His epitaph, composed by himself with the utmost care, was as follows:

QUI GIACE
ARRIGO BEYLE MILANESE
VISSE, SCRISSE, AMO.

The words, read rightly, indicate many things—his adoration of Italy and Milan, his eccentricity, his scorn of the conventions of society and the limits of nationality, his adventurous life, his devotion to literature, and, lastly, the fact that, through all the varieties of his experience—in the earliest years of his childhood, in his agitated manhood, in his calm old age—there had never been a moment when he was not in love.

Beyle's work falls into two distinct groups—the first consisting of his novels, and the second of his miscellaneous writings, which include several biographies, a dissertation on Love, some books of criticism and travel, his letters and various autobiographical fragments. The bulk of the latter group is large; much of it has only lately seen the light; and more of it, at present in MS. at the library of Grenoble, is promised us by the indefatigable editors of the new complete edition which is now appearing in Paris. The interest of this portion of Beyle's writings is almost entirely personal: that of his novels is mainly artistic. It was as a novelist that Beyle first gained his celebrity, and it is still as a novelist —or rather as the author of *Le Rouge et Le Noir* and *La Chartreuse de Parme* (for an earlier work, *Armance*, some short stories, and some later posthumous fragments may be left out of account)—that he is most widely known to-day. These two remarkable works lose none of their significance if we consider the time at which they were composed. It was in the full flood of the Romantic revival, that marvellous hour in the history of French literature when the tyranny of two centuries was shattered for ever, and a boundless wealth of inspirations, possibilities, and beauties before undreamt-of suddenly burst upon the view. It was

the hour of Hugo, Vigny, Musset, Gautier, Balzac, with their new sonorities and golden cadences, their new lyric passion and dramatic stress, their new virtuosities, their new impulse towards the strange and the magnificent, their new desire for diversity and the manifold comprehension of life. But, if we turn to the contemporaneous pages of Stendhal, what do we find ? We find a succession of colourless, unemphatic sentences ; we find cold reasoning and exact narrative ; we find polite irony and dry wit. The spirit of the eighteenth century is everywhere ; and if the old gentleman with the perruque and the 'M. de Voltaire' could have taken a glance at his grandson's novels, he would have rapped his snuff-box and approved. It is true that Beyle joined the ranks of the Romantics for a moment with a *brochure* attacking Racine at the expense of Shakespeare ; but this was merely one of those contradictory changes of front which were inherent in his nature ; and in reality the whole Romantic movement meant nothing to him. There is a story of a meeting in the house of a common friend between him and Hugo, in which the two men faced each other like a couple of cats with their backs up and their whiskers bristling. No wonder ! But Beyle's true attitude towards his great contemporaries was hardly even one of hostility : he simply could not open their books. As for Chateaubriand, the god of their idolatry, he loathed him like poison. He used to describe how, in his youth, he had been on the point of fighting a duel with an officer who had ventured to maintain that a phrase in *Atala*—'la cime indéterminée des forêts'—was not intolerable. Probably he was romancing (M. Chuquet says so) ; but at any rate the story sums up symbolically Beyle's attitude towards his art. To him the whole apparatus of 'fine writing'—the emphatic phrase, the picturesque epithet, the rounded rhythm—was anathema. The charm that such ornaments might bring was in reality only a cloak for loose thinking and feeble observation. Even the style of the eighteenth century was not quite his ideal ; it was too elegant ; there was an artificial neatness about

the form which imposed itself upon the substance, and degraded it. No, there was only one example of the perfect style, and that was the *Code Napoléon* ; for there alone everything was subordinated to the exact and complete expression of what was to be said. A statement of law can have no place for irrelevant beauties, or the vagueness of personal feeling ; by its very nature, it must resemble a sheet of plate glass through which every object may be seen with absolute distinctness, in its true shape. Beyle declared that he was in the habit of reading several paragraphs of the Code every morning after breakfast 'pour prendre le ton.' This again was for long supposed to be one of his little jokes ; but quite lately the searchers among the MSS. at Grenoble have discovered page after page copied out from the Code in Beyle's handwriting. No doubt, for that wayward lover of paradoxes, the real joke lay in everybody taking for a joke what *he* took quite seriously.

This attempt to reach the exactitude and the detachment of an official document was not limited to Beyle's style ; it runs through the whole tissue of his work. He wished to present life dispassionately and intellectually, and if he could have reduced his novels to a series of mathematical symbols, he would have been charmed. The contrast between his method and that of Balzac is remarkable. That wonderful art of materialisation, of the sensuous evocation of the forms, the qualities, the very stuff and substance of things, which was perhaps Balzac's greatest discovery, Beyle neither possessed nor wished to possess. Such matters were to him of the most subordinate importance, which it was no small part of the novelist's duty to keep very severely in their place. In the earlier chapters of *Le Rouge et Le Noir*, for instance, he is concerned with almost the same subject as Balzac in the opening of *Les Illusions Perdues*—the position of a young man in a provincial town, brought suddenly from the humblest surroundings into the midst of the leading society of the place through his intimate relations with a woman of refinement. But while in Balzac's pages what emerges is the concrete

vision of provincial life down to the last pimple on the nose of the lowest footman, Beyle concentrates his whole attention on the personal problem, hints in a few rapid strokes at what Balzac has spent all his genius in describing, and reveals to us instead, with the precision of a surgeon at an operation, the inmost fibres of his hero's mind. In fact, Beyle's method is the classical method—the method of selection, of omission, of unification, with the object of creating a central impression of supreme reality. Zola criticises him for disregarding 'le milieu.'

Il y a [he says] un épisode célèbre dans 'Le Rouge et Le Noir,' la scène où Julien, assis un soir á côté de Mme. de Rénal, sous les branches noires d'un arbre, se fait un devoir de lui prendre la main, pendant qu'elle cause avec Mme. Derville. C'est un petit drame muet d'une grande puissance, et Stendhal y a analysé merveilleusement les états d'âme de ses deux personnages. Or, le milieu n'apparaît pas une seule fois. Nous pourrions être n'importe où dans n'importe quelles conditions, la scène resterait la même pourvu qu'il fit noir ... Donnez l'épisode à un écrivain pour qui les milieux existent, et dans la défaite de cette femme, il fera entrer la nuit, avec ses odeurs, avec ses voix, avec ses voluptés molles. Et cet écrivain sera dans la vérité, son tableau sera plus complet.

More complete, perhaps ; but would it be more convincing ? Zola, with his statistical conception of art, could not understand that you could tell a story properly unless you described in detail every contingent fact. He could not see that Beyle was able, by simply using the symbol 'nuit,' to suggest the 'milieu' at once to the reader's imagination. Everybody knows all about the night's accessories—'ses odeurs, ses voix, ses voluptés molles' ; and what a relief it is to be spared, for once in a way, an elaborate expatiation upon them ! And Beyle is perpetually evoking the gratitude of his readers in this way. 'Comme il insiste peu !' as M. Gide exclaims. Perhaps the best test of a man's intelligence is his capacity for making a summary. Beyle knew this, and his novels are

full of passages which read like nothing so much as extraordinarily able summaries of some enormous original narrative which has been lost.

