with the reading of the classics—and I should doubt much whether ever any one at school was first put upon the track of it by his classical studies—for 1) boys have been initiated into the mysteries of παιδεραστία¹⁹ unofficially long before their reading of the classics has any effect on their conduct, some purely, some impurely—‘spooning’ to use a schoolboy term comes so naturally to a large number of boys, and the ‘spooning’²⁰ may be quite harmless, innocent of any desire tending to ὕβρις,²¹ or of course may be quite animal and find its only satisfaction in ὕβρις, in one form or another—I should much doubt whether Lytton²² is right in thinking that *all* ‘dual vice’ comes from ‘solitary vice’ but I should

think it probable that the brutally hybristic form of ‘spooning’ has its root in ‘solitary vice’—but I am quite sure that if you had a large boarding school compound of young Jesus Christs even, ‘spooning’ would not be unknown. E.g., T.E. Brown has told me that he had a passion for a boy-friend, and this was absolutely pure, and it seems inconceivable that T.E.B. was ever guilty of the ‘solitary vice’ or that his juices were ever in anything but a thoroughly hearty and healthy condition. 2) The classics that the boys read at school are not as a rule those that contain allusions to παιδεραστιά.²³ They read the *Iliad* of course but it does not I think occur to them that there was anything between Achilles and Patroclus,²⁴ nor I think do they attach much meaning to the friendships of Orestes and Pylades, Theseus and Pirithous and Co.²⁵ Theocritus they read, but the *Idylls* they read are not the paiderastic ones, and the edition they are provided with is probably expurgated—They never read as school subjects at all events the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*—and I much doubt whether they read them as πάρεργα²⁶—a very very few only do so, if any. I *can* tell you of a single instance that has come within my own experience of a boy who got a twist that way—He went up from us as a scholar to Balliol, and before he had been long at Oxford he declared himself a paederast, and went so far as to publish or at all events write and get printed an Ἀπολογία περι Παιδεραστιάς²⁷—which contained a defence of the habit, i.e. of the ideal παιδεραστιά,²⁸ the purely spiritual ἔρωσ.²⁹ I do not think that he for a moment contemplated any such co-habitation as the Greeks permitted themselves under certain conditions—it was all up in the clouds as the love of the beautiful. This youth was sent down from Balliol, and sent a voyage round the world, much as one sends an invalid round the world to get rid of a disease. This boy was ‘hurt’.

My own idea, founded more or less on experience, is that it is not the scholars as a rule who take to spooning and sometimes debauching beautiful choirboys, etc., but far more fleshly people. Those who have really studied Greek literature are so far from being injured in any way, rather kept straight and narrow on the ideal lines—they appreciate the ugliness of παιδεραστιά.³⁰

The end of all this is that I do not believe the evils Lyttleton combats are in any way due to a study of the classics. The study of the classics may give a sanction to some few for παιδεραστιά,³¹ but does not put them upon vices—the love of boys for boys is I believe inevitable in our public schools to which we point as our national glory—and not only is it inevitable, but I would go so far as to say it is desirable if it can be kept in an absolutely pure region—The beastly form of it is I am afraid also almost inevitable—the best safeguards against it are a well-filled routine of work and play—hard play, tiring and exciting. I don’t believe you’ll touch the thing by religion—neither do I think you’ll do much by telling boys at a certain age all about the reproductive organs, etc. You’ll rouse curiosity in more than you will allay it in—I dare say if you could get them thoroughly well frightened as to the

effects on their bodily health, you might do much that way—a thorough knowledge of the laws of health would be very advantageous, but I don't see how you are to get it. The pedagogue as we know him is not very well qualified to give it.

I don't know whether I have given you anything in answer to your question—I have been obliged to write in great haste and at odd moments. My own case in this matter was not perhaps an isolated one. Corrupted at a very early age by a Harrow eleven-boy who came over to Ashborne to play in a cricket match, and invited to his house by him where I stayed two or three days, nights were more to the point, and by him introduced to a sense of what one was made of, for years I never could throw off a perfect lust for being spooned. I regarded every big boy as a possible admirer—and when I got a bit older myself, I regarded every small boy as a possible spoon. A most pandemic state. The combined influence of Percival and yourself did something to cure me of this—but here you see is another case where the paiderastic instinct (if it can be so far dignified as to be called paiderastic) was not in any way caused by the reading of Greek literature, but was rather chastened and directed by a literary education. I dare say I have told you all this before, but it seems to me a case which Lyttleton might be glad to get hold of, if he could, —but God forbid he ever should—and then mangle many other poor little boys who are got hold of in this way by some great lustful beast, fat, soft and sleeky. He was a very good cricketer.

I am very sorry you have had this social nuisance—and very sorry for poor Janet—I hope you are both or rather all set free from the nuisance by this time—I've no doubt you made it fairly hot for the young person.

I must write no more now—Goodbye—of course all this is very private. I should like one of the pamphlets, unless you dislike letting one out of your hands. What an enterprising compositor! Will he proclaim you for it?³²

Yours affectionately
Norman Moor

5. Transcribed Note from Roden Noel

The final document bound into the manuscript is something of an enigma: a small piece of paper written upon front and back in Symonds's hand, transcribing praise received from Roden Noel on account of '*Your poems.*' The note is mounted for the purposes of binding (MS 585^{r-v}). Noel's words are dated November 1869: as such, they predate the publication of Symonds's poetry volumes and must refer to privately circulated verses (presumably the 'John Mordan' cycle). The note does not relate directly to anything discussed in the *Memoirs*.

