

and yet, it is something to remember that you have once felt like that. My friend wrote back to me that of all kinds of bondage, vagabondage was the most cruel and the hardest from which to escape. I believe him now, but *then* I adventured all the same.

Looking from Villon down the centuries, Grub Street seems to be the next important historical fact, a street of mean lodgings where poor hacks wrote rubbish for a pittance, or starved—not a merry place.

And then to the happy time in England, when the greatest English critic, William Hazlitt, could write his best on a dead player of hand fives; when Reynolds, the friend of Keats, could write a sonnet on appearing before his lady with a black eye, “after a casual turn up,” and speak of “the great men of this age in poetry, philosophy, or *pugilism*.”

Then we think of the Romantics in France. There was the sturdy poet, Petrus Borel, setting up his “Tartars’ Camp” in a house in Paris, with its one defiant rule pasted on the door: “All clothing is prohibited.” There was Balzac, writing for a fortnight on end without leaving his garret. There was Théophile Gautier, wishing he had been born in the pomp of ancient days, contenting his Grecian instincts by writing *Mademoiselle de Maupin* in six weeks in a big, bare room, with foils and boxing gloves