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NON-FICTIONAL PROSE

MAO-6102

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PREFACE

In this course, we shall deal with various aspects of Non-fictional Prose

- Essays of Francis Bacon
- Essays of Charless Lamb
- Essays of A.G. Gardiner
- Essays of Bertrand Russell

SYLLABUS

Semester-I

Non-Fictional Prose (MA-Eng.-103)

Course Content

Unit-I : Francis Bacon :

"Of Death", Of Adversity", "Of Marriage and Single Life", "of Superstition", "Of Studies".

Unit-II : Charles Lamb:

"Oxford in the vacation", "All fool's day" imperfect Sympathies", "valentine's Day", "The Praise of Chimney Sweepers" "A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People.

Unit-III : A.G. Gardiner:

"On Saying Please", "of courage Defense of Ignorance", "Of Courage" "An About a Dog", "On Catching the Made".

Unit-IV : Bertrand Runsel :

"Philosophy and Politics", Philosophy of a Layman", "The Future of Mankind", "An Outline of intellectual Rubbish".

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1

ESSAYS OF FRANCIS BACON

STRUCTURE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to understand :

1. The essays of Francis Bacon, such as:
   - Of Death
   - Of Adversity
   - Of Marriage and Single life
   - Of Superstitions
   - Of Studies

INTRODUCTION

Francis Bacon, 1st Viscount Saint Alban, KG (22 January 1561-9 April 1626) was an English philosopher, statesman, scientist, lawyer, jurist and author. He served both as Attorney General and Lord Chancellor of England. Although his political career ended in ignoming, he remained extremely influential through his works, especially as a metaphysical advocate and a practitioner of the scientific method and as a colonist in the scientific revolution too.

Bacon has been called the father of experientialism. His works established and popularized inducible methodologies for scientific inquiry, often called the Baconian method or simply, the scientific

method. His demand for a planned procedure of investigating all things natural marked a new turn in the oratorical and doctrine framework for science, much of which still surrounds conceptions of proper methodology today. His dedication probably led to his death, bringing him into a rare historical group of scientists who were killed by their own experiments.

Bacon was denominate in 1603, created Baron Verulam in 1618, and Viscount St Alban in 1621; as he died without heirs both aristocrats became defunct upon his death. He famously died of pneumonia contracted while studying the effects of freezing on the preservation of meat.

OF DEATH

Men fear death, as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children gets increased with tales, so does the other. Certainly, the contemplation of death, as the wages of sin, and passage to another world, is holy and religious; but the fear of it, as a tribute due continuous to, is weak. Yet in religious meditations, there is sometimes mixture of narcissism, and of superstition. You shall read, in some of the friars' books of embarrassment, that a man should think for himself, what the pain is, if he has but his finger's end pressed, or tortured, and thereby imagine, what the pains of death are like, when the whole body is corrupted, and dissolved; when many times death passes, with less pain than the torment of a limb; for the most indispensable parts, are not the quickest of sense: And by him that alleged only as a philosopher, and natural man, it was well said, Pompa mortis magis ferret, quam mors ipsa. Groans, and paroxysm, and a discolored face, and friends weeping, and blacks, and funeral, and the like, show death terrible. It is worthy the observing, that there is no passion in the mind of man, so weak, but it mates, and masters, the fear of death; and therefore, death is no such terrible enemy, when a man hath so many attendants about him, that can win the hostilities of him. Revenge exultations over death; love slights it; honor aspireth to it; grief flieth to it; fear preoccupateth it; derail, we read, after Ortho the emperor had slain himself, pity (which is the supplest of affections) arouse many to die, out of mere compassion to their efficacieres, and as the truest sort of followers denial, Seneca adds niceness and sufficiency: Cogita quamdiu eadem feceris; mori velle, non tantum fortis aut miser, sed etiam fastidious potest. A man would die, though he were neither valorous, nor miserable, only upon a weariness to do the same thing so oft, over and over. It is no less worthy, to observe, how little alteration in good spirits, the approaches of death make; for

hey appear to be the same men, till the last instant. Augustus Caesar died in a compliment; Livia, conjugii nostri memor, vive et vale. Tiberius in deceit; as Tacitus saith of him, Jam Tiberium vires et corpus, non dissimulation, deserebant. Vespasian in a witticism, sitting upon the stool; Ut puto deus fio. Galba with a sentence; Feri, si ex re sit populi Romani; holding forth his neck. Septimius Severus in freight; Adeste is quid mihi restat agendum, and the like. Certainly the Stoics bestowed too much cost upon death, and by their great preparations, made it appear more fearful. Better saith he, qui finem vitae extremum inter munera ponat nature. It is as natural to die, as to be born; as a little infant; perhaps, the one is as painful, as the other. He that dies in an solemn pursuit is like one that is wounded in hot blood; who, for the time, scarce feels the hurt; and therefore with a mind fixed, and bent upon somewhat that is good, doth avert the dolors of death. But, above all, believe it, the sweetest introit is, Nunc dimittis; when a man hath obtained worthy ends and expectations. Death hath this also; that it opens the gate to good fame, and extinguish envy. - Extinctus amabitur idem.

Summary

There is a general whim that men fear Death. According to Bacon, Death is a passage to another world, which is considered to be holy and religious. It is inescapable for all grates, paroxysm, discolored faces, friends weeping and obsequies are the things that show Death is terrible. A man will die, though he is valorous and miserable. For an instance, the great Ceasar also faced his death and he died with commendation. Hence death is worthy and it is an escape from the miseries of the world. Bacon concludes his essay, by saying that, Death opens the gate to good fame.

OF ADVERSITY

It was a high speech of Seneca (after the manner of the phlegmatic), that the good things, which belong to prosperity, are to be wished; but the good things, that belong to crunch, are to be admired. Bona rerum secundarum optabilia; adversarum mirabilia. Certainly if miracles be the command over nature, they appear most in crunch. It is yet a higher speech of his, than the other (much too high for a infidel). It is true greatness, to have in one the infirmity of a man, and the security of a God. Vere magnum habere fragilitatem hominis, securitatem Dei. This would have done better in poesy, where transcendences are more allowed. And the poets indeed have been busy with it; for it is in effect the thing, which figured in that strange fiction of the ancient poets,

which seem not to be without mystery; nay, and to have some approach to the state of a Christian; that Hercules, when he went to unshackle Prometheus (by whom human nature is represented), sailed the length of the great ocean, in an earthen pot or pitcher; lively describing Christian resolution, that sail in the frail bark of the flesh, through the waves of the world. But to speak in a mean, the virtue of prosperity, is temperance; the virtue of crunch, is courage; which in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Attestation; crunch is the blessing of the New; which carried the greater execration, and the clearer revelation of God's favor. Yet even in the Old Attestation, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost prompted labored more in describing the malady's of Job, than the euphoria of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needle-works and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work, upon a sad and dignified ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work, upon a lightsome ground: judge therefore of the pleasure of the heart, by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odors, most aromatic when they are infuriated, or crushed: for prosperity dotk best discover vice, but adversity executes best discover virtue.