From R. Noel.

Nov:/69

Your poems. My impression now remains what it was then. Rich graphic luxurious picturing power—movement—life—passion—intensity—you carry one away with facile strength—and there is no jar all along the journey.

Tr of

Hesiod

Pindar

Asch

Soph

Eur

Appendix 2

Letters Bound with Chapter 16

Five letters from Symonds to his sisters, Charlotte and Edith, are mounted and bound into the *Memoirs* manuscript. They are numbered in pencil: 1, 5, 6, 18 and 19. The events they describe are contemporary with those recounted in Chapter 16. There is ample evidence to associate these letters with Horatio Brown's editorial practice: pencil lines, crosses, carets and annotations throughout Chapter 16 reveal his selection of material for the biography, and his chapter on 'Manhood—Embarked on Literature' contains material from four of these letters (cf. II, pp. 81–9). There is no surviving evidence, no marginalia, to associate them with Symonds's practice of compiling and arranging supplementary materials (such as Sophie Girard's letter in Chapter 1, or Catherine's diary in Chapter 9). Whether through accident or design, these letters found their way into the cardboard box bequeathed to the London Library in 1926. In 1955 they were bound together with the *Memoirs*.

Letter 1

Clifton Jan 11 1873

My dearest Charlotte,

I was so pleased to hear from you the other day and to know that you and Tom are now quiet and happy after the troubled time which must have

brought back to you many memories. I am glad Tom is finishing his second preface. What H. Sidgwick wrote to me about must have been the first.

We are here busy about Percival's candidature at Rugby. It gives me a good deal of tiresome small work—and I am made use of to compose people's testimonials or tinker up their English when made. Do not imagine that I correct at will after they have signed! I only mean that bodies of men like Council and the assistant masters want a literary assessor and seek me. Some have greatness thrust upon them!³³

I fancy he will hardly fail to be elected, and I am perplexed to know whom we shall get. The Council ought if possible to take his nominee. At least I feel inclined beforehand to go in myself for that line.

I had a long and very interesting letter from Andrew Bradley today.³⁴ Jowett who was here last week told me his first was brilliant, and he seems now himself to be very happy. I hope he will take soon to literature of some sort. It appears to have done him good being ill before the Schools.³⁵ I fancy the jaundice is a *κάθαρσις τῶν παθημάτων*³⁶ to bilious people.

My book is now at last in the printer's hands; but I cannot find a title. I wanted to call it 'A Student's Sketchbook; Italy and Greece'. But Smith³⁷ will not have that. He votes for 'Sketches in Italy and Greece'. Can you think of anything for me? I shall put into it the paper on Tuscan songs.³⁸ By the way, I wish you would send me the numbers of any specially good ones I have not translated. What I did at Pwllheli was done very much at random out upon the sand-dunes: and I might put in a few new ones perhaps. My last journey also has produced an essay on Etna and one on Perugia.³⁹ As I write, I feel almost certain I have said all this to you before, a few days ago. If I have, pray be kind and excuse. I have had to write scores of letters, and my head gets confused about them.

It is so difficult to take up the thread of my Italian work after that long break. Fortunately I have the whole of the first volume firmly mapped out in my head. But to set the mass in motion requires a struggle.

We have Pop and the two Oxford girls here and have been having some small parties. I like being at home again. The great nuisance is the want of sun and the damp. Otherwise it is warmer here than in Italy, and the heat of the houses seems to me at times suffocating. I am sure it is better to visit Italy in the autumn before one has got tender by the use of English fires. It is that which makes springtime in the south seems so cruelly cold.

How grand the *Academy* looks. Tom must feel happy about his £100 embarked in it. I think the last number was rather too full, if anything, of matter.

If you like it, please keep the proof of the translations. Should I want it, I will ask you for it; but I should like you to have it. I did not pick up any books of that sort in Italy. I chiefly laid in stores of historical books. Varchi and Segni⁴⁰ (*Florentine Histories*) are both well worth reading. So are the

chronicles of Perugia in the *Archivio Storico*.⁴¹ Have you got that in the Taylor? It is a fine collection.

Love to Tom.
Most affectionate,
J.a.s.

Letter 5

Palermo April 6/73

My dearest Charlotte,

We have been in Palermo two nights now after a very pleasant voyage in bright calm weather from Genoa. We find the state of the island far worse than anything we had been led to expect. The Consul⁴² whom I have seen today, says that it is monthly increasing in insecurity. When I told him we had come to see Sicily, he replied 'You have chosen a most unfortunate time—you could not have come at a worse.' He will not sanction our going to Segesta or crossing the island in any direction. It is even dangerous to drive out five miles from Palermo. The road between this and Monreale has to be guarded with *bersaglieri*,⁴³ and just above Monreale is an old castle which the brigands haunt. I can see it clearly from my window. But why do not the soldiers surround and attack it? That is the question. The answer is that the government is afraid. The whole people here hate it so that they favour brigandage and rejoice in anarchy because it is a stumbling block and cause of offence to the government. The South hates the North. Yet poets like Swinburne and Bradley rave about *Italia Unita!* The only way of uniting Italy would be to put the whole South under martial law and at the same time to make railways and encourage commerce in every way. For the Italians are very keen in their perception of material advantages.

