

essentials in the characters of then and now are the same. My father lived ninety-four years and died in 1900. He, therefore, had seen men sent to Botany Bay for stealing a loaf of bread, and men hung for robbing, and men thrashed in the Navy as they were thrashed in the days of Dyck Calhoun. Yet if he were alive today he would dress in modern clothes and not in the stock at the neck and the tight-sleeved coat with the velvet collar and cuffs, and the coloured waistcoat and the close breeches of the George the Fourth period.

The outer trappings of life change, but not the inner things. Fifty years ago there was not a Church or Chapel where hell-fire was not preached, but where is it preached today? We have even changed our ideas of God; but we remain the same, better in some ways, worse in others, but down deep in the fundamentals the same—better, wiser, more tolerant than our forefathers were yet lacking some of their best qualities. When I read Walter Scott or Byron, I do not feel that I am far from them. When I read Bulwer Lytton's *The Last of the Barons* I am near the people who lived when Richard III lived; so when I write a novel like *No Defence* the reality of the characters is based on life as I have seen it and as I have read it, and the seeing and the reading have made me what I am. I am of 1400, I am of 1923, and naught can sever me from the past or cut me adrift from the present.

*No Defence* is more real to me because Richard Parker, the Mutineer, was one of the villains of the story and the cause of vast trouble, and that I have a cousin living called Richard Parker and that I am half Irish does not lessen the verisimilitude. Only a few days ago it was forbidden by the British House of Commons for a soldier to be tied to a wheel for hours in a day in case of unruly conduct, and that degrading and humiliating punishment has been prevalent in the British Army for infinite years. Somehow we adapt ourselves to all reforms with ease, yet the late war showed that senseless barbarity and cruelty