Summary

In his essay "Of crunch", Bacon brings out the difference between crunch and Prosperity. According to Bacon, the good things of prosperity are to be praised and the good things of adversity are to be admired. Miracles in nature appear only in crunch. Hence it is considered to be great and security of God. The righteousness of prosperity is temporary and the virtue of crunch is permanent, which also instills heroical virtue. Prosperity gas many fears and distastes and adversity holds comforts and hopes in the life of man.

OF MARRIAGE AND SINGLE LIFE

He that prompted wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are hindrances to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; which both in affection and means, have married and furnished the public. Yet it were great reason that those that have children, should have greatest care of future times; unto which the know they must transmit their dearest collaterals. Some there are, who though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts do end with themselves, and account future times insolences denial.

ay, there are some other, that account wife and children, but as bills f charges, denial more, there are some foolish rich avaricious men that take a pride, in having no children, because they may be thought so much the richer. For perhaps they have heard some talk, Such an one is a great rich man, and another except to it, Yea, but he prompted a great charge of children; as if it were an subsiding to his riches. But the most ordinary cause of a single life, is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and humorous minds, which are so sensible of every restraint, as they will go near to think their girdles and garters, to be bonds and shackles. Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away; and almost all fugitives, are of that condition. A single life doth well with churchmen; for charity will hardly water the ground, where it must first fill a pool. It is indifferent for judges and magistrates; for if they be superficial and corrupt, you shall have a servant, five times worse than a wife. For soldiers, I find the generals commonly in their inciting, put men in mind of their wives and children; and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks, make the tawdry soldier more base. Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hardhearted (good to make severe prober), because their tenderness is not so oft called upon. Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands, as was said of Ulysses, vetulam suam praetulit immortalitati. Chaste women are often proud and forward, as presuming upon the merit of their immaculacy. It is one of the best bonds, both of immaculacy and obedience, in the wife, if she think her husband wise; which she will never do, if she find him jealous. Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses. So as a man may have a quarrel to marry, when he will. But yet he was reputed one of the wise men, that made answer to the question, when a man should marry, - A young man not yet, an elder man not at all. It is often seen that bad husbands, have very good wives; whether it be, that it raiseth the price of their husband's kindness, when it comes; or that the wives take a pride in their patience. But this never fails, if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, against their friends' consent; for then they will be sure to make good their own folly.

Summary

"Of Marriage and Single Life" considers "wives" and children and balances their advantages against their disadvantages in such a way that

it's difficult to decide whether marriage is a good or a bad idea. Bad marriages, however, he suggests can be analyzed more easily by their effects upon the women in them.

Reflection on 'Of Marriage and Single Life'

As we all know, Francis Bacon, the chief figure of the English Renaissance, is very famous as an English statesman, essayist, and philosopher of science so his essay on. Of Marriage and Single Life is one of his most well-known essays, which analyzes and compares marriage with single life in different aspects, such as characters, public service and personal qualities. While, there seems to be not so comprehensive from people's standpoint today.

Bacon's basic opinion is that marriage is good to both an individual and the society. His analysis is taken step-by-step. At first, a single man believes that a man with a wife and children, who are impediment to both great courses and little inconsequential, is the slave of fortune. Especially some miser men think children are the bills of charges and will reduce their riches. And foremost reason is that to be single is to be free, while wife and children are the bonds to his freedom. Moreover, a single life has some good aspects. "Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, and best servants." But single life could also make a man indifferent, superficial and corrupt for judges and magistrates, coward for soldiers without hostilities power and tenacity. Marriage makes a man more responsible, tender, enthusiastic and warm-hearted. Finally, Bacon pointed out that "wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses". Even though a wife marries a bad husband, marriage offers a good chance for husbands to correct themselves.

'Of Marriage and Single Life' is very convincing especially in that period context. To be a classic means to be a challengeable one. Personally, I have some doubtful points about this essay.

First, it aims at men to persuade them to marry rather than keep single. But how about women? At that time, women were at a low position and they seemed to have no right to choose their own lives to single or married. As for Bacon's preference—marriage, which involves two sides both men and women, women also plays an important part in marriage. So I prefer the author to offer much more convincing ideas about the marriage for women.

Second, at present, singleness as a life-style is increasingly recognized by young people and their parents. But as a classic, which

assed down generations to generations, 'Of Marriage and Single Life' eems to be out of date. Some people don't regard getting married as necessarily better than remaining single, especially in developed countries and areas. However, this essay reflects and works at that certain period. Maybe that is enough.

At last, "Wives are young men's mistress, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses, so as a man may have a quarrel to marry when he will" seems a bit biased. Of course, I don't think men are superior to women, but I cannot disagree with his viewpoint here. Maybe it is better for us to think that what he really means is that they are companions for each other.

To sum up, 'Of Marriage and Single Life' has its quintessence about the attitude toward life. Different people have different opinions at different times, and we should look at the essay from our own stances.

OF SUPERSTITIONS

It were better to have no opinion of God at all, than such an opinion, as is blamable of him. For the one is unbelief, the other is rules; and certainly superstition is the admonition of the Deity. Plutarch saith well to that purpose: Surely (saith he) I had rather a great deal, men should say, there was no such man at all, as Plutarch, than that they should say, that there was one Plutarch that would eat his children as soon as they were born; as the poets speak of Saturn. And as the slurs is greater towards God, so the danger is greater towards men. Scepticism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural devotion, to laws, to reputation; all which may be guides to an outward moral virtue, though religion were not; but superstition dismounts all these, and assembled an absolute monarchy, in the minds of men. Therefore theism did never bewilder states; for it makes men wary of themselves, as looking no further: and we see the times inclined to scepticism (as the time of Augustus Caesar) were civil times. But superstition prompted been the confusion of many states, and bringeth in a new exceptional mobile, that ravisheth all the spheres of government. The master of superstition is the people; and in all superstition, wise men follow fools; and arguments are fitted to practice, in a reversed order. It was gravely said by some of the abbots in the Council of Trent, where the doctrine of the Schoolmen stripped great undulate, that the Schoolmen were like astronomers, which did sham aberrant and epicycles, and such engines of orbs, to save the phenomena; though they knew there were no such things; and in like manner, that the Schoolmen had framed a number of adroit and convoluted dictums, and

theorems, to save the practice of the church. The causes of superstition are: pleasing and sensual rites and ceremonies; excess of outward and canting holiness; over great acclaim of traditions, which cannot but load the church; the man oeuvre of prelates, for their own ambition and lucre; the favoring too much of good intentions, which openeth the gate to conceits and novelties; the taking an aim at divine matters, by human, which cannot but breed mixture of imaginations: and, lastly, bestial times, especially joined with cataclysms and disasters. Superstition, without a veil, is a awry thing; for, as it addeth disproportion to an ape, to be so like a man, so the reseonblance similitude of superstition to religion, makes it the more away. And abuiesome meat corrupt to little worms, so good forms and orders corrupt, into a number of trifling observances. There is a superstition in avoiding superstition, when men think to do best, if they go furthest from the superstition, formerly received; therefore care would be had that (as it fareth in ill ejecting) the good be not taken away with the bad; which commonly is done, when the people is the reformer.