Here are a few facts which have recently happened. Two men were shot last week on Monte Pellegrino (two miles off); another was shot in a boat in the harbour among all the ships—and the murderer coolly rowed to land, no one seeking to stop him and everyone present obstinately refusing to give any evidence. Again Lord Lovelace⁴⁴ was going a few weeks back to visit San Martius—a convent six miles off. Of course he took a guard of dragoons. Their captain pointed out a place in the road and said: 'I found three dead bodies of peasants shot by the brigands there yesterday.' Mr Dennis, the Consul, will not hear of our visiting Segesta or crossing the island. He said 'If you go, you take your lives into your own hands—no one can answer for you.' We may go by sea to Girgenti⁴⁵ and there get a guard of soldiers to attend us while we inspect the ruins. About Girgenti he told me a curious story. He wanted a little while ago to take a villa there, and had fixed on a very nice one, and had nearly agreed to pay for it: when his curiosity was roused by some old narrow

niches in the drawing-room walls. He asked what they were, and whether, as they looked ugly and awkward, they could not be walled up. The owner replied: 'Wall them up! Why, what could be more convenient? When you are attacked at night, you take your gun and stand in a niche, and as the brigands come in with a light, you shoot them.' Mr Dennis did not take the villa.—

You should hear the *table d'hôte* talk.⁴⁶ It is brigands and nothing but brigands. I am sick of it. Yet with those three dear babes at home I cannot disregard what I hear. I fear we shall come back without having seen much of what we wanted. I think we shall make a dash at Girgenti and then go to Syracuse, Catania, and Taormina: after that cross from Messina to Naples and so go home, stopping at places in Southern France if we feel inclined. But the 'Brigands on the Brain' from which all we hear forces us to suffer is a serious drawback to the pleasure of travelling.—

We found your note enclosing Mr Bertie's here. Thank you for it very much. It is such a pleasure to think that the dear babes will be with you and that you will really like to have them. I am sure from what you say that you will.

Goodbye, dearest. Best love to Tom. Your most loving,
J.a.s.

Palermo is a very beautiful place. I think it is worth coming to see, and if one were not cooped in to the walls by these bugbear brigands it would be charming. Catherine says she feels like a squirrel in a cage shut up inside Palermo with all the beautiful brigand-haunted hills outside.

Letter 6

Off Trapani 7.15 a.m.
Sunday April 13/73

[You may be enough interested in our dismal lot to hear that we sit pretty well fed twice a day, if the swell and smell leave any appetite, also the black coffee is not detestable.]⁴⁷

My dearest Edith,

I daresay you have never heard of Trapani. It is at the very western point of Sicily, the site of an old Punic town called Drepana, and just beneath that famous hill of ancient days called Eyrx. I believe the games in honour of Anchises described in *Aeneid* five took place in this very harbour where I am now disconsolately writing.⁴⁸ But what is the advantage of all these classical associations to me? Girgenti is fifty-two miles from Palermo by land—a nice day's drive in a reasonable country. But it is as much as one's life is worth to take a carriage and drive there. Accordingly one has to go by sea. The sea journey is not a long one—but then there are *winds*! We left Palermo at 8 a.m. yesterday

and got here (a short run) about 3 p.m. The wind was bad all the way; but it has since increased, and we cannot leave the port. The Captain holds out *some hopes* of our going on again tomorrow. Of course in any other country we should land and drive to Girgenti, or should at least inspect the neighbouring ruins of Segesta. But all this is out of the question with these confounded bandits. Segesta is only twelve miles off; but then it is a hornet's nest, and rolling about in the harbour of Trapani is better than being transpierced with stilettoes.

Our literature consists of Murray, half of Plutarch in Italian, and half of *Tom Jones* in English. I suppose we must feed on this nutritious diet all day long in the cabin, since the wind makes the deck unendurable, and the town is scarce worth visiting—a sort of *cività vecchia*,⁴⁹ I believe. —On the whole Sicily is a disappointment. The country itself is well enough, is indeed very beautiful and interesting. But the difficulties and dangers of travelling are wearisome beyond all words. Nor do I as yet like the climate. It is very changeable; and while Maribella complains of its getting hot at Cannes, we have only suffered cold—cold winds rushing suddenly down upon a sultry stuffy atmosphere.

However the boredom of this delay at Trapani has, I daresay, gloomed my views of the outer world. If we get in the course of this week to Girgenti and the sun shines on the Greek temples, I shall doubtless begin to tune my pipe to happier strains. Then we *will* return by land—not in a carriage, for that would be imprudence of the darkest and most suicidal dye, but in the omnibus, which is guarded by dragoons and only occasionally stopped and robbed. It is true that the filthy vehicle takes twelve hours in jolting over mountain roads and that it gets filled with flea-swarmling citizens of Girgenti (Sicily is called *La Terra delle Pulci*).⁵⁰ But fatigue and dirt are sweet as an exchange for these insufferable delays by sea. *Les voyages sont beaux surtout quand ils sont faits*,⁵¹ is an excellent [proverb. With love to Charles from both and much to you, ever your most affectionate, J.a.s.]⁵²

Sunday, at night.

