INTRODUCTION

to

ROUNDABOUT PAPERS,
DENIS DUVAL, ETC.

1860–1863

I

ROUNDABOUT PAPERS

THE "Roundabout Papers" might serve for a diary of the last years of my father's work.

One by one the times and the occasions recur as one looks over the list of these short essays which seem so identified with him. The first of the series devised for the first of the Cornhills, "On a Lazy, Idle Boy," was begun in the large low sitting-room of the little inn at Coire where we were detained—-for many weary days. My brother-in-law, Leslie Stephen, has since told me that he saw my father and my sister for the first time sitting on a bench in the garden of the Baur au Lac Hotel at Zürich, to which we moved next, and where the article was finished. How much happiness it might sometimes give one, if one could recognise lifelong friends to be in the people who seem to pass one by, and yet who are coming back—for good.

As for the "Two children in black," I can see them still, as they first got into the railway-carriage with us, with their charming mother. We made friends all day long in the train to Heidelberg, and at night we went to the same inn—their name was written with ours in the travellers' book. "Madame —— avec ses enfants."
I have forgotten the name, though I remember the phrase. How sorry my father was for the poor little boys, and how often we speculated as to their history!

This paper opens with a passage about Montaigne. "Montaigne and 'Howel's Letters' are my bedside books. If I wake at night, I have one or other of them to prattle me to sleep again. They talk about themselves for ever, and don't weary me. I like to hear them tell their old stories over and over again." My father had a favourite old Montaigne which he kept by his bedside.

As far as I can remember, I do not believe that he had any particular feeling for special editions. He used a cheap, battered old Boswell with double columns; the companion with whom, as he said, he could have been quite content to dwell upon that problematical desert island. He also liked his shabby, worm-eaten copies of Johnson's poets. Milton's Sonnet to Shakespeare in Johnson's poets was one of the last things he ever read. When he did not sleep well, sometimes in summer-time he used to get up very early, about four o'clock—long before the house was astir—and we would come down to breakfast and find him standing reading by his bookshelves.

One can feel as one reads how he enjoyed these expeditions into book-land, the long rambles in that wide, inexhaustible country; sometimes he seemed to pause and look about, and to gaze at his favourite prospects. He returned to his best beloved quotations again and again. There is one he used to speak of with special admiration—Goldsmith's parable of the hunted hare:

"Like as a hare whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first he flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return—and die at home at last."

My father's memory, though partial, was very clear. I remember Mr. Kinglake once saying that his quickness of apprehension was most remarkable, and equalled by that of very few people. If he read a book he turned page after page without stopping at all, in a rapid methodical way, and he used to say that from long habit he could glean the contents of each page as he glanced at it. It was only the other day that an eminent
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politician of this present time declared to a friend that it was almost impossible to him to read less than three lines at once, and some such power must have belonged to my father's short-sighted eyes.

The third "Roundabout," "On Ribbons," has been lately re-printed in an admirable little newspaper called the Britannia, in which for a penny you can read something better worth remembering than stale histories of present crimes and vulgarities. Things, happily no less true, but more cheering and more amusing to contemplate—seamanship, athletics, speeches of good import, active doings of every kind.

The number of this periodical which quotes the "Roundabout" "On Ribbons," warmly endorses my father's suggestion of an order of Britannia for seamen.

How well I remember the writing of the paper "On some late Great Victories," for the sixth number of the Cornhill, and its humorous and amusing description of a Roman triumphal procession, and of "six great complete and undeniable victories achieved by the corps which the editor of the Cornhill Magazine has the honour to command. . . ."

"On the 13th day of April last I went to see a friend in a neighbouring crescent," are the first words of this "Roundabout." The friend was my grandmother, who lived for a couple of years in Brompton Crescent, and remained there until my grandfather's death, when she came home to us. My father paid her a daily visit on his way into town.

There is one personal "Roundabout Paper" "On a Chalk Mark on the Door," which recalls a housekeeper's confusion when she read the paper in the Cornhill, and went out to look at the mark—she can still remember it—a sort of V in red chalk on the door-post in Onslow Square.

The essay on a "Thorn in the Cushion" is very well known and often quoted. I found a packet of thorns only the other day in an old box where I was looking for figs, and felt that a quarter of a century had not quite swept away the sting of these spinulae. Sometimes, as my father says, the letters contained not mere thorns, but bludgeons.

"Round about the Christmas Tree" is written in good spirits,
and about pleasant things. Bobby Mistletoe, who had been staying with us for a week, and "sleeping mysteriously in the bath-room," may remember the incident, and the slight pecuniary transactions alluded to. I wonder if he remembers the punch which Mr. O'Morgan pronounced too weak, and the Pantomime. I myself can bear witness to a winter's walk in the Zoological Gardens, with certain childish friends of those days, now turned to grey-headed friends. My father was always happy in the Zoological Gardens. "If I have cares in my mind," he says, "I come to the Zoo, and fancy they don't pass the gate." On this occasion as he walked along he made up that well-known poem:

"First I saw the white bear, then I saw the black;
Then I saw the camel with a hump upon his back;
Then I saw the grey wolf, with mutton in his maw;
Then I saw the wombat waddle in the straw;
Then I saw the elephant a-waving of his trunk;
Then I saw the monkeys—mercy, how unpleasantly they—smelt!"