Summary

Superstitions are the accusation of God. Plutarch says that poets talk of Saturn as one who eats his children as soon as they are born. Atheism leaves a man to feel, to think and it is a guide to an outward moral virtue. Superstitions are impediments in the life of a man to think freely, They have created confusion in many states and enrapture all spheres of Governments. The master of superstition is the people and in superstitious beliefs wise men follow fools. All arguments are fitted to practice in a reversed order. Petty observances of superstitious beliefs lead to corrupt good forms and orders. Hence, Bacon concludes the essay, by saying that, the reformation in the minds of people is necessary

OF STUDIES

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment, and disposition of business. For expert men can implement, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best, from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is indolence; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need

runing, by study; and studies themselves, do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men applaud them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to refute and negate; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with assiduity and attention. Some books also may be read by subordinate, and decoction made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books, else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he need to have a great memory; if he confab little, he had need have a present cleverness: and if he read little, he had need have much devious, to seem to know, that he executes not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics adroit; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and eloquence able to contend. Abeunt studio, in mores. denial, there is no obstruction in the wit, but may be elaborated out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body, may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen; for they are cymini sectores. If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study 197 the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

Summary

The purpose of this work is to analyze Sixteen Century Francis Bacon's essay "Of Studies" by summarizing its main points and the pertinence of its statements to this day. Francis Bacon was an English Philosopher and a writer best known as a founder of the modern verifiable tradition based on the rational analysis of data obtained by observation and experimentation of the physical world.

The main focus of Bacon's essay rests on explaining to the reader the importance of study knowledge in terms of its practical application towards the individual and its society.

His first analysis is an elucidation on the purposes or uses that different individuals can have by approaching Study—"...for delight, ornament, and for ability"—And how certain professions are better served by individuals with study knowledge. As he mentions the righteousness of Study he also points out its vices—"To spend too much time in study is sloth..." Also, how Study influences our understanding of Nature, and in opposition, how our experience of Nature bounds our obtained knowledge. After that, the Author presents the concept of how different individuals with different mental abilities and interests in life, approach the idea of studying—"Crafty men contemn studies..."—and offers advice on how study should be applied—"...but to weight and consider." Then Bacon goes into expressing his ideas in how the means to acquire study knowledge, books, can be categorized and read according to their content and value to the individual. The benefits of studying are Bacon's final approach. Benefits in terms of defining a "Man" by its ability tom read, write or confer, and in terms of being the medicine for any "obstruction in the cleverness" and by giving- "receipts" to "every defect of the mind".

Certainly, some of Francis Bacon's insights in this subject are of value after 400 years of societal evolution.. We can ascertain this when we read the phrase "They perfect Nature, and are perfected by experience...." Nevertheless some of the concepts expressed in his Essay have to be understood through the glass of time. By this I mean Society values and concepts were different altogether to what we know today. By that time Society was strongly influenced by the idea of literacy and illiteracy (relatively few were educated and could read and write). Only educated people had access to knowledge and by that, to social status and opportunity. Nowadays would be difficult to accept ideas which relate skills or professions towards an attitude to approach studying. Today, a skilled machinist or carpenter can certainly be a studied person. Nowadays most people in our Society have the possibility to read and by that, to obtain knowledge independently of what our personal choices are in terms of profession. Also we must consider how today we value the specialization of knowledge which in the past, characterized by a more generic and limited access to knowledge, wásn't a major factor into the perception and understanding of study knowledge as to the magnitude we see it today.

Finally, it is doubtful that the benefits of studying can be approached as a recipe for any "intellectual illness". We now know that the real illnesses are related to mental conditions and not necessarily to our mental skills, abilities or lack of them and by that I mean that Bacon's solutions to those conditions are extensively candid under the

tual understanding of Human Psychology. Concepts and ideas evolve the same time as the Human condition changes in all social, cientific, political and economic aspects. By looking through the glass of time and comparing the past to the present we come to the realization of the universality and endurance of some concepts and the delicacy and impermanence of some others.

SUMMARY

Bacon did not propose an actual philosophy, but rather a method of developing philosophy. In his magnum opus, Novum Organum, he argued that although philosophy at the time used the deductive syllogism to explicate nature, the philosopher should instead proceed through inductive reasoning from fact to axiom to physical law. Before beginning this inference, the querist is to free his or her mind from certain false notions or tendencies which distort the truth.

Bacon clucidatc his somewhat fragmentary ethical system in the seventh and eighth books of his De augmentis scientiarum (1623)—where he distinguished between duty to the community, an ethical matter, and duty to God, a religious matter.

KEY WORDS

1. **Death :** Death is the termination of the biological functions that sustain a living organism.
2. **Adversity :** A condition marked by misfortune, calamity, or distress.
3. **Superstition :** Superstition is a credulous belief or notion, not based on reason or knowledge.
4. **Knowledge :** To expertise, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education; the vague or practical understanding of a subject.
5. **Immortality :** Immortality (or eternal life) is the concept of living in a physical or spiritual form for an boundless length of time.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe the vision of Bacon on and about Death.
2. Differentiate the aspects conflicting between crunch and Prosperity through Bacon's Essay.

3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of married life.
4. Write down the summary of the essay, "Of Superstition".
5. Explain the Views of Bacon's on knowledge' and in-depth studies.
6. Why do men fear for death?
7. Mention the things that show death terrible.
8. Write down the difference between prosperity and adversity.
9. What is the theme of the essay, "Of Marriage and Single Life"?
10. What is the main focus of the essay, "Of Studies"?

SUGGESTED READING

1. The Essays or Counsels civil and Morall—Sir Francis Bacon.
2. Works by Francis Bacon at Project Gutenberg.
3. Works by About Francis Bacon, from internet archive.