The wind and rain still rage and we are still weather bound. Fancy living thus day after day until the seasons change! A land in sight on which it is of no use to set foot, since the town can show none but the filthiest inns and the country is infested with brigands! Our company consists of a Sicilian gentleman, courteous and portly, with his brother, young wife and servant. The lady is lovely—such torrents of towslly fair hair—all her own, as Catherine, who has seen her do it up into an indescribable mop, can testify—and such a clear pale beautiful complexion. A little Italian officer; a Milanese young woman, who has run away from her home to make herself a teacher in a *collegio* at Girgenti, and who does not understand Sicilian—poor wretch, I cannot fancy a harder fate than to exchange the decencies and civilisation of mercantile Milan for the barbarism of brigand-empeted Southern Sicily! These with the captain and his mate are our party. We sit and feed together twice a day, and do not

talk very much. At least we did not, until the Milanese Jane Eyre, recovering from sea sickness, joined our circle and instantly poured forth a fluent torrent of useful information about joint stock companies, mines, raspberries, and the Valle Anzasca, which astounded and disgusted the Sicilians. A Sicilian is an undeveloped being without doubt, compact principally of hatreds and prejudices, with a profound admiration for conservative ignorance. The quick witted young woman from the North jars upon his serenity of torpor. The Sicilians have but little original literature: yet they can boast of two unique documents no doubt manufactured on the island. One is a letter from the Virgin to the people of Messina, dated from Jerusalem; the other an epistle from the Devil to a nun of Girgenti, the only legible part of which is the date. This gives you the measure of their intelligence.

Girgenti, Monday 9.30 p.m.

The sea which got worse and worse till midnight, subsided afterwards, for the storm ceased. So we left Trapani early this morning and drove before a strong wind through great waves all day till we reached this place. The ride up from the port among olive groves and cactus plantations, through hollows where the whole air was heavy with scent of orange blossoms, in sight of this stupendous piled up old Greek town, golden in the afterglow of a gorgeous sunset, was one of most indescribably splendid experiences I have ever had and fully repaid us for our bad voyage. Our first sight in the port was a gang of some one hundred galley slaves heavily ironed who were being marched through the streets, on their way from their day's labour under guard. These rascals, when they get loose, form the brigands. A gang of them who escaped some time since cause the insecurity of the country round Girgenti. They did look precious villains as they grinned and scoffed at us in foul language which we fortunately could not understand. A string of leopards from a menagerie would be mild in comparison.

Give our best love please to Auntie and tell her how we have fared, and please thank her for the nice amusing letter I got at Palermo from her. Love to Charles. Your ever most affectionate, J.a.s.

Letter 18

Sunday Sept 14 1873
Clifton

My dearest Charlotte,

I should like to tell you myself about an accident which happened to me on Friday and which you may have heard of. I was galloping my horse near the sea walls when I fainted and fell off backwards on to my head on

the ground. Partly through the faintness and partly through the stunning I remained insensible for nearly an hour and was carried by my old college pupils Pearson and Nash into that house close by the sea walls which you may remember. They got Dr Fox⁵³ from Clifton and then brought me home, with no bones or other injuries thank God, but with a terribly shaken brain.

I am told that I must attribute the cause of this accident to weakness from overwork: and I suppose this is true. Though what surprises me is that for the last month I have been feeling more and more able to command my strength for mental labour, and have been positively grateful in my soul to think that at last the time of getting greater hardness promised to me by father was coming.

It seems, however, not to be my lot in life to be able to work while it is yet day;⁵⁴ and heaven knows how difficult I find it to keep my mind healthy when I am not working! In this way by buffets and jerks one comes at last to the great silence, I suppose, where all ends.

We had intended to go yesterday to meet Pop at Southampton, and today we have just had a telegram from her to say she had arrived. She will come down to us soon.

Goodbye dearest. Best love to Tom.
Your most loving brother,
J.a.s.

Letter 19

Clifton Sept 16 1873

My dearest Charlotte,

I write in pencil not because I do not sit up but because I find it as yet more resting to be in bed when I am not out for a drive or on the terrace.

It was very pleasing to get your letter and Tom's, both so full of sympathy and strength and so free from the merely superficial consolations people are apt to give in their kindness.

I fear I wrote to you in a querulous and desponding tone before. In truth I do find it a hard trial to be thrown down again and by a blow which seems to carry the menace of indefinite difficulties in the future. But I have many very deep sources of self-consolation. Foremost is the hope that either I may recover strength enough to live as earnestly for the nobler purposes as I wish, or else that I may now be too weak to retain a thought or care for what is less worthy of a man. I cannot write this plainer. But you will see through my obscurity what has been my chief dread in life—lest mental relaxation or enfeeblement, the cessation of mental effort or the loss of mental force—should be accompanied with an increase of certain moral debilities. The worst that could happen to me would be to retain physical strength and the

power of locomotion, etc. (so as to have idleness and the capacity for filling it up badly), while mentally enfeebled and morally harassed. *This* is a sort of nightmare from which I have hitherto found escape in literary labour.

I do not {so much} regret my work. Other men can easily do as well and better what I have set myself to do, and if they do not, the world will not suffer. No: I had hoped to make my work the means of saving my soul; and therefore I loved it. —What Tom says is not without its comfort, though it is not given to my mind to see clearly as he does, or to separate myself from vulgar *verstellungen*⁵⁵ of faith and scepticism. But on this topic I principally feel my own unworthiness to *see* either here or elsewhere, my incapacity for seeing right. I long to believe that such mishaps as my present one are discipline!