It was not that he was lacking in observation, that he had no eye for detail, or no power of expressing it ; on the contrary, his vision was of the sharpest, and his pen could call up pictorial images of startling vividness, when he wished. But he very rarely did wish : it was apt to involve a tiresome insistence. In his narratives he is like a brilliant talker in a sympathetic circle, skimming swiftly from point to point, taking for granted the intelligence of his audience, not afraid here and there to throw out a vague 'etc.' when the rest of the sentence is too obvious to state ; always plain of speech, never self-assertive, and taking care above all things never to force the note. His famous description of the Battle of Waterloo in *La Chartreuse de Parme* is certainly the finest example of this side of his art. Here he produces an indelible impression by a series of light touches applied with unerring skill. Unlike Zola, unlike Tolstoi, he shows us neither the loathsomeness nor the devastation of a battlefield, but its insignificance, its irrelevant detail, its unmeaning grotesquenesses and indignities, its incoherence, and its empty weariness. Remembering his own experience at Bautzen, he has made his hero—a young Italian impelled by Napoleonic enthusiasm to join the French army as a volunteer on the eve of the battle—go through the great day in such a state of vague perplexity that in the end he can never feel quite certain that he really *was* at Waterloo. He experiences a succession of trivial and unpleasant incidents, culminating in his being hoisted off his horse by two of his comrades, in order that a general, who has had his own shot from under him, might be supplied with a mount ; for the rest, he crosses and recrosses some fields, comes upon a dead body in a ditch, drinks brandy with a *vivandière*, gallops over a field covered with dying men, has an indefinite skirmish in a wood—and it is over. At one moment, having joined the escort of some generals, the young man allows his horse to splash into a

stream, thereby covering one of the generals with muddy water from head to foot. The passage that follows is a good specimen of Beyle's narrative style :

> En arrivant sur l'autre rive, Fabrice y avait trouvé les généraux tout seuls ; le bruit du canon lui sembla redoubler ; ce fut à peine s'il entendit le général, par lui si bien mouillé, qui criait à son oreille :
>
> Où as-tu pris ce cheval ?
>
> Fabrice était tellement troublé, qu'il répondit en Italien : *l'ho comprato poco fa.* (Je viens de l'acheter à l'instant.)
>
> Que dis-tu ? lui cria le général.
>
> Mais le tapage devint tellement fort en ce moment, que Fabrice ne put lui répondre. Nous avouerons que notre héros était fort peu héros en ce moment. Toutefois, la peur ne venait chez lui qu'en seconde ligne ; il était surtout scandalisé de ce bruit qui lui faisait mal aux oreilles. L'escorte prit le galop ; on traversait une grande pièce de terre labourée, située au delà du canal, et ce champ était jonché de cadavres.

How unemphatic it all is ! What a paucity of epithet, what a reticence in explanation ! How a Romantic would have lingered over the facial expression of the general, and how a Naturalist would have analysed that 'tapage' ! And yet, with all their efforts, would they have succeeded in conveying that singular impression of disturbance, of cross-purposes, of hurry, and of ill-defined fear, which Beyle with his quiet terseness has produced ?

It is, however, in his psychological studies that the detached and intellectual nature of Beyle's method is most clearly seen. When he is describing, for instance, the development of Julien Sorel's mind in *Le Rouge et Le Noir*, when he shows us the soul of the young peasant with its ignorance, its ambition, its pride, going step by step into the whirling vortex of life—then we seem to be witnessing not so much the presentment of a fiction as the unfolding of some scientific fact. The procedure is almost mathematical : a proposition is established, the inference is drawn, the next proposition follows, and so on until the demonstration is complete. Here the influence

of the eighteenth century is very strongly marked. Beyle had drunk deeply of that fountain of syllogism and analysis that flows through the now forgotten pages of Helvétius and Condillac; he was an ardent votary of logic in its austerest form—'la lo-gique' he used to call it, dividing the syllables in a kind of awe-inspired emphasis; and he considered the ratiocinative style of Montesquieu almost as good as that of the *Code Civil*.

If this had been all, if we could sum him up simply as an acute and brilliant writer who displays the scientific and prosaic sides of the French genius in an extreme degree, Beyle's position in literature would present very little difficulty. He would take his place at once as a late—an abnormally late—product of the eighteenth century. But he was not that. In his blood there was a virus which had never tingled in the veins of Voltaire. It was the virus of modern life—that new sensibility, that new passionateness, which Rousseau had first made known to the world, and which had won its way over Europe behind the thunder of Napoleon's artillery. Beyle had passed his youth within earshot of that mighty roar, and his inmost spirit could never lose the echo of it. It was in vain that he studied Condillac and modelled his style on the Code; in vain that he sang the praises of *la lo-gique*, shrugged his shoulders at the Romantics, and turned the cold eye of a scientific investigator upon the phenomena of life; he remained essentially a man of feeling. His unending series of *grandes passions* was one unmistakable sign of this; another was his intense devotion to the Fine Arts. Though his taste in music and painting was the taste of his time—the literary and sentimental taste of the age of Rossini and Canova—he nevertheless brought to the appreciation of works of art a kind of intimate gusto which reveals the genuineness of his emotion. The 'jouissances d'ange,' with which at his first entrance into Italy he heard at Novara the *Matrimonio Segreto* of Cimarosa, marked an epoch in his life. He adored Mozart: 'I can imagine nothing more distasteful to me,' he said, 'than a thirty-mile

walk through the mud ; but I would take one at this moment if I knew that I should hear a good performance of *Don Giovanni* at the end of it.' The Virgins of Guido Reni sent him into ecstasies and the Goddesses of Correggio into raptures. In short, as he himself admitted, he never could resist 'le Beau' in whatever form he found it. *Le Beau!* The phrase is characteristic of the peculiar species of ingenuous sensibility which so oddly agitated this sceptical man of the world. His whole vision of life was coloured by it. His sense of values was impregnated with what he called his 'espagnolisme'—his immense admiration for the noble and the high-sounding in speech or act or character—an admiration which landed him often enough in hysterics and absurdity. Yet this was the soil in which a temperament of caustic reasonableness had somehow implanted itself. The contrast is surprising, because it is so extreme. Other men have been by turns sensible and enthusiastic : but who before or since has combined the emotionalism of a schoolgirl with the cold penetration of a judge on the bench ? Beyle, for instance, was capable of writing, in one of those queer epitaphs of himself which he was constantly composing, the high-falutin' words 'Il respecta un seul homme: Napoléon' ; and yet, as he wrote them, he must have remembered well enough that when he met Napoleon face to face his unabashed scrutiny had detected swiftly that the man was a play-actor, and a vulgar one at that. Such were the contradictions of his double nature, in which the elements, instead of being mixed, came together, as it were, in layers, like superimposed strata of chalk and flint.