2

ESSAYS OF CHARLES LAMB

STRUCTURE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to understand

1. The essays of Charles Lamb, such as:
   - Oxford in the vacation
   - All fools day
   - Imperfect sympathesies
   - Valentines day
   - The praise of chimney sweepers
   - A bachelor complaint on the behaviour of the married people

INTRODUCTION

Charles Lamb (1775-1834) was an English essayist, best known for Essays of Elia and for the children's book Tales from Shakespeare, ich he produced with his sister, Mary Lamb (1764-1847). Lamb has en referred to by E.V. Lucas, his principal biographer, as the most

lovable figure in English literature and his influence on the English essay form surely cannot be overestimated.

Lamb was honored by The Latymer School, a grammar school in Edmonton, a suburb of London where he lived for a time; it has six houses, one of which, "Lamb", is named alter Charles.

Work

Lamb's first publication was the inclusion of four sonnets in the Coleridge's Poems on Various Subjects published in 1796 by Joseph Cottle. The sonnets were significantly influenced by the poems of Burns and the sonnets of William Bowles, a largely forgotten poet of the late 18th century. His poems garnered little attention and are seldom read today. Lamb's contributions to the second edition of the Poems showed significant growth as a poet. These poems included The Tomb of Douglas and A Vision of Repentance. Because of a temporary fall-out with Coleridge, Lamb's poems were to be excluded in the third edition of the Poems. As it turned out, a third edition never emerged and instead Coleridge's next publication was the monumentally influential Lyrical Ballads co-published with Wordsworth. Lamb, on the other hand, published a book entitled Blank Verse with Charles Lloyd, the mentally unstable son of the founder of Lloyd's Bank. Lamb's most famous poem was written at this time entitled The Old Familiar Faces. Like most of Lamb's poems it is particularly sentimental but it is still remembered and widely read, often included in Poetic Collections. Of particular interest to Lambarians is the opening verse of the original version of The Old Familiar Faces which is concerned with Lamb's mother. It was a verse that Lamb chose to remove from the edition of his Collected Work published in 1818.

In the; first years of the 19th century Lamb began his fruitful literary cooperation with his sister Mary. Together they wrote at least three books for William Godwin's Juvenile Library. The most successful of these was of course Tales From Shakespeare which ran through two editions for Godwin and has now been published dozens of time in countless editions, many of them illustrated. Lamb also contributed a footnote to Shakespearean studies at this time with his essay "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare," in which he argues that Shakespeare should be read rather than performed in order gain the proper effect of his dramatic genius. Beside contributing Shakespeare studies with his book Tales From Shakespeare, Lamb also contributed to the popularization of Shakespeare's contemporaries wi

his book Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare.

Although he did not write his first Elia essay until 1820, Lamb's gradual perfection of the essay form for which he eventually became famous began as early 1802 in a series of open letters to Leigh Hunt's Reflector. The most famous of these is called "The Londoner" in which Lamb famously derides the contemporary fascination with nature and the countryside.

OXFORD IN THE VACATION

Essay

Casting a preparatory glance at the bottom of this article as the very connoisseur in prints, with cursory eye (which, while it reads, seems as though it read not), never fails to consult the quis sculpsit in the corner, before he pronounces some rare piece to be a Vivares, or a Woollet \ methinks I hear you exclaim, Reader, Who is Elia?

Because in my last I tried to divert thee with some half-forgotten humours of some old clerks defunct, in an old house of business, long since gone to decay, doubtless you have already set me down in your mind as one of the self-same collegel - a votary of the desk - a notched and cropt scrivener - one that sucks his sustenance, as certain sick people are said to do, through a quill.

Well, I do agnise something of the sort. I confess that it is my humour, my fancy - in the fore-part of the day, when the mind of your man of letters requires some relaxation (and none better than such as at first sight seems most abhorrent from his beloved studies) - to while away some good hours of my time in the contemplation of indigos, cottons, raw silks, piece-goods, flowered or otherwise. In the first place and then it sends you home with such increased appetite to your books not to say, that your outside sheets, and waste wrappers of foolscap, do receive into them, most kindly and naturally, the impression of sonnets, epigrams, essays - so that the very parings of a counting-house are, in some sort, the settings up of an author. The enfranchised quill, that has plodded all the morning among the, cart-rucks of figures and ciphers, frisks and curvets so at its ease over the flowery carpet-ground of a midnight dissertation. It feels its promotion. So that you see, upon the whole, the literary dignity of Elia is very little, if at all compromised in the condescension.

Not that, in my anxious detail of the many commodities incidental to the life of a public office, I would be thought blind to certain flaws,

which a cunning carper might be able to pick in this Joseph's vest. And here I must have leave, in the fulness of my soul, to regret the abolition, and doing-away-with altogether, of those consolatory interstices, and sprinklings of freedom, through the four seasons, - the red-letter days, now become, to all intents and purposes, dead-letter days. There was Paul, and Stephen, and Barnabas - Andrew and John, men famous in old times - we were used to keep all their days holy, as long back as when I was at school at Christ's. I remember their effigies, by the same token, in the old Baskett Prayer Book. There hung Peter in his uneasy posture-holy Bartlemy in the troublesome act of flaying, after the famous Marsyas by Spagnoletti. - I honoured them all, and could almost have wept the defalcation of Iscariot - so much did we love to keep holy memories sacred: - only methought I a little grudged of the coalition of the better Jude with Simon - clubbing (as it were) their sanctities together, to make up one poor gaudy-day between them - as an economy unworthy of the dispensation.

These were bright visitations in a scholar's and a clerk's life - 'far off their coming shone.' - I was as good as an almanac in those days. I could have told you such a saint's day falls out next week, or the week after. Peradventure the Epiphany, by some periodical infelicity, would, once in six years, merge in a Sabbath. Now am I little better than one of the profane. Let me not be thought to arraign the wisdom of my civil superiors, who have judged the further observation of these holy tides to be papistical, superstitious,. Only in a custom of such long standing, methinks, if their Holinesses -the Bishops had, in decency, been first sounded - but I am wading out of my depths. I am not the man to decide the limits of civil and ecclesiastical authority - I am plain Elia - no Selden, nor Archbishop Usher - though at present in the thick of their books, here in the heart of learning, under the shadow of the mighty Bodley.

I can here play the gentleman, enact the student. To such a one as myself, who has been defrauded in his young years of the sweet food of academic institution, nowhere is so pleasant, to while away a few idle weeks at, as one or other of the Universities. Their vacation, too, at this time of the year, falls in so pat with ours. Here I can take my walks unmolested, and fancy myself of what degree or standing I please. I seem admitted ad eundem. I fetch up past opportunities. I can rise at the chapel-bell, and dream that it rings for me. In moods of humihty I can be a Sizar, or a Servitor. When the peacock vein rises, I strut a Gentleman Commoner. In graver moments, I proceed Master of Arts. Indeed I do not think I am much unlike that respectable character. I have seen your dim-eyed vergers, and bed-makers in spectacles, drop a

bow or a curtsy, as I pass, wisely mistaking me for something of the sort. I go about in black, which favours the notion. Only in Christ Church reverend quadrangle I can be content to pass for nothing short of a Seraphic Doctor.