Well: I am always inclined to dwell rather on the shady side; and I daresay it will not be so bad after all. I may have really tumbled from my horse without a previous fainting fit. It is possible to lose one's balance. If so, the sense I have lately had of greater vigour may not be illusory. But Mr Clark,⁵⁶ the surgeon who is seeing me, does not encourage me to take this view. At all events here I am—very content at present to be idle, well nursed, and with the pleasure of the children and the flowers.

I hope Tom will not try to come here. I feel as interested in his book as I do in my own, and I should not like him to lose any of his scanty working time for the sake of coming to look at me. You see it is really wisest for me to be quite passive. If you feel inclined to come, you know how glad we should be to see you and what delight I should take in you. But it might in any case be better to wait a bit. If you should find it good to come over here before term begins you might do as you thought possible at Ffestiniog.

Pop is coming today. She arrived safely on Sunday a.m. Maribella and Edward are going to be here for three days from tomorrow. I was very anxious they should not give up their visit because of me, since I can be as much in my own rooms as I like.

Thank you again my dearest and thank Tom for your very kind and comforting letters. Do not let this distress you. I have written fully because I would have those who can understand me do so. It is a very simple matter: not thwarted ambition so much as thwarted effort to lead a vigorous life disappoints me; and I dread the period of convalescence more than I dislike this time of pain and weakness.

Your most loving,
J.a.s.

*Appendix 3**Rewritten Pages (MS 517a–b)*

In Chapter 17 ('The Transition to Davos Platz, and life there') Symonds describes a liaison with a soldier in a male brothel. His account of the moral and physical crises that follow can be found on MS 516–17 (pp. 492–3 in this edition), after which the manuscript contains two rewritten pages: a censored version of the same material in a different hand, written upon watermarked paper ('Superfein') much thinner than that typically used by Symonds. The pages are bound into the manuscript and have been numbered MS 517a–b. (This numbering is contemporary with the binding of the manuscript—see Notes on the Text.) They appear to be draft materials prepared by Horatio Brown as he worked upon his 1895 biography: the pages correspond to pp. 105–6 of the second volume, but they do not match Brown's final, published text. Yet like the biography, these pages omit all mention of the soldier and the 'lesson taught' (MS 517) by Symonds's encounter.

MS 517a

exactly knowing why, I determined to await a coming crisis in regions which were better known to me.

[It is only the man himself who knows (and he knows very indistinctly) with what force he has to measure himself. I knew something about the new factor which had been introduced into my life by experience in London. And what I knew taught me that I must wait and reckon with it. I could not fly from it. I had to face it. The solution was not yet found for moral difficulties which had begun to present themselves in different ways from what I had imagined. What was Greece, its monuments, its mountains, its transparent air, for a man at strife with his own soul—indifferent to antiquity for the moment, hungering after reality, careless of nature, acutely sensitive to life? Greece, for such a man, was only a wide field of experience in the solution of the new commanding problem—the problem of correlating his dominant passion with the facts of existence. And the man, I, did not possess physical strength enough to try the issues in so bewildering a region as Greece offers to a scholar and nature lover. The δαίμονιοι⁵⁷ told me to draw in my sails. What little strength I had left must be reserved for the close battle with my passions; and my physical resources must be dedicated to the contest which could no longer be deferred.]⁵⁸

So I pottered about Lombardy in the spring of 1877. I trailed the skirts of my physical and nervous unrest through those Italian cities, always alive to their monuments of art and history, always

MS 517b

touching human nature [at its crudest and coarsest points],⁵⁹ and in no wise gaining satisfaction. [The problem was not solved but protracted;]⁶⁰ and what the soul gained or lost in this process of experience, was a leveling down until it touched the ground-pan of 'pauvre humanité.'⁶¹ What I discovered was that I could love and fraternize with the least and last and poorest, that I could call the meanest my friends, my brothers and sisters. But I had no gospel {to} preach to them. I only came to understand them and their integrity with myself. [On my way back from this spring journey, while I]⁶²