In his novels this cohabitation of opposites is responsible both for what is best and what is worst. When the two forces work in unison the result is sometimes of extraordinary value—a product of a kind which it would be difficult to parallel in any other author. An eye of icy gaze is turned upon the tumultuous secrets of passion, and the pangs of love are recorded in the language of Euclid. The image of the surgeon inevitably suggests itself—the hand with the

iron nerve and the swift knife laying bare the trembling mysteries within. It is the intensity of Beyle's observation, joined with such an exactitude of exposition, that makes his dry pages sometimes more thrilling than the wildest tale of adventure or all the marvels of high romance. The passage in *La Chartreuse de Parme* describing Count Mosca's jealousy has this quality, which appears even more clearly in the chapters of *Le Rouge et Le Noir* concerning Julien Sorel and Mathilde de la Mole. Here Beyle has a subject after his own heart. The loves of the peasant youth and the aristocratic girl, traversed and agitated by their overweening pride, and triumphing at last rather over themselves than over each other—these things make up a gladiatorial combat of 'espagnolismes,' which is displayed to the reader with a supreme incisiveness. The climax is reached when Mathilde at last gives way to her passion, and throws herself into the arms of Julien, who forces himself to make no response :

> Ses bras se roidirent, tant l'effort imposé par la politique était pénible. Je ne dois pas même me permettre de presser contre mon cœur ce corps souple et charmant ; ou elle me méprise, ou elle me maltraite. Quel affreux caractère !
>
> Et en maudissant le caractère de Mathilde, il l'en aimait cent fois plus ; il lui semblait avoir dans ses bras une reine.
>
> L'impassible froideur de Julien redoubla le malheur de Mademoiselle de la Mole. Elle était loin d'avoir le sang-froid nécessaire pour chercher à deviner dans ses yeux ce qu'il sentait pour elle en cet instant. Elle ne put se résoudre à le regarder ; elle tremblait de rencontrer l'expression du mépris.
>
> Assise sur le divan de la bibliothèque, immobile et la tête tournée du côté opposé à Julien, elle était en proie aux plus vives douleurs que l'orgueil et l'amour puissent faire éprouver à une âme humaine. Dans quelle atroce démarche elle venait de tomber !
>
> Il m'était réservé, malheureuse que je suis ! de voir repoussées les avances les plus indécentes ! Et repoussées par qui ? ajoutait l'orgueil fou de douleur, repoussées par un domestique de mon père.
>
> C'est ce que je ne souffrirai pas, dit-elle à haute voix.

At that moment she suddenly sees some unopened letters addressed to Julien by another woman.

—Ainsi, s'écria-t-elle hors d'elle-même, non seulement vous êtes bien avec elle, mais encore vous la méprisez. Vous, un homme de rien, mépriser Madame la Maréchale de Fervaques !

— Ah ! pardon, mon ami, ajouta-t-elle en se jetant à ses genoux, méprise-moi si tu veux, mais aime-moi, je ne puis plus vivre privée de ton amour. Et elle tomba tout à fait évanouie.

— La voilà donc, cette orgueilleuse, à mes pieds ! se dit Julien.

Such is the opening of this wonderful scene, which contains the concentrated essence of Beyle's genius, and which, in its combination of high passion, intellectual intensity, and dramatic force, may claim comparison with the great dialogues of Corneille.

'Je fais tous les efforts possibles pour être *sec*,' he says of himself. 'Je veux imposer silence à mon cœur, qui croit avoir beaucoup à dire. Je tremble toujours de n'avoir écrit qu'un soupir, quand je crois avoir noté une vérité.' Often he succeeds, but not always. At times his desire for dryness becomes a mannerism and fills whole pages with tedious and obscure argumentation. And, at other times, his sensibility gets the upper hand, throws off all control, and revels in an orgy of melodrama and 'espagnolisme.' Do what he will, he cannot keep up a consistently critical attitude towards the creatures of his imagination : he depreciates his heroes with extreme care, but in the end they get the better of him and sweep him off his feet. When, in *La Chartreuse de Parme*, Fabrice kills a man in a duel, his first action is to rush to a looking-glass to see whether his beauty has been injured by a cut in the face ; and Beyle does not laugh at this ; he is impressed by it. In the same book he lavishes all his art on the creation of the brilliant, worldly, sceptical Duchesse de Sanseverina, and then, not quite satisfied, he makes her concoct and carry out the murder of the reigning Prince in order to satisfy a desire for amorous revenge. This really makes her perfect. But the most striking example of Beyle's

inability to resist the temptation of sacrificing his head to his heart is in the conclusion of *Le Rouge et Le Noir*, where Julien, to be revenged on a former mistress who defames him, deliberately goes down into the country, buys a pistol, and shoots the lady in church. Not only is Beyle entranced by the *bravura* of this senseless piece of brutality, but he destroys at a blow the whole atmosphere of impartial observation which fills the rest of the book, lavishes upon his hero the blindest admiration, and at last, at the moment of Julien's execution, even forgets himself so far as to write a sentence in the romantic style : 'Jamais cette tête n'avait été aussi poétique qu'au moment où elle allait tomber.' Just as Beyle, in his contrary mood, carries to an extreme the French love of logical precision, so in these rhapsodies he expresses in an exaggerated form a very different but an equally characteristic quality of his compatriots—their instinctive responsiveness to fine poses. It is a quality that Englishmen in particular find it hard to sympathise with. They remain stolidily unmoved when their neighbours are in ecstasies. They are repelled by the 'noble' rhetoric of the French Classical Drama ; they find the tirades of Napoleon, which animated the armies of France to victory, pieces of nauseous clap-trap. And just now it is this side—to us the obviously weak side—of Beyle's genius that seems to be most in favour with French critics. To judge from M. Barrès, writing dithyrambically of Beyle's 'sentiment d'honneur,' that is his true claim to greatness. The sentiment of honour is all very well, one is inclined to mutter on this side of the Channel ; but oh, for a little sentiment of humour too !