Our playfellows, the children of Sir Henry Cole, were with us, and the youngest boy caught up the rhyme, and ran about repeating the last verse with its various readings, sometimes preferring one, sometimes the other.

"Tunbridge Toys" was written in the summer of 1860, when we were staying at Tunbridge Wells in an old wooden house at the foot of Mount Ephraim. The drawing-room windows looked across a garden towards the common. "De Juventute" was also written there. I remember my father showing me the manuscript at the time, and as I read it now everything comes back. The grandparents were living in the ground-floor sitting-room; we were established overhead, with a couple of puppies, whose antics were the chief events of those peaceful days. The puppies were called Gumbo and Saidie, after the two nigger boys in "The Virginians." Gumbo had a fine time of it, driving vast herds of sheep before him across Rustington Common. Saidie was of a meeker disposition. When we went abroad later in the year, Saidie returned to Onslow Square, and Gumbo was sent away to live with our friends the Synges, a present for the aforesaid Bobby Mistletoe. I cannot help describing here the little story my father told us of Gumbo's behaviour when they met again on our return from abroad. Gumbo, in his black-
REHEARSAL OF "FREISCHÜTZ"
and-tan coat, was quietly passing the time on the pavement in front
of the house in Pimlico, when he saw the hansom-cab driving up
the middle of the street with my father inside; and with one wild
leap from the curb-stone he sprang into the advancing cab and
landed safe on my father’s knees, knocking off his spectacles, and
tickling his face all over.

“The Roundabout” called “Notes of a Week’s Holiday” re-
represents a real week and a real holiday, and one of the happiest.

We went to the play during that little journey and saw a
wonderful performance called Le Secret de Miss Aurore, of which
the sketch on the following page is a reminiscence. Christmas
sports were introduced to charm the squire. The sketch of the
scene from the Freischütz which is also given belongs to some
earlier holiday-time.

“Screens in Dining-rooms” was prompted by an article in
the Saturday Review reproducing a gossiping one sent from an
American newspaper. My father wrote to Mr. George Smith:

“My dear S.,—I have been lying awake half the night about
that paper in a sort of despair; but I think I have found a climax
dignified and humorous enough at last, Heaven be praised, and
that our friend won’t sin again.—Yours ever,

W. M. T.”

I suppose some people disliked my father—perhaps he thought
there were more than really existed. He was a diffident man,
sensitive, and easily wounded, especially by any one for whom he
had a regard. “We shall never be allowed to be friends, that’s clear,” he says once, speaking of the reports concerning him
and Dickens. A friend of Mr. Dickens said one day, “D——
Thackeray,” which another friend felt ought to be immediately
reported in everybody’s interest.*

* There were happily other episodes more worthy of being reported, this
being but one among them.

“March 23, 1855.

“My dear Thackeray,—I have read in the Times to-day an account of
our last night’s lecture, and cannot refrain from assuring you in all truth and
earnestness, that I am profoundly touched by your generous reference to me.
do not know how to tell you what a glow it spread over my heart. Out of
a fulness I do entreat you to believe that I shall never forget your words of
ommendation. If you could wholly know at once how you have moved me
ad how you have animated me, you would be the happier, I am certain.—
faithfully yours ever,

Charles Dickens.”
One celebrated author put him into a book with unfavourable comments—but it must be confessed that my father had written "Codlinsby."

In "The Notch on the Axe" he describes a favourite Sir Jos.

print. "When your spirits are low," he writes, "her bright
shine on you and cheer you. She never fails to soothe you with her speechless prattle. . . . You love her—she is alive with you."

The print is that charming little winter-piece representing the little Lady Caroline Montagu, afterwards Duchess of Buccleuch. She is standing in the midst of a winter landscape wrapped in muff and cloak, and she looks out of the picture with a smile so exquisite that a Herod couldn’t see her without being amazed.

For this little Lady Caroline he had a special fancy.
One of the last of the "Roundabouts" is called "On some Carps at Sans Souci," but all the same it is dated from Kensington. My father had taken a fancy to a little old woman who used to come sometimes to tea at Palace Green, and he made her the heroine of this particular paper. A friend who discovered her in a workhouse used to carry her some occasional tokens of good-will. "Ah, you rich people!" says the old lady, "you are never without a screw of snuff in your pockets." The old woman used to come to tea and chatter away to my father when she met him in the hall; she curtseyed with equal deference to the page-boy, who treated her with more haughtiness perhaps. Our page-boy had sincere views and doubts about her way of life. "John," says the "Rour about Paper," "when Goody-Two-Shoes comes next Friday, I des she may not be disturbed by theological controversies. . . . Make her comfortable by our kitchen hearth, set that old kettle sing by our hob, warm her old stomach with nut-brown ale a a toast in the fire. Be kind to the poor old school-girl ninety, who has had leave to come out for a day of Christn holiday."
The last of the "Roundabouts" is called "Strange to say, on Club Paper." The will of an old friend, Lord Clyde, was written on the Athenæum note-paper, and this was remarked upon, and my father in turn remarked upon the criticism.