Appendix 4

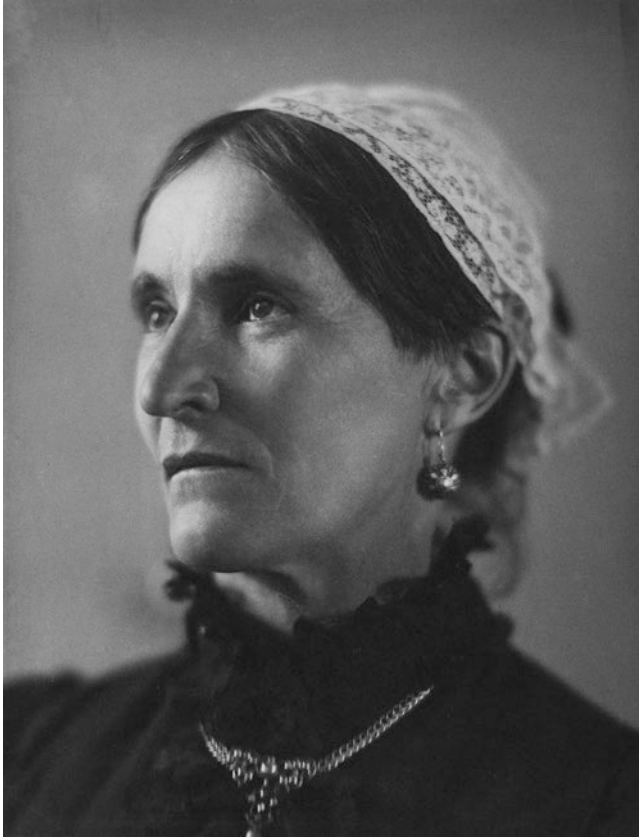
Symonds Family Photographs



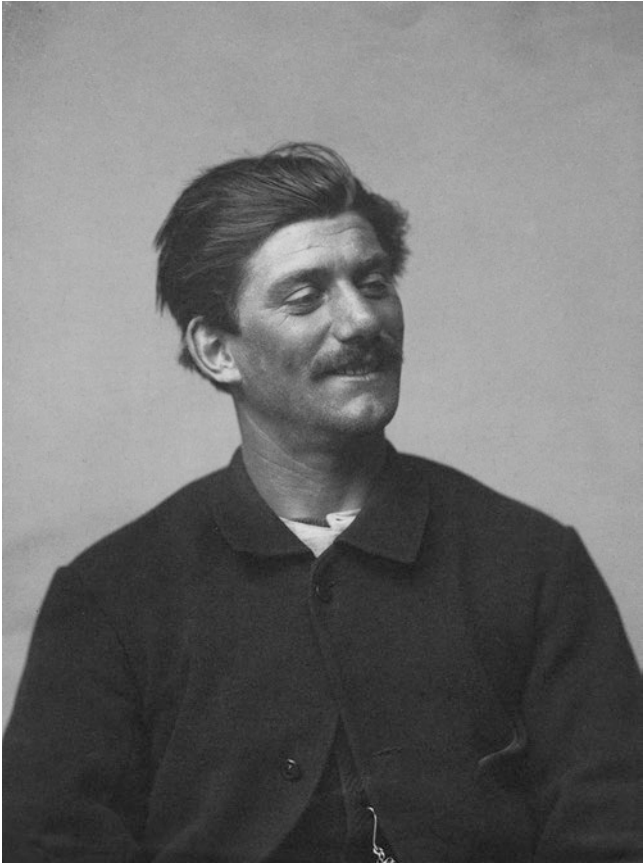
Horatio Brown (captioned 'H.F. Brown, my Father's literary executor and biographer'), University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM376/15]



John Addington Symonds (captioned 'J.A.S. in his study at Am Hof'), University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM377]



Janet Catherine Symonds, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections
[DM911/112]



Angelo Fusato in later life, University of Bristol Library, Special Collections
[DM911/119]



John Addington Symonds's four daughters (L-R: Madge, Lotta, Katharine and Janet), University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM391]



John Addington Symonds (captioned 'J.A. Symonds by Mr Frederic Myers, Cambridge 1892'), University of Bristol Library, Special Collections [DM375/1]

life of a philosophical Greek (ver.) —
 narrow & ~~was~~ ~~was~~ vanished into
~~the~~ ~~solid~~ ~~ground~~. I had ~~reached~~ ~~solid~~ ~~ground~~. I had
~~reached~~ ~~the~~ ~~sanctum~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~love~~ ~~which~~ ~~had~~
 been ~~raising~~ ~~me~~ ~~from~~ ~~child~~ ~~hood~~. Here was the
 poetry ~~the~~ ~~philosophy~~ ~~of~~ ~~my~~ ~~own~~ ~~passion~~ ~~for~~ ~~male~~ ~~beauty~~,
~~with~~ ~~all~~ ~~the~~ ~~magic~~ ~~of~~ ~~unparalleled~~ ~~style~~.
 And, what was more, I now
 became aware that the Greek race — the
 actual historical Greeks of antiquity — treated

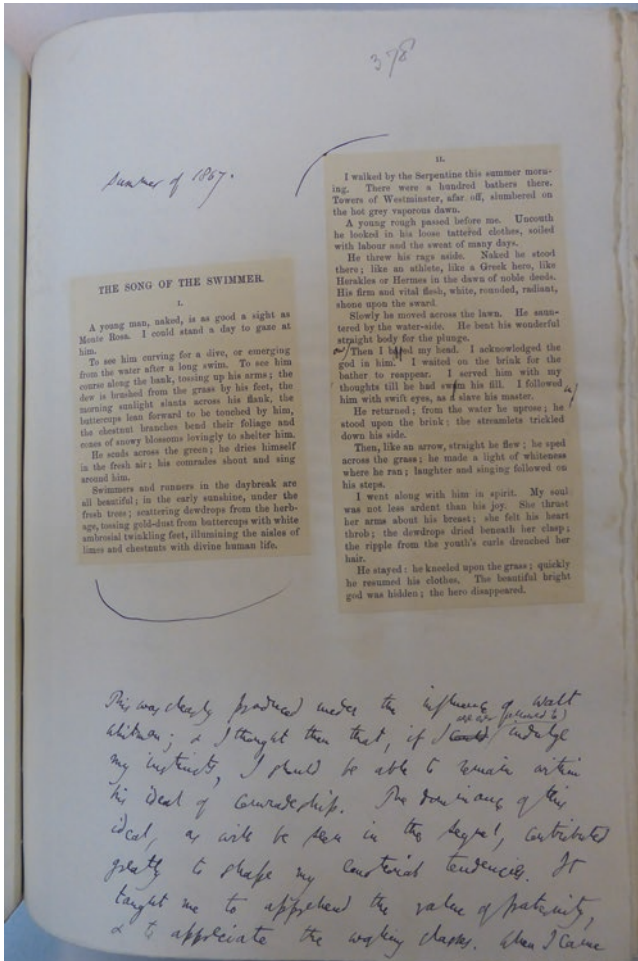
‘The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds Written by Himself’ (I, MS 151), The London Library