The view of Beyle's personality which his novels give us may be seen with far greater detail in his miscellaneous writings. It is to these that his most modern admirers devote their main attention—particularly to his letters and his autobiographies ; but they are all of them highly characteristic of their author, and—whatever the subject may be, from a guide to Rome to a life of Napoleon—one gathers in them, scattered up and down through their pages, a curious,

dimly adumbrated philosophy—an ill-defined and yet intensely personal point of view—*le Beylisme.* It is in fact almost entirely in this secondary quality that their interest lies; their ostensible subject-matter is unimportant. An apparent exception is the book in which Beyle has embodied his reflections upon Love. The volume, with its meticulous apparatus of analysis, definition, and classification, which gives it the air of being a parody of *L'Esprit des Lois*, is yet full of originality, of lively anecdote and keen observation. Nobody but Beyle could have written it; nobody but Beyle could have managed to be at once so stimulating and so jejune, so clear-sighted and so exasperating. But here again, in reality, it is not the question at issue that is interesting—one learns more of the true nature of Love in one or two of La Bruyère's short sentences than in all Beyle's three hundred pages of disquisition; but what is absorbing is the sense that comes to one, as one reads it, of the presence, running through it all, of a restless and problematical spirit. 'Le Beylisme' is certainly not susceptible of any exact definition; its author was too capricious, too unmethodical, in spite of his *lo-gique*, ever to have framed a coherent philosophy; it is essentially a thing of shreds and patches, of hints, suggestions, and quick visions of flying thoughts. M. Barrès says that what lies at the bottom of it is a 'passion de collectionner les belles énergies.' But there are many kinds of 'belles énergies,' and some of them certainly do not fit into the framework of 'le Beylisme.' 'Quand je suis arrêté par des voleurs, ou qu'on me tire des coups de fusil, je me sens une grande colère contre le gouvernement et le curé de l'endroit. Quand au voleur, il me plaît, s'il est énergique, car il m'amuse.' It was the energy of self-assertiveness that pleased Beyle; that of self-restraint did not interest him. The immorality of the point of view is patent, and at times it apppears to be simply based upon the common selfishness of an egotist. But in reality it was something more significant than that. The 'chasse au bonheur' which Beyle was always advocating was no respectable epicureanism; it had about it a touch of

the fanatical. There was anarchy in it—a hatred of authority, an impatience with custom, above all a scorn for the commonplace dictates of ordinary morality. Writing his memoirs at the age of fifty-two, Beyle looked back with pride on the joy that he had felt, as a child of ten, amid his royalist family at Grenoble, when the news came of the execution of Louis XVI. His father announced it :

> — C'en est fait, dit-il avec un gros soupir, ils l'ont assassiné.
> Je fus saisi d'un des plus vifs mouvements de joie que j'ai éprouvé en ma vie. Le lecteur pensera peut-être que je suis cruel, mais tel j'étais à 5 × 2, tel je suis à 10 × 5 + 2 ... Je puis dire que l'approbation des êtres, que je regarde comme faibles, m'est absolument indifférente.

These are the words of a born rebel, and such sentiments are constantly recurring in his books. He is always discharging his shafts against some established authority ; and, of course, he reserved his bitterest hatred for the proudest and most insidious of all authorities—the Roman Catholic Church. It is odd to find some of the 'Beylistes' solemnly hailing the man whom the power of the Jesuits haunted like a nightmare, and whose account of the seminary in *Le Rouge et Le Noir* is one of the most scathing pictures of religious tyranny ever drawn, as a prophet of the present Catholic movement in France. For in truth, if Beyle was a prophet of anything he was a prophet of that spirit of revolt in modern thought which first reached a complete expression in the pages of Nietzsche. His love of power and self-will, his aristocratic outlook, his scorn of the Christian virtues, his admiration of the Italians of the Renaissance, his repudiation of the herd and the morality of the herd—these qualities, flashing strangely among his observations on Rossini and the Coliseum, his reflections on the memories of the past and his musings on the ladies of the present, certainly give a surprising foretaste of the fiery potion of Zarathustra. The creator of the Duchesse de Sanseverina had caught more than a glimpse of the transvaluation of all values.

Characteristically enough, the appearance of this new potentiality was only observed by two contemporary forces in European society—Goethe and the Austrian police. It is clear that Goethe alone among the critics of the time understood that Beyle was something more than a novelist, and discerned an uncanny significance in his pages. 'I do not like reading M. de Stendhal,' he observed to Winckelmann, 'but I cannot help doing so. He is extremely free and extremely impertinent, and . . . I recommend you to buy all his books.' As for the Austrian police, they had no doubt about the matter. Beyle's book of travel, *Rome, Naples et Florence*, was, they decided, pernicious and dangerous in the highest degree ; and the poor man was hunted out of Milan in consequence.

It would be a mistake to suppose that Beyle displayed in his private life the qualities of the superman. Neither his virtues nor his vices were on the grand scale. In his own person he never seems to have committed an 'espagnolisme.' Perhaps his worst sin was that of plagiarism : his earliest book, a life of Haydn, was almost entirely 'lifted' from the work of a learned German ; and in his next he embodied several choice extracts culled from the *Edinburgh Review*. On this occasion he was particularly delighted, since the *Edinburgh*, in reviewing the book, innocently selected for special approbation the very passages which he had stolen. It is singular that so original a writer should have descended to pilfering. But Beyle was nothing if not inconsistent. With all his Classicism he detested Racine ; with all his love of music he could see nothing in Beethoven ; he adored Italy, and, so soon as he was given his Italian consulate, he was usually to be found in Paris. As his life advanced he grew more and more wayward, capricious, and eccentric. He indulged in queer mystifications, covering his papers with false names and anagrams—for the police, he said, were on his track, and he must be careful. His love-affairs became less and less fortunate ; but he was still sometimes successful, and when he was he registered the fact—upon his braces.

He dreamed and drifted a great deal. He went up to San Pietro in Montorio, and looking over Rome, wrote the initials of his past mistresses in the dust. He tried to make up his mind whether Napoleon after all *was* the only being he respected ; no—there was also Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. He went to the opera at Naples and noted that 'la musique parfaite, comme la pantomime parfaite, me fait songer à ce qui forme actuellement l'objet de mes rêveries et me fait venir des idées excellentes : . . . or, ce soir, je ne puis me dissimuler que j'ai le malheur *of being too great an admirer of Lady L. . . .*' He abandoned himself to 'les charmantes visions du Beau qui souvent encore remplissent ma tête à l'âge de *fifty-two*.' He wondered whether Montesquieu would have thought his writings worthless. He sat scribbling his reminiscences by the fire till the night drew on and the fire went out, and still he scribbled, more and more illegibly, until at last the paper was covered with hieroglyphics undecipherable even by M. Chuquet himself. He wandered among the ruins of ancient Rome, playing to perfection the part of cicerone to such travellers as were lucky enough to fall in with him ; and often his stout and jovial form, with the satyric look in the sharp eyes and the compressed lips, might be seen by the wayside in the Campagna, as he stood and jested with the reapers or the vine-dressers or with the girls coming out, as they had come since the days of Horace, to draw water from the fountains of Tivoli. In more cultivated society he was apt to be nervous ; for his philosophy was never proof against the terror of being laughed at. But sometimes, late at night, when the surroundings were really sympathetic, he could be very happy among his friends. 'Un salon de huit ou dix personnes,' he said, 'dont toutes les femmes ont eu des amants, où la conversation est gaie, anecdotique, et où l'on prend du punch léger à minuit et demie, est l'endroit du monde où je me trouve le mieux.'

