

Horne's cry of disgust at this miserable skulking in ambush with an insolent contempt and calm which must indeed have maddened that reverend gentleman. Turn from these queer pages of history to the painted canvas. This is one man's view of Francis, faithful and sincere, but by no means has it much likeness, I should imagine, beyond a certain look, an expression, put on by the sitter in order to please the painter, and caught by the artist in a somewhat clumsy fashion, and it can have resembled but little the extraordinary person it is meant to represent. Lawrence would have done no better, for assuredly he would not have been so simple and truthful, but Gainsborough or Reynolds would have brought out all manner of latent qualities which Hoppner never discovered, while if Holl, as I have said, or Millais, had had the handling of this head we should have had someone to look at for our pains. As I study the piece, asking this and that, my questions are answered by Miss Francis (with perhaps the same inflections in her voice as had Junius, whose movements and gestures may, for aught I know, be identical with his), who tells me much of interest in connection with her ancestor, and shows me as much more.

I take it that the link between Junius and Francis has been sufficiently proved to compel our accepting it as a matter of fact—if you want the case put clearly in a few sentences you will find it, as no doubt you know, in Macaulay's criticism of Gleig's life of Warren Hastings, and, therefore, I hope you will not think it waste of time if I ask you to look over some of the letters and papers with me, many of which for a matter of a hundred years have lain in neat bundles packed away in tin boxes, or, wafered secure, have interleaved large calf volumes, and all, from first to last, speaking eloquently of by-gone days. These manuscripts did not belong to an ordinary person, by any manner of means; they were the property of a man who made his mark on his generation in a fashion of which we, reading in the memoirs of this period, catch many and many an odd little picture, where his shadowy figure (masked and cloaked like an Italian conspirator) is sketched in, out of all proportion, dwarfing king, peer and commoner with his terrible mysterious all-pervading presence. It is reported that when this young gentleman from the War Office, aged only thirty-two, was given a post in India worth ten thousand a year that George the Third cried, with a sigh of relief, "Now we shall hear no more of Junius." Others again declare that his pen was so much dreaded no one dared to acknowledge openly that this position on the Indian Board of Council was anything better than a bribe. The thing was admirably managed, and nothing could then be proved. Woodfall himself, they say, never knew for certain that the anonymous contributor was his old school-fellow from St. Paul's. The Letters came in at irregular intervals, written in a feigned hand (on War Office paper, as it is now known, in many cases gilt-edged), and the sender never was traced. An American cousin—a Mr. Tilghmann—who is supposed to have helped Francis with the knowledge of the law that was required, may, perhaps have known the great secret, but even this is doubted. Close to the lamp we will put the volumes, the leaves of which we are about to turn, and as the light falls on the rough leather covers, and now on the yellowed sheets and faded ink, we find ourselves introduced familiarly to those great folks, of whom before, perhaps, we have only caught a cursory glimpse, blazing afar off in diamonds and spangled velvets; we are made known to those humbler members of society whom elsewhere we have met in visiting time, and now catch sociably, in morning-gown and slippers, by their own firesides, and from these pages every now and then children's faces look out on ours, little children who gradually grow up as we read on, and who write at first with that beautiful laboured copperplate hand taught by characteristic-ness and tutor, till by degrees they reach to the swift characteristic lines of the grown man and woman. Almost any letter received by Francis he has kept, and many copies of those sent by him are also here; so, if you are fond of human nature you will find plenty to your hand. Whose voice will you listen to? Burke's, as he speaks of the terrible loss of his dear Dick, whose death seems to have broken his father's heart; or Lady Clive's, as she gossips to Francis of events passing in Town, tells how her own boy is as tall as little Phil, repeats all sorts of trivial matters dear to an exile's heart; or do you want to hear the talk of that handful of sturdy kind friends, who helped Mrs. Francis manage her affairs while her husband was away? See, here is a long account of the Lisbon Earthquake—written by some one on the spot a day or two after the event occurred—that event in which Johnson sceptically refused to believe—and of a much later date, of course. Here are delightful descriptions of evenings spent at the Pavilion, long, closely-written sheets, addressed to the Duchess of Devonshire. Interrupting the older tones, come in the childish trebles of the Francis children: they are overcome—these poor babies—at the notion of their dear and honoured Sir facing the dangers of such a climate as India for their sakes, and they can only repay such goodness, they declare, by strict attention to their mother's wishes, and by taking advantage of the efforts of those kind instructors whose services their indulgent father has been generous enough to provide for them! Then come the letters from dear dearest Betsy to her husband who is a six months' voyage away from her; and now writes some guest in the Clive household, who tells of the sudden illness and death of His Lordship, with never a hint of the suicide of which you and I know all too-day. It is easy to trace much of the life of Francis from the beginning of his career to the last days spent in St. James's Square, easy to find out just those surface troubles and pleasures of which everyone speaks; but, reading between the lines of this correspondence, remembering, if you please, certain ominous Latin sentences in his Indian diary, and that immense Junius secret weighing for ever on his soul, I wonder if he had a happy existence after all, in spite of many a fortuitous circumstance, excellent health, and a good fortune. . . . Close by in a cabinet drawer is the bullet fired by Warren Hastings in the

duel with Francis, which gave the latter a wound important enough to keep him invalided for weeks; here in these volumes are the papers, put in order the night before the event, reasons carefully written out why such a course was inevitable, directions to his family, notes to his friends. Open them where we may, and all manner of curious things come to light, little touches of everyday life, snatches of everyday talk, sheets, many would think, worthless to keep, but which are inexpressibly interesting now to a generation fond of watching and hearing of former inhabitants of their Town. It is to be hoped that eventually Miss Beata Francis will arrange out of this mass of material a book of memoirs, undoubtedly much wanted; only unfortunately she has not much time (though plenty of talent) for literary matters, for Miss Francis is a singer of whom we in England are very proud, and to whose voice we are never tired of listening.