"The proofs and MSS. of this little sermon have just returned from the printers, and as I look at the writing I perceive, not without a smile, that one or two of the pages bear, 'strange to say,' the mark of a club of which I have the honour to be a member."

My father's club was so much a part of his daily life, that it seemed at last to be a part of his home; and though he was ill and suffering, he went there up to the end and worked there at his favourite table, and met the familiar faces that he liked to see, and the friendly silences as well as the friendly greetings of his old associates. It was there he met Mr. Dickens, on that occasion of which Mr. Dickens himself has written, when my father was coming away for the last time from his accustomed haunt.

It has been truly said that in life ideas are the only facts that last. Other things pass and disappear, but ideas grow and grow in people's hearts, as time goes on and men learn their long lessons, and accept the teaching of life. And so, perhaps, the best cairn or monument to the memory of a good man is that one which his friends put up to him in spirit and in truth. As one looks back at the warm expressions at the time of my father's death, one feels how much was meant by them. Here is Charles Dickens writing from his heart, and noting the little familiar things which the mind first turns to in a bereavement. "An excellent way with boys," he says among the rest, and then he goes on to speak of other characteristics—his quiet endurance, his unselfish thoughtfulness for others, his munificent hand. And then come Mr. Trollope's words of affectionate and true feeling. "He carried his heart-strings in a crystal case," he wrote. And there is a record of his saying as he spoke of a future life: "If I thought I should never see old Thackeray again, I should be a very unhappy man," he cried.*

* There is a letter from Mr. John Blackwood, published in the Annals of that house (vol. iii. p. 98), which strikes so discriminating, to true a note of friendship and old companionship, that I cannot but quote the passage. The letter is to Mr. Langford, and is dated December 30, 1863:

"Thackeray's death would be a sad blight upon your Christmas. It is a real grief to me, and indeed to all my family. 'Old Thack' was a constantly
The last words Sir John Millais wrote to me were of my father: "I dwell now entirely on the past, as far back as when as a boy I walked the Jersey lanes in spring. . . . I follow on to the days of Trollope and your father, whom I loved." Newman, writing three days after my father's death, put his stone upon the cairn and wrote, "His last fugitive pieces in the Cornhill were almost sermons."

An American, Mr. Stoddart, the author of some touching lines on my father's death, writing of his work, has quoted a passage from George Brimley's Essays, which expresses something which is true of all good work: "Thackeray could not have produced 'Vanity Fair' unless Eden had been shining brightly before his eyes."

"Love is a higher intellectual exercise than hatred," my father himself has said.

In a letter to a friend Mr. Vennables wrote: "I once told him that the basis of his character was religious sentimentality, and he gravely said that I understood him perfectly; but, like Horace, he gave warning that neither he nor his tastes, opinions, and feelings were to be attacked with impunity. His humorous pugnacity subsided at once in the presence of real or apparent goodness."

Another friend, Sir Theodore Martin, who was amongst the first to express a serious recognition of his place in literature—so my father himself felt and wrote—concluded a review of his works in 1853 with these words: "He fills a large space now in the world's recurring thought and subject of conversation with us. . . . To London literary men Thackeray's death is a very serious loss. He was a central figure, and his tone leavened and did good to the whole body. By all good fellows it will be thoroughly felt." And again to a contributor Mr. Blackwood writes, "I do not feel that the paper describes Thackeray, and consequently I did not like to put it into the magazine as our portrait and tribute to his memory. None of the numerous sketches I have had gave to me any real picture of the man, with his fun and mixture of bitterness with warm good feeling. . . . Writing about 'Old Thack' has set me thinking about him and all the scenes we have had together. I feel so truly about him, that I am frightened to give a wrong impression of him to one who did not know him." Such words from those whom he trusted and who trusted him are not words, they are facts, and they represent what has been and is still for those of us who inherit these memories.
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eye, and his reputation has become a matter of pride to his country, . . . that of the only satirist who mingles loving kindness with his sarcasm, and charity and humility with his gravest rebuke.” It makes one proud to read these words, so manly and so sincere.

Lord Houghton’s beautiful lines in the Cornhill will be remembered:

“O gentle Censor of our age,
Prime master of our ampler tongue,
Whose word of wit and generous page
Were never writh except with wrong.
Fielding without the manner’s dress,
Scott with a spirit’s larger room,
What prelate deems thy grave his bower—
What Halifax erects thy tomb?
But maybe he who so could draw
The hidden great, the humble wise,
Yielding with them to God’s good law,
Makes the Pantheon where he lies.”

II

DENIS DUVAL

In my father’s farewell circular to the readers and contributors of the Cornhill Magazine there is mention of a contemplated story which eventually became “Denis Duval,” although I think that when the address was written, not “Denis Duval,” but another history was in his mind.