And in such a Paradise of Frenchmen we may leave Henri Beyle.

1914

LADY HESTER STANHOPE

LADY HESTER STANHOPE

THE Pitt nose has a curious history. One can watch its transmigrations through three lives. The tremendous hook of old Lord Chatham, under whose curve Empires came to birth, was succeeded by the bleak upward-pointing nose of William Pitt the younger—the rigid symbol of an indomitable *hauteur*. With Lady Hester Stanhope came the final stage. The nose, still with an upward tilt in it, had lost its masculinity; the hard bones of the uncle and the grandfather had disappeared. Lady Hester's was a nose of wild ambitions, of pride grown fantastical, a nose that scorned the earth, shooting off, one fancies, towards some eternally eccentric heaven. It was a nose, in fact, altogether in the air.

Noses, of course, are aristocratic things; and Lady Hester was the child of a great aristocracy. But, in her case, the aristocratic impulse, which had carried her predecessors to glory, had less fortunate results. There has always been a strong strain of extravagance in the governing families of England; from time to time they throw off some peculiarly ill-balanced member, who performs a strange meteoric course. A century earlier, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was an illustrious example of this tendency: that splendid comet, after filling half the heavens, vanished suddenly into desolation and darkness. Lady Hester Stanhope's spirit was still more uncommon; and she met with a most uncommon fate.

She was born in 1776, the eldest daughter of that extraordinary Earl Stanhope, Jacobin and inventor, who made the first steamboat and the first calculating machine, who defended the French Revolution in the House of Lords and erased the armorial bearings—'damned aristocratical nonsense'—from his carriages and his plate. Her mother,

Chatham's daughter and the favourite sister of Pitt, died when she was four years old. The second Lady Stanhope, a frigid woman of fashion, left her stepdaughters to the care of futile governesses, while 'Citizen Stanhope' ruled the household from his laboratory with the violence of a tyrant. It was not until Lady Hester was twenty-four that she escaped from the slavery of her father's house, by going to live with her grandmother, Lady Chatham. On Lady Chatham's death, three years later, Pitt offered her his protection, and she remained with him until his death in 1806.

Her three years with Pitt, passed in the very centre of splendid power, were brilliant and exciting. She flung herself impetuously into the movement and the passion of that vigorous society; she ruled her uncle's household with high vivacity; she was liked and courted; if not beautiful, she was fascinating—very tall, with a very fair and clear complexion, and dark-blue eyes, and a countenance of wonderful expressiveness. Her talk, full of the trenchant nonchalance of those days, was both amusing and alarming: 'My dear Hester, what are you saying?' Pitt would call out to her from across the room. She was devoted to her uncle, who warmly returned her affection. She was devoted, too —but in a more dangerous fashion—to the intoxicating Antinous, Lord Granville Leveson Gower. The reckless manner in which she carried on this love-affair was the first indication of something overstrained, something wild and unaccountable, in her temperament. Lord Granville, after flirting with her outrageously, declared that he could never marry her, and went off on an embassy to St. Petersburg. Her distraction was extreme: she hinted that she would follow him to Russia; she threatened, and perhaps attempted, suicide; she went about telling everybody that he had jilted her. She was taken ill, and then there were rumours of an accouchement, which, it was said, she took care to *afficher*, by appearing without rouge and fainting on the slightest provocation. In the midst of these excursions and alarums there was a terrible and unexpected catastrophe.

Pitt died. And Lady Hester suddenly found herself a dethroned princess, living in a small house in Montague Square on a pension of £1200 a year.

She did not abandon society, however, and the tongue of gossip continued to wag. Her immediate marriage with a former lover, Mr. Hill, was announced : 'il est bien bon,' said Lady Bessborough Then it was whispered that Canning was 'le régnant'—that he was with her 'not only all day, but almost all night.' She quarrelled with Canning and became attached to Sir John Moore. Whether she was actually engaged to marry him—as she seems to have asserted many years later—is doubtful ; his letters to her, full as they are of respectful tenderness, hardly warrant the conclusion ; but it is certain that he died with her name on his lips. Her favourite brother, Charles, was killed beside him ; and it was natural that under this double blow she should have retired from London. She buried herself in Wales ; but not for long. In 1810 she set sail for Gibraltar with her brother James, who was rejoining his regiment in the Peninsula. She never returned to England.

There can be no doubt that at the time of her departure the thought of a lifelong exile was far from her mind. It was only gradually, as she moved further and further eastward, that the prospect of life in England—at last even in Europe—grew distasteful to her ; as late as 1816 she was talking of a visit to Provence. Accompanied by two or three English fellow travellers, her English maid, Mrs. Fry, her private physician, Dr. Meryon, and a host of servants, she progressed, slowly and in great state, through Malta and Athens, to Constantinople. She was conveyed in battleships, and lodged with governors and ambassadors. After spending many months in Constantinople, Lady Hester discovered that she was 'dying to see Napoleon with her own eyes,' and attempted accordingly to obtain passports to France. The project was stopped by Stratford Canning, the English Minister, upon which she decided to visit Egypt, and, chartering a Greek vessel, sailed for Alexandria in the winter

of 1811. Off the island of Rhodes a violent storm sprang up; the whole party were forced to abandon the ship, and to take refuge upon a bare rock, where they remained without food or shelter for thirty hours. Eventually, after many severe privations, Alexandria was reached in safety; but this disastrous voyage was a turning-point in Lady Hester's career. At Rhodes she was forced to exchange her torn and dripping raiment for the attire of a Turkish gentleman—a dress which she never afterwards abandoned. It was the first step in her orientalization.

She passed the next two years in a triumphal progress. Her appearance in Cairo caused the greatest sensation, and she was received in state by the Pasha, Mehemet Ali. Her costume on this occasion was gorgeous: she wore a turban of cashmere, a brocaded waistcoat, a priceless pelisse, and a vast pair of purple velvet pantaloons embroidered all over in gold. She was ushered by chamberlains with silver wands through the inner courts of the palace to a pavilion in the harem, where the Pasha, rising to receive her, conversed with her for an hour. From Cairo she turned northwards, visiting Jaffa, Jerusalem, Acre, and Damascus. Her travelling dress was of scarlet cloth trimmed with gold, and, when on horseback, she wore over the whole a white-hooded and tasselled burnous. Her maid, too, was forced, protesting, into trousers, though she absolutely refused to ride astride. Poor Mrs. Fry had gone through various and dreadful sufferings—shipwreck and starvation, rats and black-beetles unspeakable—but she retained her equanimity. Whatever her Ladyship might think fit to be, *she* was an Englishwoman to the last, and Philippaki was Philip Parker and Mustapha Mr. Farr.