Lord Catherine Symonds —
 Clifton Hill House — August 1865

Just a year ago we were at Paternoster, and my new life
 was just beginning; now it seems very old, and as if
 I had been living in it all my life. So it even is a way,
 for those twelve months have contained all of life that
 was really worth living to me, ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~time~~ ~~before~~
 then and distant now, contains ~~nothing~~ that I look
 back to with regret. — The memory of those summer
 days in the Alps last year is very fresh to me now;
 before it fades I should like to put down a record of them
 as they rise up before me day by day, for no time in
 my life can ever have such thrilling memories. It is
 well to have such a beginning to one's life, to look back
 to in the gray commonplace of every day living, for
 nothing there has commonplace, and the feeling of the
 solemn Alps, when in and out with all that is just dear
 to me, can never die out. It is a setting to one's love,
 such as few people can have had, and the two can
 never now be separated in my mind. It was on the
 last week of July that we left England, the prospect of
 the journey giving me little pleasure, for I had been

Schooling myself to believe that the feelings of these
 past weeks in London were all a dream, a foolish
 dream which for my own happiness ought to be rooted
 up, & knew that John was gone northwards, and that
 in all probability I should not see him again for
 months, during which time I should have plenty of
 leisure to teach myself that he did not care for me
 a bit, that all those meetings in London had been
 pure coincidences, and that it was my duty to myself
 and to those I lived with, to drive the folly out of my
 head; what right had I to care for him? — a nice
 stranger of whom I knew nothing really, younger than
 myself, that I felt he was; with a high ideal of
 womanhood, to which I knew I could not attain; dandy
 and artistic while I was commonplace in all things;
 who should be care for me? — I hated myself for
 having let his weakness creep into my head, hated
 myself for having innocently laughed at my
 conquest as he called it, little guessing how he as
 the weak his master was, hated the weakness which
 had made me write foolish about it all, when I felt
 that I must have an outlet somewhere, and wrote
 her another conscientious letter, to prove that I cared

‘The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds Written by Himself’ (I, MS 276a), The London Library



'The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds Written by Himself' (II, MS 378),
The London Library

XVI.

Chap. Religion Development (487)
528

Religion is so important a factor in man's intellectual life, & has so direct a bearing upon the growth of the creative, that I ought not to omit some account of my development upon this side. /-

I have already observed that I was ^{afflicted} not ~~born~~ with any strong sense of God as a Person near to me; ^{my} was naturally of a pious disposition; ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~with~~ ^{with} that theological bias which qualifies the metaphysical thought of philosophers like my late brother-in-law, Professor T. H. Green. /-

The ground-work of my mental temperament might rather be described as literary, ~~essentially~~ ^{essentially} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~oretical~~ ^{as} ~~theoretical~~ ^{as} ~~with~~ ^{with} a certain

'The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds Written by Himself' (II, MS 487), The London Library

... master with the comprehensive justice.
... the cabriestical reflections it
the immediate effect of dissociating
... in my view of the religious life.
... fact that Dr. [redacted] passed for an
man; & it was equally clear that
secret habits which he deemed as
it. Branding upon this discord in
... to suspect human nature at last

'The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds Written by Himself' (II, MS 488), The London Library

NOTES

1. Trans: buttocks.
2. *Consuelo* (1842–43) by George Sand.
3. Marginal note: ‘Footnote: He reckons that he may have practised self-abuse about once a week during a period of from six to seven months’ (MS 568).
4. ‘A permanent (hereditary or acquired) condition of the body which renders it liable to certain special diseases or affections; a constitutional predisposition or tendency.’ (*OED*)
5. Deletes ‘terror’, substitutes ‘danger’ (MS 569).
6. Trans.: for want of better.
7. Trans.: from the bed.
8. Trans.: effeminacy, womanliness.
9. Insertion in Brown’s hand (MS 572).
10. Material underlined in pencil (MS 572).
11. Missing letters supplied by Brown (MS 572).
12. Material underlined in purple pencil (MS 572).
13. Frederick Keppel North (1860–1948) and Dora Hermione North (1873–1923) were Catherine’s nephew and niece, the children of her brother, Charles North.
Edward Prioleau Warren (1856–1937) was the brother of Symonds’s friend, T.H. Warren, whom he met while the latter was a pupil at Clifton College. As an architect, Edward was particularly active in Oxford where his brother was President of Magdalen College.
14. Thomas William Coke, 2nd Earl of Leicester (1822–1909), acceded to his title in 1842. He was a landowner and keen agriculturalist, and served as Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk between 1846 and 1906.
15. Presumably Guy Estell Morley (1868–1952), son of John Morley’s brother, William. Morley adopted Guy and bequeathed to him the interest in his correspondence and diaries.
16. Postscript incomplete (MS 573).
17. Following ‘his cousins’, deletes ‘a son and daughter of William Ewart’ (MS 574^v).
18. Following ‘and had’, deletes ‘often and often’ (MS 575^v).
19. Trans.: *paiderastia*, pederasty.
20. ‘Courting or love-making of a sentimental kind.’ (*OED*)