The address was published in April 1862, and part of it has already been quoted. The editor, after announcing his resignation, concludes in the following words:

“I had rather have a quiet life than gold lace and epaulets, and deeper than ever did plummet sound, I fling my speaking-trumpet. Once in a voyage to America, I met a sea-captain who was passenger in a ship he had formerly commanded. No man could be more
happy and cheerful than this. He rode through the gale with the most perfect confidence in the ship and its captain; he surveyed the storm as being another gentleman’s business; and his great delight was to be called at his watch, to invoke a blessing on the steward boy who woke him, and to turn round in his crib and go to sleep again. Let my successor command the Cornhill, giving me always a passage on board; and if the printer’s boy rings at my door of an early morning, with a message that there are three pages wanting or four too much, I will send out my benediction to that printer’s boy, and take t’other half-hour’s doze.

“Though editor no more,” continues my father, “I hope long to remain a contributor to my friend’s magazine. I believe my own special readers will agree that my books will not suffer when their author is released from the daily task of reading, accepting, refusing, losing, and finding the works of other people. To say ‘no’ has often cost me a morning’s peace and a day’s work. I tremble recenti metu. Oh, those hours of madness spent in searching for Louisa’s lost lines to her dead piping bull-finch, for Xhoj Senoj’s mislaid essay! I tell them for the last time that the late editor will not be responsible for rejected communications, and herewith send off the chair and the great Cornhill Magazine tin box, with its load of care.

“Whilst the present tale of ‘Philip’ is passing through the press, I am preparing another, on which I have worked at intervals for many years past, and which I hope to introduce in the ensuing year; and I have stipulated for the liberty of continuing the little essays which have amused the public and the writer, and which I purpose to contribute from time to time to the pages of the Cornhill Magazine.”

W. M. T.”

Before finally starting on the novel of “Denis Duval” he was turning over two stories in his mind. Of one of these—it was never written after all—we had often heard him speak, and there are some notes which concern it in the same MSS. volume which contains those for “Denis Duval.” The story which was never written belonged to the days of Henry V., and we had seen him reading for it from time to time in Froissart and Brantôme and Monstrelet. The one fact concerning it which is vividly impressed
Hackney horses. Henry IV's clerk. Janicost forbidden to purchase such horses or to wear a professionable sum.

Henry IV's clerk. On the very day he caused the sentence of Canterbury to publish Janicost duel for name of promotion see Arches. Every twenty thousand men were in Arches in the name of A.G. and them to see Cotton MS Claudius A. VIII.


Badges. Lancaster's were the antel the Boltons. H. wore the antelope on some Henry's badge during his father's life. White hart was a frequent annoyance.

The first considerable coinage of (in his remains article money) the coin soon after were made by Froissart. London. The motto on the coin was "Chemicum reptat" this story.
Their ears or head. If any horse knocked up on the road, the owner
Disputes M.S. V p 18 dated Jan 5. 19 R v II. Archaeologia 1846,
upon its head to be beheaded. Bishops fell at the King, episcopal to provide
communication. Tyler 1 291 quoting Stevens 1776.


a bridge carpenter. G.H. note 43.

They say but they help. The B.P. need hardly the same word at Gregory

Neither forec in perpetua administrativa, qui dextera ad longis:

auxilium sine urbis, villae, incolae, manus praedicat, in facie contempl.

Deo, verificantur in animaduino spectant, ut eam adhibere incorda

vivae foret e dicta morte nobi intentata ex sua suprema gratia

Here, a forer trail dependent, a swan argent gules a chevron or from

a blue velvet when he entered the lists, by the Bof Norfolk young

an. The Black Prince had a sun issuing from clouds. Richard

Archaeologia 1846

country was by Edward III in 1343, and according to Camden

affirms as an unwritten story that the 260 noble men were to

replication Alchemical by Raymond Lully in the Tower of

Samianus per medium corn. that! Although the scene

or lxviii.

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on my mind is that the hero was to come into action on a cow, as the knights did at Agincourt when horses ran short.

The second story was to be shorter than the mediaeval romance, and to date from 1763, with highway robbers and sea-fights, and a sailor for a hero; this was "Denis Duval."

My father used to talk a great deal about it all to us. Agnes, the heroine, had one or two aliases. She was sometimes Henriette, sometimes Blanche, but then he said she should be Agnes after all; it was an ugly name, but it was convenient for the working of the story, and there were two St. Agneses. In the same way Denis himself was called Blaise for a little time, and the Duvals were called Merian.

He was anxious about this novel. I can remember his saying that "Philip" had not enough story, and that this new book must be a success, if he could make it so. He used to carry the chapters about with him, and often pull them out from his coat pocket to consult.

He said that it was a superstition of his to write at least one line in every day whether he was ill or well. Only once, to my recollection, did he try to dictate some pages of "Denis Duval," but he very soon sent his secretary away, saying that he must write for himself.