The walks at these times are so much one's own, - the tall trees of Christ's, the groves of Magdalen! The halls deserted, and with open doors, inviting one to slip in unperceived, and pay a devoir to some Founder, or noble or royal Benefactress (that should have been ours) whose portrait seems to smile upon their over-looked beadsman, and to adopt me for their own. Then, to take a peep in by the way at the butteries, and scullieries, redolent of antique hospitality; the immense caves of kitchens, kitchen fireplaces, cordial recesses; ovens whose first pies were buked four centuries ago; and spits which have cooked for Chaucer! Not the meanest minister among the dishes but is hallwed to me through his imagination, and the Cook goes forth a Manciple.

Antiquity! thou wondrous charm, what art thou? that, being nothing, art everything! When, thou wert, thou wert. not antiquity - then thou wert nothing, but hadst a remoter antiquity, as thou calledst it, to look back to with blind veneration; thou thyself being to thyself flat, jejune, modern! What mystery lurks in this retroversion? or what half Januses are we, that cannot look forward with the same idolatry with which we for ever revert! The mighty fbture is as nothing, being everything! the past is everything, being nothing!

What were thy dark ages? Surely the sun rose as brightly then as now, and man got him to his work in the morning? Why is it we can never hear mention of them without an accompanying feeling, as though a palpable obscure had dimmed the face of things, and that our ancestors wandered to and fro groping!

Above all thy rarities, old Oxenford, what do most arride and solace me, are thy repositories of mouldering learning, thy shelves What a place to be in is an old library! It seems as though all the souls of all the writers, that have bequeathed their labours to these Bodleians, were reposing here, as in some dormitory, or middle state. I do not want to handle, to profane the leaves, their winding-sheets. I could as soon dislodge a shade. I seem to inhale learning, walking amid their foliage; and the odour of their old moth-scented coverings is fragrant as the first bloom of those sciential apples which grew amid the happy orchard.

Still less have I curiosity to disturb the elder repose of MSS. Those variae lectiones, so tempting to the more erudite palates, do but disturb

and unsettle my faith. I am no Herculanean raker. The credit of the three witnesses might have slept unimpeached for me. I leave these curiosities to Porsori, and to G.D. - whom, by the way, I found busy as a moth over some rotten archive, rummaged out of some seldom-explored press, in a nook at Oriel. With long poring, he is grown almost into a book. He stood as passive as one by the side of the old shelves. I longed to new-coat him in russia, and assign him his place. He might have mustered for a tall Scapula.

. . D. is assiduous in his visits to these seats of learning. No inconsiderable portion of his moderate fortune, I apprehend, is consumed in journeys between them and Clifford's Inn---where, like a dove on the asp's nest, he has long taken up his unconscious abode, amid an incongruous assembly of attorneys, attorneys' clerks, apparitors, promoters, vermin of the law, among whom he sits, in calm and sinless peace. The fangs of the law pierce him not - the winds of litigation blow over his humble chambers - the hard sheriff's officer moves his hat as he passes - legal nor illegal discourtesy touches him - none thinks of offering violence or injustice to him - you would as soon 'strike an abstract idea.'

D. has been engaged, he tells me, through a course of laborious years, in an investigation into all curious matter connected with the two Universities; and has lately lit upon a MS. collection of charters, relative to C----, by which he hopes to settle some disputed points – particularly that long controversy between them as to priority of foundation. The ardour with which he engages in these liberal pursuits, I am afraid, has not met with all the encouragement it deserved, either here or at C----. Your caputs, and heads of colleges, care less than anybody else about these questions. - Contented to suck the milky fountains of their Alma Maters, without inquiring into the venerable gentlewoman's years, they rather hold such curiosities to be impertinent - unreverend. They have their good glebe lands in manu, and care not much to rake into the title-deeds. I gather at least so much from other sources, for D. is not a man to complain.

D. started like an unbroken heifer, when I interrupted him. A priori it was not very probable that we should have met in Oriel. But D would have done the same, had I accosted him on the sudden in his own walks in Clifford's Inn, or in the Temple. In addition to a provoking short-sightedness (the effect of late studies and watchings at the midnight oil) D. is the most absent of men. He made a call the other morning at our friend M.'s in Bedford Square; and, finding nobody at home, was ushered into the hall, where, asking for pen and ink, with

reat exactitude of purpose he enters me his name in the book - which rdinarily lies about in such places, to record the failures of the ntimely or unfortunate visitor - and takes his leave with many eremonies, and professions of regret. Some two or three hours after, his walking destinies returned him into the same neighbourhood again, and again the quiet image of the fireside circle at M.'s - Mrs. M. presiding at it like a Queen Lar, with pretty A.S. at her side - striking irresistably on his fancy, he makes another call (forgetting that they were 'certainly not to return from the country before that day week'), and disappointed a second time, inquires for pen and paper as before: again the book is brought, and in the line just above that in which he is about to print his second name (his re-script) - his first name (scarce dry) looks out upon him like another Sosia, or as if a man should suddenly encounter his own duplicate! - The effect may be conceived. D. made many a good resolution against any such lapses in future. I hope he will not keep them too rigorously.

For with G.D. - to be absent from the body, is something (not to speak it profanely) to be present with the Lord. At the very time when, personally encountering thee, he passes on with no recognition - or, being stopped, starts like a thing surprised - at that moment, Reader, he is on Mount Tabor - or Parnassus - or co-sphered with Plato - or, with Harrington, framing 'immortal commonwealths' - devising some plan of amelioration to the country, or thy species - peradventure meditating some individual kindness or courtesy, to be done to thee thyself, the returning consciousness of which made him to start so guiltily at thy obtruded personal presence.

D. commenced life, after a course of hard study in the house of 'pure Emmanuel,' as usher to a knavish fanatic schoolmaster at, at a salary of eight pounds per annum, with board and lodging. Of this poor stipend, he never received above half in all the laborious years he served this man. He tells a pleasant anecdote, that when poverty, staring out at his ragged knees, has sometimes compelled him, against the modesty of his nature, to hint at arrears, Dr. would take no immediate notice, but after supper, when the school was called together to evensong, he would never fail to introduce some instructive homily against riches, and the corruption of the heart occasioned through the desire of them - ending with 'Lord, keep Thy servants, above all things, from the heinous sin of avarice. Having food and raiment, let us therewithal be content. Give me Agur's wish' - and the like - which, to the little auditory, sounded like a doctrine full of Christian prudence

and simplicity, but to poor D. was a receipt in full for that quarter's demand at least.