Outside Damascus, Lady Hester was warned that the town was the most fanatical in Turkey, and that the scandal of a woman entering it in man's clothes, unveiled, would be so great as to be dangerous. She was begged to veil herself, and to make her entry under cover of darkness. 'I must take the bull by the horns,' she replied, and rode into the

city unveiled at midday. The population were thunder-struck; but at last their amazement gave way to enthusiasm, and the incredible lady was hailed everywhere as Queen, crowds followed her, coffee was poured out before her, and the whole bazaar rose as she passed. Yet she was not satisfied with her triumphs; she would do something still more glorious and astonishing; she would plunge into the desert and visit the ruins of Palmyra, which only half-a-dozen of the boldest travellers had ever seen. The Pasha of Damascus offered her a military escort, but she preferred to throw herself upon the hospitality of the Bedouin Arabs, who, overcome by her horsemanship, her powers of sight, and her courage, enrolled her a member of their tribe. After a week's journey in their company, she reached Palmyra, where the inhabitants met her with wild enthusiasm, and under the Corinthian columns of Zenobia's temple crowned her head with flowers. This happened in March 1813; it was the apogee of Lady Hester's life. Henceforward her fortunes gradually but steadily declined.

The rumour of her exploits had spread through Syria, and from the year 1813 onwards, her reputation was enormous. She was received everywhere as a royal, almost as a supernatural, personage: she progressed from town to town amid official prostrations and popular rejoicings. But she herself was in a state of hesitation and discontent. Her future was uncertain; she had grown scornful of the West—must she return to it? The East alone was sympathetic, the East alone was tolerable—but could she cut herself off for ever from the past? At Laodicea she was suddenly struck down by the plague, and, after months of illness, it was borne in upon her that all was vanity. She rented an empty monastery on the slopes of Mount Lebanon, not far from Sayda (the ancient Sidon), and took up her abode there. Then her mind took a new surprising turn; she dashed to Ascalon, and, with the permission of the Sultan, began excavations in a ruined temple with the object of discovering a hidden treasure of three million pieces of gold. Having

unearthed nothing but an antique statue, which, in order to prove her disinterestedness, she ordered her appalled doctor to break into little bits, she returned to her monastery. Finally, in 1816, she moved to another house, further up Mount Lebanon, and near the village of Djoun ; and at Djoun she remained until her death, more than twenty years later.

Thus, almost accidentally as it seems, she came to the end of her wanderings, and the last, long, strange, mythical period of her existence began. Certainly the situation that she had chosen was sublime. Her house, on the top of a high bare hill among great mountains, was a one-storied group of buildings, with many ramifying courts and out-houses, and a garden of several acres surrounded by a rampart wall. The garden, which she herself had planted and tended with the utmost care, commanded a glorious prospect. On every side but one the vast mountains towered, but to the west there was an opening, through which, in the far distance, the deep blue Mediterranean was revealed. From this romantic hermitage, her singular renown spread over the world. European travellers who had been admitted to her presence brought back stories full of Eastern mystery ; they told of a peculiar grandeur, a marvellous prestige, an imperial power. The precise nature of Lady Hester's empire was, indeed, dubious ; she was in fact merely the tenant of her Djoun establishment, for which she paid a rent of £20 a year. But her dominion was not subject to such limitations. She ruled imaginatively, transcendentally ; the solid glory of Chatham had been transmuted into the phantasy of an Arabian Night. No doubt she herself believed that she was something more than a chimerical Empress. When a French traveller was murdered in the desert, she issued orders for the punishment of the offenders ; punished they were, and Lady Hester actually received the solemn thanks of the French Chamber. It seems probable, however, that it was the Sultan's orders rather than Lady Hester's which produced the desired effect. In her feud with her terrible neighbour,

the Emir Beshyr, she maintained an undaunted front. She kept the tyrant at bay ; but perhaps the Emir, who, so far as physical force was concerned, held her in the hollow of his hand, might have proceeded to extremities if he had not received a severe admonishment from Stratford Canning at Constantinople. What is certain is that the ignorant and superstitious populations around her feared and loved her, and that she, reacting to her own mysterious prestige, became at last even as they. She plunged into astrology and divination ; she awaited the moment when, in accordance with prophecy, she should enter Jerusalem side by side with the Mahdi, the Messiah ; she kept two sacred horses, destined, by sure signs, to carry her and him to their last triumph. The Orient had mastered her utterly. She was no longer an Englishwoman, she declared ; she loathed England ; she would never go there again ; and if she went anywhere, it would be to Arabia, to 'her own people.'

Her expenses were immense—not only for herself but for others, for she poured out her hospitality with a noble hand. She ran into debt, and was swindled by the moneylenders ; her steward cheated her, her servants pilfered her ; her distress was at last acute. She fell into fits of terrible depression, bursting into dreadful tears and savage cries. Her habits grew more and more eccentric. She lay in bed all day, and sat up all night, talking unceasingly for hour upon hour to Dr. Meryon, who alone of her English attendants remained with her, Mrs. Fry having withdrawn to more congenial scenes long since. The doctor was a poor-spirited and muddle-headed man, but he was a good listener ; and there he sat while that extraordinary talk flowed on—talk that scaled the heavens and ransacked the earth, talk in which memories of an abolished past—stories of Mr. Pitt and of George III., vituperations against Mr. Canning, mimicries of the Duchess of Devonshire—mingled phantasmagorically with doctrines of Fate and planetary influence, and speculations on the Arabian origin of the Scottish clans, and lamentations over the wickedness of servants ; till the

unaccountable figure, with its robes and its long pipe, loomed through the tobacco-smoke like some vision of a Sibyl in a dream. She might be robbed and ruined, her house might crumble over her head; but she talked on. She grew ill and desperate; yet still she talked. Did she feel that the time was coming when she should talk no more?