It is in May 1863 that he writes to Mrs. Ritchie, the widow of his cousin William Ritchie, "the gentleman of the long robe" of the "Roundabout Papers," the friend and benefactor of so many here in England as well as in India, whose death at Calcutta the year before had been so great a shock: "If I haven't written to you sooner, be pleased to know that for the last ten days I have been almost non compos mentis. When I am in labour with a book I don't quite know what happens. I sit for hours before my paper, not doing my book, but incapable of doing anything else, and thinking upon that subject always, waking with it, walking about it, and going to bed with it. Oh, the struggles and bothers—a, the throbs and pains about this trumpery!"

There were a good many technical difficulties in the subject had taken up, and he sometimes said that he should like to take a journey in a man-of-war so as to learn all the nautical ruses. Mr. Greenwood's notes on "Denis Duval" will show how roughly my father got all the details up.
One pleasant impression still in my mind belonging to those days, is that of my father's return one summer's evening, pleased and in good spirits from a little visit he had paid to Winchelsea and Rye. He came home delighted with the old places; he had seen the ancient gateways and sketched one of them, and he had seen the great churches and the old houses, all sailing inland from the sea. Winchelsea was everything he had hoped for, and even better than he expected. He was so often ailing in those latter days that when he was well and happy it seemed to be a general holiday in the house.

Another association which I have with "Denis Duval" is connected with almost the last page of the manuscript. One day he came down at luncheon time in great spirits and excitement; he was quite carried away by what he had been reading and writing that morning concerning the splendid gallantry of Captain Pearson of the Serapis. Instead of eating his luncheon, he began describing the engagement with as much pride as if he had witnessed it, or as if he had had a son serving on board. His old friend and neighbour Admiral FitzRoy had looked up the papers and particulars and sent them to him from the Admiralty; my father followed them all with something beyond interest, until he seemed to be actually living through the events which laid hold of his imagination.

My sister-in-law, Mrs. Warre Cornish, who was scarcely more than a child in those days, has written down some of her reminiscences of that time.

"Out of my girlish remembrance of visits at Palace Green," she writes, "the impression made by the creation of 'Denis Duval' remains extraordinarily clear. It was in the summer of 1863, and I believe that Mr. Thackeray was just then very happy, finding himself once more, after a long interval, in the full vein of historical romance. But I knew nothing of this at the time, only that the atmosphere of 'Denis Duval' permeated everything. The beautiful red house shaded by tall elms, on Palace Green; the bits of antique plate, china, and furniture, collected by Mr. Thackeray, when it was easier than it is now, to make genuine last-century purchases, 'brand new and intensely old' as he would describe some Louis XVI. clock or guéridon just brought home—all these
old-world things seemed to me a part of the spell. The story progressed day by day, and reached us through his talk with his daughters, and with my sister and myself, whose father he had loved. The great world of London came and went past the quiet green precincts, and he went to the great world or came from it. It was the July season, and Mr. Thackeray's constant presence among a small band of his own and his daughters' friends—Mr. and Mrs. Collins, Herman Merivale and his sister, Mrs. Williams Freeman, Frederick Walker, and others—left an indescribably full impression. But every day one received a clearer idea of the laborious daily task; the initiation behind the scenes into the delightful story which was coming into being was full, not only of wonder and charm, but of the serious aspect of work in Mr. Thackeray's house.

I remember when the story of the poor Countess of Saverne absorbed him. "The Countess is growing very mad," he said one day; "last night St. Sebastian appeared to her stuck all over with arrows—looking like a fiancée," he added gravely, though with a mock shudder. And then he would sketch for us what we read afterwards, that Count de Saverne was heartbroken about his wife's flight with the little Agnes; and one gathered the story of the duel with the mysterious Count de la Motte, who had been brought up as a priest. The Count de Saverne was to be killed, and round his neck was to be found within his shirt a little shoe hanging by a string.

"You know, Papa, Victor Hugo has got a shoe."

"So he has! Hugo has a magnifique shoe. It must be something else. What do babies wear?"

We could not think of anything but the cap, but we regretted it, and agreed that nothing was so pathetic as a shoe.

The inspiration sometimes had to be waited for and caught at the flood. The carriage came to the door and waited, waited an hour, an hour and a half, two hours. Mr. Thackeray wrote on.

* Mrs. Williams Freeman, who was Ella Merivale, and very young in those days, remembers sitting at luncheon by my father, who was helping us all, as he sat at the head of the table. To her he said—

"Little maid with sparkling eye,
Will you have some mutton pie?
Little maid with tender heart,
Will you have some apple tart?"
His daughters only said what a good thing it was that every ten minutes made a page of Papa's handwriting. At last he came, and got into the carriage with us, all in the best of spirits. As we drove towards Wimbledon or Richmond he would read every name on the small shops as we passed; he wanted Christian names for certain smugglers to come into the story. He commented on all the names. Every minute seemed brimful in his society; one never thinks, even when remembering what followed, of incompletion.

At a garden party I have a recollection of a man saying to him, "It is said, Thackeray, of you, that you have body enough for two and soul enough for three..."

"Soul enough for one I hope—I can but hope," he replied gravely.