And I must add the following, as a postscript: I was talking this afternoon to a charming old lady of these letters and the pleasure they had given me, when she interrupted me to say that in Paris, fifty years ago, she had met Madame Le Grand—of whose beauty Francis first speaks in 1774, I think—when she was Madame de Talleyrand; the loveliness had fled, said my old friend, but the grace and sweetness of manner were still there; so I, to-day, in 1888, hear a faithful description of some one who had seen this woman of many adventures (married before the American Rebellion), who remembered exactly of what she talked and how she looked.

On Saturday I made, under protest, one of an enormous audience to welcome Mansfield, the actor, to the Lyceum ; under protest, I say, as first, I could not imagine that out of Mr. Stevenson's wonderful little parable it was possible to make a good play, and secondly, speak as we will, much of our newspaper criticism is vastly misleading, and is the result, in so many cases, of private friendships and enmities, that from the enthusiastic praise given beforehand to this actor I was more than half inclined to doubt his power to do anything beyond bore me. The playhouse was crammed (for all they declare town is empty, but many of these people came up from the country for this first night), and that is of itself a charming sight. As for the representative folk about me I cannot remember half whom I saw, but no doubt you have read their names in the papers by now ; did they tell you that Miss Mary Anderson looked beautiful, young, gay, sweet-tempered, and that Princess Victoria of Teck has no claim whatever to the prettiness with which the paragraphists are perpetually endowing her ? Music of a not very inspiring sort soon began to wail from the orchestra, and those knowing members of the company assembled who had seen Mansfield before tried, as we waited, to work on our feelings with a description of the coming horrors, but none of us cared a straw. I have so often been warned that, for instance, he of the *Bells* would freeze my bones, that she of *Tosca* fame would haunt my dreams ; but, alack ! no freezing, no haunting has ever ensued from such-like entertainments. On the contrary, I have been (like Pet Marjorie's hen) " more than usual calm, and didn't care a damn," and have left the theatre with no other feeling in many cases than that of weariness. When the curtain went up the other night, and we watched Sir Danvers at chess with Utterson, and listened to Agnes complaining of the absence of her lover, and later, when we saw that same lover enter through the bow-window, reminding one of some conscience-stricken young curate, his soul suddenly assailed with doubts as to the common-sense of the Thirty-nine Articles (as *Robert Elsmere* must have looked, in fact, after reading in one of the wicked *Quakers'* atheistic books), I don't think any of us felt very much impressed. None of the actors so far were good. Mr. Mansfield was personally a disappointment ; he seemed short and insignificant ; luxuriant dark hair massed over a marble brow, like the hero of a lady's novel, and fine, troubled, bewildered eyes did not make up for the comparative feebleness of the lower part of the face, and though an attitude every now and then was effective, many of them were affected, and there was a tendency, I thought, to keep before himself Irving as a model of deportment. The opening of the play, then, the manner in which Mansfield brought Jekyll before us, all this was very unlike the book, consequently, when the doctor took Miss Carew for a walk in the moonlight, most of us began to murmur to each other, but those who had been before at the piece said, " Wait and see." And decidedly we were astonished at that for which we waited.

Dr. Jekyll had returned home, and Agnes was playing a melancholy little air on the piano, while her father dozed by the fire, when suddenly, creeping close to the panes, there stood that hideous object, Edward Hyde. Well, we watched, fearing he was going to enter the room, and then, when he did so, from the first noiseless stumble over the threshold, from the first grating sound of that awful creature's rough voice, we were literally spell bound, horror struck, a feeling which increased rather than diminished, and which reached its culminating height when, with a horrible leap, the murderer flew at his victim's throat. A false step would have ruined the situation and made the thing grotesque. It is impossible to exaggerate the effect produced on us all, and the tribute of a second's scared silence as the curtain went down was the result.

I do not propose to carefully criticise the play—no doubt you have seen it for yourself, and have no wish for my opinion—but I should like to be allowed to say that there are certain points in the piece which, as long as memory holds her seat, I can never forget; there are certain touches, suggested by Mr. Stevenson, I am sure, which will remain as fresh in my mind for years to come as they are to-day. There is that ghastly toasting of the ghost for instance, alluded to in the story, which is here just elaborated enough to make it blood-curdling, and one cannot, any more than can Hyde, take one's eyes away from the armchair in which It sat, or the open door through which It entered, and at length departed. Then the marvellous transformation of Hyde to Jekyll as he stands to be judged before his friend (that despairing cry, *oh! Lanyon Lanyon* still rings in my ears), his manner as he speaks of the punishment