21. Trans.: *hybris*, arrogance leading to an act of assault (physical, sexual), or gratification achieved by shaming another. There is a complicated literature concerning the meaning and use of ὕβρις. See Brady, p. 119 n. 42, and Marilyn B. Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).
22. Edward Lyttelton (1855–1942) was an assistant master at Wellington College, Eton and Haileybury, later serving as head master of Eton (1905–16). His pamphlet, ‘The Causes and Prevention of Immorality in Schools’ (1877), was privately printed by the Social Purity Alliance.
23. See note 19.
24. Patroclus was the son of Menoetius, an Argonaut, and he fought alongside Achilles during the Trojan War. He was killed by Hector, whom Achilles killed in turn as an act of vengeance. See Homer’s *Iliad*, Books 16–18, 22.
25. In Greek mythology, Orestes was the son of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. He committed matricide to avenge the death of his father, aided by his friend Pylades. Pylades would later marry Theseus’ sister, Electra.
 Theseus was the son of both Poseidon and Aegeus (his mother, Aethra, having slept with god and mortal on a single night). He performed a series of extraordinary labours, and is famed for slaying the Minotaur in the labyrinth at Crete. Pirithous (Kind of the Lapiths) and Theseus were so enamoured of each other’s appearance that they swore an oath of friendship.
26. Trans.: *parerga*, things done on-the-side, i.e. as a diversion, sideline or hobby.
27. Trans.: ‘Apology concerning Pederasty’; a defence of pederasty.
28. See note 19.
29. Trans.: *erós*; love, sexual passion.
30. See note 19.
31. See note 19.
32. This pamphlet is *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (1883). Symonds recounts the story of the offended compositor at in Chapter 14.
33. Allusion to *Twelfth Night* (1601) by William Shakespeare: ‘be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them’ (II. 8. ll. 107–8).
34. Andrew Cecil Bradley (1851–1935), literary scholar best known for his work on Shakespeare. He was elected a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, in 1874 and later taught at Liverpool and

Glasgow Universities. He held the Oxford Professorship of Poetry between 1901 and 1906.

35. The Final Schools—see Chapter 6, note 61.
36. Trans.: cleansing (*catharsis*) of emotions
37. George Murray Smith (1824–1901), publisher and founder of the *Cornhill Magazine* and *Dictionary of National Biography*. He managed the family publishing house established by his father, George Smith, and Alexander Elder. Symonds published many of his books with the firm.
38. ‘Popular Songs of Tuscany’ was first published in the *Fortnightly Review* (November 1873) and later reprinted in *Sketches in Italy and Greece* (1874).
39. Essays on ‘Perugia’ and ‘Etna’ were included in *Sketches in Italy and Greece* (1874).
40. Benedetto Varchi (c.1502–65), Italian historian and poet. His *Storia fiorentina* was suppressed on account of its frank portrayal of contemporary Florence; it was finally published in 1721.
Bernardo Segni (1504–58), Italian historian and translator. His *Storie fiorentine* was published posthumously in 1859.
41. The first issue of history journal, *Archivio Storico Italiano*, was published in 1842.
42. George Dennis (1814–98), traveller, writer and archaeologist. He was the author of *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Sicily* (1864), and was appointed administrative Consul for Palermo in 1870.
43. Trans.: riflemen, or shooters.
44. William King, 1st Earl of Lovelace (1805–93), married Ada Byron (mathematician and daughter of the infamous poet) in 1835. He was created Earl of Lovelace in 1838 to celebrate the succession of Queen Victoria, and was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey in 1840.
45. Sicilian name for the city of Agrigento.
46. Trans.: the host’s table.
47. Note in the header.
48. In Greek mythology, Anchises was the lover of Aphrodite, goddess of love. Their son, Aeneas, organised funeral games to honour his father’s memory. See Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Book 5.
49. Trans.: old town.
50. Trans.: land of the flea.

51. Trans.: Travels are beautiful especially after they have been made. From 'Montaigne en Voyage' in the second volume of *Nouveaux Lundis* (1863–70) by Charles Sainte-Beuve.
52. Written vertically in the left-hand margin.
53. Edward Long Fox (1832–1902), physician at Bristol Royal Infirmary and Clifton College. He also lectured at Bristol Medical School.
54. Cf. John 9. 4.
55. Trans.: adjustments.
56. Thomas Edward Clark (c.1835–97) was a surgeon at Bristol Royal Infirmary, and later a physician at Bristol General Hospital. He was a member of the Medical Reading Society of Bristol alongside Symonds's other doctors, including John Beddoe and William Budd, and his photograph is reproduced in *A History of the Bristol Royal Infirmary* (1917) by George Munro Smith.
57. Trans.: *daimonion*, divine power (distinct from the deity itself). Symonds may intend an allusion to Socrates' prophetic spirit, a kind of guardian that warns against improper action. Cf. Plato's *Apology* 40a.
58. Brown does not reproduce this material, cf. II, p. 105.
59. Brown does not reproduce this material, cf. II, p. 106.
60. Brown does not reproduce this material, cf. II, p. 106.
61. Trans.: poor humanity.
62. Brown does not reproduce this material, cf. II, p. 106.

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