Her melancholy deepened into a settled gloom when the news came of her brother James's death. She had quarrelled with all her English friends, except Lord Hardwicke—with her eldest brother, with her sister, whose kind letters she left unanswered; she was at daggers drawn with the English consul at Alexandria, who worried her about her debts. Ill and harassed, she hardly moved from her bedroom, while her servants rifled her belongings and reduced the house to a condition of indescribable disorder and filth. Three dozen hungry cats ranged through the rooms, filling the courts with frightful noises. Dr. Meryon, in the midst of it all, knew not whether to cry or laugh. At moments the great lady regained her ancient fire; her bells pealed tumultuously for hours together; or she leapt up, and arraigned the whole trembling household before her, with her Arab war-mace in her hand. Her finances grew more and more involved—grew at length irremediable. It was in vain that the faithful Lord Hardwicke pressed her to return to England to settle her affairs. Return to England, indeed! To England, that ungrateful, miserable country, where, so far as she could see, they had forgotten the very name of Mr. Pitt! The final blow fell when a letter came from the English authorities threatening to cut off her pension for the payment of her debts. Upon that, after dispatching a series of furious missives to Lord Palmerston, to Queen Victoria, to the Duke of Wellington, she renounced the world. She commanded Dr. Meryon to return to Europe, and he—how could he have done it?—obeyed her. Her health was broken, she was over sixty, and, save for her vile servants, absolutely alone. She lived for nearly a year after he left her—we know no more. She had vowed never again to

pass through the gate of her house ; but did she sometimes totter to her garden—that beautiful garden which she had created, with its roses and its fountains, its alleys and its bowers—and look westward at the sea ? The end came in June 1839. Her servants immediately possessed themselves of every moveable object in the house. But Lady Hester cared no longer : she was lying back in her bed—inexplicable, grand, preposterous, with her nose in the air.

1919.

MR. CREEVEY

MR. CREEVEY

Clio is one of the most glorious of the Muses; but, as everyone knows, she (like her sister Melpomene) suffers from a sad defect: she is apt to be pompous. With her buskins, her robes, and her airs of importance she is at times, indeed, almost intolerable. But fortunately the Fates have provided a corrective. They have decreed that in her stately advances she should be accompanied by certain apish, impish creatures, who run round her tittering, pulling long noses, threatening to trip the good lady up, and even sometimes whisking to one side the corner of her drapery, and revealing her undergarments in a most indecorous manner. They are the diarists and letter-writers, the gossips and journalists of the past, the Pepyses and Horace Walpoles and Saint-Simons, whose function it is to reveal to us the littleness underlying great events and to remind us that history itself was once real life. Among them is Mr. Creevey. The Fates decided that Mr. Creevey should accompany Clio, with appropriate gestures, during that part of her progress which is measured by the thirty years preceding the accession of Victoria; and the little wretch did his job very well.

It might almost be said that Thomas Creevey was 'born about three of the clock in the afternoon, with a white head and something a round belly.' At any rate, we know nothing of his youth, save that he was educated at Cambridge, and he presents himself to us in the early years of the nineteenth century as a middle-aged man, with a character and a habit of mind already fixed and an established position in the world. In 1803 we find him what he was to be for the rest of his life—a member of Parliament, a familiar figure in high

society, an insatiable gossip with a rattling tongue. That he should have reached and held the place he did is a proof of his talents, for he was a very poor man ; for the greater part of his life his income was less than £200 a year. But those were the days of patrons and jobs, pocket-boroughs and sinecures ; they were the days, too, of vigorous, bold living, torrential talk, and splendid hospitality ; and it was only natural that Mr. Creevey, penniless and immensely entertaining, should have been put into Parliament by a Duke, and welcomed in every great Whig House in the country with open arms. It was only natural that, spending his whole political life as an advanced Whig, bent upon the destruction of abuses, he should have begun that life as a member for a pocket-borough and ended it as the holder of a sinecure. For a time his poverty was relieved by his marriage with a widow who had means of her own ; but Mrs. Creevey died, her money went to her daughters by her previous husband, and Mr. Creevey reverted to a possessionless existence—without a house, without servants, without property of any sort—wandering from country mansion to country mansion, from dinner-party to dinner-party, until at last in his old age, on the triumph of the Whigs, he was rewarded with a pleasant little post which brought him in about £600 a year. Apart from these small ups and downs of fortune, Mr. Creevey's life was static—static spiritually, that is to say ; for physically he was always on the move. His adventures were those of an observer, not of an actor; but he was an observer so very near the centre of things that he was by no means dispassionate ; the rush of great events would whirl him round into the vortex, like a leaf in an eddy of wind ; he would rave, he would gesticulate, with the fury of a complete partisan ; and then, when the wind dropped, he would be found, like the leaf, very much where he was before. Luckily, too, he was not merely an agitated observer, but an observer who delighted in passing on his agitations, first with his tongue, and then—for so the Fates had decided—with his pen. He wrote easily, spicily,

and persistently; he had a favourite stepdaughter, with whom he corresponded for years; and so it happens that we have preserved to us, side by side with the majestic march of Clio (who, of course, paid not the slightest attention to him), Mr. Creevey's exhilarating *pas de chat*.

Certainly he was not over-given to the praise of famous men. There are no great names in his vocabulary—only nicknames: George III. is 'Old Nobs,' the Regent 'Prinney,' Wellington 'the Beau,' Lord John Russell 'Pie and Thimble,' Brougham, with whom he was on friendly terms, is sometimes 'Bruffam,' sometimes 'Beelzebub,' and sometimes 'Old Wickedshifts'; and Lord Durham, who once remarked that one could 'jog along on £40,000 a year,' is 'King Jog.' The latter was one of the great Whig potentates, and it was characteristic of Creevey that his scurrility should have been poured out with a special gusto over his own leaders. The Tories were villains, of course—Canning was all perfidy and 'infinite meanness,' Huskisson a mass of 'intellectual confusion and mental dirt,' Castlereagh . . . But all that was obvious and hardly worth mentioning; what was really too exacerbating to be borne was the folly and vileness of the Whigs. 'King Jog,' the 'Bogey,' 'Mother Cole,' and the rest of them—they were either knaves or imbeciles. Lord Grey was an exception; but then Lord Grey, besides passing the Reform Bill, presented Mr. Creevey with the Treasurership of the Ordnance, and in fact was altogether a most worthy man.

Another exception was the Duke of Wellington, whom, somehow or other, it was impossible not to admire. Creevey, throughout his life, had a trick of being 'in at the death' on every important occasion; in the House, at Brooks's, at the Pavilion, he invariably popped up at the critical moment; and so one is not surprised to find him at Brussels during Waterloo. More than that, he was the first English civilian to see the Duke after the battle, and his report of the conversation is admirable; one can almost hear the 'It has been a damned serious business. Blücher and I have lost

30,000 men. It has been a damned nice thing—the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life,' and the 'By God! I don't think it would have done if I had not been there.' On this occasion the Beau spoke, as was fitting, 'with the greatest gravity all the time, and without the least approach to anything like triumph or joy.' But at other times he was jocular, especially when 'Prinney' was the subject. 'By God! you never saw such a figure in your life as he is. Then he speaks and swears so like old Falstaff, that damn me if I was not ashamed to walk into the room with him.'