One other recollection of those working days of his is very vivid. Besides writing "Denis Duval" and the "Roundabout Papers," he was receiving calls for articles which he was often indisposed to write—once it was a critique of the sketches collected and exhibited after Cruikshank's death. He accepted the task, declaring he would fail.

"If I were you, Papa, I would write all round the subject and say as little as possible about it."

This was the quiet voice of his youngest daughter.

"Thank you, my dear," he said, and I can see him pacing the room impatiently and her sitting calmly by—the most reposeful, the most observant of women, then a girl of twenty, with shining bronze hair and bright rosy cheeks; she was ever reserved, but with him in perfect sympathy of taste and feeling.

My father's last letter to Dr. John Brown, with whom my sister was staying in Edinburgh that autumn, touches on "Denis Duval":—

"Palace Green, September 23, 1863.

"My dear J. B.,—I am very glad you like my little Min; with her and her sister I have led such a happy life that I am afraid almost as I think of it lest any accident should disturb it. . . . We three get on so comfortably together that the house is not the house when one is away."
"I have done no work for a whole year, and must now set to at this stale old desk, or there will be no beef and mutton—I have spent too much money on this fine house one way or t'other, besides gincracks, china, plate, the deuce knows what. I am not in debt, thank my stars, but instead of writing to you, why am I not writing the history of Denis Duval, Esq., Admiral of the White Squadron? Because I don't know anything about the sea and seamen, and get brought up by my ignorance every other page.

"Good-bye, my dear J. B. My love to the children.—Your grateful old friend,

W. M. T."

There is a chapter of "Denis Duval" hitherto not printed, in which my father says, "Over the back of the armchair in which I sit, I remember, as a boy, how there used to hang a little slim, powdered queue which dear old Doctor C. wore." (Doctor C. was Doctor Carmichael-Smyth.) "His son inherited the chair; he also has passed away. As I lean in the comfortable arms (not unmindful that the generation to which I belong is the next to be called) I hold on to the past which was present once to my faithful old study companion. Burke has sat in the chair, and I remember having heard the owner talk of Garrick, whom he knew. His own sons took honourable parts in the great European and Asian wars at the commencement of the century. Here, then, their father has sat, with moist eyes and heart, thankful to the Father of all, reading the young men's affectionate letters."

We have the pen-and-ink sketch of the old chair described in the suppressed chapter. It is drawn on the back of one of the pages of the manuscript of "Denis Duval"; which manuscript a friend brought us, who had discovered it long after my father's death, carefully put away and forgotten.

The only picture of "Denis Duval" by my father is the little water-colour sketch here given. Poor Denis is flying from his old grandfather the perruquier's blows to the protection of Dr. Barnard. There is another water-colour sketch done at the same time by Frederick Walker, in the possession of Mr. George Smith, representing "little Denis dancing and singing before the navy gentlemen"; the design for this was my father's, and it is referred to in the life of Frederick Walker as "the last drawing from Mr. Thackeray's
hand." Mr. Walker reproduced it for the *Cornhill Magazine*. And Mr. Marks tells us that of the four illustrations for "Denis Duval," Walker afterwards reproduced two in water-colour—"Evidence for the Defence," and "Denis's Valet." They both belong to Mr. and Mrs. George Smith. Walker's water-colour sketches are all charming, specially that one of the two boys looking at the pistol with the box standing open before them. In the picture of Denis, the figure of the boy is delightful, with the *bonne aîné*, as Madame de Sévigné calls it, of youth and nature; but the drawing of the mother does not in the least represent the grim and violent personage described in the text.

Among other critics, Leslie Stephen, writing of "Denis Duval," has spoken of the harmonious unfinished picture that might have been worthy to be put beside Esmond, and, indeed, as one reads the notes one realises what a complete historical impression the book should have come to be.* The lines laid by so sure a hand, seem to spread out into a wider and more comprehensive horizon; it is a story of action rather than of thought, with the strange heroic figures of the last century for heroes, warm-hearted, heavy-handed. Perhaps the writer was not uninfluenced by his early associations with a family of soldiers and their ways and talk. He always had the keenest interest in naval and military things.

Since his death there has been an immense revival of appreciation of those warlike times; of the days of Nelson, when the great fleets were sweeping the high seas. Denis came at the head of those stirring, honest, and delightful heroes of Stevenson and others—seamen belonging to a splendid day, who did not split hairs, who still clung to their pig tails, who fought and bled, somewhat haphazard perhaps, but who from early training or from natural bent made more often for right than for wrong.

Some chapters of the wonderful histories of Nelson and his shipmates, lately published, read at times like a page out of "Denis Duval."

Take Colonel Drinkwater's story as it is quoted in Mahan's

* Charles Dickens wrote, "In respect of earnest feeling, far-seeing purpose, character, incident, and a certain living picture-siveness blending the whole, I believe it to be much the best of all his works."
book—Colonel Drinkwater, who met Nelson shortly before the battle of Camperdown, which was fought on the 11th of October 1797, when Nelson was not yet quite recovered from his terrible wound.

