

complete her kindness by completing the series of letters, our joy would be *au comble*.

For we, too, have always felt a great interest about the author's private life—about his family, lodgings, earnings and general history. And what delightful glimpses of your character these letters disclose. Kinder you are as a father than Colonel Newcome himself, forasmuch as your boys are girls, as your friend Major O'Dowd would say. (Or was it *Captain O'Dowd*?) How touching is that scene in the inn at Baden! And that little detail of the next day's travel, "how Minnie laid out the table of the first-class carriage with all the contents of the travelling bag, books, o de Cologne, ink, etc.," whereby we are reminded of Mr. Patmore's pathetic little poem.

Too true it is that we are taught to be ashamed of our best feelings all our life. But you at least were not ashamed of owning the strong regard you had for your friends. Wherever you are, be sure there are some left in the world who love you. Nor was this kindliness confined to the inner circle of your friends. There was something of this spirit in the *mot* which captured the heart of the old French Vicomte and romance writer. "He said, *J'ai vu l'Ecosse; mais Valter Scott n'y était plus, hélas!* I said, *Vous y'étiez, Vicomte, c'était bien assez d'un*—on which the old boy said I possessed French admirably and knew how to speak the prettiest things in the prettiest manner." And the old boy was right. Even for those poor little painted Jezebels whom you neither knew nor recognized there is a pitying word.

This genial disposition is very different from the sourness of another great author mentioned once in your letters as "glowering in at Lady —'s." He wasn't very genial. How sweet and wholesome are these letters compared with his atrabilious outpourings, of which we have read so many volumes! For though you had as many private griefs as the Chelsea philosopher you had what he had not—an excellent digestion. You could fall asleep upon an easy chair after dinner and not awake till dawn. Can it be that a whole heart is not so essential to happiness as a wholesome stomach?

No doubt you were right in supposing you had a great faculty of enjoyment. Men of such large frame and large heart are apt to have Rabelaisian appetites. You were able to enjoy a good dinner whether at the club or in the Jewry, and always made a point of mentioning the mock-turtle soup when it was uncommonly good. Not even sickness could depress your spirits. Indeed, we are inclined to envy you in bed with your brandy and water and a novel. That is, we should be tempted to envy you, but even that mild drink of which we find mention in the Letters (and which we believe goes by the odd name of shandy gaff) would be too strong for the president of a temperance league.

Then what delight you took in pretty faces and how fond you were of drawing them! By that token how often you drew Mrs. J. O. B. (*On les aime jolies, Madame.*) Your own features seem to have borne some traces of that early school encounter of which your Saturday friend used to boast. No, we do him an injustice (which you never did even when he was harsh enough to attack you after paying 2/6 for a single number of his Review*). His boast was strength of memory, it was his friends who, in pure wantonness, reported his boyish strength of fist after you both had met beyond the Styx. In a drawing which Clive Newcome might have penned we see how the little printer's devil kept you from an appointment.

* We see the Saturday man, with his usual "tartarity," would like to have Vernon Harcourt account for the extra 2 bob.

We are pleased to recognize in that genial countenance a likeness to a certain Great Statesman, who, though he may not have your power of painting character, seems to possess an equally clear insight into human nature and has not been without the opportunity of turning his gift to good account.

To the would-be novelist there is much food for reflection in these letters. Here he may see how keen was your scent for characters—how now you discover a chapter of Pendennis in certain of the company; again, it is a new character—a snobbish grisette, a French Fotheringay, or a foreign parson. More than once we get welcome bits of gossip about the novels which you found such an uncommonly pleasant subject after dinner. Concerning the much maligned Amelia Sedley, you tell us—"You know you (Mrs. J. O. B.) are only a piece of her, my mother is another half, my poor little wife *y est pour beaucoup*." It increases our interest in Castlewood to know that its original belonged to the grandfather of Arthur Hallam, who is buried in the parish church hard by. And there is something fitting in this link between the greatest novel and the greatest poem of our time.

Did you not live in your books as much as in the world? We are not surprised when you tell us about your interest in the Inn where Becky used to live and your desire to pass by Captain Osborne's lodging. Long ago we knew that you believed perfectly in all those people. For are they not to be met with in all manner of unexpected places in that shadow-land which has so much reality for some of us still? Nay, does it not become more real with time, and is it not we who are fading and getting dim-eyed and needing a sight of old Jos. Osborn or young Clive Newcome or that amiable profligate, Foker, to restore us to our youth?

We have always had a suspicion that you were yourself the hero of your books, that as Fielding is wild Tom Jones and wild Captain Booth so you were wild Arthur Pendennis and wild Clive Newcome. But when we are told that your vanity would be to go through life as a Major Pendennis and that *he* is your model gentleman, the words cannot be taken seriously. However you may speak of yourself you were too large-hearted to be a snob. Is it significant that the letter written on Shakespeare's birthday shows you in a truer light, as though on that day the nobler instinct predominated?

For there are times when our trust is shaken—our idol totters. "One doesn't think the worse of a man of honour for cheating in affairs of the heart." Surely Major Pendennis wrote that sentence and his nephew (who was an honest young fellow enough, as that episode with Fanny shows) failed to blot it out. What a contrast between the reflections on the love-sick poetess and those of Washington Irving in a similar connection. Yet you appreciated Irving highly. Perhaps it was with unconscious self-pity that you wrote of him: "He had loved once in his life; the lady he loved died and he, whom all the world loved, never sought to replace her. I can't say how much the thought of that fidelity has touched me. Does not the very cheerfulness of his after-life add to the pathos of that untold story?" We think of the pathos of another little known story and are silent.

Dating from 1847 these letters sometimes bring back the life of the last century. When we read of you in the Belgian coach we are reminded of Peregrine Pickle in a similar scene; and when you refer to the probable outcome of a controversy with priestly fellow-passengers, we recall the famous trip to Harwich of Mr. Boswell and Dr. Johnson when the doctor astonished a coach load of people by defending the Inquisition. You must have had quite a fellow-feeling for the old Doctor. Did he not on that same journey rebuke his ardent young friend