

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky Smith Willis
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Gogol Busch
Darwin Thoreau Twain
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte
London Descartes Cervantes Wells Hesse
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Bunner Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Richter Chekhov da Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving
Doré Dante Shaw Wodehouse
Swift Pushkin Alcott
Newton



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Austin Dobson

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PROLOGUE

LECTOR BENEVOLE!—FOR SO THEY USED TO CALL YOU, YEARS AGO,— I CAN'T PRETEND TO MAKE YOU READ THE PAGES THAT TO THIS SUCCEED; NOR COULD I—IF I WOULD—EXCUSE THE WAYWARD PROMPTINGS OF THE MUSE AT WHOSE COMMAND I WROTE THEM DOWN.

I HAVE NO HOPE TO "PLEASE THE TOWN." I DID BUT THINK SOME FRIENDLY SOUL (NOT ILL-ADVISED, UPON THE WHOLE!) MIGHT LIKE THEM; AND "TO INTERPOSE A LITTLE EASE," BETWEEN THE PROSE, SLIPPED IN THE SCRAPS OF VERSE, THAT THUS THINGS MIGHT BE LESS MONOTONOUS.

THEN, LECTOR, BE BENEVOLUS!

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ON SOME BOOKS AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS

New books can have few associations. They may reach us on the best deckle-edged Whatman paper, in the newest types of famous presses, with backs of embossed vellum, with tasteful tasselled strings,—and yet be no more to us than the constrained and uneasy acquaintances of yesterday. Friends they may become to-morrow, the day after,—perhaps "hunc in annum et plures" But for the time being they have neither part nor lot in our past of retrospect and suggestion. Of what we were, of what we like or liked, they know nothing; and we—if that be possible—know even less of them. Whether familiarity will breed contempt, or whether they will come home to our business and bosom,—these are things that lie on the lap of the Fates.

But it is to be observed that the associations of old books, as of new books, are not always exclusively connected with their text or format,—are sometimes, as a matter of fact, independent of both. Often they are memorable to us by length of tenure, by propinquity,—even by their patience under neglect. We may never read them; and yet by reason of some wholly external and accidental characteristic, it would be a wrench to part with them if the moment of separation—the inevitable hour—should arrive at last. Here, to give an instance in point, is a stained and battered French folio, with patched corners,—Mons. N. Renouard's translation of the *Metamorphoses d'Ovide*, 1637, "*enrichies de figures à chacune Fable*" (very odd figures some of them are!) and to be bought "*chez Pierre Billaine, rue Saint Jacques, à la Bonne-Foy, deuant S. Yues.*" It has held no honoured place upon the shelves; it has even resided au rez-de-chaussée,—that is to say, upon the floor; but it is not less dear,—not less desirable. For at the back of the "Dedication to the King" (Lewis XIII. to wit), is scrawled in a slanting, irregular hand: "*Pour mademoiselle de mons Son tres humble et tres obeissant Serviteur St. André.*" Between the fourth and fifth word, some one, in a smaller writing of later date, has added "*par*" and after "St. André," the signature "*Van-*

deuvre." In these irrelevant (and unsolicited) interpolations, I take no interest. But who was Mlle. de Mons? As Frederick Locker sings:

Did She live yesterday or ages back?
What colour were the eyes when bright and waking?
And were your ringlets fair, or brown, or black,
Poor little Head! that long has done with aching![1]

"Ages back" she certainly did *not* live, for the book is dated "1637," and "yesterday" is absurd. But that her eyes were bright,—nay, that they were particularly lively and vivacious, even as they are in the sanguine sketches of Antoine Watteau a hundred years afterwards, I am "confidous"—as Mrs. Slipslop would say. For my theory (in reality a foregone conclusion which I shrink from dispersing by any practical resolvent) is, that Mile. de Mons was some delightful seventeenth-century French child, to whom the big volume had been presented as a picture-book. I can imagine the alert, strait-corseted little figure, with ribboned hair, eagerly craning across the tall folio; and following curiously with her finger the legends under the copper "figures,"—"Narcisse en fleur," "Ascalaphe en hibou," "Jason endormant le dragon,"—and so forth, with much the same wonder that the Sinne-Beelden of Jacob Cats must have stirred in the little Dutchwomen of Middelburg. There can be no Mlle. de Mons but this,—and for me she can never grow old!

Note:

[1] This quatrain has the distinction of having been touched upon by Thackeray. When Mr. Locker's manuscript went to the Cornhill Magazine in 1860, it ran thus:

Did she live yesterday, or ages sped?
What colour were the eyes when bright and waking?
And were your ringlets fair? Poor little head!
—Poor little heart! that long has done with aching.