"One of the first questions Mr. Nelson put to me was whether I had been at the Admiralty. I told him there was a rumour that the British fleet had been engaged with that of Holland. He started up in his peculiar energetic manner, notwithstanding Lady Nelson's attempt to quiet him, and stretching out his unwounded

arm, 'Drinkwater,' said he, 'I would give this other arm to be with Duncan at this moment.' So unconquerable was the spirit of the man, and so intense his eagerness to give every instant of his life to the service."

Something of the spirit of this absorption in life's work, rather than in life's continuance, seems in some measure to animate all master spirits and great men, whether warriors, or teachers, or administrators, or artists. Each one seems to be the servant of some higher unknown rule; to be in part the expression of that
which is beyond all speech. My father was not alone among his companions to live and teach and work in obedience to a law which is stronger for great men than for smaller ones.

Lesser men in turn are not slow to do justice to those they trust, and whose mission they recognise.

Only a few days before his death my father came home one afternoon saying that he could not get accustomed to the number of people whom he did not know, who seemed to know him in the street, and took off their hats as he went along. His figure was so remarkable, and so little to be passed over, that no wonder people recognised him as they recognised Tennyson or Carlyle, or any other of the well-known characters of those days.

Except for the spontaneous expression of regard from his readers, my father never received any of those other recognitions or marks of favour which are more common now than they were then. The Benchers of the Middle Temple sent him a message a few days before he died, which pleased him, that they were about to elect him a Bencher, but his name was never actually on the list.

One bright afternoon in December 1863 we drove with him to the Temple. Our friend Lady Colvile came with us, and we went through the Park to pick him up at the Athenæum, and then on to the Temple church, where the service was going on. The anthem was “Rejoice, and again I say unto you, rejoice,” and afterwards the evening hymn was sung. When we came out from the inner aisle, he was waiting for us, standing quite still with his back turned. He began to chant the anthem in an undertone, and then he praised the evening hymn, which he always liked; he said it was simple and unaffected, and entirely to the purpose, expressing just what was needful and no more. We walked with him along the Terrace and down some steps into the Garden. For a little while longer the sky was very bright and red, then the twilight began, and we went in to tea with Herman Merivale, who was expecting us in his rooms, up some twisting stairs. My father laughed and was in good spirits, and looked at the pictures upon the walls. Perhaps it all reminded him of his own Temple days—“Ah, happy rooms, bright rooms, rooms near the sky,” he says in “Philip,” “to remember you is to be young again.”
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My father's last visit to Charterhouse, on Founder's Day, and the enthusiastic welcome the boys gave him as he walked up the old hall, has often been alluded to. "C.H., December 12th," is almost the last entry in his diary. A letter from the Rev. Alfred Gatty, another old Carthusian, reminds me that my father, as he himself did, acted as steward on this occasion.*

A day or two before his death I went out driving in the twilight with my father. We met Mr. Carlyle walking along the path by the Serpentine, and my father began to wave to him—"a great shower of salutations," Carlyle said in after days, speaking of that last meeting, with the strange echo of tenderness in his grave tones that those who loved him can remember.

It was on the 17th of December 1863 that this last letter about his work was written:—

"Palace Green.

"Dear Smith, I was just going to be taken prisoner by Paul Jones when I had to come to bed. If I could get a month's case I could finish the eight numbers handsomely with the marriage of Denis and Agnes, after the capture of Toulon by the English. "The Course of True Love" I thought of as a pretty name. . . .

"Yesterday burglars entered our house and robbed my poor mother and girls of watches, trinkets, diamonds—all my little presents, lockets, bracelets, to poor Annie since she was fifteen."

He had no real illness, but he flagged all that last week and was more at home than usual. An old friend who came to see us told me that my father took him upstairs to his room to show him

* The year before, the author of "The Newcomes" had also dined at Charterhouse, and Professor Jebb, who was present, writes in reply to a letter of mine, many years afterwards:—

"After the Charterhouse dinner I went with another young Cambridge man to Evans's, in Covent Garden. Presently your father came in. He recognised us as having been at the dinner, and sat down at the table where we were. I remember feeling very shy at first, and also that the feeling wore off as he talked. I noticed that he spoke warmly of Longfellow, apropos of a reference made by one of us to those lines from 'Hyperion.' "Many a year is in its grave." Before we separated he asked us to dine with him the next day at Palace Green."

I can also recall my father's interest in the young man, the Senior Classic that year at Cambridge, who had once been Captain of Charterhouse School.
and smile as the lid is closing over them. I don’t think we deplore the old who have had enough of living and striving and have buried so many others, and must be weary of living—it seems time for them to go—for where’s the pleasure of staying when the feast is over, and the flowers withered, and the guests gone? Isn’t it better to blow the light out than sit on among the broken meats and collapsed jellies and vapid heeltaps? I go—to what I don’t know—but to God’s next world, which is His and He made it. One paces up and down the shore yet awhile—and looks towards the unknown ocean, and thinks of the traveller whose boat sailed yesterday. Those we love can but walk down to the pier with us—the voyage we must make alone. Except for the young or very happy, I can’t say I am sorry for any one who dies.”