And D. has been underworking for himself ever since; - drudging at low rates for unappreciating booksellers, - wasting his fine erudition in silent corrections of the classics, and in those unostentatious but solid services to learning which commonly fall to the lot of laborious scholars, who have not the heart to sell themselves to the best advantage. He has published poems, which do not sell, because their character is unobtrusive, like his own, and because he has been too much absorbed in ancient literature to know what the popular mark in poetry is, even if he could have hit it. And, therefore, his verses are properly, what he terms them, crochets; voluntaries; odes to liberty and spring; effusions; little tributes and offerings; left behind him upon tables and window-seats at parting from friends' houses, and from all the inns of hospitality, where he has been courteously (or but tolerably) received in his pilgrimage. If his muse of kindness halt a little behind the strong lines in fashion in this *excitement-loving age, his prose is the best of the sort in the world, and exhibits a faithful transcript of his own healthy, natural mind, and cheerful, innocent tone of conversation.*

D. is delightful anywhere, but he is at the best in such places as these. He cares not much for Bath. He is out of his element at Buxton, at Scarborough, or Harrowgate. The Cam and the Isis are to him 'better than all the waters of Damascus.' On the Muses' hill he is happy, and good, as one of the Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains; and when he goes about with you to show you the halls and colleges, you think you have with you the Interpreter at the House Beautiful.

Summary

Lamb explains that the pseudonym "Elia" refers to himself. He informs the reader that at one time he was a clerk as the South-Sea House, a description of which, with brief sketches of some of his colleagues of those days, he has given in an earlier essay (The South-Sea House). He used to treat his working hours in the office as a sort of relaxation preparatory to his literacy labours which he used to commence after going home from the office. In changing over from his clerical work in the office to his literacy work in the evenings, he used to have the feeling that he had been promoted to a higher position.

Lamb deplores the abolition of certain holidays which were formerly on certain days connected with the memories of saints. There was a time when certain days were observed as holidays in commemoration of saints like Paul, Stephen, Barnabas, Andrew, John and Simon. But those

holidays have now been dispensed with. Those "red-letter days" have a list of festivals and holidays on the tips of his fingers. It is a pity that the civil authorities have abolition most of the holidays connected with religious and spiritual matters.

Lamb then describes a visit to the University of Oxford during the vacation. He never actually had a University education. But a visit to the University of Oxford during the vacation makes him imagine what he might have been, had he actually been admitted to the University as a student. He imagines himself as a Sizar or a Servitor or a Gentleman Commoner. He even imagines himself as a Master of Arts. In the cathedral of Christ Church, Lamb imagines himself as a Doctor of Divinity. He sees the tall trees of Christ Church and the groves of Magdalen College. He passes through the deserted halls and takes a peep into the butteries, sculleries and kitchens. The meanest cook of the University rises in his imagination to the dignity of the Manciple whom Chaucer describes in the Prologue to his Canterbury Tables.

Lamb's mind next travels back to the days of antiquity. The times, which are referred to as antiquity, had their own, a more remote, antiquity. There was a time when antiquity itself was not antiquity but the "present". It is a tendency of people to go back in retrospect to bygone times, and not to project themselves into the future. Even to bygone udark ages", the sun used to shine as brightly as it does now.

To stand in the Bodley of the University of Oxford in a most satisfying and pleasing experience for Lamb. It seems as though all the souls of all the past writers are testing on the shelves of the library. Lamb would not like to disturb those souls by handling the various volumes. He feels as if he is inhaling learning. The odour of the moth eaten volumes is as fragrant to him as was that of the apple tree in the Garden of Eden to Adam. Nor would he like to disturb the repose of the different manuscripts that lie in the Bodley library. He is not one of those research workers who try to explore the past. He is no Herculanean explorer.

The labour of exploring manuscripts should be left to a man like George Dyer, says Lamb. George Dyer pores over books so diligently that he himself has grown almost into a book. George Dyer is assiduous in his visits to the seats of leaning like the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Much of his fortune has been spent in his journeys from his dwelling to these two universities and back. Dyer has been investigating into the dispute as to which of the two universities was founded first. The enthusiasm with which he has been pursuing this investigation has not been shared by heads of colleges and other

administrators at the two universities. George Dyer is a very absent-minded man. He looks startled even when accosted by a person of long acquaintance. He is so absent-minded, that one day he made a second call at a house where he had already called and been told that the occupants of the house were away to the country and were not expected for a week at least. Most of the time, George Dyer is pre-occupied with his meditations and with his imaginative flights.

After a course of hard study at Cambridge, Dyer worked as an usher to a knavish fanatic schoolmaster at a meager salary. Subsequently he became an author but without much commercial success. His poems do not sell because he is too absorbed in ancient literature to understand the demands of modern taste. He is a writer of excellent prose.

Lamb concludes the essay by observing that Dyer is delightful anywhere but that he is at his best at such places as the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The rivers of Oxford and Cambridge Universities are more to him than all the waters of Damascus. He feels most at home at these seats of learning.

ALL FOOLS DAY

Essay

The compliments of the season to my worthy masters, and a merry first of April to us all! Many happy returns of this day to you — and you —and you, Sir — nay, never frown, man, nor put a long face upon the matter. Do not we know one another? What need of ceremony among friends? We have all a touch of that same — you understand me — a speck of the motley. Beshrew the man who on such a day as this, the general festival, should affect to stand aloof. I am none of those sneakers. I am free of the corporation, and care not who knows it. He that meets me in the forest to-day, shall meet with no wise-acre, I can tell him. Stultus sum. Translate me that, and take the meaning of it to yourself for your pains. What, man, we have four quarters of the globe on our side, at the least computation.

Fill us a cup of that sparkling gooseberry — we will drink no wise, melancholy, politic port on this day — and let us troll the catch of Amiens — due ad me — due ad me — how goes it?

Here shall he see Gross fools as he.

Now would I give a trifle to know historically and authentically, who was the greatest fool that ever lived. I would certainly give him in

a bumper. Marry, of the present breed, I think I could without much difficulty name you the party.

Remove your cap a little further, if you please; it hides my bauble. And now each man bestride his hobby, and dust away his bells to what tune he pleases. I will give you, for my part,

The crazy old church clock, And the bewildered chimes.

Good master Empedocles, you are welcome. It is long since you went a salamander gathering down Aetna. Worse than samphire-picking by some odds. 'Tis a mercy your worship did not singe your mustachios.