Sometimes it comes to pass that the association is of a more far-fetched and fanciful kind. In the great Ovid it lies in an inscription:

in my next case it is "another-guess" matter. The folio this time is the *Sylva Sylvarum* of the "Right Hon. Francis Lo. Verulam. Viscount St. Alban," of whom some people still prefer to speak as Lord Bacon. 'Tis only the "sixt Edition"; but it was to be bought at the Great Turk's Head, "next to the Mytre Tauerne" (not the modern pretender, be it observed!), which is in itself a feature of interest. A former possessor, from his notes, appears to have been largely preoccupied with that ignoble clinging to life which so exercised Matthew Arnold, for they relate chiefly to laxative simples for medicine; and he comforts himself, in April, 1695, by transcribing Bacon's reflection that "a Life led in *Religion* and in *Holy Exercises*" conduces to longevity,—an aphorism which, however useful as an argument for length of days, is a rather remote reason for religion. But what to me is always most seductive in the book is, that to this edition (not copy, of course) of 1651 Master Izaak Walton, when he came, in his *Compleat Angler* of 1653, to discuss such abstract questions as the transmission of sound under water, and the ages of carp and pike, must probably have referred. He often mentions "Sir Francis Bacon's" *History of Life and Death*, which is included in the volume. No doubt it would be more reasonable and more "congruous" that Bacon's book should suggest Bacon. But there it is. That illogical "succession of ideas" which puzzled my Uncle Toby, invariably recalls to me, not the imposing folio to be purchased "next to the Mytre Tauerne" in Fleet Street, but the unpretentious eighteenpenny octavo which, two years later, was on sale at Richard Marriot's in St. Dunstan's churchyard hard by, and did no more than borrow its erudition from the riches of the Baconian storehouse.

Life, and its prolongation, is again the theme of the next book (also mentioned, by the way, in Walton) which I take up, though unhappily it has no inscription. It is a little old calf-clad copy of Lewis Cornaro's *Sure and Certain Methods of attaining a Long and Healthful Life*, 4th ed., 24mo, 1727; and was bought at the Bewick sale of February, 1884, as having once belonged to Robert Elliot Bewick, only son of the famous old Newcastle wood-engraver. As will be shown later, it is easy to be misled in these matters, but I cannot help believing that this volume, which looks as if it had been re-bound, is the one Thomas Bewick mentions in his *Memoir* as having been his companion in those speculative wanderings over the Town Moor or

the Elswick Fields, when, as an apprentice, he planned his future *à la Franklin*, and devised schemes for his conduct in life. In attaining Cornaro's tale of years he did not succeed; though he seems to have faithfully practised the periods of abstinence enjoined (but probably not observed) by another of the "noble Venetian's" professed admirers, Mr. Addison of the *Spectator*.

If I have admitted a momentary misgiving as to the authenticity of the foregoing relic of the "father of white line," there can be none about the next item to which I now come. Once, on a Westminster bookstall, long since disappeared, I found a copy of a seventh edition of the *Pursuits of Literature* of T.J. Mathias, Queen Charlotte's Treasurer's Clerk. Brutally cut down by the binder, that *durus arator* had unexpectedly spared a solitary page for its manuscript comment, which was thoughtfully turned up and folded in. It was a note to this couplet in Mathias, his Dialogue II.:—

From Bewick's magick wood throw borrow'd rays
O'er many a page in gorgeous Bulmer's blaze,—

"gorgeous Bulmer" (the epithet is over-coloured!) being the William Bulmer who, in 1795, issued the *Poems of Goldsmith and Parnell*. "I" (says the writer of the note) "was chiefly instrumental to this ingenious artist's [Bewick's] excellence in this art. I first initiated his master, Mr. Ra. Beilby (of Newcastle) into the art, and his first essay was the execution of the cuts in my Treatise on Mensuration, printed in 4to, 1770. Soon after I recommended the same artist to execute the cuts to Dr. Horsley's edition of the works of Newton. Accordingly Mr. B. had the job, who put them into the hands of his assistant, Mr. Bewick, who executed them as his first work in wood, and that in a most elegant manner, tho' spoiled in the printing by John Nichols, the Black-letter printer. C.H. 1798."

"C.H." is Dr. Charles Hutton, the Woolwich mathematician. His note is a little in the vaunting vein of that "founder of fortun's," the excellent Uncle Pumblechook of *Great Expectations*, for his services scarcely amounted to "initiating" Bewick or his master into the art of engraving on wood. Moreover, his memory must have failed him, for Bewick, and not Beilby, did the majority of the cuts to the *Mensuration*, including a much-praised diagram of the tower of St.

Nicholas Church at Newcastle, afterwards a familiar object in the younger man's designs and tail-pieces. Be this as it may, Dr. Hutton's note was surely worth rescuing from the ruthless binder's plough.