When, a few years later, the trial of Queen Caroline came on, it was inevitable that Creevey should be there. He had an excellent seat in the front row, and his descriptions of 'Mrs. P.,' as he preferred to call her Majesty, are characteristic:

> Two folding doors within a few feet of me were suddenly thrown open, and in entered her Majesty. To describe to you her appearance and manner is far beyond my powers. I had been taught to believe she was as much improved in looks as in dignity of manners; it is therefore with much pain I am obliged to observe that the nearest resemblance I can recollect to this much injured Princess is a toy which you used to call Fanny Royds (a Dutch doll). There is another toy of a rabbit or a cat, whose tail you squeeze under its body, and then out it jumps in half a minute off the ground into the air. The first of these toys you must suppose to represent the person of the Queen; the latter the manner by which she popped all at once into the House, made a *duck* at the throne, another to the Peers, and a concluding jump into the chair which was placed for her. Her dress was black figured gauze, with a good deal of trimming, lace, &c., her sleeves white, and perfectly episcopal; a handsome white veil, so thick as to make it very difficult to me, who was as near to her as anyone, to see her face; such a back for variety and inequality of ground as you never beheld; with a few straggling ringlets on her neck, which I flatter myself from their appearance were not her Majesty's own property.

Mr. Creevey, it is obvious, was not the man to be abashed by the presence of Royalty.

But such public episodes were necessarily rare, and the

main stream of his life flowed rapidly, gaily, and unobtrusively through the fat pastures of high society. Everywhere and always he enjoyed himself extremely, but his spirits and his happiness were at their highest during his long summer sojourns at those splendid country houses whose hospitality he chronicles with indefatigable *verve*. 'This house,' he says at Raby, 'is itself *by far* the most magnificent and unique in several ways that I have ever seen. . . . As long as I have heard of anything, I have heard of being driven into the hall of this house in one's carriage, and being set down by the fire. You can have no idea of the magnificent perfection with which this is accomplished.' At Knowsley 'the new dining-room is opened ; it is 53 feet by 37, and such a height that it destroys the effect of all the other apartments. . . . There are two fireplaces ; and the day we dined there, there were 36 wax candles over the table, 14 on it, and ten great lamps on tall pedestals about the room.' At Thorp Perrow 'all the living rooms are on the ground floor, one a very handsome one about 50 feet long, with a great bow furnished with rose-coloured satin, and the whole furniture of which cost £4000.' At Goodwood the rooms were done up in 'brightest yellow satin,' and at Holkham the walls were covered with Genoa velvet, and there was gilding worth a fortune on 'the roofs of all the rooms and the doors.' The fare was as sumptuous as the furniture. Life passed amid a succession of juicy chops, gigantic sirloins, plump fowls, pheasants stuffed with pâté de foie gras, gorgeous Madeiras, ancient Ports. Wine had a double advantage : it made you drunk ; it also made you sober : it was its own cure. On one occasion, when Sheridan, after days of riotous living, showed signs of exhaustion, Mr. and Mrs. Creevey pressed upon him 'five or six glasses of light French wine' with excellent effect. Then, at midnight, when the talk began to flag and the spirits grew a little weary, what could be more rejuvenating than to ring the bell for a broiled bone? And one never rang in vain—except, to be sure, at King Jog's. There, while the host was

guzzling, the guests starved. This was too much for Mr. Creevey, who, finding he could get nothing for breakfast, while King Jog was 'eating his own fish as comfortably as could be,' fairly lost his temper.

> My blood beginning to boil, I said: 'Lambton, I wish you could tell me what quarter I am to apply to for some fish.' To which he replied in the most impertinent manner: 'The servant, I suppose.' I turned to Mills and said pretty loud: 'Now, if it was not for the fuss and jaw of the thing, I would leave the room and the house this instant'; and dwelt on the damned outrage. Mills said: 'He hears every word you say': to which I said: 'I hope he does.' It was a regular scene.

A few days later, however, Mr. Creevey was consoled by finding himself in a very different establishment, where 'everything is of a piece—excellent and plentiful dinners, a fat service of plate, a fat butler, a table with a barrel of oysters and a hot pheasant, &c., wheeled into the drawing-room every night at half-past ten.'

It is difficult to remember that this was the England of the Six Acts, of Peterloo, and of the Industrial Revolution. Mr. Creevey, indeed, could hardly be expected to remember it, for he was utterly unconscious of the existence—of the possibility—of any mode of living other than his own. For him, dining-rooms 50 feet long, bottles of Madeira, broiled bones, and the brightest yellow satin were as necessary and obvious a part of the constitution of the universe as the light of the sun and the law of gravity. Only once in his life was he seriously ruffled; only once did a public question present itself to him as something alarming, something portentous, something more than a personal affair. The occasion is significant. On March 16, 1825, he writes:

> I have come to the conclusion that our Ferguson is *insane*. He quite foamed at the mouth with rage in our Railway Committee in support of this infernal nuisance—the loco-motive Monster, carrying *eighty tons* of goods, and navigated by a tail of smoke and sulphur, coming thro' every man's grounds between Manchester and Liverpool.

His perturbation grew. He attended the committee assiduously, but in spite of his efforts it seemed that the railway Bill would pass. The loco-motive was more than a joke. He sat every day from 12 to 4; he led the opposition with long speeches. 'This railway,' he exclaims on May 31, 'is the devil's own.' Next day, he is in triumph: he had killed the Monster.

> Well—this devil of a railway is strangled at last. . . . To-day we had a clear majority in committee in our favour, and the promoters of the Bill withdrew it, and took their leave of us.

With a sigh of relief he whisked off to Ascot, for the festivities of which he was delighted to note that 'Prinney' had prepared 'by having 12 oz. of blood taken from him by cupping.'

Old age hardly troubled Mr. Creevey. He grew a trifle deaf, and he discovered that it was possible to wear woollen stockings under his silk ones; but his activity, his high spirits, his popularity, only seemed to increase. At the end of a party ladies would crowd round him. 'Oh, Mr. Creevey, how agreeable you have been!' 'Oh, thank you, Mr. Creevey! how useful you have been!' 'Dear Mr. Creevey, I laughed out loud last night in bed at one of your stories.' One would like to add (rather late in the day, perhaps) one's own praises. One feels almost affectionate; a certain sincerity, a certain immediacy in his response to stimuli, are endearing qualities; one quite understands that it was natural, on the pretext of changing house, to send him a dozen of wine. Above all, one wants him to go on. Why should he stop? Why should he not continue indefinitely telling us about 'Old Salisbury' and 'Old Madagascar'? But it could not be.

> Le temps s'en va, le temps s'en va, Madame;
> Las! Le temps non, mais nous, nous en allons.

It was fitting that, after fulfilling his seventy years, he should catch a glimpse of 'little Vic' as Queen of England,

laughing, eating, and showing her gums too much at the Pavilion. But that was enough : the piece was over ; the curtain had gone down ; and on the new stage that was preparing for very different characters, and with a very different style of decoration, there would be no place for Mr. Creevey.

1919.

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