

apartment was styled the "monument room," because it was the depository of several huge coffin-like chests containing the records of St. Mary's monastery. Their grim appearance would, one would deem, alone have sufficed to deter the nervously sensitive boy from lingering there, had he not already have "drunk the world's cruelty," and had he not determined, at all risks, to obtain a place of unmolested solitude. But the scene changes. In a wretched garret of a poor lodging-house the boy lies dead on his miserable mattress. Scattered about the room are fragments of manuscripts: and that torn paper is all now remaining of the poor anguished mind.

Shake the mental kaleidoscope: the figure changes and behold Leigh Hunt in his study. The genial author of "Rimini" pictures his *sacrum*—perhaps only an ideal one—for us, himself, and introduces us into a room such as real live authors love to labour in. "We like a small study," says Hunt, "where we are almost in contact with our books. We like to feel them about us: to be in the arms of our mistress Philosophy, rather than to see her at a distance." "When I speak of being in contact with my books, I mean it literally. I like to lean my head against them. Whilst writing this, I am in my study, on the right and left of me are book-shelves: a book-case is affectionately open in front of me, and thus kindly enclosed with my books, I write. I like a great library near me, but for the study itself give me a small snug place, almost entirely walled with books."

But Leigh Hunt did not write all his works in such snuggeries: he was one of that glorious army of literary martyrs who wrote in prison, not always, perchance, the worst places to compose in. Has not some of the world's most famous literature germinated within the precincts of a gaol. Noblest and best of human creations, thou peerless knight errant, Don Quixote de la Mancha, did not thy immortal chronicler pass many years of his embittered life in durance vile? Did not the gallant Sir Walter Raleigh write his

stately "History of the World" in confinement? Was not that sweetest of lyrics, "To Althea," written within the stone walls of a prison? Was it not in Newgate's gloom that Daniel de Foe first projected his *Robinson*—the prototype of periodical literature? Was it not in gaol that André Chenier was composing his last mournful stanzas when he was led away to death? Alas, in all times and climes, have not the dungeon and the cell, the prison and even the scaffold, been the home of poesy and the haunt of genius?

What contrasts do we see in the localities where they did it! What a prodigious stride from some grand old writer lolling in his easy chair—a Bacon or a Burton, perchance, indulging sonorous sentences, each sentence a sermon in itself—to your modern journalist, scribbling as he goes in balloons, steamboats, express trains, and the like! But the man of genius is always the same! From Homer to Victor Hugo, genius has been regularly irregular. For instance, Dickens, as his biographer tells us, excited himself to an extraordinary degree over the composition of "The Christmas Carol," and "walked, thinking of it fifteen and twenty miles about the back streets of London many and many a night after all sober folks had gone to bed." It was the work of such odd moments of leisure as were left him out of the time taken up by two numbers of his "Chuzzlewit."

Secluded, but far from gloomy or hateful, was the literary life depicted by Alexander Smith in "Dreamthorpe." A garden, the young Scotchman found the best place to think out his thoughts in: but they had to be wrought into shape in his library, an apartment into which he himself introduces us, calling our particular attention to a book-case standing there. It is surmounted by a bust of Dante, and a certain shelf in it holds, as he tells us, "a number of volumes which look somewhat the worse for wear. Those of them which originally possessed gilding have had it fingered off. Out of the world of books have I singled them, as I have singled my intimates out