

Then on, along the Embankment, past the grey mass of the Tate Gallery, past the bridges, looking out over the broad river, now silver speckled in the moonlight, now dark, with bright shafts of light across the water and sparks of red and green from the lanterns on the boats. When a tug, with a train of barges, swept from under a bridge and brought me the invariable, unaccountable shiver with the cold noise of the waters parted by her bows, I would lean on the parapet and watch, and catch a sight of a dark figure silent upon her, and wonder what it would be like to spend all my days eternally passing up and down the river, seeing ships and men, and knowing no hours but the tides, until her lights would vanish round a bend, and leave the river as before, moving on past the still lamps on either side.

I would walk on past Chelsea Bridge, under the trees of Cheyne Walk, thinking, with heart uplifted by the unusual wine, and my own youth, of the great men who had lived there, and wondering if Don Saltero's still knew the ghosts of Addison and Steele—and then I would laugh at myself, and sing a snatch of a song that the evening had brought me, or perhaps be led suddenly to simple matters by the sight of the bright glow of light about the coffee-stall, for whose sake I came this way, instead of crossing the river by Westminster or Vauxhall Bridge.