Ha! Cleombrotus! and what salads in faith did you light upon at the bottom of the Mediterranean? You were founder, I take it, of the disinterested sect of the Calenturists.

Gebir, my old free-mason, and prince of plasterers at Babel, bring in your trowel, most Ancient Grand! You have claim to a seat at my right hand, as patron of the stammerers. You left your work, if I remember Herodotus correctly, at eight hundred million toises, or thereabout, above the level of the sea. Bless us, what a long bell you must have pulled, to call your top workmen to their nuncheon on the low grounds of Sennaar. Or did you send up your garlick and onions by a rocket? I am a rogue if I am not ashamed to show you our Monument on Fish-street Hill, after your altitudes. Yet we think it somewhat.

What, the magnanimous Alexander in tears? — cry, baby, put its finger in its eye, it shall have another globe, round as an orange, pretty moppet!

Mister Adams — 'odso, I honour your coat — pray do us the favour to J read to us that sermon, which you lent to Mistress Slipslop — the twenty I and second in your portmanteau there — on Female Incontinence — the same — it will come in most irrelevantly and impertinently seasonable to the time of the day.

Go Master Raymund Lully, you look wise. Pray correct that error.

Duns, spare your definitions. I must fine you a bumper, or a paradox. We will have nothing said or done syllogistically this day. Remove those logical forms, waiter, that no gentleman break the tender shins of his apprehension stumbling across them.

Master Stephen, you are late. — Ha! Cokes, is it you? — Ague-cheek, my dear knight, let me pay my devoir to you. — Master Shallow, your worship's poor servant to command. — Master Silence, I will use few words with you. — Slender,

it shall go hard if I edge not you in somewhere. — You six will engross all the poor wit of the company to-day. — I know it, I know it.

Ha! honest R—, my fine old Librarian of Ludgate, time out of mind, art thou here again? Bless thy doublet, it is not over-new, threadbare as thy stories — what dost thou flitting about the world at this rate ? — Thy customers are extinct, defunct, bed-rid, have ceased to read long ago. — Thou goest still among them, seeing if, peradventure, thou canst hawk a volume or two. — Good Granville S—, thy last patron, is flown.

King Pandion, he is dead,

All thy friends are lapt in lead.

Nevertheless, noble R —, come in, and take your seat here, between Armado and Quisada: for in true courtesy, in gravity, in fantastic smiling to thyself, in courteous smiling upon others, in the goodly ornature of well-apparelled speech, and the commendation of wise sentences, thou art nothing inferior to those accomplished Dons of Spain. The spirit of chivalry forsake me for ever, when I forget thy singing the song of Macheath, which declares that he might be happy with either, situated between those two ancient spinsters — when I forget the inimitable formal love which thou didst make, turning now to the one, and now to the other, with that Malvolian smile — as if Cervantes, not Gay, had written it for his hero; and as if thousands of periods must revolve, before the minor of courtesy could have given his invidious preference between a pair of so goodly-propertied and meritorious-equal damsels. . . . To descend from these altitudes, and not o protract our Fools' Banquet beyond its appropriate day, - - for I fear the second of April is not many hours distant - - in sober verity I will confess a Truth to thee, reader. I love a Fool — as naturally, as if I were of kith and kin to him.

When a child, with child-like apprehensions, that dived not below the surface of the matter, I read those Parables — not guessing at their involved wisdom — I had more yearnings towards that simple architect, that built his house upon the sand, than I entertained for his more cautious neighbour; I grudged at the hard censure pronounced upon the quiet soul that kept his talent; and — prizing their simplicity beyond the more provident, and, to my apprehension, somewhat unfeminine wariness of their competitors — I felt a kindliness, that almost amounted to a tendre, for those five thoughtless virgins, — I have never made an acquaintance since, that lasted; or a friendship, that answered; with any that had not some tincture of the absurd in their characters. I venerate an honest obliquity of understanding. The more laughable blunders a man shall commit in your company, the more tests he giveth you, that he will not betray or overreach you. I love the safety, which a palpable hallucination warrants; the security, which a word out of season ratifies. And take my word for this, reader, and say a fool told it you, if you please, that he who hath not a dram of folly in his mixture, hath pounds of much

worse matter in his composition. It is observed, that "the foolisher the fowl or fish, — woodcocks, — dotterels, —cod's-heads, &c. the finer the flesh thereof," and what are commonly the world's received fools, but such whereof the world is not worthy? and what have been some of the kindliest patterns of our species, but so many darlings of absurdity, minions of the goddess, and her white boys? — Reader, if you wrest my words beyond their fair construction, it is you, and not I, that are the April Fool.

Summary

This essay celebrates April 1, which is regarded as all fools day on which all kinds of practical jokes are fools day and wishes many happy returns of the day to everybody. Nobody, he says, should keep away from the celebration of this festival. Everybody, according to Lamb, has a touch of the fool in him, "a speck of motley". He himself, says Lamb, belongs to the category of fools and would like his readers to regard themselves as having a touch of the fool in their composition. The majority of the people in this world have something of the fool in their make-up. Lamb invites everybody to share the Gooseberry wine with him and to sing the song of folly that Amiens sings in Shakespeare's play. He would like to know, who was the greatest fool that would like to drink a toast to that man.

Lamb then invites to the company of fools some of the characters who have actually lived and whom he regards as fools. He welcomes Empedocles, the philosopher, who jumped into the crater of Mt. Etna in order to know what was at the bottom of it. Then he welcomes Cleombrotus who jumped into the ocean in order to lead a better life after death. He invites Gebir who had a hand in the building of the Tower of Babel. He invites Alexander the great who, after having conquered the world, wept because there was no other world for him to conquer. He invites Raymund Lully, the chemist and philosopher of the thirteen century, to join the company of fools. Another philosopher who is invited to this company is Duns Scotus, also of the thirteenth century.

Next, Lamb invites some of the fools and simpletons from fiction to join the feast. Parson Adams, Master Stephen, Cokes, Aquecheek, Master Shallow, Master Silence, Slender, all these are asked to join the feast of fools.

Another character to be invited is Ramsay who used to keep the "London Library" in Ludgate Street. Ramsay is given a seat between the two Spanish Dons, Armado and Quisada (Don Quixote), because he is in no way inferior to these two Dons in respect of Chivalry, gravity, courteous smiling upon others, bombastic speech; and the uttering of wise maxims. Lamb compliments Ramsay on his having acted the part of Macheath who had to face the embarrassment of making love two sweethearts at once, one on each side of him.

