

voluminous writers the world has ever known, he worked week after week, month after month, year after year, without interruption. Disappointments, and of these he had his full share, spurred him only to fresh efforts; he was never weary, never until the last years of his life ill, never till the day of his death out of spirits.

Scores of gentlemen have, at different times, expressed to me their surprise that I was "*always in spirits*," that nothing *pulled me down*; and the truth is that, throughout nearly forty years of troubles, losses, and crosses, assailed all the while by more numerous and powerful enemies than ever man had before to contend with, and performing, at the same time, labours greater than man ever before performed; all those labours requiring mental exertion, and some of them mental exertion of the highest order; the truth is, that, throughout the whole of this long time of troubles and of labours, I have never known a single hour of *real anxiety*; the troubles have been no troubles to me; I have not known what *lowness of spirits* meant; have been more gay, and felt less care, than any bachelor that ever lived. "You are *always in spirits*, Cobbett!" To be sure; for why should I not? *Poverty* I have always set at defiance, and I could, therefore, defy the temptation of riches.¹

To his work Cobbett sacrificed everything that makes life enjoyable to most people. He never trod the primrose path of dalliance, and he wrote scornfully of those who invented dressing-gowns and slippers. "They could have had very little else to do," he remarked. This was perhaps the harshest thing he could say, for in his eyes there was nothing more contemptible than to have little

¹ *Advice to Young Men* (ed. 1837), par. 92.