Between the work of Thomas Bewick and the work of Samuel Pepys, it is idle to attempt any ingenious connecting link, save the fact that they both wrote autobiographically. The "Pepys" in question here, however, is not the famous *Diary*, but the Secretary to the Admiralty's "only other acknowledged work," namely, the privately printed *Memoires Relating to the State of the Royal Navy of England, for Ten Years, 1690*; and this copy may undoubtedly lay claim to exceptional interest. For not only does it comprise those manuscript corrections in the author's handwriting, which Dr. Tanner reproduced in his excellent Clarendon Press reprint of last year, but it includes the two portrait plates by Robert White after Kneller. The larger is bound in as a frontispiece; the smaller (the ex-libris) is inserted at the beginning. The main attraction of the book to me, however, is its previous owners—one especially. My immediate predecessor was a well-known collector, Professor Edward Solly, at whose sale in 1886 I bought it; and he in his turn had acquired it in 1877, at Dr. Rimbault's sale. Probably what drew us all to the little volume was not so much its disclosure of the lamentable state of the Caroline navy, and of the monstrous toadstools that flourished so freely in the ill-ventilated holds of His Majesty's ships-of-war, as the fact that it had once belonged to that brave old philanthropist, Captain Thomas Coram of the Foundling Hospital. To him it was presented in March, 1724, by one C. Jackson; and he afterwards handed it on to a Mr. Mills. Pasted at the end is Coram's autograph letter, dated "June 10th, 1746." "To Mr. Mills These. Worthy Sir I happend to find among my few Books, Mr. Pepys his memoires, w'ch I thought might be acceptable to you & therefore pray you to accept of it. I am w'th much Respect Sir your most humble Ser't. THOMAS CORAM."

At the Foundling Hospital is a magnificent full-length of Coram, with curling white locks and kindly, weather-beaten face, from the brush of his friend and admirer, William Hogarth. It is to Hogarth and his fellow-Governor at the Foundling, John Wilkes, that my next jotting relates. These strange colleagues in charity afterwards—as is well known—quarrelled bitterly over politics. Hogarth carica-

tured Wilkes in the *Times*: Wilkes replied by a *North Briton* article (No. 17) so scurrilous and malignant that Hogarth was stung into rejoicing with that famous squint-eyed semblance of his former crony, which has handed him down to posterity more securely than the portraits of Zoffany and Earlom. Wilkes's action upon this was to reprint his article with the addition of a bulbous-nosed woodcut of Hogarth "from the Life." These facts lent interest to an entry which for years had been familiar to me in the Sale Catalogue of Mr. H.P. Standly, and which ran thus: "The NORTH BRITON, No. 17, with a PORTRAIT of HOGARTH in WOOD; and a severe critique on some of his works: in Ireland's handwriting is the following—'This paper was given to me by Mrs. Hogarth, Aug. 1782, and is the identical North Briton purchased by Hogarth, and carried in his pocket many days to show his friends.'" The Ireland referred to (as will presently appear) was Samuel Ireland of the *Graphic Illustrations*. When, in 1892, dispersed items of the famous Joly collection began to appear sporadically in the second-hand catalogues, I found in that of a well-known London bookseller an entry plainly describing this one, and proclaiming that it came "from the celebrated collection of Mr. Standly, of St. Neots." Unfortunately, the scrap of paper connecting it with Mrs. Hogarth's present to Ireland had been destroyed. Nevertheless, I secured my prize, had it fittingly bound up with the original number which accompanied it; and here and there, in writing about Hogarth, bragged consequentially about my fortunate acquisition. Then came a day—a day to be marked with a black stone!—when in the British Museum Print Room, and looking through the "—Collection," for the moment deposited there, I came upon *another* copy of the *North Briton*, bearing in Samuel Ireland's writing a notification to the effect that it was the Identical No. 17, etc., etc. Now which is the right one? Is either the right one? I inspect mine distrustfully. It is soiled, and has evidently been folded; it is scribbled with calculations; it has all the aspect of a *vénéralable vétusté*. That it came from the Standly collection, I am convinced. But that other pretender in the (now dispersed) "—Collection"? And was not Samuel Ireland (*nomen invisum!*) the, if not fraudulent, at least too-credulous father of one William Henry Ireland, who, at eighteen, wrote *Vortigern and Rowena*, and palmed it off as genuine Shakespeare? I fear me—I much fear me—that, in the words of the American showman, I have been "weeping over the wrong grave."