In conclusion, Lamb says that he loves a Fool and that he loves a Fool as naturally as if he were related to him by ties of the blood. He recalls that when he used to read the parables in the Bible, he used to feel more attracted towards the fool who built his house upon the sand then towards the wise man who built his house on a rock. He sympathy went to the foolish servant buried his money in the ground rather than to the wise servants who multiplied their money by investment. Similarly, he experienced a feeling of tenderness for five foolish virgins who were deprived of the bridegroom and not for the five shrewed virgins who were united with the bridegrooms. Then Lamb tells us that only those of his friendships have proved firm and lasting which were made with persons who had a touch of absurdity in their characters. He feels a respect for honest, stupidity, eccentricity. The more the blunders a man commits; the greater the certainty that he will not betray a friend. Folly and absurdity are a sure guarantee of loyalty and honesty. If a man does not have any touch of folly in his composition, it means that there is a lot of knavery in him. The finest flesh for eating is that which is obtained from those birds or fish, which are the most foolish. The most kind-hearted human beings are those who have an element of folly, stupidity, or absurdity in their character.

IMPERFECT SYMPATHESIES

Essay

I am of a constitution so general, that it consorts and sympathizeth with all things, I have no antipathy, or rather idiosyncracy in any thing. Those national repugnancies do not touch me, nor do I behold with prejudice the French, Italian, Spaniard, or Dutch — Religio Medici.

That the author of the Religio Medici, mounted upon the airy stilts of abstraction, conversant about notional and conjectural essences; in whose categories of Being the possible took the upper hand of the actual; should have overlooked the impertinent individualities of such poor concretions as mankind, is not much to be admired. It is rather to be wondered at, that in the genus of animals he should have condescended to distinguish that species at all. For myself-earth-bound and fettered to the scene of my activities,

Standing on earth, not rapt above the sky, I confess that I do feel the differences of mankind, national or individual, to an unhealthy excess. I can look with no indifferent eye upon things or persons. Whatever is, is to me a matter of taste or distaste; or when once it becomes indifferent, it begins to be disrelishing. I am, in plainer words, a bundle of prejudices — made up of likings and dislikings — veriest thrall to sympathies, apathies, antipathies. In a certain sense, I hope it may be said of me that I am a lover of my species. I can feel for all indifferently, but I cannot feel towards all equally. The more purely-English wont that expresses

sympathy will better explain my_-meaning. I can be a friend to a worthy man, who upon another account cannot be my mate or fellow. I cannot like all people alike.

I would be understood as confining myself to the subject of imperfect sympathies To nations or classes of men there can be no direct antipathy. There may be individuals born and constellated so opposite to another individual nature, that the same sphere cannot hold them. I-have met with my moral antipodes, and can believe the story of two persons meeting (who never saw one another before in their lives) and instantly fighting,

"We by proof find there should be twixt man and man such an antipathy, That though he can show no just reason why For any former wrong or injury, Can neither find a/blemish in his fame, Nor aught in face or feature justly blame, Can challenge or accuse him of-no evil, Yet notwithstanding hates him as a devil".

The lines are from old Heywood's "Hierarchic of Angels," and he subjoins a curious story in confirmation, of a Spaniard who attempted to assassinate a King Ferdinand of Spain, and being put to the rack could give no other reason for the deed but an inveterate antipathy which he had taken to the first sight of the King.

The cause which to that act compelled him Was, he ne'er loved him since he first beheld him. I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They cannot like me - - and in truth, I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. There is something more plain and ingenuous in their mode of proceeding. We know one another at first sight. There is an order of imperfect intellects (under which mine must be content to rank) which in its constitution is essentially anti-Caledonian. The owners of the sort of faculties I allude to, he minds rather suggestive than comprehensive. They have no pretences to much clearness or precision in their ideas, or in their manner of expressing them. Their intellectual wardrobe (to confess fairly) has few whole pieces in it. They are content with fragments and scattered pieces of Truth. She presents no full front to them — a feature or side-face at the most. Hints and glimpses, germs and crude essays at a system, is the utmost they pretend to. They beat up a little game peradventure — and leave it to knottier heads, more robust constitutions, to run it down. The light that lights them is not steady and polar, but mutable and shifting: waxing, and again waning. Their conversation is accordingly. They will throw out a random word in or out of season, and be content to let it pass for what it is worth. They cannot speak always as if they were upon their oath — but must be understood, speaking or writing, with some abatement. The seldom wait to mature a proposition, but even bring it to market in the green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries as they arise, without waiting for their full development. They are no systematizers, and would but err more by attempting it. Their minds, as I said before, are suggestive merely. The brain of a true Caledonian (if I am not mistaken) is constituted upon quite a different plan. His Minerva is born in panoply. You are never admitted to see his ideas in their growth — if, indeed, they do grow,

and are not rather put together upon principles of clock-work. You never catch his mind in an undress. He never hints or suggests any thing, hut unlades his stock of ideas in perfect order and completeness. He brings his total wealth into company, and gravely unpacks it. His riches are always about him. He never stoops to catch a glittering something in your presence, to share it with you, before he quite knows whether it be true touch or not. You cannot cry halves to any thing that he finds. He does not find, but bring.

You never witness his first apprehension of a thing. His understanding is always at its meridian - you never see the first dawn, the early streaks. - He has no falterings of self-suspicion. Surmises, guesses,—misgivings,—half-intuitions,—semi-consciousnesses,—partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions, have no place in his brain, or vocabulary. The twilight of dubicty never falls upon him. Is he orthodox — he has no doubts. Is he an infidel — he has none either. Between the affirmative and the negative there is no border-land with him. You cannot hover with him upon the confines of truth, or wander in the maze of a probable argument. He always keeps the path. You cannot make excursions with him — for he sets you right. His taste never fluctuates. His morality never abates. He cannot compromise, or understand middle actions. There can be but a right and a wrong. His conversation is as a book. His affirmations have the sanctity of an oath. You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. "A healthy book" — said one of his countrymen to me, who had ventured to give that appellation to John Buncle, — "did I catch rightly what you said? I have heard of a man in health, and of a healthy state of body, but I do not see how that epithet can be properly applied to a book." Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher upon your irony, if you are unhappily blest with a vein of it. Remember you are upon your oath. I have a print of a graceful female after Leonardo da Vinci, which I was showing off to Mr. After he had examined it minutely, I ventured to ask him how he liked MY BEAUTY (a foolish name it goes by among my friends) — when he very gravely assured me, that "he had considerable respect for my character and talents" (so he was pleased to say), "but had not given himself much thought about the degree of my personal pretensions." The misconception staggered me, but did not seem much to disconcert him. — Persons of this nation are particularly bond of affirming a truth — which nobody doubts. They do not so properly affirm, as annunciate it. They do indeed appear to have such a love of truth (as if, like virtue, it were valuable for itself) that all truth becomes equally valuable, whether the proposition that contains it be new or old, disputed, or such as is impossible to become