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### Life.

THIS life is a drama,  
A great panorama,  
With strange alternations of joy and of woe ;  
Or are we but dreaming,  
And things only seeming ?  
For save that we're ignorant, what do we know ?

We're strange contradictions,  
Our loves turn afflictions,  
Our sweetest affections are scourges of flame ;  
There's strength in our weakness,  
And pride in our meekness,  
And near neighbors always are glory and shame.

Lovely humanities  
Bloom among vanities,  
Beams of peace mid our tumult and strife ;  
Spiritualities  
Close by brutalities,  
Oh who can read us the riddle of life ?

And mere brute unreason  
Comes duly in season,  
As sure as the dewdrops and flowers of spring ;  
And reason astounded  
Stands dumb and confounded,  
And out of the stern facts no meaning can wring.

Behold the oppressor !  
And wrong's stern redressor,  
The bane and the antidote both at a birth.  
Is nothing disjointed ?  
Are all pre-appointed,  
The saints, and the sinners, and saviours of earth ?

Oh whence ! and oh whether !  
Have we been sent hither,  
Without chart or compass the track to pursue ;  
Cast on a wild ocean  
Of endless emotion,  
To buffet the waves with this terrible crew ?

We journey as strangers  
This desert of dangers ;  
And mid all our knowledge is this all we know ?  
The road's long and dreary,  
We're wayworn and weary,  
We vanish, and who can tell whither we go ?

ALEXANDER MCLACHLAN.

### THE JUNIOR PICKWICKS,

AND THEIR MEMORABLE TRIP TO NORTH AMERICA.

#### CHAP. I.

IN a quiet but most respectable street in the west end of London stands the Junior Pickwick Club, an association composed of men, mostly between twenty and thirty years of age, who devoted themselves to the discussion of all manner of questions, the most important of which were Literature, Art, Science and Politics, and though it has never been learned that the world at large has ever been greatly benefited by the results of these discussions, it can never be denied that the Club served as an admirable means of keeping its members out of mischief. The members for the most part, however, were exceedingly proper and well conducted young men, though none of them might be said to possess a very extensive knowledge of the world in which they lived, moved, and had their being, for though several of them had made what is called the grand tour, it had so happened that they had done so in the company of tutors of undeniable morality

and propriety, who had kept them closely under their own immediate supervision, and consequently the youths had been unable to give way to the exuberance of their spirits in any of the dissipations so common in France and the European Continent generally. Certain envious parties who had been proposed for membership in the Club and black-balled, stigmatized the Junior Pickwicks as a lot of milkshops and humbugs ; nay, they had even been heard to apply the terribly opprobrious term of "duffers" to them as a body, but as it was evident that nothing but the lacerated state of their own sensibilities had caused them thus to reflect on those who had denied them the privilege of membership, these epithets may be taken for what they were worth.

No one appeared to be able to state precisely why the Club had received the title that it bore, but as every club must have a name of some kind or other, and as the objects of its organization were intended to be similar to those which gave rise to the immortal Pickwick Club long since defunct, it was deemed a suitable title and had been adopted with much applause and universal acclamation at the first general meeting of the Club, now exactly four years since, for it is at the fourth annual general assemblage that the reader is introduced to the Junior Pickwick Club and its members.

In a large room of the Club building, then, some four score or so of the young Pickwickians had assembled, and as the reader, being privileged, enters that room, the President for the ensuing year, Mr. Granby Simmers, elected half an hour ago and with the honor bran upon him, had just taken his seat at the head of a long table with a blue cloth, and around which sat the rest of the members, applauding vociferously and hammering the table with their knuckles.



Mr. Simmers was a tall, rather soft-looking, young man of perhaps twenty-nine years of age, exceedingly bashful, and of most undoubted morality and virtue. He was devoted to the pursuit of art and science of every description ; not that he was either a painter, sculptor or anything else, but as he was often heard to assert that he doted on art, and had crammed his rooms with specimens of every thing that might be considered art, he was generally conceded to be —well, to be fond of art ; and

as such, a worthy person to be President of the Junior Pickwick Club. The election of various other officers was proceeded with and finished, and several very learned discussions had taken place, in which a great many members asked for advice and information on most abstruse subjects from other members who were understood to have made a very particular study of those subjects, and who gave the desired advice and information in a manner calculated to impress their hearers with a profound sense of their wisdom, and which were received by their questioners as being eminently satisfactory, though it was extremely doubtful whether either parties understood the first thing that they said or heard, and everything had proceeded with the greatest harmony, courtesy and good feeling, when the newly elected President arose and said, "Gentlemen," ("hear, hear," from several voices) "it has ever been the object of this association to advance the interests of Art, Science and general information as far as lay in the power of its members,