To prolong these vagrant adversaria would not be difficult. Here, for example, dated 1779, are the *Coplas* of the poet Don Jorge Manrique, which, having no Spanish, I am constrained to study in the renderings of Longfellow. Don Jorge was a Spaniard of the Spaniards, Commendador of Montizon, Knight of the Order of Santiago, Captain of a company in the Guards of Castile, and withal a valiant *soldado*, who died of a wound received in battle. But the attraction of my volume is, that, at the foot of the title-page, in beautiful neat script, appear the words, "Robert Southey. Paris. 17 May 1817," — being the year in which Southey stayed at Como with Walter Savage Landor. Here are the *Works* of mock-heroic John Philips, 1720, whose *Blenheim* the Tories pitted against Addison's *Campaign*, and whose *Splendid Shilling* still shines lucidly among eighteenth-century parodies. This copy bears—also on the title-page—the autograph of James Thomson, not yet the author of *The Seasons*; and includes the book-plate of Lord Prestongrange,—that "Lord Advocate Grant" of whom you may read in the *Kidnapped* of "R.L.S." Here again is an edition (the first) of Hazlitt's *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*, annotated copiously in MS. by a contemporary reader who was certainly not an admirer; and upon whom W.H.'s cockneyisms, Gallicisms, egotisms, and "ille-isms" generally, seem to have had the effect of a red rag upon an inveterately insular bull. "A very ingenious but pert, dogmatical, and Prejudiced Writer" is his uncomplimentary addition to the author's name. Then here is Cunningham's *Goldsmith* of 1854, vol. i., castigated with equal energy by that Alaric Alexander Watts,[2] of whose egregious strictures upon Wordsworth we read not long since in the *Cornhill Magazine*, and who will not allow Goldsmith to say, in the *Haunch of Venison*, "the porter and eatables followed behind." "They could scarcely have followed before,"—he objects, in the very accents of Boeotia. Nor will he pass "the hollow-sounding bittern" of the *Deserted Village*. A barrel may sound hollow, but not a bird—this wiseacre acquaints us.

Note:

[2] So he was christened. But Lockhart chose to insist that his second pre-name should properly be "Attila," and thenceforth he was spoken of in this way.

Had the gifted author of *Lyrics of the Heart* never heard of rhetorical figures? But he is not Goldsmith's only hyper-critic. Charles Fox, who admired *The Traveller*, thought Olivia's famous song in the *Vicar* "foolish," and added that "folly" was a bad rhyme to "melancholy." [3] He must have forgotten Milton's: —

Bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musicall, most melancholy!

Or he might have gone to the other camp, and remembered Pope on Mrs.

Howard: —

Not warp'd by Passion, aw'd by Rumour,
Not grave thro' Pride,, or gay thro' Folly,
An equal Mixture of good Humour,
And sensible soft Melancholy.

Note:

[3] *Recollections*, by Samuel Rogers, 2nd ed., 1859, 43.

AN EPISTLE TO AN EDITOR

"Jamais les arbres verts n'ont essayé d'être bleus." –
THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

"A new Review!" You make me tremble
(Though as to that, I can dissemble
Till I hear more). But is it "new"?
And will it be a *real* Review? –
I mean, a Court wherein the scales
Weigh equally both him that fails,
And him that hits the mark? – a place
Where the accus'd can plead his case,
If wrong'd? All this I need to know
Before I (arrogant!) say "Go."

"We, that are very old" (the phrase
Is STEELE'S, not mine!), in former days,
Have seen so many "new Reviews"
Arise, arraign, absolve, abuse; –
Proclaim their mission to the top
(Where there's still room!), then slowly drop,

Shrink down, fade out, and *sans* preferment,
Depart to their obscure interment; –
We should be pardon'd if we doubt
That a new venture *can* hold out.

It *will*, you say. Then don't be "new";
Be "old." The Old is still the True.
Nature (said GAUTIER) never tries

To alter her accustom'd dyes;
And all your novelties at best
Are ancient puppets, newly drest.
What you must do, is not to shrink
From speaking out the thing you think;
And blaming where 'tis right to blame,
Despite tradition and a Name.
Yet don't expand a trifling blot,
Or ban the book for what it's not
(That is the poor device of those
Who cavil where they can't oppose!);
Moreover (this is *very* old!),
Be courteous—even when you scold!

Blame I put first, but not at heart.
You must give Praise the foremost part;—
Praise that to those who write is breath
Of Life, if just; if unjust, Death.
Praise then the things that men revere;
Praise what they love, not what they fear;
Praise too the young; praise those who try;
Praise those who fail, but by and by
May do good work. Those who succeed,
You'll praise perforce,—so there's no need
To speak of that. And as to each,
See you keep measure in your speech;—
See that your praise be so exprest
That the best man shall get the best;
Nor fail of the fit word you meant
Because your epithets are spent.
Remember that our language gives
No limitless superlatives;
And SHAKESPEARE, HOMER, *should* have more
Than the last knocker at the door!

"We, that are very old!"—May this
Excuse the hint you find amiss.
My thoughts, I feel, are what to-day