Whenever my father wrote of death it was with peaceful encouragement and good-will, and now with his own words it seems fitting to end these notes of his dear life.

A. I. R.
INTRODUCTION

UNPUBLISHED CHAPTER OF
"DENIS DUVAL"

Over the back of the arm-chair in which I sit, I remember as a boy how there used to hang a little, slim, powdered queue which dear old Dr. C. wore. His son inherited the chair; he also has passed away. As I lean back in the comfortable arms (not unmindful that the generation to which I belong is the next to be called) I hold on to the past which was present once to my study companion. Burke has sat in the chair, and I remember having heard the owner talk of Garrick, whom he knew; his own sons took honourable part in the great European and Asian wars at the commencement of the century; here their father has sat with moist eyes, and heart thankful to the Father of all, reading the affectionate letters from the brave young men who told of Bhurtpore and Delhi, of Bergen-op-Zoom and Waterloo. Good readers, if you will listen to a story of old times, I will relate one which must have come to pass when this old chair was new.

When the old chair was some five-and-forty years younger than is to-day, some of the people were yet alive whose adventures and characters we shall try to depict. The two chief personages whom our story exhibits lived in comfort and opulence in a little old town of Fairport, in Hampshire, where, during and after the great European war, the society was mainly composed of wives, widows, and daughters of his Majesty's navy. Portraits of gentlemen in red coats and white facings hung in most of the parlours. Pictures of shipwrecks and naval combats were to be seen in almost all drawing-rooms. I think the two prints representing the famous action between the Java and the Constitution were the most modern works of art to be seen at Fairport, and, you know, that battle was fought the year before Waterloo. A sedan-chair or two still existed in the place, and took out the good ladies to tea on rainy evenings. Dinner
was at three or four o'clock; home-made wines, by some young palates thought delicious, were not uncommonly served at dessert; at six appeared tea, and then came cards, quadrille, and whist until eleven, when a neat little supper terminated the evening's mild amusement. Betty and Mary arrived with the shawls, clogs, and lantern; and the good ladies went to rest, to rise the next morning for just such another day's gossip, business, and pleasure. There were scarcely any men in the Fairport society. There were many widows and elderly spinsters, daughters of deceased Commodores and Captains. It was not certainly an intellectual society, very few books were read: indeed, books were not considered fit furniture for ladies' bedrooms. I don't know how many families would club together to take in the Portsmouth paper. There was plenty of beautiful old china which the dear old ladies delicately washed and polished after tea. I can see one of them now with one of the kindest and sweetest faces in the world, which beams and nods from the parlour window as the London coach pulls up at the garden gate, with a little boy from school on the first delightful day of the Midsummer holiday.

Our cottage was called Rose Cottage; I wonder do the roses still clamber round the porch. It was quite a modest little cottage, but next door was Laurel House, the residence of Madame Admiral Duval. A comfortable brick-built mansion, with bow-windows on each side of the door, and cedars and evergreens on the lawn. Thousands and thousands of times have their shadows been cast upon the grass since their mistress and master beheld their dark verdure.

I place the mistress first, just as Madame Duval was the first in rank of the good couple. If she were to appear and walk down Fairport High Street now, how the children would wonder. Madame Duval used always to wear a dress of grey figured-silk with sleeves ruffled at the elbow, and mittens of black lace; she walked on the prettiest little velvet high-heeled shoes, bearing a tortoise-shell cane before her, which she held daintily between thumb and finger. She carried a snuff-box and a tooth-pick, and used both with a perfect grace. What would you say nowadays to a duchess with a tooth-pick case and a snuff-box. Madame Duval's hat been given by Count de Gras to her husband, Lieutenant Duval
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CAPTAIN BECHER, R.N.

MRS. BECHER
who acted as the Count’s interpreter on board the ——, of which M. Duval was lieutenant. After Rodney’s famous victory for years ago, at the time of which I speak, Madame’s hair was white as snow; but in her picture, as I have seen it, in a dress of white muslin sprigged with gold, the locks were as black as jay wings. It used to hang in her dining-room between the portrait of her son, who died early, and of her husband in his uniform of blue and white, with a ruffled hand in his waistcoat, and a smile on his broad kind face.* Madame Duval appeared very seldom, and at Fairport evening parties, you see, there were differences—many quarrels and feuds among the dear old people at Fairport. Questions of social precedence were debated with much acrimony, and sometimes with actual violence. I remember a dreadful to-do, for instance, one day, when my grand-aunt Tomlinson, a doctor of divinity’s lady, said she would never consent to leave a room after Mrs. Sawyer, who was the wife of a medical man. The two, I fear, had a scuffle in the hall on their way to the tea-room. Ah, dear grand aunt Tomlinson, the question between you and Mrs. S. is buried under the grass now, and the impartial daisies cover you both!

* My father once made a rough sketch of these two paintings, which he sent to Mr. FitzGerald, and which we give on the preceding page.